Management and Performance Review of Texas Regional Education Service Centers

Volume III – Individual RESC Reports

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Management and Performance Review of Texas Regional Education Service Centers

VOLUME III – INDIVIDUAL RESC REPORTS

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Appendix A: Survey Results of Individual School District Superintendents
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CHAPTER 1:

EDINBURG

CHAPTER 1

EDINBURG

Regional Education Service Center 1 provides services to the seven southern Texas counties of Cameron, Hidalgo, Jim Hogg, Starr, Webb, Willacy and Zapata, all of which are economically depressed. Region 1 consists of 9,662 square miles and includes 38 districts. In addition to these 38 districts, RESC 1 serves 15 state-approved charter schools and one regional juvenile center. There are a total of 471 schools in RESC 1, serving approximately 341,813 students.

The districts in RESC 1 vary in size. The largest district, Brownsfield Unified School District, serves approximately 44,700 students; the smallest district, Mirando City Independent School District, serves approximately 45 students. There are a number of medium to large size districts in RESC 1, with approximately 30 percent of the districts having over 12,000 students.

The students in RESC 1 are mostly Hispanic (96 percent) and economically disadvantaged (84 percent). RESC 1 also has among the highest proportion of bilingual and migrant students in the state, with 39 percent and 18 percent of students in the region in each respective category, which accounts for 20 percent of the state's bilingual students and 44 percent of its migrant students.

The executive director and staff of RESC 1 articulate their mission as "students first." According to the executive director, it is this mission that drives all center activities. Under the leadership of the executive director, RESC 1 supports schools through training, financial management services, technology assistance, and instructional technical assistance. RESC 1 has distinguished itself as a partner within the Region 1 community. The center has initiated workforce development training programs, locally-supported purchasing cooperatives, and information-sharing services that make RESC 1 an entity the community knows and respects.

RESC 1 runs along the United States-Mexico border. From north to the south, RESC 1 extends over 200 miles, with Laredo the major city to the north and Brownsville the major city to the south. Given the significant distance across RESC 1 and the existence of medium to large districts in both the north and south end of the region, RESC 1 established a satellite office in Laredo in 1998 to allow the center to better serve clients throughout the region. RESC 1 also maintains three additional facilities from which it offers specialized services.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- RESC 1 supports strong communication with the community through regular publications, attractive event notices, and communication with local media outlets.
- RESC 1 uses its Web site as an effective and efficient information dissemination tool.
- RESC 1 uses its Web site as an effective and efficient information dissemination tool.
- Region 1 supports open, frequent, and productive communication with staff, board members, and member districts.
- Region 1 is reducing its utilities costs through a performance-based contract with an outside vendor.
- RESC 1 maintains a systematic structure to ensure that it attends to the individual needs of every school in the region.
- RESC 1 services and activities contribute positively to the larger Region 1 community.
- RESC 1 has developed and implemented innovative services designed to help its districts and schools achieve success.
- The RESC 1 integrated approach reflects the characteristics and structure of its member schools, allowing the center to more effectively support pupil instruction.

- The RESC 1 pioneering Migrant Education Program enhances the educational opportunities of migrant children and their families within Region 1, the state of Texas, and the nation.
- Region 1 offers exceptional PEIMS training for districts and has developed an excellent PEIMS submission program that includes training, support, and specialized reporting for member districts.
- The RESC 1 Office of Human Resources provides valuable information through its Web site in a cost-efficient manner.
- Despite significant cuts in its state funding, Region 1 has continued to provide valued services to the districts in its service area, maintained recommended fund balances, and made significant strides in the areas of financial reporting, financial accountability, and district monitoring.
- Region 1 provides valuable shared and cooperative services to member school districts.
- The RESC 1 Office of Information Systems and Technology provides significant, valuable support to its member districts.

FINDINGS

- RESC 1 has dedicated time and attention to planning. The center has generated various planning documents which should be integrated and monitored to maximize the effectiveness of its planning activities.
- The RESC 1 executive director is burdened with too many responsibilities to adequately manage the operational and functional needs of RESC 1 over an extended period of time. An additional senior administrator is needed.
- RESC 1 relies on part-time retirees and other limited-term staff to fill management responsibilities. A staffing plan to address long-term, sustainable human resources has not been developed.
- The Region 1 fee structure could be restructured to better meet the needs of its clients. There are a variety of ways that RESC 1 generates revenue including local assessment fees, fee for services, and state and federal grants.
- RESC 1 has recognized the need for efficiency studies of school districts in the region. This new service offering cannot be sustained without obtaining additional resources.
- RESC 1 can more cost-effectively answer employees benefit questions through the use of its Web site.
- The RESC 1 Web site allows interested applicants to browse job openings online, but not to submit a job application electronically. The current application could be streamlined and generally improved by supporting electronic job applications.
- RESC 1 offers a full range of core services. However, customers have expressed a desire for even greater offerings and some concern over their ability to pay for the services they need.
- Region 1's performance-based contract for its energy efficiency study provides an exceptional model for contracting for services. Despite its successful, however, Region 1 has not expanded its use of performance-based contracts.
- The RESC 1 Print Shop performs all of the printing work required by the RESC 1 on a partial cost recovery basis. The Print Shop could leverage its services to the districts for an increase in revenue to the RESC by promoting their printing facility and print services to the districts in the region.

- RESC 1 does not currently facilitate insurance coverage for member districts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 1-1: Make necessary modifications to the RESC 1 strategic plan and related documents to ensure consistency and linkages among the Strategic Plan, the Regional Plan for Improving Student Performance, and the Balanced Scorecard.** RESC 1 should review its planning and documentation process to ensure that all planning outcomes are clearly documented and that clear linkages exist between planning efforts and the TEA required Balanced Scorecard. The RESC 1 should consider adopting the *Regional Plan for Improvement Student Performance* as its strategic planning document, or removing extraneous background information from the Strategic Plan and inserting core planning information from the Regional Plan. The usefulness of the strategic plan as a planning document requires that it include such a clear statement of goals and objectives that are linked to action plans for achievement. A process should be in place to ensure consistency in the information and evaluation of results of all planning-related materials.

- **Recommendation 1-2: Hire a deputy director to oversee the Division of Instructional Support and redirect one of the administrative assistants currently supporting the executive director to support the deputy director of Instructional Support.** The executive director's current span of control is too large to reasonably oversee and manage the operating and programmatic needs of RESC 1. Although the executive director has managed the responsibilities and provided oversight and direction to the division of instructional support, RESC 1 is too large and complex for this structure to be productive in the long-term. Consistent with Recommendation A-3, this position should be filled on a full-time basis by and incorporated into the staffing and organizational plan.

- **Recommendation 1-3: Develop a staffing and organizational plan that is focused on organizational stability.** Several RESC 1 administrators have retired or will retire in the near future. Given the challenge at finding qualified staff, Region 1 should develop a comprehensive multi-year assessment of its staffing needs and plans to address such needs including a transition plan for key administrative positions. The director of Human Resources should coordinate the assessment with input and support from the RESC 1 management team. The development of a plan should be a high priority for RESC 1. The use of retirees on a part-time basis represents an interim solution and not one that is sustainable. In RESC 1, there is a strong desire to "get the job done," which staff have willingly accomplished with extra overtime effort. RESC 1 is currently meeting the expectations of the field, but its ability to maintain its current level of effort over the long-term is questionable.

- **Recommendation 1-4: Reexamine and reevaluate the RESC 1 fee structure.** Because RESC 1 has discussed the center's fee structure with representatives from member districts each year, it is striking that a significant portion of them do not feel that the amount they are charged is appropriate for the services they receive. This is true even though a majority indicate they have adequate funding to purchase the services they

need. It is also interesting that nearly one-quarter of the superintendent respondents wish to receive more direct funding to select particular services and their vendor of choice. These could be indications that Region 1 superintendents are not satisfied with the current local assessment fee structure, but would prefer to purchase all RESC 1 services a la carte.

- **Recommendation 1-5: Develop a long-term business plan for how efficiency studies will be funded prior to offering them as a service to Region 1 districts.** Under the current RESC 1 fee structure, funding for a new service area would need to come from local assessment fees or a fee-for-service to recover costs. Given that it is RESC's intention to provide this new service to districts in the region that are struggling financially, it is unlikely to expect that this service can be offered as a full cost-recovery fee-for-service. Alternatively, RESC 1 could increase the local assessment to support the provision of this service, but as noted in Recommendation C-2, some Region 1 superintendents are already raising some concerns about the Center's fee structure.

- **Recommendation 1-6: Expand the RESC 1 Web site to include more detailed benefits information.** Improving the Web site in this area will provide additional value for RESC 1 employees. Furthermore, it will ensure that consistent information is provided and reduce the need for staff time to be spent addressing more routine questions. This should permit the human resources staff to focus on other critical job functions. Once the information is available on the Web site, an e-mail notice should be sent to staff with an information sheet instructing them on how to use the Web site to obtain benefits information.

- **Recommendation 1-7: Improve the Region 1 Web site to allow online submission of job applications.** The process should include electronic access and submission of all required forms, resumes, and applications via email or through the region's Web site. The region should continue to provide a physical mailing address for applicants who do not have Internet or email access. Advertising in other venues can direct applicants to the Web site to download the application and submit it electronically.

- **Recommendation 1-8: Evaluate service offerings regularly to determine whether new offerings should be introduced.** RESC 1 should continue to take every measure to ensure that the services provided to the districts are priced appropriately and affordably.

- **Recommendation 1-9: Develop policies and procedures to support the implementation of additional performance-based contracts.** RESC 1's energy efficient contract has been highly productive. There are significant benefits to pursuing performance-based contracts. Areas within RESC 1 that may lend themselves to performance-based contracts include external technology support and consulting support for efficiency and other school finance studies. Based on RESC 1's experience with the energy contract, it should develop a policy and procedure for investigating other contracting options that lend themselves to performance-based contracts. Such contracts when used effectively share risk and rewards with vendors. This can promote efficiencies that may otherwise go unnoticed to RESC 1.

- **Recommendation 1-10: Increase Print Shop revenue by developing a full cost-recovery charge back structure.** A charge back model would allow RESC 1 to generate revenue from expanded services, which could directly offset the costs of the Print Shop operations. To implement a charge back model, RESC 1 would first need to identify its cost per unit of production based on the type of service provided. Costs should take into account equipment, personnel, and materials. If there are areas where RESC does not find it can be competitive it should considering outsourcing these services to address internal needs. For those areas where it can offer competitive pricing with commercial providers it should market services to districts in the region to begin generating revenue.

- **Recommendation 1-11: Coordinate with Region 1 member districts to determine if a package of service related to risk management insurance is a beneficial offering.** Given that the RESC 1 has been successful in negotiating a cost-effective risk management solution for the service center, the districts in the region may in turn be able to realize similar benefits. The RESC I could work with providers to offer customized packages to meet the unique insurance needs of the representative districts.

DETAILED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

COMMUNICATION WITH THE COMMUNITY

Region 1 has established strong relationships with local media which allows it to share news and information with the community about its activities and services as well as those of schools in the region.

Region 1 is somewhat unique among RESCs in that, for the past seven years, the center has provided funding for a full-time Public Information Officer (PIO) position that reports directly to the executive director. Until the 2003–04 fiscal year, the center also funded a supporting PIO secretary. The PIO's responsibilities include coordinating and managing internal communication with Region 1 staff to ensure that they are well informed of events, board actions, initiatives, and other important Region 1 matters. In addition, the PIO also serves as a direct contact with area media outlets (print, radio, and television) and supports communication with schools and the community at large.

There are several regular and special publications and notices that the PIO produces to support internal and external communication. **Exhibit 1-1** provides an overview of the major types of publications and notices that are produced.

Through its relationships with the media, RESC 1 has gained attention for activities and events sponsored by districts in the region. RESC 1 produces several press releases each month. In addition, local print and television media have developed several education-related human interest media pieces for which RESC 1 was involved with generating information.

In cases where materials are printed for distribution, printing is managed by the RESC 1's Print Shop. The Print Shop operates a rapid color copier, four-color printing press, and high-speed black and white copy machines. The Print Shop is overseen by the Chief Financial Officer; however, as stated in the *Administrative and Organizational Procedures Manual*, all printing requests must be routed through the Office of Public Information.

Exhibit 1-1
RESC 1 Information Office Publications

Publication	Audience	Description
Board Update	RESC 1 staff, Superintendents, and school board members in the region	A quarterly newsletter with news about TEA and RESC 1 policies and initiatives.
Quarterly Update One	Superintendents, school board members in the region, RESC 1 staff, and other RESCs	A quarterly newsletter with news and information about RESC 1 and districts in the region. Focused on current events and topical information.
Region One Directory of Service	RESC clients and community	Provides information about the specific services that RESC 1 offers.
Press Releases	Media—print, radio, and television	Provide the press with information about special events, special interest topics, meetings, holidays and other operations information.
Special Event Fliers, Brochures, and Other Print Notices	School administrators and staff in the region, media, community, and RESC 1 staff	Notify schools, community, and the media of special events or programs.

Source: Compiled from review of Web site and interviews with PIO, 2004.

Accomplishment: RESC 1 supports strong communication with the community through regular publications, attractive event notices, and communication with local media outlets.

EFFECTIVE WEB SITE

The RESC 1 Web site is well-designed and effectively used to disseminate publications.

By using its Web to site share information and publications, RESC 1 has limited printing and mailing costs significantly. In 2004, the Center's Web site (www.esc1.net) was redesigned to be more accessible and informative to visitors. The publications listed in **Exhibit 1-1** are also available on the Region 1 Web site.

In addition to the listed publications, visitors may also download a master calendar that provides key dates including the first and last days or school, holidays, and in-service days for all districts in the region. By posting publications on the Web site, RESC 1 has significantly reduced its costs for printing and postage. Staff throughout the center are aware of these resources and know how to direct requests for information about events and publications to the Web site. The RESC 1's *Administrative and Organizational Procedures Manual* includes a section regarding the services and publications supported by the Office of Public Relations. This section of the manual includes information about the publications listed in **Exhibit 1-1** with additional details that may be helpful to RESC 1 staff should questions arise about PIO services.

Accomplishment: The RESC 1 uses its Web site as an effective and efficient information dissemination tool.

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

Communication within the center and with Region 1 school districts is very strong.

The executive director holds weekly meetings with the management team (all deputy directors, directors, and coordinators). In addition, division meetings and other team meetings occur regularly. The chief financial officer meets with all directors and deputies on a monthly basis to review financial reports to ensure that programs are operating within budget. These meetings are held following distribution of a monthly financial statement and review by the directors and deputy directors. Furthermore, RESC 1 staff report feeling well informed and aware of current

events at the RESC. Staff cited the publications shown in **Exhibit 1-1**, RESC 1 Web site, colleagues, and the executive director as sources of useful information.

Additionally, each month the executive director holds an advisory meeting with Region 1 superintendents. These meetings are hosted by a district within the region. The meeting occurs over the course of a morning and ends with a lunch sponsored by the host school district. RESC 1 organizes each meeting, dedicating time on the agenda for policy and program updates, TEA updates, executive director report, and special topics of interest presented by experts from the field. RESC 1 also organizes an annual leadership conference in which all districts participate. The annual conference spans two days and includes nationally recognized speakers, special presentations, and opportunities for superintendents to discuss rates and services with RESC 1 administrators and staff. There are also numerous advisory committees and councils that meet regularly to provide input and discussion about topical areas.

As part of its research for this project, MGT administered a survey to all Texas superintendents to gather feedback regarding RESCs. As shown in **Exhibit 1-2**, 88 percent of Region 1 superintendents that responded to MGT's survey expressed some degree of agreement that "there are adequate channels of communication with [RESC 1]," which is slightly below the statewide response of 94 percent agreement with this statement. Other areas related to communication show a similar result, with RESC 1 respondents expressing slightly less agreement with statements related to communication.

Exhibit 1-2
Superintendent Survey Responses Regarding Communication

Statement	% Agree/% Disagree[a]	
	Statewide	RESC 1
There are adequate channels of communication within the RESC in our Region.	94/3	88/2
The RESC in out region is responsive to complaints.	90/3	83/0
The RESC in our Region is responsive to requests for services.	94/2	88/0
The RESC in our region listens and tries to meet the needs of the school district.	95/2	88/0

Source: MGT Survey of School District Superintendents, 2004.
[a] The difference between the percent of respondents that "agreed or strongly agreed" and the percent of respondents that "disagreed or strongly disagreed" responded "neutral" or "don't know."

Comments offered by superintendents responding to the survey identified budget reductions and resulting staff cuts as a possible factor affecting RESC in its ability to provide consistent follow-up support. As a larger RESC, state funding formula adjustments introduced in 2003–04 had an especially significant impact on RESC 1. The center's annual budget declined from approximately $14.5 million in 2002–03 to $11.0 million in 2003–04, a 31 percent decrease in funding.

Board members report being well informed by the executive director and staff. The board members all agree that their role is to provide the executive director with policy direction and advice, and that the job of managing and directing staff is the responsibility of the executive director. The board generally receive packets for board meetings on the Friday before a Tuesday board meeting. This provides them the weekend prior to the meeting to review materials. The materials are presented in a well organized, bound

publication. Meeting minutes are also orderly and succinct. The quality of the preparation by RESC 1 staff and the level of knowledge of board members significantly contributes to highly efficient board meetings.

Accomplishment: Region 1 supports open, frequent, and productive communication with staff, board members, and member districts.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Region 1 conducted an energy efficiency review that has resulted in immediate and expected long-term savings.

A few RESCs have conducted energy efficiency reviews in recent years to identify potential cost-saving measures that may result from improved energy management. The reviews that have been conducted have resulted in savings that pay for the costs of the studies and system upgrades within a period of a few years.

Region 1 maintains five facilities from which it delivers services. The purpose and cost of each facility are shown in **Exhibit 1-3.**

Exhibit 1-3
Region 1 Facilities

Location	Purpose	Annual Cost
Edinburgh	Region 1 Service Center	$450,000/year purchased in 1997 with a 20-year lease-to-own agreement
Brownsville	Early Childhood Development Center	purchased for $50,000 using federal surplus funds just completed $500,000 in renovations; moving in September 2004
Pharr Development Corporation	Adult Education	Leased for $7,451/month
Rio Grande City	Adult Education	Leased for $4,250/month
Laredo	Satellite Office	20-year lease with the City of Laredo for $12,000/year $600,000 in renovations planned, pending audit recommendations and decisions regarding future of RESCs

Source: Region 1, June 2004.

Region 1 recently implemented an energy savings project for its facilities. This initiative is projected to reduce the overall utility costs of the Region significantly. Region 1 has contracted with TAC Energy Solutions to initiate an energy savings project for the Edinburgh facility. TAC is a private company that focuses on energy projects for school districts and higher education. The contract is performance-based; savings from the project should cover the costs of implementing the solutions over a certain period of time, or TAC will be financially responsible for the shortfall. The performance-based contract enables Region 1 to pay for facility improvements with guaranteed energy savings. New, more efficient equipment and facility automation should generate guaranteed utility savings. The way in which RESC 1 conducted its audit can serve as a model for other RESCs throughout the state.

TAC presented a preliminary Energy Analysis Report to Region 1 in September 2003. The report found that, with a baseline annual utility cost of $154,840, the region could expect estimated savings of $51,400, or 33 percent. The report also outlined energy conservation opportunities in the areas of:

- lighting;
- control and management measures;
- air system measures;
- HVAC equipment measures;
- electrical system measures;
- miscellaneous measures; and
- utility system measures.

TAC will perform a lighting retrofit and implement an Energy Management System. The Energy Management System will be controllable from a central workstation and provide access through a Windows-based interface. Control zones will be programmed for night setup and night setback operation with optimized schedules, permanent scheduling, and holiday scheduling.

Accomplishment: Region 1 is reducing its utilities costs through a performance-based contract with an outside vendor.

NEEDS OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS

RESC 1 ensures that it attends to the needs of all of the schools in its region. Every public and charter school in RESC 1 has been assigned to a staff member in the Center's Division of Instructional Support.

RESC staff members serve as the primary liaison or "point person" for schools should they have a particular need, question or concern for the center. In like fashion, these staff are responsible for contacting their schools should there be an issue that needs to be communicated (for example, news from TEA). This mechanism improves the efficiency of two-way communication between the schools and RESC 1; principals and site staff are not "bounced around" from one RESC 1 staff member to another when they have a question, and the staff members' familiarity with the schools ensures that RESC information is directly communicated to the proper campus-level individual.

In addition to serving as their liaisons, RESC staff also take responsibility for providing targeted services to their adopted schools. Each year, technology staff disaggregate student performance data at the campus and classroom levels. Consultants from the Instructional Support Division analyze these data for each of their adopted campuses, identifying trends and populations or subject areas where students are underperforming. They then meet with the principals at each of their assigned to schools to share the data and discuss strategies for addressing identified needs, including the workshops and services offered by RESC 1. This same level of attention is given to every school in the region, ensuring that no campus is overlooked or underserved by RESC 1.

Accomplishment: The RESC 1 maintains a systematic structure to ensure that it attends to the individual needs of every school in the region.

SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES

RESC 1 has made a deliberate effort to be a contributing and collaborative member of its surrounding community.

Specifically, the center has designed services to serve the greater Region 1 population, beyond just the students in its member school districts. Furthermore, RESC 1 staff members serve on community-improvement boards and committees. The center follows the philosophy that Region 1 student performance is improved when their families' living environments and quality of life are enhanced.

Some RESC 1 community-based services and activities include:

- **Tri-County Community Resource Coordination Group (CRCG):** The CRCG is a function of the Texas Health and Human Services Commission. Staff from RESC 1 serve as representatives of TEA on this CRCG for Jim Hogg, Webb and Zapata counties. This group, composed of public and private agencies, develops service plans for individuals and families whose needs can be better met through interagency coordination and cooperation. It has a special initiative targeted at serving the population living in poverty-stricken colonias in Webb County.

- **Delta Region Revitalization Project:** Funded with federal monies from the Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration, RESC 1

has taken the leadership role in pulling together a group of community representatives in an effort to help and empower the citizens of Edcouch, Elsa, La Villa, Monte Alto, and surrounding areas. The goal of the project is to support the development of a long-term regional plan that will facilitate a rejuvenation of the Delta Region through economic, educational, and workforce development.

- **Workforce Development Centers and GED Testing Center:** RESC 1 has formed partnerships with other community organizations to expand the services it offers to adults in Region 1 beyond those typically offered by other RESC adult education programs. In addition to adult basic education and English as a second language (ESL), RESC 1's four adult education centers also offer job training and placement. For this reason, they are referred to as workforce development centers. Specifically, the RESC 1 adult service offerings include:

  - computer literacy;
  - GED High School Equivalency preparation and testing;
  - adult basic education (including evening classes);
  - ESL;
  - E1/Civics citizenship classes;
  - job retention skills;
  - job search training;
  - Out-of-school youth program;
  - Self-sufficiency project and Texas Academic Skills Program (TASP) Academy;
  - TANF job preparation; and
  - assistance with job placement.

  In addition to the four workforce development centers, RESC 1 also operates a GED testing center. All funding for this community-based adult services program is derived from state and federal grants, or through cooperatives with local school districts who have chosen RESC 1 to be their adult education provider.

- **Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) Program:** RESC 1 is the ECI provider for portions of Hidalgo and Cameron counties. The ECI is a statewide program that provides direct services to children ages birth to three with developmental delays and their families. Services are provided in the children's natural environments (usually their homes or daycare settings), and incorporate extensive family interaction, involvement, and support. The program also carries out extensive Child Find activities and ensures that families experience a smooth transition from ECI to the next service setting. The program, funded through the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, is designed to assist both children and their families in managing their special circumstances.

The leadership and community support provided by RESC 1 has improved the continuity of services available to promote all levels of education, from early childhood education to adult education. The programs and activities supported by RESC 1 address broad educational needs with a focus on addressing the economic challenges present in the areas served by RESC 1.

Accomplishment: RESC 1 services and activities contribute positively to the larger Region 1 community.

INNOVATIVE SERVICE OFFERINGS

The RESC 1 develops innovative service offerings that anticipate and respond to regional district needs.

As a result of the regular contact and consultation with district staff through numerous advisory councils, RESC 1 staff

have an intimate working knowledge of the issues faced by Region 1 schools and districts. The center uses this knowledge to take an active and initiating role in helping its customers solve problems. The center regularly develops and offers new services that enable schools and districts to improve their efficiency and effectiveness. These innovative services include:

- **Annual Salary Survey:** Each year, the RESC 1 Personnel Support Services department surveys Region 1 superintendents and charter school administrators and compiles a report on salaries and benefit trends in the region. This report is broken down by district and specific position or responsibility, and contains the following categories of information:

  - teacher salaries and substitute pay;
  - teacher special assignment stipends;
  - administrator and professional salaries;
  - clerical and technical support salaries;
  - manual trades salaries;
  - athletic extra duty stipends; and
  - department head and other extra duty stipends.

  After compiling this information, RESC 1 staff analyze the data and identify trends or outliers. They then meet with district superintendents, share the information, and make recommendations for possible salary or stipend adjustments. This resource enables districts to design appropriate salary schedules that allow them to remain competitive across the region, and help them to judge and avoid implementation of unsustainable and unparalleled salary hikes.

- **Efficiency Study:** In the spring of 2004, RESC 1 contracted with an external consultant to conduct an efficiency study of the McAllen ISD. The review covered nine functional areas: district organization and management; finance; purchasing; asset and risk management; human resources; technology; transportation; plant operations; and food service. The final report contained 48 recommendations that had no fiscal impact for the district, but if implemented, would help to improve efficiency and effectiveness in district operations. It also included 24 recommendations that, if fully implemented, were projected to provide the district with a net savings of more than $41 million over five years. RESC 1 hopes to undertake similar studies with other Region 1 districts in the future.

- **English for Newcomers courses:** In an effort to better meet the needs of the many Region 1 Limited English Proficient (LEP) students, RESC 1 developed the curriculum for and received TEA approval for two innovative courses, *English for Newcomers A* and *B*. These high school-level courses are designed to provide instructional opportunities for students with little or no English proficiency who are not yet ready to achieve success with the TEKS mandated for English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and/or regular English courses. Sixteen (16) Region 1 schools are currently implementing the elective-credit courses, which focus on helping students build their English language listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills.

- ***Bridging the Educational Scene for Teachers of Tomorrow*** **(BESTT):** Like *English for Newcomers*, BESTT is a state-approved innovative high school elective course. The course, designed by RESC 1 and implemented by 11 Region 1 and five non-Region 1 districts, is designed to allow juniors

and seniors explore teaching as a profession. It was developed to address Region 1's difficulty in recruiting and retaining high-quality teachers who knew and understood the unique student population of the region. The BESTT is intended to help Region 1 "grow its own" teachers. Between 1990 and 1997, over 600 Region 1 high school students took the course. By 1997 approximately 25 of the 180 students who completed the course in its first three years had received their teaching certificates, and additional individuals were enrolled in educator preparatory courses. The BESTT course has just been approved by TEA for three additional years, and plans are in place to update the curriculum.

- **Regional Satellite Offices:** At 9,662 square miles, the size of Region 1 makes it difficult for educators from the outer parts of the region to attend meetings and professional development sessions at the Edinburg facility. Similarly, it is time-consuming and costly for RESC 1 staff to travel from Edinburg to the region's far-off schools to provide onsite services. In an effort to better serve outlying schools and districts, in 1998 RESC 1 opened a satellite office in Laredo, located approximately 155 miles from Edinburg. It has also recently purchased a facility in Brownsville which will be used primarily for its Early Childhood Intervention Program, but will also offer workshops and other satellite services to educators in the southern-most part of Region 1. The opening of the Laredo satellite office garnered recognition from TEA's Management and Service (M&S) Audits Section in its March 2000 audit of the Center, which noted that the Laredo facility "enable[d] districts to use RESC services without incurring travel expenditures." Having local assistance is also very important to Region 1 superintendents, of whom 71 percent agreed or strongly agreed that TEA needs regional offices in order to effectively execute it responsibilities (compared to 50 percent of statewide respondents).

- **GEAR-UP: Right Choices for Youth Partnership Program:** Beginning in 1999, RESC 1 has served as the fiscal agent and project director for a federal grant of approximately $14.3 million for the Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Program (GEAR-UP). The program is administered in partnership with 23 Region 1 schools and multiple businesses and institutions of higher learning and serves 5,832 high-risk, minority, and economically disadvantaged students. When the cohort of students began the program as 7th graders in 2001, 49 percent of them indicated that they expected to obtain a bachelor's degree or higher. That number has since increased to 73 percent. In 2001, 44 percent of the parents of these GEAR-UP students indicated that they could afford college for their children, and 36 percent indicated that they had spoken to someone about college requirements. Four years into the program, those percentages have risen to 95 and 63 percent, respectively. The RESC 1 has recently received a grant renewal of approximately $3.5 million to operate the program for a sixth year.

The products and services offered by RESC 1 are responsive to the needs of the school districts in the region. RESC 1 has developed several products that provide districts support to manage themselves efficiently and effectively.

Accomplishment: The RESC 1 has developed and implemented innovative services designed

to help its districts and schools achieve success.

INTEGRATED APPROACH

The RESC 1 Division of Instructional Support is designed to "mirror," the school setting, thereby providing more effective services. Each office maintains staff from each of the RESC 1 content programs, including bilingual education, general education, migrant education, and special education. As illustrated in **Exhibit 1-4**, the division is separated into offices of elementary, middle school, and high school education.

Separating the division by grade level rather than subject area allows RESC 1 to target services to the specific needs of schools, which are organized around this same structure. The division has also followed this approach in constructing many of its professional development offerings. Each of the three offices (elementary, middle school and high school) offers regional schools the opportunity to join a Professional Development Consortium, which consists of several multi-day academy trainings on subjects and issues pertinent to the particular age group being served. For example, the Elementary Consortium offers an Academy on "Integrated Science and Math K-2nd Grade," while the Office of High School has a "Counselor's Academy." These are specialized trainings that are only applicable to school staff serving certain grade levels.

The RESC 1 structure also contrasts with that found in most other RESCs in that educational content areas such as bilingual, special, and general education are not housed in separate departments. The staff at RESC 1 designed the division in this way in a deliberate effort to match the structure of the schools they are serving. Most general education teachers work in classrooms that contain students who may have one or more special characteristics, including bilingual, ESL, migrant, and/or special education status. Because these children do not typically fall neatly into separate categories and are typically integrated together in the same classrooms, RESC 1 is better able to understand and serve its customers by following a similarly integrated approach to education. Instructional support staff meet together either by division, office, meet each week to discuss issues related to meeting school needs. Staff from each different program content areas work together to provide educators with academies and other staff development opportunities that address the needs of all the different populations of students that principals and teacher may have in their schools and classrooms. This helps to ensure that Region 1 educators are better equipped to differentiate instruction and meet the needs of all their students.

Region 1 superintendents indicate that the RESC 1 is effectively meeting its instructional needs with this organizational structure. At least 88 percent of Region 1 respondents to MGT's superintendent survey reported that they were satisfied or very satisfied with RESC 1's support for regular education and special population programs, with the exception of advanced academics, where 79 percent were satisfied or very satisfied. These responses are relatively consistent with those of the aggregate statewide response of all superintendents.

Accomplishment: The RESC 1 integrated approach reflects the characteristics and structure of its member schools, allowing the center to more effectively support pupil instruction.

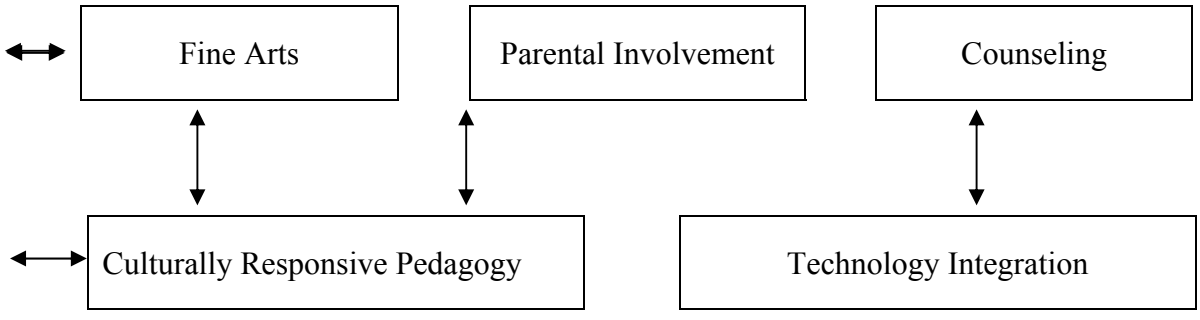
Exhibit 1-4
Organizational Structure of RESC 1 Division of Instructional Support

Director Office of Elementary Education & Special Education Program	**Director Office of Middle School Education & General Education Program**	**Director Office of High School Education & Bilingual/ ESL and Migrant Education Program**
• PK-5 Professional Development Consortium Core Academic Subjects	• 6-8 Professional Development Consortium Core Academic Subjects	• 9-12 Professional Development Consortium Core Academic Subjects

Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment

PROGRAMS:
PK-12

Bilingual Education →	Two-Way Bilingual, ESL, Title III, Title VIII, LOTE
General Education →	Advanced Academics, TRMI, Title 1, CATE, GEAR UP, Title II, Dyslexia
Migrant Education →	Identification & Recruitment Early Education, New Generation System, Migrant Service Coordination, Parental Involvement, Graduation Enhancement, Credit Accrual
Special Education →	IDEA-B Child Find, Preschool Programs, AI, VI, Inclusion, Multicultural Focus, Assistive Technology, Autism, Behavior, Low incidence, Transition



Source: RESC 1, Division of Instructional Support, 2004.

MIGRANT EDUCATION

The RESC 1 has served as a leader in developing statewide and national initiatives for serving the needs of migrant students.

Approximately 18 percent of RESC 1 students are migrants, whose families frequently move to different regions of the state, other states, or Mexico for seasonal work. In an effort to better serve this relatively high percentage of migrant families, RESC 1 has taken the initiative to play a leadership role with the federal Title 1 Migrant Education Program (MEP).

The national and statewide initiatives with which RESC 1 has been involved include:

- **New Generation System (NGS) and Hotline:** The NGS is Web-based interstate information network that collects, stores, communicates and transfers demographic, educational and health data on migrant students to educators throughout the nation. The system allows educators to record the movement of migrant students through the educational process by producing online records of a student's educational progress and health profile. Educators can generate a student transfer document to facilitate academic placement as the student transfers schools. Developed out of RESC 1, the system is now used throughout the state of Texas and in 12 other states including Illinois and Montana. RESC 1 conducts many of the trainings for NGS implementation both state and nationwide. In addition, RESC 1 staffs and maintains a toll-free help line to provide NGS technical assistance to users throughout the country.

- **National Migrant Education Hotline:** The RESC 1 provides the Texas Hotline Specialist for the USDOE Office of Migrant Education's toll-free help line. This service allows migrant farm workers and their families to call anywhere in the country for help in enrolling their children in school and for migrant education program services; calls in Texas are routed to RESC 1.

- **Project SMART:** Project Summer Migrants Access Resources Through Technology (SMART) is a national distance learning program specifically designed for migrant students. It is broadcast via satellite each summer for eight weeks to selected sites in the United States, designed for the approximately 40,000 Texas-based migrant students. The RESC 20 has primary responsibility for this program; however, RESC 1 trains the Region 1 Project SMART partners who monitor and assess students' participation in the program.

- **Graduation Enhancement for Migrant Students (GEMS):** The RESC 1 initiated, researched, developed, and published this resource guide to help high school counselors determine and convert partial-course completion into credits for graduation. Migrant students frequently move schools before they are able to complete a full semester course; secondary and post-secondary institutions must develop a guideline and process for interpreting and converting these non-traditional credits. The Texas-specific GEMS guide has been distributed throughout the state and nation to be used as a resource by all schools who serve students who have been educated in Texas schools.

- ***Building Bridges***: Staff from RESC 1 developed both home-based and school-based early childhood curriculums for developing school readiness in migrant three-year olds. It is distributed free of charge by request and at statewide and national migrant education conferences.

In addition to these initiatives, RESC 1 hosts, attends, and presents migrant education trainings and conferences both in Region 1 and at the state and national level. The RESC 1 Migrant Education Department staff also provide services to Region 1 schools, including program support, student enrichment activities, professional development, and technical assistance.

RESC 1 was recognized by TEA's 2000 M&S Audit of the Center with the following commendation:

> "The initiatives cited [in the audit] went far beyond expectations and were evidence of the commitment and support that ESC leadership has for the migrant children and families of Texas…[the initiatives] resulted in increased empowerment by districts and ESCs throughout the state, allowing MEP educators beyond Region 1 to provide superior academic and support services to migrant children." (TEA, 2000).

MGT found that the RESC 1's migrant education services have continued to expand and improve in the four years since TEA's M&S Audit. The RESC 1 is providing valuable services to migrant children and their families both within and beyond Region 1.

Accomplishment: The RESC 1 pioneering Migrant Education Program enhances the educational opportunities of migrant children and their families within Region 1, the state of Texas, and the nation.

PEIMS SERVICES

Region 1 offers considerable support services to member districts for PEIMS reporting. As a result, the schools in Region 1 have a zero percent Personal Identification Database (PID) error rate, which is under the Region's goal of one percent or less, and well below the TEA allowable rate of two percent.

The state funding for PEIMS in Region 1 is $120,000. The RESC 1 uses these funds to support base services that are available to all of its districts free of charge. The base service includes:

- Fall training – includes training on Optional Extended Year Program (OEYP) & Education and Youth Services (EYS), Bilingual/English as a Second Language (ESL). Student Data, Student Enrollment, Special Education, Career & Technology, Leaver, Course Completion, Disciplinary Action, Basic Attendance, Title 1, Part A, and Review of EDIT+ changes.

- Edit+ training – Edit+ is a Web-based application used to submit PEIMS data. Edit+ training is held in the computer lab and provides hands-on training.

- Spring training – includes the summer submission and covers: attendance, course completion, child restraint, Title 1, OEYP/EYS, information on Limited English Proficiency (LEP)/Bilingual/ESL, CATE, & SE, Disciplinary Record, and data standards.

- Technical phone support - the phone support is provided for data standards; Edit+ usage; reports and errors; Student Attendance Accounting Manual; PID; and TEA audits. Phone support is available twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week through a toll free number. It includes Region staff reported that they regularly assist district personnel after hours to meet critical submission deadlines.

Region 1 has also developed a PEIMS consortium that districts in its service area can choose to join. In 2003–04, all Region 1 districts were members of the consortium. Member districts pay an annual fee, ranging from $500 to $1,500, based on their size. This

fee supports the creation of customized reports and more extensive PEIMS support, including data analysis assistance, a PEIMS Web page, a region-specific PEIMS handbook, maintenance of a longitudinal database, and code table sheets.

The PEIMS Web page provides a variety of tools, including:

- downloads of PEIMS data for districts to run special reports;
- links to TEA information including prior reports;
- leavers procedures manual;
- timelines for submissions;
- listing of PEIMS Coordinators in the region; and
- PEIMS archive for prior submissions.

The region encourages successful PEIMS submissions by recognizing districts for lower than TEA-allowed error rates. School districts with a zero percent PID rate are deemed *exemplary*; 0.49 percent or less are *recognized*; and, those with 0.5 percent to 0.99 percent error rates are *acceptable*.

In Region 1, PEIMS reporting is viewed as an ongoing, year round effort. Training of the PEIMS coordinators occurs throughout the year, prior to each of the four submission cycles, to ensure that when the TEA reporting cycles begin, district PEIMS coordinators feel prepared and are able to efficiently and effectively manage the process. The region provides additional PEIMS training as requested and provides Microsoft Access training to enable district personnel to download data and run special reports.

Region 1 staff constantly analyze PEIMS data to assist districts in making sound educational and business decisions. Staff runs data queries based on TEA audit criteria to correct any errors before submission to TEA. Prior to PEIMS submissions, four times a year, RESC staff holds meetings with district superintendents to review reports in detail and identify problem areas ahead of the submission. Region 1 staff believes that it is their responsibility to take a proactive approach to capturing the PEIMS data and to assist districts with not only verifying the data, but also understanding and analyzing the data to measure their student performance, assess funding, determine future strategies, identify staff development needs, and evaluate their business.

RESC 1 has developed a comprehensive list of special reports to assist the districts with data analysis. One of these was a report to track underreported leavers. Underreported leavers are students who leave a district, but are unaccounted for. These students became an issue in 1998 when TEA changed the way dropouts were reported. Prior to then, districts would only have to account for students that they considered to be dropouts. Now districts must account for all 7th through 12th grade students who leave, regardless of the reason. When this change was implemented, Region 1 created a customized report to assist its districts in identifying underreported leavers and correcting their data prior to state submission. That first year, Region 1 was the only region to check for underreported leavers. The following year, checking for underreported leavers became a state requirement. The report designed by RESC 1 is still in use statewide. Other reports provided by Region 1 through its PEIMS Consortium are listed in **Exhibit 1-5.**

On MGT's survey conducted as part of this review, 88 percent of the region's superintendents indicated that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the region's PEIMS services, which is fairly comparable to the level of satisfaction reported by superintendents throughout the state. None of the superintendents in RESC 1 indicated that they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the services and support for PEIMS provided by the RESC.

Exhibit 1-5
Customized PEIMS Reports Provided by RESC 1

Season	Report Description
Fall Customer Reports	Dual enrollment
	Leavers found enrolled
	LEP with home language of English, LEP students not served in Bilingual/ESL
	Pre–K, not LEP or economically disadvantaged
	Enrollment comparison, cumulative enrollment by district/campus
	Career and Technology Indicator Counts
	Disagregation of data by campus, district, county, RESC, disagregation comparisons
	Professional staff years experience comparison
	Analysis of submission status
Mid-year Custom Reports	Financial Analysis
	Comparison of Audit Report
Summer Custom Reports	Dual Enrollment
	Discipline code 50-60, disciplinary action reason summary, disciplinary action code summary, discipline mandatory expellable offense and not expelled or placed, discipline expelled without mandatory expellable offense, discipline suspended with 0 days absent, discipline out of school suspension >3 days, discipline special education referrals more than 10 days, discipline less than 10 years and not a violation of code of conduct, discipline expelled under 10 years of age, discipline less than 7 years of age and place in DAEP, discipline disruptive behavior
	Ineligible for PK with PK eligible days, Ineligible students at snapshot with eligible days
	Parental denial with bilingual days

Source: Region 1 personnel, July 2004.

Accomplishment: Region 1 offers exceptional PEIMS training for districts and has developed an excellent PEIMS submission program that includes training, support, and specialized reporting for member districts.

HUMAN RESOURCES WEB SITE

The Office of Human Resources (HR) uses the RESC 1 Web site effectively to provide employees and applicants with substantial human resource information.

Information available on the human resource portion of the Region 1 Web site includes:

- dental insurance application;
- employment application ;
- change of address form;
- direct deposit form;
- W-4 form;
- beneficiary designation forms;
- Family Medical Leave Act Request Forms;
- Standard Operating Procedures Manual (Employee Handbook);
- organization chart and phone list;
- request for estimating retirement benefits; and
- workers' compensation procedure;

Online access to the *Standard Operating Procedures Manual* provides RESC 1 employees with convenient access to important information. The online manual covers many areas important to service center staff, including:

- vision statement, mission statement, goals;
- region plan for improving student performance;
- employee procedures;
- employee responsibilities;

- leave and absences;
- time and effort;
- grievance procedures;
- employee benefits; and
- internal services procedures
  - staff development management system
  - office of pubic relations
  - print shop
  - business procedures
  - building access/security.

Any changes to the employee manual are immediately posted online. An e-mail notification is sent to employees informing them to check the Web site for updates.

Posting information on the Web site allows RESC 1 to save money through reduced printing costs. It has avoided some printing costs by providing general benefits information electronically, although the center has not documented the exact savings. In addition, RESC 1 has not printed the employee handbook in a year, saving approximately $3,300 in printing costs.

The RESCs use of its Web site to share important procedural and operational information with employees is a model for other RESCs to follow. Since all RESCs have Web sites the addition of this information can be done for a small cost and results in not only savings from eliminating printing, but also reduces the amount of staff time needed to support material distribution and addressing common questions.

Accomplishment: The RESC 1 Office of Human Resources provides valuable information through its Web site in a cost-efficient manner.

FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Region 1 managed to continue to provide valued services despite the recent state funding reductions. Moreover, it has implemented improvements in the areas of financial reporting, financial accountability, and district monitoring.

The majority of the ESCs experienced a significant state budget cut in FY 2003–04. RESC 1 experienced a 60 percent reduction in state base funding, as shown in **Exhibit 1-6.**

Exhibit 1-6
Decline in RESC 1 State Base Funding

Funding Source	2002–03	2003–04	Percent Reduction
State Base	$2,020,955	$800,309	60%

Source: Region 1 Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports, 2002, 2003.

Exhibit 1-7 provides a statement of the revenue and expenses of these funds as of June 30, 2004. As the exhibit shows, most of the state funds are directed into Curriculum and Instruction and Executive Services. The RESC 1 provides a summary of the 100-series Funds (state funds) to the board each month.

Despite this decline in funding, Region 1 has maintained its fund balances and provided services deemed valuable by district superintendents. **Exhibit 1-8** shows RESC 1's fund balances for the past three years.

As the exhibit shows, the region has maintained an adequate fund balance for the previous three years.

Exhibit 1-7
RESC 1 Use of State Funds

Use of Funds	Realized Revenue	Expenditures Incurred	Fiscal YTD Revenue	Percent of State Funding
Executive Services	$79,045	$184,762	$(105,717)	16%
State Textbooks	$1,331	$34,987	$(33,656)	0%
Field Services	$54,294	$79,481	$(25,186)	11%
State ESC-PEIMS	$48,959	$110,668	$(61,709)	10%
School Finance Specialist	$5,573	$5,865	$(292)	1%
Adm. Svcs. – State Support	$65,834	$88,308	$(22,474)	14%
State ESC – Assoc Dir	$51,233	$63,213	$(11,980)	11%
ESC State – C&1	$89,460	$110,486	$(21,026)	19%
ESC State – Exec Svcs C/O	$67,607	$116,404	$(48,797)	14%
ESC State – Assoc Dir C/O	$11,768	$5,123	$(6,645)	2%
Curriculum and Instr Carryover	$462	$2,301	$(1,839)	0%
ESC State Admin Svcs Support C/O	$6,618	$16,164	$(9,546)	1%
Total	**$482,184**	**$817,762**	**$(335,578)**	**100%**

Source: Region 1 YTD Financial Reports, 2004.

Exhibit 1-8
Region 1 Fund Balances

Use	Designated Fund Balance	Reserved for Debt Service	Undesignated Fund Balance	Total
Beginning Fund Balance: **September 1, 2002**	$1,672,000	$225,613	$1,525,635	$3,422,248
Beginning Fund Balance: **September 1, 2003**	$2,372,000	$225,613	$1,525,635	$3,422,248
Estimated Ending Fund Balance: **August 31, 2004**	$2,372,000	$225,613	$2,125,635	$4,723,248

Source: Region 1 Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports, 2001, 2002, 2003.

Superintendents who responded to MGT's survey gave the region high marks for the services it provides. Almost 72 percent of the superintendents indicate that their districts frequently use services provided by Region 1 and 90 percent indicate that the services provided by Region 1 are critical to the success of their districts' programs and operations. The same amount, 90 percent, also indicated that Region 1 provides quality services.

The MGT survey asked superintendents several questions regarding RESC funding. When superintendents were asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement with the statement, "The RESC in our region is adequately funded," approximately 36 percent of RESC 1 superintendents agreed or strongly agreed; 41 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed. Most, 88 percent, agreed or strongly agreed that ESCs should continue to be funded by the state. The MGT survey of Region 1 employees had a similar response. Only 13 percent of employees agreed or strongly agreed that Region 1 is adequately funded and all agreed or strongly agreed that ESCs should continue to be funded by the state.

With the addition of a new chief financial officer, Region 1 has implemented several new financial controls. RESC 1 has developed the "Budget Manager's Financial Status Report," which is used by the districts to monitor and track the financial condition of the schools. The Region has begun conducting monthly Finance Advisory Council meetings

with the districts. Topics from the June 2004 Finance Advisory Council meeting included:

- Management Antifraud Programs and Controls
- 2004 Preliminary Property Value Update
- Proposed Changes to FIRST Indicators and Senate Bill 900
- ARI (Accelerated Reading Instruction) Unspent Funds 2003–04
- ISD Indicators of Financial Problems

The RESC 1 also prepares monthly financial reports for its board. The report states the ESC's financial condition and fund balance. Each program director reviews the report before it is presented to the board in a detailed fashion.

Accomplishment: Despite significant cuts in its state funding, Region 1 has continued to provide valued services to the districts in its service area, maintained recommended fund balances, and made significant strides in the areas of financial reporting, financial accountability, and district monitoring.

SHARED AND COOPERATIVE SERVICES

Region 1 coordinates a number of shared and cooperative services to meet the needs of school districts and is exploring other areas in which it can assist.

Region 1 founded the South Texas Purchasing Cooperative. This cooperative assists the Region's Child Nutrition Programs in saving money on commercial purchasing, dairy and bread products. Serving 56 school districts in RESCs 1 and 2 and the Camerson County Jail System, the program also includes a full line of commercial bid products (food, paper, and janitorial supplies). The cooperative coordinates commodity processing with USDA commodities. An automated online ordering system for commodities saves child nutrition program directors time and money. This cooperative has now expanded to include transportation parts and will be further expanded to new areas in 2004–05.

Region 1 is working with the Texas Department of Agriculture, US Department of Defense, and Texas Department of Human Services on a pilot program to bring fresh fruits and vegetables directly from "Farm to School." Eight districts are participating in program, which is expected to expand in 2004–05.

RESC 1 hosts a food fair every two years. It has been a resounding success for the community, schools and students. Approximately 600 students and 80 food supply vendors participated in the 2003–04 event. Students have the opportunity to "taste-test" foods that are being offered by the vendors to districts. Students then vote and results are provided to the vendors.

RESC 1 has launched a media cooperative to support district Internet functions. This cooperative saved the school districts 28 percent in 2002–03. Furthermore, all districts in the Region are members of a technology cooperative, resulting in cost savings to the district compared to direct contracting with providers.

Finally, RESC 1 is studying the possibility of establishing a shared services arrangement for procurement of student insurance for its regional districts.

On MGT's superintendent survey, RESC 1 scored better than other regions statewide on the question of purchasing cooperatives. Ninety (90) percent of Region 1 superintendents indicate that they are satisfied or very satisfied with their purchasing cooperatives. A smaller majority, 84 percent, of superintendents statewide said the same of their purchasing cooperatives.

Accomplishment: Region 1 provides valuable shared and cooperative services to member school districts.

VALUABLE TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT

RESC 1 provides outstanding technology support to its member districts. The Region 1 Office of Information Systems and Technology's has implemented multiple initiatives to support its mission, which is "to provide school districts with technology resources that will enhance efficiency, effectiveness, and the performance of students, teachers and administrators."

The RESC 1 Technology Plan 2004–07 is based upon and driven by RESC 1's *Regional Plan for Improving Student Performance*. To address the technology needs of the school districts and the RESC, the plan also considered and incorporated ideas from the TEA *Long-Range Plan for Technology*, the *No Child Left Behind* requirements for technology, and the requirements of the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) Schools and Libraries Division – Technology Plan. In developing its technology plan, the region sought input from a variety of committees, councils, and organizations, including district superintendents, technology directors, and library coordinators. In reviewing the technology plan, MGT found it to be comprehensive and progressive.

RESC 1 has implemented an efficient and effective organizational structure to meet the technology needs of the districts it serves. It recently combined all areas of technology under the Office of Information Systems and Technology including internal PEIMS, networking, TETN, administrative systems (RSCCC/iTCCs), distance learning, grant-funded projects, and educational technology. This one-stop structure provides districts with a coordinated approach to their technology issues.

RESC 1 has hosted an Annual Technology Conference since 1994. The conference provides school districts with an opportunity to:

- meet technology vendors;
- discuss best practices for technology and technology planning;
- learn about technology-driven curriculums;
- learn about classroom technologies, including integrating content areas and technology;
- learn about distance learning; and
- discuss federal and state technology initiatives.

Last year, 324 vendors participated in the RESC 1 conference and approximately 64 different entities participating including representatives from districts, regional education service centers, private schools, charter schools, and universities.

Region 1 is one of three recipients, and the only RESC selected by TEA, to pilot a technology immersion project. The other recipients are Dell Computer Corporation and Apple Computer Corporation. The pilot project will run for two years. Thirty (30) schools will receive $350,000 each to immerse technology into the school including wireless technology. Each of the pilot recipients will offer services to districts so that every child and teacher has a laptop, wireless access, and productivity software – such as Microsoft suite. Region 1 is also offering a carry case, online access to research quality resources, onsite mentors three days a week during the initial implementation, and two-way visual video connection over IP to conference with RESCs.

In addition to the technology immersion pilot, RESC 1 supports numerous grant-funded technology initiatives. They are:

- TARGET – provides TEKS-based online learning for teachers and students with resources through technology;

- No Child Left Behind – purchases technology-based instructional resources and equipment that support student mastery of the TEKS;

- Technology Assessment tool – a Web-based tool that identifies technology deficiency areas for teachers, enabling districts to create individualized professional development plans; and

- Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR-Up) – provides distance learning equipment to participating campuses.

RESC 1 provides a number of services to its districts through vendor relationships and partnerships. Two of the most innovative are Academic Planet, which provides low-cost home internet access for students and teachers, and the Master Technology Teacher, a partnership with the University of Texas, Brownsville which provides a certification program for instructional leadership in technology.

Through its regional network, ESCONETT, RESC 1 provides several network-related services to districts including: Web hosting, domain name service hosting, firewall services, Internet URL filtering, router configuration, switch maintenance, telecommunication line provisioning, video conferencing, email services, Web server configuration, and email server configuration. The center also supports 102 sites in distance learning applications, including bridging concurrent enrollment courses from Texas State Technical College, South Texas Community College, University of Texas, Pan American, and University of Texas, Brownsville.

RESC 1 provides:

- excellent network, telecommunications, email, and application services to the districts as represented in the surveys;

- excellent PEIMS support to the districts as represented by the PID rates;

- an excellent technology assessment tool and Master's Technology Program;

- a media cooperative for school librarians;

- reduced cost for services through vendor partnerships such as Computer Associate for anti-virus software, Academic Planet for Internet access, NovaNet for school curriculum software, and United Streaming for digital video; and

- the largest technology conference for all regions in the state that is well attended and demonstrates best practices, relevant technology for student curricula, and information exchange among attendees.

Accomplishment: The RESC 1 Office of Information Systems and Technology provides significant, valuable support to its member districts.

DETAILED FINDINGS

INTEGRATE PLANNING FUNCTIONS

RESC 1 has dedicated time and attention to planning. The center has generated various planning documents which should be integrated and monitored to maximize the effectiveness of its planning activities.

Although RESC 1 has generated several documents that relate to strategic planning, the RESC 1 lacks a comprehensive strategic planning document and monitoring process. In 2003, RESC 1 developed a four-year strategic plan. This plan states that the center will achieve the following goals by the 2005–06 school year:

- All Region 1 ESC campuses will exceed the state average performance for every indicator in the Academic Excellence Indicator System (AIES) for every student group: White, African America, Hispanic,

Economically Disadvantaged, Special Education, Migrant, and Limited English Proficient.

- All Region 1 ESC school district personnel will be highly qualified in their professional knowledge and skills.
- All Region 1 ESC district programs will meet state and federal compliance requirements.
- All Region 1 ESC school districts will earn a Superior Achievement rating on the Financial Accountability Resource System.
- All Region 1 ESC programs will establish public/private partners to increase parent and community support and engagement in regional teaching/learning initiatives.
- The number of adults completing their GED and becoming employed will increase annually.

Each year RESC 1 develops and submits to TEA a *Regional Plan for Improving Student Performance* that delineates the objectives, activities, and evaluation strategies that will be implemented by RESC 1 staff to meet the identified goals. In the March 2000 TEA Management and Service (M&S) audit of RESC 1, auditors recommended that the center modify its regional plan to include:

> "Specific performance indicators based on student data. SC 1 should develop indicators that quantify the benefits of using ESC services such as shared service arrangements and/or purchasing cooperative. These indicators should be used to both evaluate the effectiveness of the program and to promote the program to districts. "(TEA, March 2000).

RESC 1's regional plan now includes performance indicators, but does not reference the goals identified in the strategic plan.

The current strategic plan document provides a significant amount of information about the services provided by RESC 1 and the population that it is responsible for supporting, but it lacks the core components of a strategic planning document. The plan references the "Regional Plan for Improving Student Performance" as the source of detailed information that comprises the core of a complete strategic planning document, but as a stand-alone document, the strategic plan lacks such details.

TEA is moving towards full implementation of a Balanced Scorecard report that all Texas public school agencies, including RESC will participate in as an accountability reporting tool. As of the time of this review, Region 1 was producing data for a Balanced Scorecard. However, RESC 1 has not developed a process for reviewing the Balanced Scorecard in the context of its strategic plan.

A significant amount of time and attention is put into planning at RESC 1. The lack of clear linkages among the various planning products reduces the effectiveness of the planning process and value of the planning time.

Organizations should have one comprehensive strategic plan. This plan should clearly articulate goals, objectives, strategies, and action steps. The RESC 1 has the process in place to develop the components of a comprehensive strategic plan, but it has not done so to date.

RESC 1 should make necessary modifications to the RESC 1 strategic plan and related documents to ensure consistency and linkages among the Strategic Plan, the Regional Plan for Improving Student Performance, and the Balanced Scorecard.

RESC 1 should review its planning and documentation process to ensure that all planning outcomes are clearly documented

and that clear linkages exist between planning efforts and the TEA required Balanced Scorecard. The RESC 1 should consider adopting the *Regional Plan for Improvement Student Performance* as its strategic planning document, or removing extraneous background information from the Strategic Plan and inserting core planning information from the Regional Plan.

The usefulness of the strategic plan as a planning document requires that it include a clear statement of goals and objectives that are linked to action plans for achievement. A process should be in place to ensure consistency in the information and evaluation of results of all planning-related materials.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR

The RESC 1 executive director is burdened with too many responsibilities to adequately manage the operational and functional needs of RESC 1 over an extended period of time. An additional senior administrator is needed.

As one of the larger RESCs in the state, RESC 1 experienced a significant reduction in state base funding and a reduction in federal funding for adult education. As noted earlier, the RESC 1 budget decreased by approximately $3.5 million from 2002–03 to 2003–04.

RESC 1's response to funding reductions was swift, well organized, and effective. The executive director and management team determined what functions and positions were critical to maintain RESC 1 services. All job descriptions were reviewed and updated. In those areas where reductions were to occur, staff in affected positions were notified that they could reapply for the available positions. Staff that applied for positions were reinterviewed and rehired. This process allowed RESC 1 to implement a reduction in force (RIF) that was viewed by employees as being fair and considerate.

As shown in **Exhibit 1-9**, approximately 65 positions were eliminated during the reorganization. Position reductions affected all operation areas.

Exhibit 1-9
RESC 1 Positions by Unit

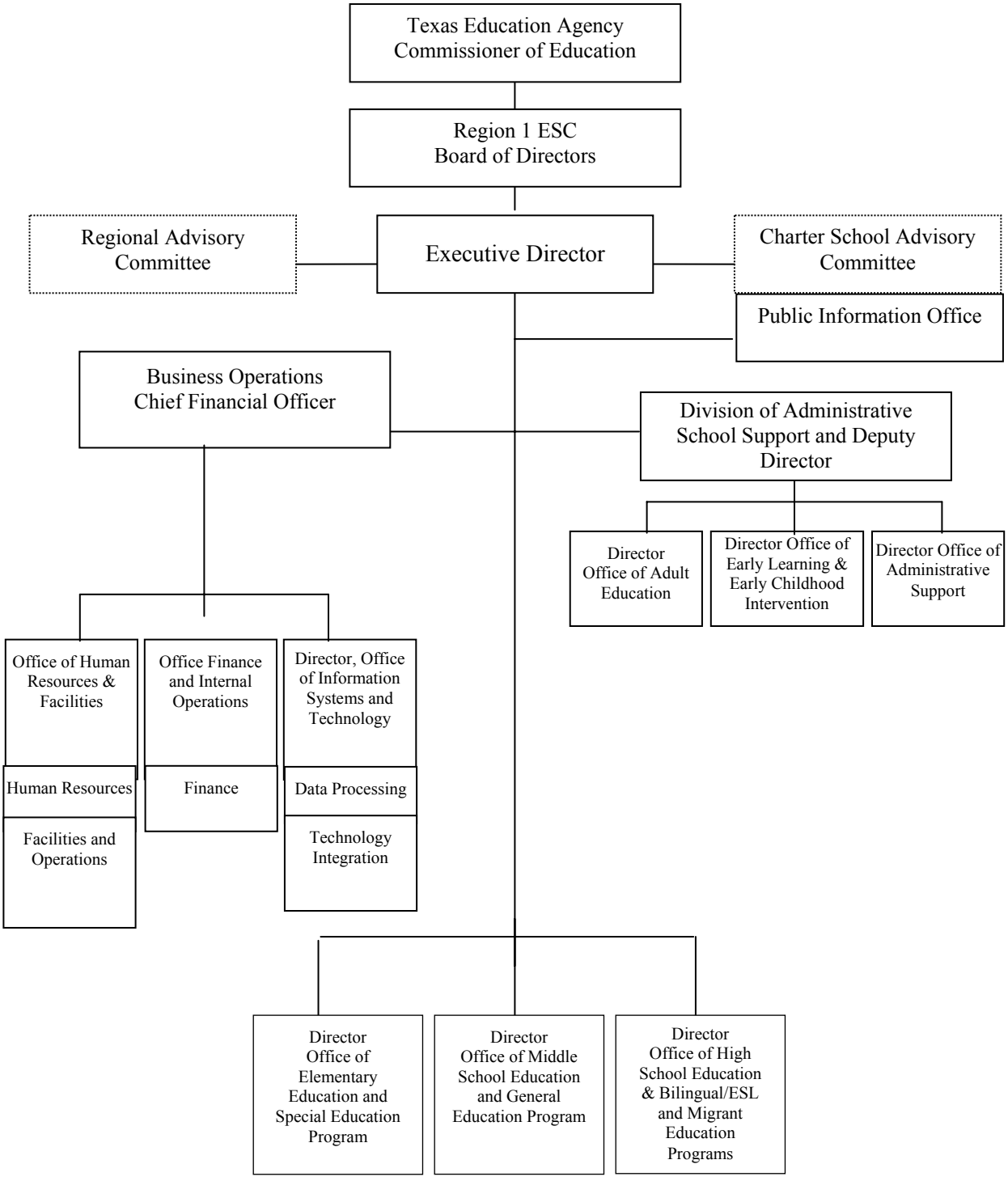
Unit	Number of Full-time Equivalent Positions	
	2002–03	2003–04
Executive Directors Office	3	3
Public Information Office	2	1
Print Shop/Graphics	5	4
Business Office	2	2
Facilities/Purchasing/Risk Management	9.5	4
Human Resources	7	4
Division of Instructional Support	2	0
Division of Administration and School Support	2	2
Office of Administrative/Field Services	6	1
Office of Info. Systems and Technology	9	7.5
Office of Technology Support	9	7.5
Office of Personnel Support Services	5.5	3
Office of Student Support	6	3.5
Office of Early Learning	34	36
Office of Elementary Education	31	22
Office of Middle School	20	12
Office of High School	23	23
Office of Adult Education	54	36.5
Office of Technology Integration	13	9
Office of PADC and Accelerated Schools	10	105
Totals	**265**	**200**

Source: Region 1 Position Comparative Report, 2004.

In addition to reducing the number of staff, RESC 1 reorganized functions to reduce administrative positions. **Exhibit 1-10** shows the current organizational structure of RESC 1. Prior to the reorganization, a deputy director was responsible for overseeing the Division of Instructional Support, which includes the offices of Elementary Education, Middle School Education, and High School Education. Under the reorganization, this deputy director position was eliminated. Now each of the division directors in the instructional support area report directly to the executive director. Other organizational changes that occurred included shifting responsibility for Early Learning and Early Childhood Intervention to the deputy director of Administrative and School Support and shifting Information Systems and Technology to the chief financial officer.

The movement of additional functional areas to the deputy director of Administration and School Support and chief financial officer allowed for logical groupings of services and functions to be coordinated. These changes also extended the span of control of the deputy director and chief financial officer somewhat, but not excessively.

Exhibit 1-10
RESC 1 2003–04 Organization



Source: RESC 1, 2004

The elimination of the deputy director of Instructional Support and the corresponding support position significantly extended the span of control of the executive director. Prior to the reorganization, four professional staff reported directly to the executive director. Following the reorganization this increased to six. While the executive director posses the qualifications to directly oversee the Instructional Support Division, shifting such responsibility increases the oversight responsibilities for this position beyond a reasonable level. The executive director reports that she is able to find time to meet with the three directors in the Instructional Support Division, but she is not able to spend as much time as she would like. Staff in this division reported feeling adequately supported, but noted that the executive director was balancing many responsibilities.

RESC 1 should hire a deputy director to oversee the Division of Instructional Support and redirect one of the administrative assistants currently supporting the executive director to support the deputy director of Instructional Support.

The executive director's current span of control is too large to reasonably oversee and manage the operating and programmatic needs of RESC 1. Although the executive director has managed the responsibilities and provided oversight and direction to the Division of Instructional Support, RESC 1 is too large and complex for this structure to be productive in the long-term.

The fiscal impact is based on discussions with the chief financial officer, RESC 1's indirect cost rate on federal grants is around four percent, which is significantly lower than other RESCs. Since the deputy director would be in a position to oversee several federally-funded programs, it should be possible to offset a portion (approximately 50 percent) of the position's costs with federal funds. This could be accomplished directly or indirectly (by offsetting salary expenditures for other staff that are currently general fund with federal funds). The remaining position costs could be funded by general fund resources, made available through elimination of a vacant position in another part of the organization, or by earmarking local fund resources for this purpose.

The following fiscal impact assumes the annual salary and benefits for this new position would be comparable to the current vacancy for deputy director of the Division of Administrative School Support, approximately $110,000 annually with benefits.

STAFFING PLAN

RESC 1 relies on part-time retirees and other limited-term staff to fill management responsibilities. A staffing plan to address long-term, sustainable human resources has not been developed.

The current deputy director of Administrative and School Support retired in July 2004. The position wasadvertised, but RESC staff believe it was challenging to find a qualified applicant. The executive director and other staff speculate that uncertainly about the future of the RESCs and non-competitive salaries with neighboring districts has affected recruitment for this upcoming vacancy and other existing vacancies.

An offer of employment for the position of deputy director of Administrative and School support wasextended to a former superintendent who began work on August 16, 2004.

Reliance on retirees and limited-term positions is an appropriate stop-gap approach, but it is not a long-term solution. Senior management at RESC 1 acknowledged that there the plan for filling senior management vacancies has not been established and that it would be difficult for anyone to take on additional responsibilities.

Establishing a plan to ensure that all positions are adequately staffed needs to be a high priority for RESC 1. Without such a plan, RESC 1 is vulnerable to discontinuity in its ability to provide services or asking staff to

carry unreasonably high workloads, which could contribute to further staff turnover.

RESC 1 should develop a staffing and organizational plan that is focused on organizational stability. Several RESC 1 administrators have retired or will retire in the near future. Given the challenge at finding qualified staff, Region 1 should develop a comprehensive multi-year assessment of its staffing needs and plans to address such needs including a transition plan for key administrative positions. The director of Human Resources should coordinate the assessment with input and support from the RESC 1 management team.

The development of a plan should be a high priority for RESC 1. The use of retirees on a part-time basis represents an interim solution and not one that is sustainable. In RESC 1, there is a strong desire to "get the job done," which staff have willingly accomplished with extra overtime effort. The RESC 1 is currently meeting the expectations of the field, but its ability to maintain its current level of effort over the long-term is questionable.

FEE STRUCTURE

The Region 1 fee structure could be restructured to better meet the needs of its clients. There are a variety of ways that RESC 1 generates revenue including local assessment fees, fee for services, and state and federal grants.

RESC 1 supplements core services through the use of a local assessment fee. **Exhibit 1-11** describes the services districts receive as a result of this fee. The local assessment fee structure is established annually by participating school districts to support targeted services.

Exhibit 1-11
RESC 1 Services Provided to Districts Through Local Assessment Fees

Legal contracted services support.	PEIMS review and data disagregation reports.	Consulting services by external consultant.
Consulting services by Superintendent Support Specialist.	Conferences, workshops, and seminars for superintendents and central office personnel.	Superintendent Summer Leadership Academy.
Onsite workshops and technical assistance related to governance, goal setting and evaluation of superintendent.	Curriculum, instruction and assessment leadership support activities.	Assistance in preparing grant applications.
Staff Development Data Management System.	Finance technical assistance and support.	Other services as requested by regional advisory committees.

Source: RESC 1 Documentation of "Services Provided to LEA's by Funding Source," 2003–04

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Currently, every Region 1 district pays this annual local assessment fee. The amount of this fee varies by district depending on size, as outlined in **Exhibit 1-12**. These fees are readjusted annually based on RESC 1's assessment of amount needed for cost recovery. The fees remained unchanged from 2002-03 to 2003-04.

Exhibit 1-12
Region 1 Local Assessment Fee Structure 2003–04

Size of District based on Average Daily Attendance (ADA)	Amount district pays to RESC 1 (per student)
Up to 1,000 ADA	$2.50
1,000 to 2,000 ADA	$2.25
2,000 to 12,000 ADA	$2.00
12,000 to 16,000 ADA	$1.75
16,000 to 19,000 ADA	$1.60
19,000 to 30,000 ADA	$1.50
30,000+ ADA	$1.25

Source: RESC 1 Documentation of "Services Provided to LEA's by Funding Source," 2003–04.

In addition to these local assessment fees, districts also pay for certain other services, either through agreement/consortia or on a per-usage basis. For example, schools who join Professional Development Consortia are allotted one slot in each academy, determined based on the number and cost of the academies. In 2003–04 schools paid $750 for one slot in every academy (of which there were 14 for elementary, 23 for middle and 28 for high school). Additional slots cost $100 per academy for consortium members and $200 per academy for non-consortium members. RESC 1 also charges for services such as bus driver training, school board training, child nutrition, and the professional development and appraisal system, among others.

The executive director indicates that this fee structure is shared and discussed with Region 1 superintendents each year. Despite being given this opportunity to provide input, MGT's survey results found that Region 1 superintendents were significantly less likely than their statewide peers to agree with the statement "the amount charged to our district by the RESC is appropriate for the quality and amount of services provided." Sixty-two (62) percent of Region 1 superintendents agreed or strongly agree with this statement, compared to 78 percent statewide. Furthermore, Region 1 superintendents were more likely to agree that many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and effectively provided by allocating the dollars to districts and allowing them to purchase services from the most appropriate sources (24 percent compared to 11 percent statewide).

Also in contrast to statewide responses, a greater percentage of Region 1 superintendents agreed or strongly agreed that their districts have the funding to purchase the services they need from the RESC (53 percent compared to 40 percent statewide).

The MGT survey data alone are not sufficient to discern the source of the superintendents' dissatisfaction. A discussion of the RESC 1 fee structure and possible modifications should be a major theme in upcoming Regional Advisory Council meetings. These discussions should result in mutual agreement on a long-term plan for how RESC 1 services should be funded, amounts that districts should be charged, and the criteria for adjusting fees as necessary in the future. It is important that Region 1 customers understand and are comfortable with RESC 1's fee structure, but also that center continues to generate enough revenue to finance the services it provides.

RESC 1 should reexamine and reevaluate the RESC 1 fee structure. Because RESC 1 has discussed the center's fee structure with representatives from member districts each year, it is striking that a significant portion of them do not feel that the amount they are charged is appropriate for the services they receive. This is true even though a majority indicate they have adequate funding to purchase the services they need. It is also

interesting that nearly one-quarter of the superintendent respondents wish to receive more direct funding to select particular services and their vendor of choice. These could be indications that Region 1 superintendents are not satisfied with the current local assessment fee structure, but would prefer to purchase all RESC 1 services ala carte.

EFFICIENCY STUDIES

RESC 1 has recognized the need for efficiency studies of school districts in the region. This new service offering cannot be sustained without obtaining additional resources.

As noted in the aforementioned accomplishment, in the Spring of 2004, RESC 1 contracted with a consultant to conduct an efficiency study for the McAllen ISD, resulting in recommendations that forecast potential savings of $41 million over five years. This type of review is a valuable service that could also benefit other RESC 1 districts. The RESC 1 funded the majority of the McAllen study with the intention of learning the methodology, thereby enabling the Center to conduct efficiency reviews as a service to its member districts in the future without needing to rely upon costly external contractors.

The external consultant cost to conduct the McAllen efficiency study was approximately $144,800, of which McAllen ISD paid $24,500. In addition, the RESC 1 Chief Financial Officer anticipates that the center expended approximately $10,000 worth of staff time for the six RESC 1 staff members working on the project.

RESC 1 does not currently maintain the staff or resources necessary to conduct these studies internally on a regular basis. As RESC 1 considers how it might support such services in the future, it will need to consider how it will staff and fund such studies. RESC 1 may be able to offer the service at a more competitive cost, but it will need to hire additional staff or redirect current staff from existing responsibilities to support such studies.

While a slight majority (53 percent) of Region 1 superintendents report that their districts currently have the funding to purchase the services they need from RESC 1, it is likely that the districts who are most in need of the efficiency studies are those who cannot currently afford to have them conducted. The RESC 1 will need to carefully consider how it will staff and fund such studies before it begins offering this as a new service area. Given the recent reductions in staff, it would be impractical to expect existing staff to take on a new program responsibility.

RESC 1 should develop a long-term business plan for how efficiency studies will be funded prior to offering them as a service to Region 1 districts. Under the current RESC 1 fee structure, funding for a new service area would need to come from local assessment fees or a fee-for-service to recover costs. Given that it is RESC's intention to provide this new service to districts in the region that are struggling financially, it is unlikely to expect that this service can be offered as a full cost-recovery fee-for-service. Alternatively, RESC 1 could increase the local assessment to support the provision of this service, but some Region 1 superintendents are already raising some concerns about the Center's fee structure.

BENEFITS ON WEB SITE

RESC 1 can more cost-effectively answer employees benefit questions through the use of its Web site.

The time spent by human resources staff answering questions about benefits can be significantly reduced by placing information about benefits on the RESC 1 Web site. Given how well the RESC 1 has used its Web site to distribute information, adding such information to the Web site would help employees and reduce the staff time dedicated to responding to routine questions. The *Standards Operating Procedures Manual*

available on the Web site provides high level descriptions of these areas:

- annuities;
- medical insurance eligibility requirements;
- disability insurance eligibility requirements;
- cancer insurance;
- life insurance;
- dental insurance;
- Texas Retirement System Buyback service;
- Texas Tomorrow Fund;
- Long-term care;
- workers' compensation; and
- disability, term life and voluntary accident insurance.

The Web site provides a detailed description and forms for the dental insurance plan. However, for most of the other benefit areas, the Web site does not provide sufficient information to answer more than general employee questions. Ideally, the Web site would provide information in much greater detail, such as:

- detailed descriptions of available Medical, Cancer and Disability Insurance benefits, including downloadable applications and claims forms;
- links to insurance provider lists for doctors and pharmacies by area or zip code;
- detailed descriptions of the Life Insurance plans, including downloadable applications and beneficiary designation forms;
- Employee Assistance Plan (EAP) resources;
- detailed descriptions of the annuities offered with downloadable application forms;
- a link to TRS for more information on buying back service;
- a link to Texas Tomorrow Fund for more information; and
- detailed descriptions of Long-term Care coverage, including downloadable applications and claims forms.

Currently, inquiries about such matters must be directed to human resource staff. While they can certainly answer such questions, this takes time away from other critical responsibilities.

RESC 1 should expand the RESC 1 Web site to include more detailed benefits information. Improving the Web site in this area will provide additional value for RESC 1 employees. Furthermore, it will ensure that consistent information is provided and reduce the need for staff time to be spent addressing more routine questions. This should permit the human resources staff to focus on other critical job functions. Once the information is available on the Web site, an e-mail notice should be sent to staff with an information sheet instructing them on how to use the Web site to obtain benefits information.

ELECTRONIC JOB APPLICATIONS

The RESC 1 Web site allows interested applicants to browse job openings online, but not to submit a job application electronically. The current application could be streamlined and generally improved by supporting electronic job applications.

Job opportunities are posted on RESC 1's Web site at www.esc1.net. However, there is currently no available functionality to submit a job application online. Applications may be downloaded as a PDF document and sent via regular mail to the Region 1 office. Once received by the office, applications are processed manually. Manual processing of applications adds time and extra expense for applicants and RESC 1. Applications can be emailed if the applicant has the version of

Adobe Acrobat software that allows users to modify a PDF file, but few applicants have this software.

RESC 1 should improve the Region 1 Web site to allow online submission of job applications. The process should include electronic access and submission of all required forms, resumes, and applications via email or through the region's Web site. The region should continue to provide a physical mailing address for applicants who do not have Internet or email access. Advertising in other venues can direct applicants to the Web site to download the application and submit it electronically.

MGT estimates that improving the benefits information and the job application functionality on the Region's Web site will cost approximately $950. This includes a total of 13 hours of services: three hours for Web site design at $70 per hour; four hours of Web site content at $55 per hour; four hours of programming at $55 per hour; and, six hours of testing and implementation at $50 per hour.

MGT estimates that approximately 650 staff hours per year will be saved in not processing the current volume of manual job applications. Valued at $14.45 per hour, the region should save approximately $9,390 per year. The first year savings is reduced by 50 percent due to the implementation date beginning in January 2005.

EVALUATE SERVICES

The RESC 1 offers a full range of core services. However, customers have expressed a desire for even greater offerings and some concern over their ability to pay for the services they need.

All RESCs provide six major types of services. They are:

- core services identified in statute;
- decentralized agency functions;
- administrative support for schools;
- instructional support for schools;
- direct student instruction; and
- other locally determined services.

Region 1 provides core services in these categories:

- administrative support;
- adult education/workforce development;
- bilingual education;
- child nutrition;
- early childhood education;
- field services;
- general education;
- information management;
- instructional support;
- migrant education;
- personnel support;
- principals assessment and development;
- school health/safe and drug free schools;
- special education; and
- technology and integration support (including PEIMS support)..

Region 1 is able to offer some services by assessing local fees. These services include:

- contracted legal support;
- PEIMS review and data disaggregating;
- superintendent conferences and workshops;
- governance, goal setting, and evaluation workshops;
- finance technical assistance and support;
- grant application preparation; and
- staff development.

Through consortium agreements, Region 1 is able to offer still further services, including:

- field service agent consortium;
- child nutrition purchasing co-op;
- data processing computer services;
- PEIMS data analysis and customized reports;
- media and library services;

- Esconett Internet and Video Conferencing;
- Personnel Services Co-op;
- E-Rate Consortium;
- TEKSTAR; and
- Bilingual/ESL Consortium.

In addition, RESC 1 administers more than 40 state and federal grants, including Child Nutrition, Target (technology), Title III Immigrant, ESEA Title VII Bilingual, ESEA Title 1 Migrant, IDEA-B, Gear Up, and Early Childhood Intervention.

Region 1 conducts quarterly meetings with district superintendents to discuss the quality and level of satisfaction with services received from the RESC. On MGT's survey, 88 percent of Region 1 superintendents indicated that the RESC is responsive to requests for services. However, the survey responses also indicate that they need additional services offerings. Superintendents state that they would like to see additional product offerings and services in these areas:

- training and support for TEKS;
- aligning curriculum and instruction with TEKS;
- training and assistance to help improve student performance;
- training and assistance using new teaching methods and strategies;
- training and assistance in the use of technology;
- computer network and telecommunication services;
- online distance learning; and
- on-site technical assistance.

Also on MGT's survey, Region 1 superintendents expressed some concern with having sufficient funds to purchase the RESC services they need. Only 53 percent of Region 1 superintendents agree or strongly agree that their districts have the funding to purchase the services they need from an RESC. This is a larger percentage than the 40 percent of superintendents statewide who respond that they have the necessary funding; however, it is still not a large majority. Twenty-eight (28) percent of Region 1 superintendents indicated that they do not have sufficient funding to purchase the services they need.

Regular evaluation of the breadth and depth of services the region provides will ensure that it is doing everything possible to meet the needs of the districts it serves. Ensuring that services remain affordable for districts should be a priority.

RESC 1 should evaluate service offerings regularly to determine whether new offerings should be introduced. The RESC 1 should continue to take every measure to ensure that the services provided to the districts are priced appropriately and affordably.

PERFORMANCE-BASED CONTRACTS

Region 1's performance-based contract for its energy efficiency study provides an exceptional model for contracting for services. Despite its successful, however, Region 1 has not expanded its use of performance-based contracts.

The use of performance-based contracts limited the risk borne by the RESC and places strong incentive for vendors to provide promised results. In the case of the energy efficiency study, recommendations have resulted in improvements, which will fully pay for the study costs in a short period time. Currently, this is the only performance-based contract in place at RESC 1.

Other areas that may lend themselves to performance-based contracts are in the area of technology services and financial/performance reviews.

RESC 1 should develop policies and procedures to support the implementation of additional performance-based contracts. The RESC 1's energy efficient contract has been highly productive. There are significant benefits to pursuing performance-based contracts. Areas within RESC 1 that may lend

themselves to performance-based contracts include external technology support and consulting support for efficiency and other school finance studies. Based on RESC 1's experience with the energy contract, it should develop a policy and procedure for investigating other contracting options that lend themselves to performance-based contracts. Such contracts when used effectively share risk and rewards with vendors. This can promote efficiencies that may otherwise go unnoticed to RESC 1.

PRINT SHOP

The RESC 1 Print Shop performs all of the printing work required by the RESC 1 on a partial cost recovery basis. The Print Shop could leverage its services to the districts for an increase in revenue to the RESC by promoting their printing facility and print services to the districts in the region.

MGT has found that often print shops in educational entities are funded on a full charge-back basis, allowing them to be completely financially independent of the overseeing organization. In this way, the education agency ensures that the Print Shop continues to provide a cost-competitive, necessary service. The RESC 1 Print Shop should sell its services in-house and externally based on clearly stated prices and the level of services provided. This would enable the Print Shop to run without receiving budget allocations from the RESC. In addition, the Print Shop would pay its full share of organizational overhead and adjust its staffing and expenditure levels to fit within its annual revenue. Customers of the Print Shop would have the choice of purchasing services from other, outside vendors. By better promoting print services to the districts in its service area, the Print Shop could increase the flow of revenue to the RESC.

RESC 1 should increase Print Shop revenue by developing a full cost-recovery charge back structure. A charge back model would allow RESC 1 to generate revenue from expanded services, which could directly offset the costs of the Print Shop operations. To implement a charge back model, RESC 1 would first need to identify its cost per unit of production based on the type of service provided. Costs should take into account equipment, personnel, and materials. If there are areas where RESC does not find it can be competitive it should considering outsourcing these services to address internal needs. For those areas where it can offer competitive pricing with commercial providers it should market services to districts in the region to begin generating revenue.

MGT estimates that the Print Shop could increase the revenues it receives from school districts by as much as 20 percent, or total of $136,500 annually. The RESC 1 is interested in marketing their Print Shop services to the school districts. In doing so, the Print Shop director feels that revenue could be increased by 10 percent each year for the next two years. In the first year of implementation, the Print Shop could achieve an increase of $60,000 in addition to another $71,500 increase the following year, by providing printing services to districts that require printing services which can be fulfilled by RESC 1.

INSURANCE COVERAGE

RESC 1 does not currently facilitate insurance coverage for member districts.

Region 1 recently obtained appropriate insurance coverage from the Texas Association of School Boards Risk Management Fund. The coverage is extensive in that is provides protection for the RESC in the following areas:

- property – buildings, personal property, auxiliary structures;
- flood and earthquake;
- automobile and mobile physical damage;
- equipment breakdown; and
- miscellaneous property.

Districts in RESC 1 may find that support from RESC 1 can help them gain cost-effective coverage for their insurance needs. Maintaining

adequate insurance is critical to protect all educational organizations from undue risk.

RESC 1 should coordinate with Region 1 member districts to determine if a package of service related to risk management insurance is a beneficial offering.

Given that the RESC 1 has been successful in negotiating a cost-effective risk management solution for the service center, the districts in the region may in turn be able to realize similar benefits. The RESC I could work with providers to offer customized packages to meet the unique insurance needs of the representative districts.

FISCAL IMPACT

Recommendation		2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	5-Year (Costs) or Savings	One-Time (Costs) or Savings
1-2	Hire deputy director of Instructional Support.	$0	($110,000)	($110,000)	($110,000)	($110,000)	($440,000)	
1-7	Improve Web site and eliminate staff time spent on processing manual applications.	$4,695	$9,390	$9,390	$9,390	$9,390	$42,255	($950)
1-10	Increase print shop revenue.	$60,000	$131,500	$136,500	$136,500	$136,500	$601,000	
	TOTAL	**$64,695**	**$30,890**	**$35,890**	**$35,890**	**$35,890**	**$203,255**	**($950)**

CHAPTER 2:

CORPUS CHRISTI

CHAPTER 2

CORPUS CHRISTI

Regional Education Service Center II (RESC 2) area encompasses 11 southeast Texas counties covering 10,738 square miles with its main office located in downtown Corpus Christi. This central facility is housed in a recently renovated 1950s department store building that includes state-of-the-art technology and convention-like training facilities on the third floor. RESC 2 provides services to 43 school districts and six charter schools enrolling a total of 106,986 students in on 248 campuses. These services are provided by a staff that includes 90 full and part-time employees including one executive director, two deputy directors, four associate directors, two field service agent positions (one vacant), and other professional, clerical, and related positions. Since June 2002, administration reduced the number of FTE positions by 30 as a result of reductions in revenue.

According to 2002–03 data, 58.6 percent of the region's students are identified as economically disadvantaged, an increase of 2.5 percentage points from 2000–01 figures while 6.2 percent are classified as Limited English Proficient (LEP). Student ethnicity distribution has remained essentially stable from 2000-01 to 2002-03.

Exhibit 2-1 provides information comparing all RESCs. An analysis of the exhibit's data shows that RESC 2:

- ranks eleventh in student membership among the 20 RESCs;
- ranks fourth lowest in percentage of White ethnic population students with 27.4 as compared to the average of 39.8 percent for the 20 RESCs;
- has the third largest percentage of Hispanic population students and compares at 67.6 percent to 42.7 percent for the average for all RESCs, and
- has the fourth smallest African American population and is approximately ten percentage points lower than the average for all RESCs.

The mission statement, reported in the RESCs *Programs and Services Manual*, is "to be a catalyst for change resulting in student improvement and efficiency and economy of operation." The vision statement is: "World Class Service for World Class Schools."

The Vision 2005 Strategic Plan contains six critical issues that form the basis for all strategic initiatives. These include:

1. **Student Achievement**: The ESC-2 will build a solid learning foundation for all children in Region 2;
2. **Customer Service:** The ESC-2 will place quality customer service as a high priority;
3. **Evaluation and Reporting**: The ESC-2 will ensure that ongoing, in-depth, results-based evaluation and reporting will be integral to all ESC-2 programs and operations;
4. **ESC-2 Culture**: The ESC-2 will create a positive, exciting work and learning environment;
5. **Professional Development:** The ESC-2 will consistently provide world-class quality, research-based, and effective professional development; and
6. **Technology**: The ESC-2 will appropriately integrate technology with all ESC-2 functions, programs, and services.

Exhibit 2-1
Student Composition Of Each RESC
2002–03 School Year

Esc Region	Regional Student Membership	Percent African American	Percent Hispanic	Percent White	Percent Other	Percent Economically Disadvantaged	Percent LEP
1	328,518	0.2	96.1	3.3	0.4	84.5	38.5
2	106,986	3.7	67.6	27.4	1.4	58.6	6.2
3	54,982	10.8	44.0	43.8	1.3	51.6	4.9
4	924,052	21.5	39.3	33.7	5.6	50.2	17.2
5	84,875	31.2	8.4	57.6	2.7	49.2	3.7
6	142,153	13.9	19.4	64.9	1.8	42.1	7.0
7	159,855	21.2	15.7	62.2	0.9	50.0	7.5
8	55,911	23.0	10.9	65.1	1.1	51.7	5.7
9	40,289	9.1	16.9	71.7	2.3	44.7	3.1
10	635,621	20.8	33.1	41.1	5.0	45.4	17.2
11	446,247	13.4	24.2	58.3	4.2	36.0	11.1
12	138,152	23.2	21.9	52.7	2.2	49.6	5.5
13	288,335	9.6	36.3	51.0	3.1	39.2	10.3
14	45,834	6.7	27.5	64.7	1.0	49.7	2.7
15	49,286	3.6	49.4	46.2	0.7	56.4	7.4
16	77,449	5.5	36.6	56.1	1.7	51.5	1.3
17	78,236	8.2	48.9	41.9	1.0	55.8	5.1
18	76,139	5.6	54.4	39.0	1.0	54.9	11.1
19	163,170	2.7	87.2	9.1	1.0	74.7	30.5
20	343,821	7.0	64.9	26.6	1.5	61.6	10.4
State Total	**4,239,911**	**14.3**	**42.7**	**39.8**	**3.2**	**51.9**	**14.9**

Source: TEA 2002–03 AEIS RESC reports.

The RESC 2 Web site also includes a listing of the eight-member Board of Directors, RESC personnel, details relating to districts and charter schools served, along with a comprehensive list and description of programs and services, compilation of policy and procedural documents, and a human resources section with employment information and a listing of job vacancies.

The MGT review committee watched a well-organized power point presentation and completed a tour of facilities as an orientation to the RESC. All requests for documents and data were available in hardcopy, on the Web site, or in diskettes/CDs. Additional information (as the visit progressed) was readily available to the team.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- The Board of Director's membership possesses a variety of backgrounds ranging from law and other private business interests to both K-12 and higher education levels.
- RESC 2 administration and the Board of Directors have maintained an up-to-date policy and procedures manual at a minimum cost.
- RESC 2's organizational pattern represents an efficient and cost-effective method for organizing in response to significant reductions in personnel while ensuring internal support of operations.
- RESC 2 has a large state-of-the-art facility and has the proper controls in place for efficient maintenance and operations.

- RESC 2 properly analyzes utilization data and assesses need for parking lot facilities.
- RESC 2 is marketing its meeting space to meet the needs of RESC members and the Corpus Christi external customer community.
- RESC 2 is serving the needs of the Corpus Christi community by providing reasonable rates for meeting rooms and audio visual capabilities.
- RESC 2 informs the community and other stakeholders about the services offered by hosting a model annual fair for teachers, parents, administrators and community members.
- RESC 2 uses a formal data-driven needs assessment model for assessing and evaluating the services offered to member districts.
- RESC 2 is serving as a statewide resource for providing support for autism programs.
- RESC 2 uses technology efficiently to offer its customers cost-effective ways to improve their learning opportunities.
- RESC 2 actively pursues external revenue through the use of a professional grant writer.
- RESC 2 is providing many valuable services to the school districts and schools.
- All RESC 2 employees review and update their job descriptions and receive evaluation feedback from their supervisors on a regular annual schedule.
- RESC 2 provides clients via handbooks, booklets, and the Web site comprehensive, important information related to contracted services and shared services arrangements.
- RESC 2 offers a full range of technological services and technical assistance to schools and school districts.
- DUPLICATES!

FINDINGS

- Board members are not fully involved in development of the strategic plan and other related planning documents other than the facilities development plan.
- The Board of Directors do not have standing committees, while such committees are often a means for developing appropriate board involvement in agency or organizational policy and planning development.
- Field service agents provide a valuable service in Region 2 that needs to be continued.
- The RESC does not have an institutionalized process for following up on survey results or responses.
- There is no written contract to detail out the terms and conditions of legal services provided by the law firm representing the board whereas it is a standard practice of agencies and education organizations to have such documents.
- RESC 2 is taking the first steps to develop specific counseling and guidance assistance and training services and is resulting in identifying a staff member assigned responsibility for establishing a stakeholder group of counselors to assist with defining needed supportive services.
- RESC 2 does not maintain a system for cross-training personnel in complementary positions which could result in reduced organizational efficiency or other difficulties.
- RESC 2 does not include job applications and other related forms on the Web site in a format that permits their completion and submission electronically.
- RESC 2 has positive financial and program audits for the past four years resulting in only very minor recommendations for improvement. The 2003 audit reported unusually high accounts receivables;

approximately $500,000 as compared to previous years figures typically in the $150,000 range.

- The RESC has not established and implemented procedures to ensure the control of all fixed assets resulting in the potential for a failure to be able to be fully accountable.
- Under the current procedures, assets with a value of under $5,000 are not formally inventoried resulting in no formal means for accounting for valuable equipment having values less than $5,000.
- An evaluation of services sent out from the MIS Department to districts by e-mail had a poor response as have other surveys resulting in the continued use of paper survey instruments.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 2-1: Train and involve the RESC 2 Board of Directors in the development of the RESC strategic planning process and establish procedures for input in development and periodic review of the plan.** The implementation of this recommendation should ensure that all Board of Directors are trained and prepared for involvement in the strategic planning process. Additionally, involvement in the planning process ensures that the RESC executive staff will secure a broad range of input in its development. The executive director and other RESC staff should prepare and schedule a training session for board members in the RESC's planning processes and proposed board involvement. As this recommendation is implemented, the Board of Directors should adopt a policy and related procedures to ensure continued involvement. Furthermore, a portion of each regular meeting agenda should address the status of the plan and related implementation processes. The process of updating the current Board of Directors should begin with using the annual budget development and approval processes. Using the budget development, review, and approval process as a vehicle for achieving this ensures that board members will have an opportunity for reviewing the relationship between the two documents.

- **Recommendation 2-2: Establish, minimally, one standing committee focused on developing external relations.** The implementation of this recommendation should lay the groundwork for developing Board of Directors infrastructure to deal with issues related to the perception that important education stakeholders do not adequately understand the nature and purpose of the RESC organization, and related programs and services provided the school districts of Texas (this perception was gained in the initial briefing of consultants and further confirmed in interviews with various RESC personnel). The implementation of this recommendation is further supported by the fact that the Texas Legislature prohibits education-related personnel from lobbying for legislative support and funding. This recommendation is based upon the premise that current RESCs and their boards are not proactive in promoting RESC value nor are there established working relationships with local school district boards to identify effective means of educating the publics. This recommendation should be implemented through the following steps of action:

  - The executive director should review the recommendation with the Board of Directors;

- Once agreed upon, the Board of Directors should direct the Executive Director to prepare the necessary policy and procedures to guide the proposed committee's development and activity; and

- The chair of the Board of Directors should appoint a three member committee assigned the task of implementing the recommendation—that is, preparing a plan for an RESC board external relations program.

The effective implementation of this recommendation should contribute to making important stakeholders informed supporters of the important services and program work of RESC 2. The effective development of this standing committee could lead to the establishment of a standing strategic planning committee, resources development committee, or other appropriate board groupings designed to support the RESC administration and deployment of services and programs.

- **Recommendation 2-3: Continue the use of the field service agent position to support RESC 2 client school districts, their school boards, and superintendents.** The implementation of this recommendation should result in continuing a service that the superintendents and executive RESC personnel state is vital. The rationale employed by the State Council on Competitive Government in its January 2004 report is based on an incomplete analysis of how other RESCs utilize the field service agent positions to meet assessed client needs.

- **Recommendation 2-4: Develop systematic follow-up procedures to survey results and develop and implement strategies to effectively resolve the validated issues.** The implementation of this recommendation should result in the development of a method for following up on all survey results to validate responses, particularly those that raise questions regarding program or services effectiveness. Additionally, this should result in establishing effective means for remedying identified issues and improving positive response rates. The results of this activity should become an integral part of the annual assessment processes and RESCs strategic planning initiative.

- **Recommendation 2-5: Develop and approve a written contract with the law firm representing the RESC 2 and the Board of Directors.** The executive director should negotiate with the law firm and establish the services to be performed and compensation to be paid. A contract containing the services to be performed and compensation to be paid should be taken to the Board of Directors for approval. An approved, written contract with the law firm representing the board should be maintained and updated annually.

- **Recommendation 2-6: Continue to develop and begin providing counseling and guidance support services for school districts.** Implementation of this recommendation should result in the RESC assigning the position, not only the establishment of the stakeholder group but also the responsibility for coordinating the work of the counselors, academic coordinators and social workers. This individual should, in collaboration with the stakeholder group, develop a plan to combine the region and districts' resources into a unified approach to address the counselors' needs.

Counselors, social workers, academic coordinators and principals should be involved in developing the plan. The development and delivery of these supportive services should result in preparing counselors and other to more effectively carry out assigned responsibilities, therefore, affording both students and classroom teachers support. Annually, the services should be evaluated and adjustments made in response to assessed progress and needs.

- **Recommendation 2-7: Provide for systematic cross-training of personnel in complementary or overlapping positions and develop a means for carrying out essential responsibilities when key personnel are absent from duty.** Through cross-training, RESC 2 could both maximize efficiency and ensure that essential responsibilities can be appropriately assumed in the event of untimely or extended absences. This effort should focus on positions in which there is a natural overlap, and where individuals have already begun to share responsibilities. These include: the executive director's executive secretary, the administrative assistant for payroll, backup for human resources; the education specialists for Bilingual/ESL, Migrant Education, and State/Compensatory Education; Safe and Secure Schools, and Safe and Drug Free Schools; complementary personnel in the Educational Technology Department; and complementary personnel in the Computer Services Department. For those positions that do not have overlapping or complimentary positions available comprehensive checklists and detailed description of how to carry out essential responsibilities should be developed and provided to specific identified personnel. These checklists and details should be reviewed periodically to ensure that they are accurate and current. This process should be scheduled to commence upon approval of the recommendation by the RESC leadership.

- **Recommendation 2-8: Review and consider adopting the processes and procedures used by RESC 3 for the submission and processing of job applications and other human resource activity on its Web site.** The implementation of this recommendation should result in streamlining the job application processes for RESC positions. Additionally, this same system should work to conserve time for personnel in the school districts who are assigned responsibilities for receiving and processing job applications. Over time, the use of the Web site for completion and submission of forms should reduce the number of walk-in's to offices. In order that RESC 2 staff be able to provide current and innovative services to their customers, under the current reduction in staff circumstances, the administration should consider upgrading the human resources services offered via the RESC Web site as one more means of making adjusting workloads.

- **Recommendation 2-9: Establish and implement procedures to reduce accounts receivables at year's end.** The implementation of this recommendation should result in the development of standard procedures for evaluating accounts receivables and the protocol for minimizing the fiscal impact at the end of each fiscal year. The procedures should be developed through the appointment by the executive director of a representative task group. The task group should prepare recommendations for review, amending, and approval by the RESC leadership team and forwarding to the

Board of Directors for subsequent review and approval. The final approved procedures should become a part of RESC 2 policy and provide administrative direction to reduce or minimize future exceptionally large receivables.

- **Recommendation 2-10: Establish and implement procedures to ensure that fixed assets can be properly accounted for at all times.** The implementation of this recommendation should result in the proper accounting for fixed assets. The Finance Department should coordinate the development of a process which assures that all fixed assets are on the fixed asset inventory and are properly inventoried and accounted for at all times. RESC 2 should contact other RESCs that have appropriate controls (such as RESC 3, 6 or 19) to obtain copies of their procedures. All personnel who are involved with fixed assets should be involved in the review of existing appropriate procedures and the development of RESC's procedures. Upon completion, all personnel involved with fixed assets should be in-serviced regarding their responsibility for the fixed asset inventory accounting procedures.

- **Recommendation 2-11: Establish a board-approved asset inventory process for assets valued less than $5,000.** The implementation of this recommendation should result in more effective control over equipment with less than $5,000 value, such as laptop computers and other such equipment that is difficult to account for or is often a target for thieves. The Board of Directors should establish the type and value of capital assets for which they want the service center to be accountable. All categories of items designated by the board should be inventoried and labeled. This would include those items already purchased by the RESC.

- **Recommendation 2-12: Establish a plan for conducting all surveys electronically and include strategies for ensuring acceptable response rates.** The implementation of this recommendation should result in establishing a plan that will permit all RESC surveys to be conducted electronically and include strategies addressing adequate response rates. Further, implementation should permit the economical and efficient codification and analysis of response to surveys. Accomplishing this should lead to improving the overall use of distant technologies to improve efficiencies in administration and providing services. The implementation of this recommendation should involve establishing a task group composed of representative of a cross section of member districts and charter schools. This task group should be charged with identifying the various barriers to survey response rates and prepare recommended strategies to overcome identified obstacles. A plan of action should be developed and piloted with additional modifications made as a result.

DETAILED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

BOARD MEMBERSHIP

Membership on the Board of Directors of the RESC 2 is representative of both private and public sector interests with both experienced and new members included.

Exhibit 2-2 provides the supporting data and includes the following related information:

- one member, the adjunct professor, is an active educator;

- in all, five either have been or are employed in the private sector,

two in the public sector and one a stay-at-home parent;

- four members have fewer than fives years of board experience;
- one has six years of board experience, and
- three have ten or more years of board experience.

Exhibit 2-2
RESC 2 Board of Directors
July 2004

Name	Title	District	Term Expires	Length of Service as of 5/04	Occupation
Mr. Ruben Escobar	Chair	1	2006	4	Retired US Postal Service; Rancher
Mr. Eduardo S. Torres		2	2005	4	Adjunct Professor
Mr. Leo Villarreal		3	2004	18	Attorney
Mr. Sam A. May		4	2006	10	Retired Superintendent
Mr. William D. Dodge, III	Vice Chair	5	2005	1	President, The Dodge Co.
Mr. Ruben Olvera		6	2004	6	Customer Service Engineer: AEP/ Central Power & Light Co.
Mrs. Patricia Wallek	Secretary	7	2006	10	Realtor
Mrs. Katie Howell		Charter Rep		2	Parent/Volunteer

Source: RESC 3, Executive Director, July 2004.

Interviews with board members indicate a clear understanding of their respective roles and the distinctions between the policy and approval of recommendation processes and the function of the RESC administration. Furthermore, where requested by the administration, board members provide essential support for the development of services to clients and the planning and funding of necessary facilities.

Membership on the Board of Directors reflects a cross-section of board experiences as reflected in **Exhibit 2-2**. Furthermore, board members possess a variety of backgrounds ranging from law and other private business interests to both K-12 and higher education levels, past and present.

Accomplishment: The board of director's membership possesses a variety of backgrounds ranging from law and other private business interests to both k-12 and higher education levels.

BOARD POLICY MANUAL

The RESC 2 Policy and Procedures Manual is maintained in a current and up-to-date condition.

The RESC contracts with the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) for regular updates to the policy manual. An examination of Board of Directors' meeting minutes shows that routinely the administration provides recommendations for updating and including new provisions based upon the TASB information. The service is provided to the RESC at an annual cost of $800, a very nominal amount (some districts in other states such as Florida pay up to $4,000 per year for such services from private

vendors and in two instances consortiums pay from $10,000 to $12,000 per year for updates to a model manual from which districts can select policies and adapt to their particular circumstances). RESC representatives report that TASB will be providing an online manual from which updates may be drawn for a one-time set-up fee of $1,800 and annually at the regular subscription price.

MGT consultants' review of policy manuals for various educational clients seldom find policy manuals maintained in an up-to-date condition. The process for monitoring policy is time-consuming and often is reported as not having a high priority. RESC 2 has overcome these barriers.

Accomplishment: The RESC 2 administration and the Board of Directors have maintained an up-to-date policy and procedures manual at a minimum cost.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

RESC 2 eliminated 30 positions from 2002–03 to 2003–04 and has effectively reorganized.

Exhibit 2-3 shows the organization of services within RESC 2. As can be seen, the organization includes two deputy director positions each supported by two associate directors. The associate directors are supported by a series of department positions. This model represents a fairly traditional organization patterns and has effective spans of control for management. This pattern organizes the RESC into three primary divisions, (administration, instruction, and fiscal services) with the two deputy positions and the executive director dividing responsibilities among their areas. The executive director and associate directors characterize the organizational patterns in terms of "centers". Each of the three centers is defined operationally as administration services (linking or serving the other two centers), instructional services, and fiscal services.

This structure is an appropriate organizational pattern that permits reduction in key staff members while controlling span issues.

Accomplishment: RESC 2's organizational pattern represents an efficient and cost-effective method for organizing in response to significant reductions in personnel while ensuring internal support of operations.

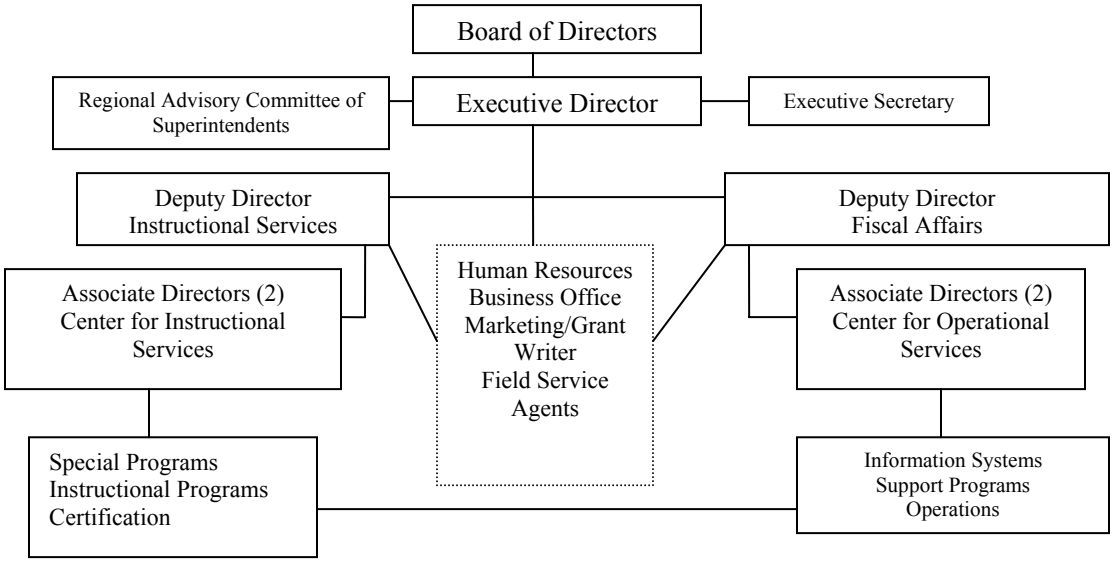
STATE-OF-THE-ART FACILITIES

RESC 2 has a large state-of-the-art facility and has the proper controls and systems in place for efficient maintenance and operations.

RESC 2 is buying a 125,000 square foot building and a 2,500 square foot warehouse facility and has the proper controls in place for its efficient maintenance and operation. Management of the facilities and maintenance function is under the deputy director for Fiscal Affairs, Operational Services, and Operations' section. The operations unit includes building maintenance, print shop, van delivery, and reception. Facility maintenance includes four areas: HVAC, custodial services, public elevators and energy management. The following describes each service or system:

- **HVAC** - RESC 2 outsources HVAC services and includes a preventive maintenance contract. The monthly maintenance includes checking all fan motors and amps, Freon levels, fans, drain pans, dampers and linkages, grease bearings, check belts, compressors, and treating rust and corrosion. Bi-monthly maintenance includes washing of condenser coils on chillers and condensing units. Semi-annual maintenance includes adding Sta Clean strips to all drain pans and cleaning evaporator coils on roof top units. Annual maintenance includes checking compressor oil levels, taking oil samples for testing and diagnosis, removing and cleaning suction screens on pumps, cleaning evaporator coils, air handlers, replace all belts, and calibrate all temperature, humidity and CO2 sensors.

Exhibit 2-3
RESC 2 Organization
May 2004



Source: RESC 2, 2004.

- **Custodial Services** – RESC 2 outsources custodial cleaning services, which includes five contracted personnel. The service includes: carpet spotting, daily vacuuming, restroom cleaning, sweeping, clean stairwell areas, dusting, mopping, stripping and waxing.

- **Public Elevators** – RESC 2 outsources preventive maintenance on all elevators.

- **Energy Management** – RESC 2 entered into an energy conservation program via an Inter-local agreement with Region 4. RESC 2 also uses a computer program to control air flow temperatures based on the demand of people in the building. The program allows for the adjustment of temperatures and control over the system's ability to cycle on and off during peak hours to control humidity and operation costs.

Each of the services or systems has been established to ensure implementation of best practices' implementation and the most cost-efficient long-term use of the facilities.

Accomplishment: RESC 2 has a large state-of-the-art facility and has the proper controls in place for efficient maintenance and operations.

FACILITIES NEEDS

RESC 2 properly analyzes data to determine facility needs. The RESC 2 management has recently recognized the need for additional parking. To analyze and document this need, the number of training sessions and attendees is collected and analyzed.

The RESC has collected session's data and included it in their *Five Year Plan for Future Parking Lot Requirements*. **Exhibit 2-4** shows the data collected. The exhibit shows an increase in demand from September 2001 through august 2003. The data for 2003-04 is available through May (significant increases in training is scheduled for July and August 2004 with participation data not available at the time of this report's preparation).The plan

shows that the number of sessions over the period September 2001 through May 2004 increased from 561 to 1,068 with participant counts increasing from 4,479 to 20,717. This represents in excess of a 400 percent participant rate increase. The plan includes an examination of existing and required spaces for employees, visitors, and participants in various on-site programs and services.

RESC 2 has local agreements with hotel providers and city administrators to allow parking at their facilities until additional parking space can be acquired or developed.

Exhibit 2-4
RESC 2 Parking Lot Demand

Year	Sessions Offered	Attendees
September 2001 – August 2002	561	4,479
September 2002 – August 2003	520	8,256
September 2003 – May 2004	1,068	20,717

Source: Associate Director for Operational Services, June 2004.

RESC 2 representatives are working with area chamber of commerce, economic development, other business interests, and city officials to validate downtown and RESC parking needs. This thorough approach to establishing and documenting critical needs represents the best in effective planning to determine these needs.

Accomplishment: RESC 2 properly analyzes utilization data and assesses need for parking lot facilities.

MARKETING OF SPACE

RESC 2 is marketing its meeting space to external customers thus providing revenues to defray operating expenses and meeting local and area business and professional needs.

The RESC 2 provides about 22,000 square feet of meeting space with a maximum capacity of 1100 attendees. Most of the rooms have built in multimedia and audiovisual equipment. The available rooms include a 167 seat auditorium, three computer labs, two teleconference rooms, and 18 conference rooms. The meeting space is made available on a priority basis that is documented in the Facility Marketing Plan. For example, Region 2 school districts and educators have higher priority than private sector companies.

The marketing initiative includes:

- Development and distribution of information brochures to member school districts, charter schools, other regions, local and state-wide businesses, and professionals (law, etc.);
- Use of the RESC Web site;
- Involvement in local chamber of commerce activity; and
- Communications with local hotels.

The marketing initiative is resulting in the use of facilities and equipment on a pay-for-use basis by non-RESC member groups on a regular basis. During the MGT consultants' on-site visit, for example, one attorney firm scheduled and rented space for the taking of depositions while another organization scheduled space for a conference.

This RESC marketing activity and use of facilities by other interests represents an effective and best practice related to providing taxpayers and other publics appropriate use of taxpayer-owned facilities when not needed for meeting the organization's objectives.

Accomplishment: RESC 2 is marketing its meeting space to meet the needs of RESC members and the Corpus Christi external customer community.

FACILITY USE RATES

RESC 2 is serving the community of Corpus Christi by providing reasonable rates for meeting rooms.

Exhibit 2-5 provides a comparison of fees charged for meeting rooms.

Exhibit 2-5
Comparison of Daily Use Fees for Meeting Rooms

Square Feet	RESC 2 Rates		Texas A&M – Corpus Christi*	Ortiz Center**	Funtrackers*
	School District Government	Commercial			
550	$150	$300	n/a	$985	n/a
790	220	440	$40	n/a	$200
940	250	500	40	1035	n/a
1100	300	600	n/a	1085	n/a
2251	400	800	200	n/a	n/a
3527	800	1600	200	1435	n/a

Source: RESC 2 Marketing Specialist, June 2004.
** No audio visual provided*
*** Must buy food and beverage services*

As the exhibit shows, RESC 2 rates for government and commercial use are higher than those charged by Texas A & M and Funtrackers but the university and Funtrackers does not provide a full service of support technology and equipment. Ortiz Center rates are higher and customers must purchase food and beverage services. Rooms can be rented on a half-day or hourly basis with fees adjusted accordingly. Additionally, very small rooms can be obtained at a lower cost if requested by customers.

Rates for use of RESC facilities have been established by considering direct and indirect costs for operating the facilities including labor and a review of local market conditions and facilities availability.

Accomplishment: RESC 2 is serving the needs of the Corpus Christi community by providing reasonable rates for meeting rooms and audio visual capabilities.

STAKEHOLDER INFORMATION

RESC 2 holds an annual Technology Fair for teachers, parents, students, administrators and community members resulting in displaying services and programs available to school districts and schools and other clients.

The fair extends over a two-day period with various vendors providing mini-sessions for participants. Each mini-session is offered three times and session topics include:

- Multi-media – Video-On-Demand;
- Assistive technologies;
- Audio Optical System;
- Router hardware, interfaces, and other related matters;
- IP configuration of Ethernet and serial ports along with trouble shooting IP networks;
- Switching hardware;
- InterWrite School Pad;
- Online Encyclopedia Britannica;
- Textbook management software; and

- Nineteen other technology topics related to instructional delivery systems, curriculum, and related matters.

The fair is supported by over 80 exhibitors each with booths and many providing information and training sessions to attendees. Two large corporations, Coca Cola and Glencoe McGraw-Hill were major sponsors. The entire program is contained in a 44 page program containing a detailed description of all sessions and supporting businesses.

The event includes informative sessions, door prizes and follow-up participant surveys. A three-page survey of participants provided exceptionally strong support for the fair along with suggestions for future events. Based on positive feedback from participants, the center plans to make the fair a continuing annual event.

The fair represents a major RESC organizational effort and an important information service to all customers and means for vendors to demonstrate their programs and services. Bringing this to the RESC 2 area membership permits teachers and parents who could not afford to travel to distant conferences and conventions an opportunity to obtain first-hand exposure to important education support information.

Accomplishment: RESC 2 informs the community and other stakeholders about the services offered by hosting a model annual fair for teachers, parents, administrators and community members.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT MODEL

RESC 2 has established an effective formal needs assessment model to ensure appropriate services are delivered to member districts.

Region 2 needs assessment cycle is conducted four times per year. According to the RESC 2 model, student achievement remains the primary goal during the seven needs assessment process. The following steps guide the RESC 2's needs assessment model:

1. Data Collection and Analysis
2. Goals and Objectives
3. Strategies and Activities
4. Implementation
    a. Who?
    b. What?
    c. What do we need?
5. Professional Development and Sustained Support
6. Ongoing Formative Evaluation
7. Summative Evaluation

For the data collection and analysis phase, RESC 2 has identified the following data inputs:

- AEIS Data Analysis
- Vision 2005 and Vision 2010
- Annual Program Evaluations
- State Initiatives
- Regional Plan
- ESC's Strategic Plan
- State SAS Application
- Balanced Scorecard Data
- Stakeholder Groups
- Workshop Evaluations
- Program Contact Meetings
- State/Regional Evaluation Surveys
- On-site Visits
- Superintendent RAC Meetings
- Advisory Group Meetings
- Web-based Feedback System

This needs assessment model offers a comprehensive approach that includes not only hard data but also important value laden information. This offers the advantage of taking into account important political and economic considerations to ensure greater efficiency and economy as decisions relating to program development/modifications are made.

Effective assessment models include both quantitative and qualitative data collected from varied sources to permit validation and are designed to guide important program and

services modifications and/or adoption actions.

Accomplishment: RESC 2 uses a formal data-driven needs assessment model for assessing and evaluating the services offered to member districts.

AUTISM PROGRAM

RESC 2 serves as an agent for TEA to provide a comprehensive statewide conference for continuing education on the issue of autism resulting in meeting critical special education training and information dissemination needs in Texas.

The RESC is hosting the Texas Autism Conference each September through a two to three-day conference with from 1000 to 1400 participants. The conference is developed and conducted in partnerships with Texas A & M University and other agencies.

The September conference has 23 exhibitors and over 35 presenters delivering 48 scheduled sessions related to autism. Additionally, an assistive technology laboratory is established and open for participants for two of the three days.

The agenda for the September 2004 scheduled conference is comprehensive in content and activity and includes such topics as:

- Visual strategies;
- After school services;
- Siblings of the autistic child;
- Working with paraprofessionals;
- Making informed curriculum decisions;
- Positive student management strategies;
- Transition planning;
- Asperger 101;
- Sensory integration;
- Autism Spectrum Disorders;
- Developing social skills;
- Legal issues guide; and
- Many other topics.

RESC 2 is providing a exceptionally well-organized conference and shows its commitment to the continued education of and opportunities for people involved with individuals with autism.

Accomplishment: RESC 2 is serving as a model statewide resource for providing support for autism programs.

USE OF TECHNOLOGY FOR LEARNING

RESC 2 utilizes technology to provide cost-effective learning opportunities to a large audience resulting in reducing lost time due to traveling to conference sites and expanding learning and training opportunities.

RESC 2s applications include both the distance learning program and online professional development. Meetings, workshops, courses, and special activities are offered via video broadcast and allow the teachers, administrators, board members, other educators, and other clients the opportunity to participate at a low cost and at their convenience.

Through the Coastal Bend Telecommunications Network, the RESC conducts meetings and workshops for member districts. They are also able to train staff in mandatory new regulations and procedures without having to pay to send them to the RESC or TEA. In the year 2003–04, the Coastal Bend Telecommunications Network organized 16 training sessions or meetings with a participation of 670 educators and has enabled 205 high school students to take high school and dual credit courses that otherwise would not be available. RESC 2 also offered virtual trips to grade school students.

RESC 2 applications of technology represent optimizing the use of resources to reduce costs to clients and as a means of expanding learning and training opportunities.

Accomplishment: The RESC 2 uses technology efficiently to offer its customers

cost-effective ways to improve their learning opportunities.

GRANTS WRITER

RESC 2 benefits from having a full-time grant writer resulting in generating significant revenues for programs and services.

RESC 2 has a grant writer on staff and continuously pursues external funding. **Exhibit 2-6** shows that RESC 2 grant funds since 2000 total over 11 million dollars.

Exhibit 2-6
Grants Received with RESC 2 as Fiscal Agent

Grant/Contract Name	Amount	Year	Source
Academic 2000	$5,823,272	1998–2002	Texas Education Agency
Quality Development of Childcare Services	400,000	2000	Workforce Development Board
TxBESS	300,000	2000	State Board for Educator Certification
TxBess	235,574	2001	State Board for Educator Certification
Regional Fine Arts Summit Support	2,000	2001	Texas Commission on the Arts
Quality Development of Childcare Services	366,000	2001	Workforce Development Board
Regional ESC Innovative Grants Program	125,000	2001	Texas Education Agency
Quality Development	363,000	2002	Workforce Development Board
Regional ESC Innovative Grants Program	120,000	2002	Texas Education Agency
Rural Utilities Service Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grant Program	499,073	2002	U.S. Department of Agriculture
Teaching American History Grants	966,965	2002	U.S. Department of Education
Quality Development	383,110	2003	Workforce Development Board
Teaching American History Grants	965,650	2003	U.S. Department of Education
	258,640	2003	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Target	296,500	2004	Texas Education Agency
Target	292,482	2005	Texas Education Agency
Total Amount in Grants	$11,389,266		

Source: RESC 2, Business Department, 2004.

Additionally, through this position a Grant Resources section of the RESC 2 Web site is maintained with links to current grant opportunities affording member school districts and schools an easy and effective method for identifying potential resources.

This use of personnel to develop grants and provide additional revenues to support important client and RESC programs and services demonstrates the value of an institutionalized commitment to effective grant writing and related grant development services.

Accomplishment: RESC 2 actively pursues external revenue through the use of a professional grants writer.

PROGRAMS COOPERATIVES

RESC 2 has created appropriate programs and cooperatives to deliver services to clients.

Exhibit 2-7 provides a list of programs and cooperatives RESC 2 offers to member districts. As the exhibit shows, 35 programs and cooperatives are offered to client school districts and charter schools.

In addition to providing a large inventory of programs and services as shown in **Exhibit 2-7**, RESC 2 also provides many other services to its customers. As is shown in **Exhibit 2-8**, many services are offered free of service fees or costs.

Accomplishment: RESC 2 is providing many valuable services to the school districts and schools.

JOB DESCRIPTIONS AND EVALUATION

RESC 2 updates job descriptions and evaluates employees in a timely fashion resulting in positive relationship between employee performance assessment instrumentation and job descriptions.

As part of an annual process, employees evaluate their own job performance, and then meet with their supervisors to receive feedback. One part of these meetings involves reviewing the employees' job descriptions and making any necessary modifications. The employees then sign the descriptions, indicating that they are accurate. A review of personnel files show that all employees have up-to-date and signed self-evaluations, supervisor evaluations, and job descriptions.

It is rare that an organization so consistently maintains updated job descriptions that are reviewed as an integral part of reviewing the employees' job performance. It is also commendable that employees are provided regular opportunities to review and provide input into their own job descriptions.

This constitutes a best practice and one that should be replicated as a standard practice in organizations.

Accomplishment: All RESC 2 employees review and update their job descriptions and receive evaluation feedback from their supervisors on a regular annual schedule.

Exhibit 2-7
RESC 2 Programs and Cooperatives
2004

Program	Impact
Adapted Physical Education/Special Olympics	68% increase in adapted sports opportunities
Advanced Academic Program/AP Summer Institute	40 Districts
Advanced Academic Program/Conference by the Sea	39 Districts
Assistive Technology	32 Districts
Texas State Conference on Autism	1400 participants over 3 years
Coastal Bend Telecommunications Network	670 educators, 205 students, and 309 grade students
Child Nutrition Summer Workshop	448 food personnel
Digital Knowledge Central	36 school districts
Early Childhood Cooperative	N/A
Educator Preparation and Certification	475 Teachers
English as a Second Language Supplemental Certificate	616 Teachers
Schoolwide Discipline Foundations Project	N/A
Instructional Technology Cooperative	27 School Districts
Library Cooperative	11 School Districts
Visually Impaired/Clinical Low Vision Evaluations	22 Students
Media Cooperative	36 School Districts
Coastal Bend Network	40 School Districts
Merrill-Palmer Scales Evaluation	40 Students
Multi-Regional Purchasing Cooperative	38 School Districts
Partners for Educational Leadership	135 Administrators
Teachers of Literacy Collaborative	25 Teachers
Quality Development Child Care Services	171 Child Care Sites
Leadership Services Cooperative: School board member Training	334 Board Members
Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities	1,000 participants
Evaluation for Special Education	39 Districts
Teaching American History	110 Teachers
An Integrated Approach to Improving the Teaching of American History	120 Teachers
Project Sea and Learn – TARGET	N/A
Texas Behavior Support Initiative	34 Districts
Educational Technology Expo and Library Media Book Fair	300 Educators
Technology Applications Certification Educator Preparation	31 Teachers
Technology Olympics for Students with Visual Impairments	N/A
Technology Planning	N/A
Texas Education Telecommunication Network	687 Participants
Transition	34 Districts

Source: RESC 2 Program Catalog, 2004.

Exhibit 2-8
RESC 2 Services by Center and Cost

Center for Educational Technology		Center for Instructional Support Systems	
Program/Service	**Cost**	**Program/Service**	**Cost**
State Technology Workshops	Fee-based	Bilingual/ESL Education	Co-op
Preview Center	Free	Migrant Education	Free
Bright Ideas	Fee-based	School Health/HIV/Aids Education	Fee-based
T-Star Operations and Training	Fee-based	Family and Community Involvement	Free
TETN Operations	Free	Learn and Serve	Free
Tape Duplication	Fee-based	Safe and Drug Free Schools and Community Program	Entitlement
WEB Master	Free	SDFSC State Initiative	Free
Texas Library Connection	Free	SDFSC Region-Wide	Free
Technology Planning	Free	Support Services	Free
Technical Assistance	Free	Multi-Regional Purchasing Cooperative	Fee-based
NovaNet Collaboration	Free	Public Education Information Management Systems	Fee-based
Collaborative Grant Writing	Free	South Texas Multi-Regional	Fee-based
Textbook Adoption	Free	Regional Service Center Computer Cooperative	Fee-based
Technology Cooperative	Fee-based	Management Information Systems	Fee-based
Library Cooperative	Fee-based	Printing Services	Fee-based
Center for Teaching and Learning		**Center for Professional Development and Assessment**	
Program/Service	**Cost**	**Program/Service**	**Cost**
Advanced Academic Services	Free	Core Subject Areas	Free
Assessment	Free	Board Member Training	Fee-based
Assistive Technology	Free	Accreditation	Free
Autism (statewide conference)	Free	SBDM	Free
Behavior Management and Discipline	Free	Legislative/TEA Updates	Free
Career and Technology Education	Free	Leadership	Fee-based
Child Find	Free	Mentor	Free
Counselors Staff Development	Free	Nutrition	Free
Educator Preparation and Certification	Fee-based	Curriculum	Fee-based
ESL Endorsement	Fee-based	AEIS-It	Fee-based
Inclusion	Free	Dyslexia	Free
Interagency Coordination	Funded	Grants and Development	Free
Learning Disabilities	Free	Texas Assessment Program	Free
Multicultural Education	Free	Early Childhood Education	Fee-based
PPCD Programs	Free	Regional School Improvement	Fee-based
Quality Development	Free		
Section 504	Free		
Severe Disabilities Low Incidence	Free		
Special Education Contact Group	Free		
Speech Masters Program	Fee-based		
Transition	Free		
Visually Impaired	Free		

Source: RESC 2 Programs and Services Guide, July 2004.

CONTRACTED PURCHASING SERVICES

RESC 2 provides a wide-range of contracted, purchased services to client school districts and schools and communicates these services in a variety of means that constitute an exemplary program.

These services' documents are available in hardcopy and for inspection and copying from the RESC 2 Web site. Additionally, each customer and potential customer has access to the purchasing services cooperative via e-mail or a direct line 800 number. The Web site is comprehensive and includes:

- Purchasing department organization and contact personnel;
- Provides direct access to the Multi-Regional Purchasing Cooperative (MRPC) and lists the names and contact persons for its over 70 members;
- Lists all bids;
- Shows contract schedules;
- Current contracts and inclusive dates;
- An invitation for bids; and
- Provisions for vendor registration.

Contracted services are in the areas of Curriculum, Library/Media Services, Technology, Support Services, Early Child Co-Op, Living Materials, Gifted Education, Multi-Regional Purchasing Co-Op, School Improvement, Math/Science Services, Bilingual ESL and Other Individualized Services and are used by districts and schools within the region. RESC 2 has developed a comprehensive Contracted Services and Shared Services Arrangements booklet which contains a compendium of services offered and the necessary procedures for obtaining these services.

In addition, interested potential customers can register for cooperative membership or place information inquiries.

Accomplishment: RESC 2 provides clients via handbooks, booklets, and the Web site comprehensive, important information related to contracted services and shared services arrangements.

TECHNOLOGY SERVICES AND ASSISTANCE

RESC 2 offers a full range of technology services which provide valuable support to member districts and schools resulting in increasing the capacity to provide training to personnel, affording access to purchasing services, and supporting the efficient and economical delivery of other client services and programs.

These services include areas such as RESC Core Technology, Management Information Services, Coastal Bend Network, Coastal Bend Telecommunications Network, Business Account Services, Instructional Media, Services and Internal Data Processing. Technical assistance is provided to schools and school districts in using software in the MIS areas and grade reporting. Teachers are also trained in the application and use of technology in the classroom.

A Technology Cooperative is available to districts and includes areas such as campus technology plans, software selection, network planning, design and troubleshooting, district Web design, and district database design.

The development and application of technology and related services represents an effective and economical approach to meeting clients' needs.

Accomplishment: RESC 2 offers a full range of technological services and technical assistance to schools and school districts.

DETAILED FINDINGS

STRATEGIC PLANNING

Board members are not fully involved in development of the strategic plan and other related planning documents other than the facilities development plan.

There is no policy provision that requires the board's involvement in the development of the plan. Plans are developed by the executive director and staff and based on systematic and annual input from client school districts and schools. The strategic plan and related initiatives are updated annually; however, the board's role is primarily one of review and approval.

The Vision 2005 Strategic Plan contains six critical issues that form the basis for all strategic initiatives. One of these is "--- the ESC-2 will ensure that ongoing, in-depth, results-based evaluation and reporting will be integral to all ESC-2 programs and operations". While this is observed as true regarding operational aspects of the RESC and its services and products, there is no compelling evidence to suggest that board involvement meets this test.

Typically, boards of control establish and implement procedures for providing input and periodic review of major planning documents and related processes. While the board members express general knowledge of major planned initiatives, they do not indicate that they have been involved in the development processes other than site acquisition and facilities development.

RESC 2 should train and involve the Board of Directors in the development of the RESC strategic planning process and establish procedures for input in development and periodic review of the plan.

The implementation of this recommendation should ensure that all Board of Directors are trained and prepared for involvement in the strategic planning process. Additionally, involvement in the planning process ensures that the RESC executive staff will secure a broad range of input in its development.

The executive director and other RESC staff should prepare and schedule a training session for board members in the RESC's planning processes and proposed board involvement. As this recommendation is implemented, the Board of Directors should adopt a policy and related procedures to ensure continued involvement. Furthermore, a portion of each regular meeting agenda should address the status of the plan and related implementation processes.

The process of updating the current Board of Directors should begin with using the annual budget development and approval processes. Using the budget development, review, and approval process as a vehicle for achieving this ensures that board members will have an opportunity for reviewing the relationship between the two documents.

BOARD STANDING COMMITTEE

The Board of Directors does not have standing committees. Such committees are often a means for developing appropriate board involvement in agency or organizational policy and planning development.

The Board of Directors meets every other month for regularly scheduled meetings and other meetings are called as needs arise. MGT consultants do not believe that the board needs to meet more often; however, greater board involvement in planning activities, services development, and essential RESC promotion activity among the region's districts and other stakeholders may well require more individual board member involvement and could result in producing a means by which board members can actively affect the publics and others' understanding of RESC services and products.

As previously noted and confirmed by the participants, the Board of Directors is not actively involved in the development of strategic planning documents. The board's role in this and fiscal matters is limited in scope to a simple review and approval

process. Additionally, many personnel interviewed express concerns that, other than the client stakeholders and possibly TEA personnel, few other parties really understand the role and contributions of the RESCs. This situation, interviewees' state, is partially the result of legislative prohibitions against lobbying by the education community.

Many effective organizations involve the Board of Directors in carefully crafted committee work or ad hoc committee activity which contribute to overall efficiency and serve as an effective tool for overcoming external barriers to success in many areas of concern. One of the areas of concern voiced by the executive director and other RESC personnel relates to strengthening relationships with external audiences (an area addressed by RESC 2 with the employment of a marketing person who has a key responsibility in marketing conferencing services).

RESC 2 should establish, minimally, one standing committee focused on developing external relations. The implementation of this recommendation should lay the groundwork for developing Board of Directors infrastructure to deal with issues related to the perception that important education stakeholders do not adequately understand the nature and purpose of the RESC organization, and related programs and services provided the school districts of Texas (this perception was gained in the initial briefing of consultants and further confirmed in interviews with various RESC personnel).

The implementation of this recommendation is further supported by the fact that the Texas Legislature prohibits education-related personnel from lobbying for legislative support and funding. This recommendation is based upon the premise that current RESCs and their boards are not proactive in promoting RESC value nor are there established working relationships with local school district boards to identify effective means of educating the publics.

This recommendation should be implemented through the following action steps:

- The executive director should review the recommendation with the Board of Directors;
- Once agreed upon, the Board of Directors should direct the Executive Director to prepare the necessary policy and procedures to guide the proposed committee's development and activity; and
- The chair of the Board of Directors should appoint a three member committee assigned the task of implementing the recommendation (i.e., preparing a plan for an RESC board external relations program).

The effective implementation of this recommendation should contribute to making important stakeholders informed supporters of the important services and program work of RESC 2.

The effective development of this standing committee could lead to the establishment of a standing strategic planning committee, resources development committee, or other appropriate board groupings designed to support the RESC administration and deployment of services and programs.

FIELD SERVICE AGENTS

Field service agents provide a valuable service in Region 2 that needs to be continued.

The State Council on Competitive Government (SCCG) conducted a review of RESCs and prepared a January 9, 2004 report that, among a series of recommendations, proposed elimination of RESCs' field service agent positions. The SCCG's recommendation as reported is based on the assumption that the elimination of such positions by five RESCs as a result of recent budget reduction activity provides evidence of a lack of need for field service agents. MGT consultant's review of RESC's historical and current assignments of

responsibilities to these positions did not confirm the findings of the State Council on Competitive Government as regards RESC 2. To the contrary, RESC 2s two field service agent positions (one position is vacant) provide the following services to school districts:

- support in the areas of school finance, particularly for new superintendents in small school districts, districts having lost their finance directors or business agents, and districts experiencing fiscal difficulties;
- provide school board training that is mandated by Texas law;
- work with boards and superintendents in team building;
- work in training new superintendents;
- provide curriculum and instruction program support;
- provide services that TEA is unable to supply due to lack of personnel. These involve such matters as preparing for audits and other types of program reviews;
- available to school boards to temporarily cover vacated business management positions or even superintendent positions; and
- other matters as the need may arise.

The executive director reports that the field service agent position is an essential element in the RESCs organizational structure and they will continue to work toward filling vacant positions. RESC 2 intentionally seeks to employ veteran principals and/or superintendents in field service agent positions because of the background they bring to the position. As former principals/superintendents they are in an eminent position to serve as mentors and advisors to these key school district personnel.

Some personnel interviewed expressed the opinion that retired superintendents are employed to these positions to simply provide additional income. MGT consultants could not verify this opinion. MGT consultants find that the individual filling the position (one position was vacant at the time of the on-site visit and in process of being staffed by a person with superintendence background and a fiancé specialist. Additionally, plans are underway to staff a position with an individual possessing curriculum and instruction background) for RESC 2 can provide documentation that they actually perform duties over a time period in excess of their contractual responsibilities. This is due, at least in part, by the driving time required because of the 10,000 plus square mile size of the region.

RESC 2 should continue the use of the field service agent position to support RESC 2 client school districts, their school boards, and superintendents. The implementation of this recommendation should result in continuing a service that the superintendents and executive RESC personnel state is vital. The rationale employed by the State Council on Competitive Government in its January 2004 report is based on an incomplete analysis of how other RESCs utilize the field service agent positions to meet assessed client needs.

USE OF SURVEY RESULTS

The RESC does not have an institutionalized process for following up on survey results or responses.

The member district support reports' on annual client satisfaction surveys is varied (see **Exhibit 2-9**), particularly in the areas of responsive to the service needs of our district (#10) and highly efficient and effective (#8).

Exhibit 2-9
Survey of RESC 2 School District Superintendents
Perceptions About Services Provided by the
Regional Education Service Centers (RESCs)

Survey Item	(SA+A)/(D+SD)*
1. Our district frequently utilizes services provided by our RESC.	94/0
2. The services provided by our RESC are critical to the success of our district's programs and operations.	81/0
3. Many of the current RESC services to districts could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by TEA.	25/69
4. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by other sources such as universities or private vendors.	19/69
5. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by allocating the dollars to districts and allowing them to purchase services from the most appropriate sources.	13/63
6. Many of the current RESC services to districts duplicate services provided by TEA.	13/63
7. Many of the services offered by RESCs around the state are critical to the success of many districts.	88/0
8. The RESC in our region is highly efficient and effective.	75/13
9. The RESC role in providing services to districts should be expanded.	69/6
10. The RESC in our region is highly responsive to the service needs of our district.	75/13
11. The RESC in our region provides quality services.	75/0
12. There are adequate channels of communication with the RESC in our region.	75/0
13. The RESC in our region is responsive to complaints.	75/0
14. The RESC in our region is responsive to requests for services.	88/6
15. The RESC in our region listens and tries to meet the needs of the school district.	88/6

* (SA+A)/(D+SD): Strongly Agree + Agree/Disagree + Strongly Disagree
Source: Prepared by MGT of America, July 2004.

Annually, all school district superintendents and a sample of principals and teachers are surveyed to determine the degree of satisfaction/dissatisfaction with RESC 2 services and programs. This survey titled *Texas Regional Education Service Centers Client Satisfaction Survey* is divided into sections reflecting responses from each of the populations and concluded with a provision for specific comments. The topics surveyed include:

- services and training to support regular education program services,
- services and training to support programs for special populations,
- district operation services and school board training,
- instructional technology and student performance services,
- technology and data services,
- ratings for ESC staff members, and
- other items including comments sections.

This evaluation of services provides data for the needs assessment process. The report concludes with noting that in general, superintendents, principals, and teachers are highly satisfied with RESC staff and services. Survey responses and interviews could not be validated during the on-site review but provide concerns that should be pursued by the RESC.

MGT survey in **Exhibit 2-9** provides perceptions of superintendents about RESC 2 services. **Exhibit 2-10** provides all superintendents responses statewide and shows the following:

Exhibit 2-10
Survey of all School District Superintendents
Perceptions About Services Provided by the
Regional Education Service Centers (RESCs)

Survey Item	(SA+A)/(D+SD)*
1. Our district frequently utilizes services provided by our RESC.	98/1
2. The services provided by our RESC are critical to the success of our district's programs and operations.	94/2
3. Many of the current RESC services to districts could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by TEA.	8/83
4. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by other sources such as universities or private vendors.	5/88
5. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by allocating the dollars to districts and allowing them to purchase services from the most appropriate sources.	11/78
6. Many of the current RESC services to districts duplicate services provided by TEA.	5/89
7. Many of the services offered by RESCs around the state are critical to the success of many districts.	96/1
8. The RESC in our region is highly efficient and effective.	93/3
9. The RESC role in providing services to districts should be expanded.	69/8
10. The RESC in our region is highly responsive to the service needs of our district.	93/4
11. The RESC in our region provides quality services.	95/2
12. There are adequate channels of communication with the RESC in our region.	94/3
13. The RESC in our region is responsive to complaints.	90/3
14. The RESC in our region is responsive to requests for services.	94/2
15. The RESC in our region listens and tries to meet the needs of the school district.	95/2

Source: Prepared By MGT Of America, July 2004.
** (SA+A)/(D+SD): Strongly Agree + Agree/Disagree + Strongly Disagree*

- 19 percent of RESC 2 respondents Strongly Agreed/Agreed with "Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by other sources such as universities or private vendors" while only five percent of superintendents in all RESCs responded likewise;

- 75 percent of RESC 2 respondents Strongly Agreed/Agreed with "The RESC in our region is highly efficient and effective" while 93 percent of superintendents in all RESCs responded likewise;

- 75 percent of RESC 2 respondents Strongly Agreed/Agreed with "The RESC in our region is highly responsive to the service needs of our district" while 93 percent of superintendents in all RESCs responded likewise; and

- 75 percent of RESC 2 respondents Strongly Agreed/Agreed with "The RESC in our region provides quality services" while 95 percent of superintendents in all RESCs responded likewise.

The survey responses are not the sole source for expression of some dissatisfaction. MGT consultants' interviews with some personnel indicate a similar pattern. Additionally, a review of the 2001–2002 Evaluation of Services by the Texas Center for Educational Research (TCER) provides a comment that suggests that an examination of staffing issues may be warranted. Such an issue could be partially related to some survey responses that are lower than the average for all RESCs.

Effective practices leading to ensuring maximum client satisfaction include

systematic analysis and follow-up on customer satisfaction information.

RESC 2 should develop systematic follow-up procedures to survey results and develop and implement strategies to effectively resolve the validated issues. The implementation of this recommendation should result in the development of a method for following up on all survey results to validate responses, particularly those that raise questions regarding program or services effectiveness. Additionally, this should result in establishing effective means for remedying identified issues and improving positive response rates. The results of this activity should become an integral part of the annual assessment processes and RESCs strategic planning initiative.

CONTRACT WITH LEGAL FIRM

There is no written contract to detail out the terms and conditions of legal services provided by the law firm representing the board whereas it is a standard practice of agencies and education organizations to have such documents.

Board Policy BDD states that the board may retain an attorney or law firm. Best practices provide that services to be performed by the attorney and/or firm and reasonable compensation to be paid by the board should be set forth in a contract between the board and the attorney or law firm. RESC 2 Board of Directors has no written contract with the law firm appointed to represent the service center.

The failure to have this contract places the board and RESC in jeopardy of a major misunderstanding regarding fees for services. Further, misunderstandings could occur regarding how expenses are to be computed and reimbursed.

The contract should, minimally, contain the following provisions:

- compensation terms for attorneys, paralegals, clerks, and other firm personnel services, including billing cycle;
- conditions for reimbursement for expenses;
- if a retainer is to be paid, the services to be included for the fixed fees;
- procedures to be used by the firm if outside counsel is required; and
- other provisions as deemed necessary.

The RESC 2 Board of Directors should develop and approve a written contract with the law firm representing the RESC 2 and the Board of Directors. The executive director should negotiate with the law firm and establish the services to be performed and compensation to be paid. A contract containing the services to be performed and compensation to be paid should be taken to the Board of Directors for approval. An approved, written contract with the law firm representing the board should be maintained and updated annually.

GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING

RESC 2 is taking the first steps to develop specific counseling and guidance assistance and training services and is resulting in identifying a staff member assigned responsibility for establishing a stakeholder group of counselors to assist with defining needed supportive services.

The center has made significant strides in addressing student performance, curriculum guidance, and monitoring the needs of teachers. These initiatives all focus on the students and involve the academic coordinators. These efforts, however, have not considered the impact of guidance counselors on student performance. In response to this identified need, the RESC has initiated the development of support services for guidance counselors in the region.

Some area counselors participate on dropout and attendance task forces, therefore may attend trainings that can be developed and offered. Additionally, many counselors are responsible for managing student discipline matters and have related training needs in

effective methods for handling hostile students.

Other RESCs and larger school districts throughout the country have established programs to provide guidance personnel the most current methods for carrying out their responsibilities. RESC 2's state of the art technology can provide economical and efficient means for delivering training and other information to school districts' guidance personnel and represents a best practices strategy.

RESC 2 should continue to develop and begin providing counseling and guidance support services for school districts. Implementation of this recommendation should result in the RESC assigning the position, not only the establishment of the stakeholder group but also the responsibility for coordinating the work of the counselors, academic coordinators and social workers.

This individual should, in collaboration with the stakeholder group, develop a plan to combine the region and districts' resources into a unified approach to address the counselors' needs. Counselors, social workers, academic coordinators and principals should be involved in developing the plan.

The development and delivery of these supportive services should result in preparing counselors and other to more effectively carry out assigned responsibilities, therefore, affording both students and classroom teachers support. Annually, the services should be evaluated and adjustments made in response to assessed progress and needs.

This identification of needs can be accomplished with existing resources and at no additional cost to the RESC. However, when services needed are defined the cost must be estimated and methods for funding must be determined. The most practical approach could be the formation of a counseling cooperative with member school districts sharing the expenses.

CROSS-TRAINING OF PERSONNEL

RESC 2 does not maintain a system for cross-training personnel in complementary positions which could result in reduced organizational efficiency or other difficulties.

Several staff members report an awareness of their colleagues' responsibilities, and that they frequently assume some of those tasks when an individual is absent or unavailable. This practice is handled informally, however, and staff members have not been specifically trained to assume the responsibilities of their co-workers. This is true even for positions that have functions that frequently overlap, such as the administrative assistants for payroll and human resources, or the education specialists for Bilingual/ESL and Migrant Education.

Failure to cross-train personnel in key support positions can result in neglecting to complete important tasks including reports and other documents. This can lead to loss of revenue, reduction in employee productivity, morale issues, and other problems.

Effective organizations anticipate the potential difficulties resulting from the unexpected absences of key personnel and, as a result, develop means to ensure that cross-training is provided or some effective method for carrying out essential responsibilities is formulated.

RESC 2 should provide for systematic cross-training of personnel in complementary or overlapping positions and develop a means for carrying out essential responsibilities when key personnel are absent from duty.

Through cross-training, RESC 2 could both maximize efficiency and ensure that essential responsibilities can be appropriately assumed in the event of untimely or extended absences. This effort should focus on positions in which there is a natural overlap, and where individuals have already begun to share responsibilities. These include: the executive director's executive secretary, the administrative assistant for payroll, backup for human resources; the education specialists for

Bilingual/ESL, Migrant Education, and State/Compensatory Education; Safe and Secure Schools, and Safe and Drug Free Schools; complementary personnel in the Educational Technology Department; and complementary personnel in the Computer Services Department.

For those positions that do not have overlapping or complimentary positions available comprehensive checklists and detailed description of how to carry out essential responsibilities should be developed and provided to specific identified personnel. These checklists and details should be reviewed periodically to ensure that they are accurate and current.

This process should be scheduled to commence upon approval of the recommendation by the RESC leadership.

WEB-BASED JOB APPLICATIONS

RESC 2 does not include job applications and other related forms on the Web site in a format that permits their completion and submission electronically.

The Web site does contain job vacancy listings, sample forms, procedures, and other very useful and important human resource related information. These forms can be downloaded, manually or electronically completed but no provision is made for electronic submission. Consequently, all applicants must make a special trip to the center to deliver materials and this process then creates additional disruption of employee's work as they serve walk-in personnel.

As organizations strive to streamline operations and reduce costs they are turning to new technologies. RESC 3, in Victoria, provides an extremely comprehensive Web site that accomplishes this purpose and increases the efficiency of staff assigned human resources related tasks. The RESC 3 Web site allows applicants to complete and submit job application forms and other documents online. This results in saving the RESC personnel time that would otherwise be spent processing walk-in customers. Additionally, applicants are spared the travel and waiting time required of a visit to the RESC facility.

RESC 2 should review and consider adopting the processes and procedures used by RESC 3 for the submission and processing of job applications and other human resource activity via their Web site. The implementation of this recommendation should result in streamlining the job application processes for RESC positions. Additionally, this same system should work to conserve time for personnel in the school districts who are assigned responsibilities for receiving and processing job applications. Over time, the use of the Web site for completion and submission of forms should reduce the number of walk-in's to offices. In order that RESC 2 staff be able to provide current and innovative services to their customers, under the current reduction in staff circumstances, the administration should consider upgrading the human resources services offered via the RESC Web site as one more means of making adjusting workloads.

ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE

RESC 2 has positive financial and program audits for the past four years resulting in only very minor recommendations for improvement. The 2003 audit reported unusually high accounts receivables; approximately $500,000 as compared to previous years figures typically in the $150,000 range.

RESC 2 is required by law to have an independent financial audit done annually. The audit for each of the past four years was reviewed. Each audit contained a *Report on Compliance and on Internal Control over Financial Reporting Based on an Audit of Financial Statements Performed in Accordance with Government Auditing Standards and a Report on Compliance with Requirements Applicable to each Major Program and Internal Control over Compliance In Accordance With OMB Circular A-133*. RESC 2 was found to have

complied each year, in all material respects, with requirements that are applicable to each of its major federal programs. In each year's audit, there were no matters noted involving the internal control over financial reporting and its operation that were considered to be material weaknesses.

The accounts receivables from member school districts and schools as well as other customers rose in response to revenue reductions that were not entirely offset by planned reductions in expenditures. Many of the accounts are from small schools with very limited resources.

This increase in accounts receivables issue was discussed with the Board of Directors and the administration has proceeded to address the issue. Acceptable practices suggests that early involvement of clients in identifying accounts payable and their status is a preferred action to effectively deal with such situations.

RESC 2 should establish and implement procedures to reduce accounts receivables at year's end. Implementation of this recommendation should result in the development of standard procedures for evaluating accounts receivables and the protocol for minimizing the fiscal impact at the end of each fiscal year. The procedures should be developed through the appointment by the executive director of a representative task group. The task group should prepare recommendations for review, amending, and approval by the RESC leadership team and forwarding to the Board of Directors for subsequent review and approval. The final approved procedures should become a part of RESC 2 policy and provide administrative direction to reduce or minimize future exceptionally large receivables.

FIXED ASSETS

The RESC has not established and implemented procedures to ensure the control of all fixed assets resulting in the potential for a failure to be able to be fully accountable.

The Independent Auditors *Report* in 2000 noted a concern regarding fixed asset inventory. The auditors stated that "We strongly recommend the strengthening of internal controls involving location of all fixed assets. In the Independent Auditors Report in 2003, it is stated, We strongly recommend the strengthening of internal controls over fixed asset accounting. We suggest that the subsidiary fixed asset register be maintained current and that all fixed asset additions and deletions are recorded in a timely manner."

The proper accounting of assets is an important process designed to reduce lost and unaccounted for property and is generally a standard, required practice.

RESC 2 should establish and implement procedures to ensure that fixed assets can be properly accounted for at all times. Implementation of this recommendation should result in the proper accounting for fixed assets. The Finance Department should coordinate the development of a process which assures that all fixed assets are on the fixed asset inventory and are properly inventoried and accounted for at all times. RESC 2 should contact other RESCs that have appropriate controls (such as RESC 3, 6 or 19) to obtain copies of their procedures. All personnel who are involved with fixed assets should be involved in the review of existing appropriate procedures and the development of RESC's procedures. Upon completion, all personnel involved with fixed assets should be in-serviced regarding their responsibility for the fixed asset inventory accounting procedures.

The implementation cost would be time and effort in developing the process. There is the potential to create savings by eliminating the replacement of lost or unaccounted for fixed assets.

ASSET INVENTORY PROCESS

Under the current procedures, assets with a value of under $5,000 are not formally inventoried resulting in no formal means for

accounting for valuable equipment having values less than $5,000.

The TEA has set as a guideline the minimum capitalization limit of $5,000 for assets. However, a service center may establish accounting policies with a lower capitalization limit for items recorded as fixed assets.

RESC 2 inventory contains only assets that cost $5,000 or more. The RESC should maintain accountability for capital assets even if it does not meet the capitalization policy. For example, certain audiovisual or computer equipment might not be recorded as a fixed asset, however, a listing of such assets and their location could be maintained for control and accountability purposes. These types of equipment are traditional targets for theft and represent substantial replacement costs.

RESC 2 should establish a board-approved asset inventory process for assets valued less than $5,000. Implementation of this recommendation should result in more effective control over equipment with less than $5,000 value, such as laptop computers and other such equipment that is difficult to account for or is often a target for thieves. The Board of Directors should establish the type and value of capital assets for which they want the service center to be accountable. All categories of items designated by the board should be inventoried and labeled. This would include those items already purchased by the RESC.

The only cost would be time and effort in setting up the inventory list plus the cost of equipment labels. Labels used for inventory valued at $5,000 or more can be used for this purpose and are available. There is the potential to save dollars by minimizing the loss of fixed assets.

ELECTRONIC SURVEYS

An evaluation of services sent out from the MIS Department to districts by e-mail had a poor response as have other surveys resulting in the continued use of paper survey instruments.

Only five out of 42 districts responded. This poor response rate may be indicative of a need for additional training in technology use and applications or simply be a result of personnel not being accustomed to responding to online documents. MIS is developing a follow-up to the survey to determine seek information on the reasons for a low response rate to the electronic survey.

MGT interviews and an examination of records shows that paper survey instruments are used by all RESC areas except MIS.

Best practices and the current state of the RESC's technology dictates that the most effective and efficient means for conducting surveys is though electronic means.

RESC 2 should establish a plan for conducting all surveys electronically and include strategies for ensuring acceptable response rates. The implementation of this recommendation should result in establishing a plan that will permit all RESC surveys to be conducted electronically and include strategies addressing adequate response rates. Further, implementation should permit the economical and efficient codification and analysis of response to surveys. Accomplishing this should lead to improving the overall use of distant technologies to improve efficiencies in administration and providing services.

The implementation of this recommendation should involve establishing a task group composed of representative of a cross section of member districts and charter schools. This task group should be charged with identifying the various barriers to survey response rates and prepare recommended strategies to overcome identified obstacles. A plan of action should be developed and piloted with additional modifications made as a result.

FISCAL IMPACT

None.

CHAPTER 3:

VICTORIA

CHAPTER 3

VICTORIA

Regional Education Service Center 3, located in Victoria, Texas operates out of a modern facility that is equipped with state-of-the-art technology. Additionally, a satellite office is located in Wharton, Texas. The satellite office houses the Early Childhood Intervention staff. RESC 3 serves 40 school districts and 1 charter school enrolling a total of 54,982 students in average daily attendance on 156 campuses. The RESC encompasses 11 Texas counties covering 10,833 square miles.

Exhibit 3-1 provides information comparing all RESCs. An analysis of the exhibit's data shows that RESC 3:

- ranks 17th in student membership among the 20 RESCs and nearly tied with RESC 8;
- along with RESC 10, 17, and 18 has a White ethnic population of students approximately equal to the average for all RESCs at 39.8 percent;
- has the eighth largest percentage of Hispanic population students and compares at 44 percent to 42.7 percent for the average for all RESCs, and
- has the ninth largest African American population at 10.8 percent and is slightly less than the average for all RESCs (14.3).

Services to the clients are rendered through 101 full-time and seven part-time employees including one executive director, two deputy directors, and three coordinators in the Programs and Services Division, one coordinator for Technology Department and one field service agent position (see **Exhibit 3-4** for greater detail).

The stated RESC 3 mission, reported on the Web site, is "to be a catalyst for improving the performance of all learners by promoting excellence and equity." The vision states that "we are committed to providing world-class services and products that ensure students excel individually in a global economy, as they become contributing members in an ever-changing society."

The mission and vision of the organization are carried out through the RESC formalized planning processes that emphasize data-driven decisions. To this end, the RESC is fully committed to a Quality Management System driven by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). This has resulted in the development of an RESC 3 Scorecard and related Scorecard Strategy Map.

The RESC 3 Web site includes a listing of the eight-member Board of Directors, RESC personnel, and details relating to districts and the charter school served, along with a comprehensive list and description of programs and services. Additionally, a comprehensive human resources section provides job listings for all client districts and a means for electronically filing job applications.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Members of the RESC 3 Board of Directors possess a variety of backgrounds ranging from a physician and other private business interests to professional educators.
- RESC 3 administrators and the Board of Directors have maintained an up-to-date policy and procedures manual at a minimum cost.
- RESC services and programs receive high marks and strong support from clients, reporting that services and programs are of a high quality and that the RESC is effectively providing support.

Exhibit 3-1
Student Composition of Each RESC
2002–03 School Year

RESC Number	Regional Student Membership	Percent African American	Percent Hispanic	Percent White	Percent Other	Percent Economically Disadvantaged	Percent LEP
1	328,518	0.2	96.1	3.3	0.4	84.5	38.5
2	106,986	3.7	67.6	27.4	1.4	58.6	6.2
3	54,982	10.8	44.0	43.8	1.3	51.6	4.9
4	924,052	21.5	39.3	33.7	5.6	50.2	17.2
5	84,875	31.2	8.4	57.6	2.7	49.2	3.7
6	142,153	13.9	19.4	64.9	1.8	42.1	7.0
7	159,855	21.2	15.7	62.2	0.9	50.0	7.5
8	55,911	23.0	10.9	65.1	1.1	51.7	5.7
9	40,289	9.1	16.9	71.7	2.3	44.7	3.1
10	635,621	20.8	33.1	41.1	5.0	45.4	17.2
11	446,247	13.4	24.2	58.3	4.2	36.0	11.1
12	138,152	23.2	21.9	52.7	2.2	49.6	5.5
13	288,335	9.6	36.3	51.0	3.1	39.2	10.3
14	45,834	6.7	27.5	64.7	1.0	49.7	2.7
15	49,286	3.6	49.4	46.2	0.7	56.4	7.4
16	77,449	5.5	36.6	56.1	1.7	51.5	8.6
17	78,236	8.2	48.9	41.9	1.0	55.8	5.1
18	76,139	5.6	54.4	39.0	1.0	54.9	11.1
19	163,170	2.7	87.2	9.1	1.0	74.7	30.5
20	343,821	7.0	64.9	26.6	1.5	61.6	10.4
State Total	**4,239,911**	**14.3**	**42.7**	**39.8**	**3.2**	**51.9**	**14.9**

Source: TEA 2002–03 AEIS RESC reports.

- RESC 3's organizational pattern represents an efficient and cost-effective method for ensuring that services and programs are provided to clients and that employees are highly satisfied with their jobs.
- RESC 3 uses an internationally recognized planning system for developing programs and services.
- RESC 3 plays a key role in the development of the Balanced Score Card and serves as the central collection point for information.
- With limited resources, RESC 3 is providing for its space needs and is using its facilities appropriately for delivering services.
- The RESC 3 uses technology efficiently to offer its customers cost-effective ways to improve learning opportunities.
- RESC 3 has a comprehensive, data-driven process for evaluating the quality and use of all programs and service offerings.
- RESC 3 develops a successful, data-driven, written plan of action to assist low performing schools in member districts.
- RESC 3 continuously evaluates its programs to ensure appropriateness, efficiency, effectiveness, and whether the center is meeting the needs of its customers.
- Although state funding has decreased, RESC 3 continues to increase services in the program and services areas and provide technical assistance.

- RESC 3 is meeting the needs of its customers by creating a cooperative that assists with recruiting qualified, degreed, and certified teachers to the region.
- RESC 3 communicates important employment and job information by maintaining a comprehensive and easily accessible *Personnel Procedures Manual* and user friendly Web site.
- The leadership and staff of RESC 3 have developed a positive work environment that supports employee satisfaction and dedication.
- RESC employee job descriptions are in an updated condition and employee evaluations are conducted annually.
- RESC 3 effectively collaborates with Region 4 to offer school districts a variety of cost-saving purchasing options.
- RESC 3 is a leader in the development and implementation of technology among the 20 RESCs.
- RESC 3 MIS support emphasis on data quality in the PEIMS programs results in zero percent error rates.

FINDINGS

- The RESC 3 Board of Directors do not have standing committees. Such committees are often a means for developing appropriate board involvement in agency organizational policy and planning development, promoting the services or value of an organization, and other activities.
- The field service agent in Region 3 provides valuable services that should be continued.
- There is no written contract setting out the terms and conditions of legal services provided by the law firm representing the board. It is a standard practice of agencies and education organizations to have such documents.
- RESC 3 does not have a facilities master plan that can be directly translated into immediate and long-term projects. The lack of this master plan creates a series of difficulties, including not having addressed long-term parking needs and raising questions regarding long-term retrofitting of facilities to meet the rapidly changing demands of modern technology.
- RESC 3 does not conduct utility management audits resulting in a lack of data to support decisions on energy management and related potential cost savings.
- RESC 3 has no work plan to increase district participation in its Migrant Education Program. Due to involved reporting issues required by migrant program schools, some districts have expressed an interest in forming an SSA. RESC 3 offers assistance to any district that chooses to become a program district.
- RESC 3 does not have a grant writer on staff nor has grant writing responsibilities been assigned to any specific position.
- RESC 3 is not the fiscal agent for the federally-funded Head Start Program. The agency has the potential to capitalize on additional funding by acting as a fiduciary agent for Head Start. The RESC had applied during the open application period, but was not successful. Other RESCs and school districts around the country often serve as the fiscal agents for these types of programs and other federal or grant-driven projects and services.
- RESC 3 has no system for cross-training personnel in key support positions except for the business office.
- Small districts often lack the personnel and resources needed to efficiently perform all required business functions. RESC 3 assists some districts in the area of finance and bookkeeping. However, there are

other smaller districts that could potentially benefit from additional assistance.

- RESC has not complied with cash deposit requirements as recommended by auditors.
- Some school administrators and other school district staff do not maximize technology use resulting in an identified need for additional training.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 3-1: Establish a standing committee structure of the RESC 3 Board of Directors.** The implementation of this recommendation should result in a careful analysis of potential board committee activity designed to promote the work of the RESC and support important planning activity. The implementation of this recommendation can lay the groundwork for developing the RESC 3 Board of Directors infrastructure to deal with issues related to the perception that important education stakeholders do not adequately understand the nature and purpose of the RESC organization and related programs and services provided to the school districts of Texas. This perception was gained in the initial briefing of consultants and further confirmed in interviews with various RESC personnel. This is further supported by the fact that the Texas Legislature prohibits education-related personnel from lobbying for legislative support and funding. This recommendation is based upon the premise that current RESCs and their boards are not proactive in promoting RESC value nor are there established working relationships with local school district boards to identify effective means of educating the public. This recommendation may lead to the development of one or more of the following committees:
  - strategic planning;
  - cooperatives' development;
  - finance;
  - facilities; or
  - external relations.

  This recommendation should be implemented through the following steps:

  - The executive director should review the recommendation with the Region 3 Board of Directors.
  - Once agreed upon, the Board of Directors should direct the Executive Director to prepare the necessary policy and procedures to guide the proposed committee(s) development and activity.
  - Potential committee membership should be identified with attention to involvement of member school district representation.
  - The executive director should identify an RESC liaison for each established committee.
  - The chair of the RESC 3 Board of Directors should appoint a three-member committee assigned the task of implementing the recommendation—that is, preparing a plan for an RESC board external relations program.

  The effective implementation of this recommendation can contribute to making stakeholders informed supporters of the services and program work of RESC 3 and provide for policy-level board involvement.

- **Recommendation 3-2: Continue the use of the field service agent position to support RESC 3 member school districts, their school boards, and superintendents.** The

implementation of this recommendation can result in continuing a service that the superintendents and executive RESC personnel consider vital. The rationale employed by the State Council on Competitive Government in its January 2004 report is based on an incomplete analysis of how other RESCs use field service agents.

- **Recommendation 3-3: Develop and approve a written contract with the law firm representing the RESC 3 and the Board of Directors.** The executive director should negotiate with the law firm and establish the services to be performed and compensation to be paid. A contract containing the services to be performed and compensation to be paid should be taken to the RESC 3 Board of Directors for approval. An approved, written contract with the law firm representing the board should be maintained and updated annually. The contract should, minimally, contain the following provisions:

  - compensation terms for attorneys, paralegals, clerks, and other firm personnel services, including billing cycle;
  - conditions for reimbursement for expenses;
  - if a retainer is to be paid, the services to be included for the fixed fees;
  - procedures to be used by the firm if outside counsel is required; and
  - other provisions as deemed necessary.

- **Recommendation 3-4: Conduct a facilities analysis and incorporate results into a long-range facilities master plan.** The implementation of this recommendation should result in a useable long-range facilities use master plan. The plan should include specific recommendations that reflect the identification of deferred maintenance needs, documented cost estimates and a timeline to address these recommendations. Development of the plan should be coordinated with the Board of Directors. Once the plan has been completed, it should be reviewed and updated annually and approved by the RESC 3 Board of Directors.

- **Recommendation 3-5: Conduct utility management audits.** The implementation of this recommendation should result in conserving energy with resulting savings in expenditures. Conducting utility audits for the service center and providing guidance to school districts on use of utility audits should produce much needed increased efficiency and economies for Region 3. Typically organizations can secure assistance with utility management audits from a variety of sources. The RESC should contact the local public utilities service provider for assistance. If the public utilities provider does not offer this service, then the RESC should turn to the private sector providers such as Honeywell Corporation or Johnston Controls Corporation. These types of firms usually offer the audit at no cost to the organization with optional retrofitting services paid for through identified savings as they occur.

- **Recommendation 3-6: Reassign responsibilities among the migrant support positions to focus on developing a work plan to increase district participation.** The implementation of this recommendation should result in providing resources to permit the development of a district participation plan. Additional emphasis in the developed plan should be placed on providing quality services to non-participating school districts. There is

an unmeet need of at least 386 identified students in school districts that should be participating in the program and using the services provided by RESC 3. This recommendation should result in the center surveying other RESCs in Texas and other states with large migrant programs to identify existing programs that have resulted in improved district participation.

- **Recommendation 3-7: Examine RESC 3 staffing levels to see if grant writer responsibilities can be created and assigned in order to increase grant opportunities for the RESC and member districts.** The implementation of this recommendation can result in generating additional revenue for the RESC and its member school districts. The revenues can compensate the RESC for its investment in grant writing activity and related training provided to school district personnel. These assigned responsibilities can focus primarily on writing grants for RESC 3 and member districts. Additionally, this can permit the development and provision of training in grant writing and development. The grant specialist should also work as a technical advisor and increase available RESC provided services to school districts.

- **Recommendation 3-8: Investigate the federal Head Start Program and other opportunities in Region 3 and determine whether or not RESC 3 can apply for and obtain fiduciary responsibility for the program to enhance revenue.** Although RESC 3 was not a successful previous applicant for Head Start, a careful study of strategies to be designated should occur. Additionally, the implementation of this recommendation should involve an examination of all other possible future options to serve as a program fiscal agent. In other Regional Education Service Centers, Head Start has provided much needed revenue to sustain the service center. This new service line can provide additional funding to RESC 3 and result in providing valuable services to the Region 3 communities.

- **Recommendation 3-9: Provide for systematic cross-training of personnel in key positions.** Through cross-training, RESC 3 could both maximize efficiency and ensure that essential responsibilities can be appropriately assumed in the event of untimely or extended absences. This effort can focus on positions in which there is a natural overlap, and where individuals have already begun to share responsibilities. These include: the executive director's executive assistant; payroll; the education coordinators, and State/Compensatory Education specialists; and complementary personnel in the Computer Services Department. This process should be scheduled to commence upon approval of the recommendation by the RESC leadership.

- **Recommendation 3-10: Conduct a feasibility study to determine if a finance cooperative organization pattern for small districts would be beneficial**. Personnel from within the Finance Division can conduct a study to determine which districts have difficulties handling financial and business affairs because of the lack of or a shortage of qualified personnel on staff. Once this determination has been made, the districts identified can be invited to an information sharing meeting. A task force can be established to determine if a finance cooperative could effectively be developed and which finance services can be offered. This study can include

reviewing the option of using a large district capacity to provide a group of small school districts with some or all fiscal services. This can result in small districts outsourcing identified services to the larger district and reducing costs and increasing efficiencies.

- **Recommendation 3-11: Ensure that cash deposits are not undercollateralized.** The implementation of this recommendation can eliminate the undercollatorization problem. The Finance Department should monitor the principal balance of the pledged mortgage-backed securities to assure that it does not decrease below the appropriate level. An annual report on the status of collatorization along with other fiscal data should be provided to the board of directors for informative purposes.

- **Recommendation 3-12: Market and provide essential training in the advantages and use of technology applications offered by RESC 3.** The implementation of this recommendation should result in providing technology application information to school districts and schools, establishing additional training sessions, and increasing efficiencies in job performance for newly trained users. The marketing materials can be developed internally by the RESC staff and distributed to schools and school districts through existing means. These include the courier system and personnel who visit the school districts and schools as a part of their regularly assigned responsibilities.

DETAILED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

BOARD MEMBERSHIP

Membership on the Board of Directors of the RESC 3 is representative of both private and public sector interests with both experienced and new members included.

Exhibit 3-2 shows the following:

- one member, the charter school representative, is a local physician;
- four are retired educators with one of the four in business;
- two are retired private sector business persons one of whom held an executive management position with a large firm;
- one member is an insurance company representative; and
- in all, four have formal education teaching and/or management experiences while four are private sector professionals or other representatives of the private sector.

Attendance at a scheduled RESC 3 Board of Directors meeting and interviews with RESC 3 Board of Directors indicate that members have a clear understanding of their respective roles and the distinctions between the policy and approval of recommendations' processes and the function of the RESC administration. Furthermore, where requested by the administration, board members provide essential support for the development of services to clients and the planning and funding of necessary facilities.

Membership on the RESC 3 Board of Directors shows a cross-section of board experiences as reflected in **Exhibit 3-2**. Furthermore, board members possess a variety of backgrounds ranging from a physician, insurance representative, and other private business interests to professional educators.

Accomplishment: Members of the RESC 3 Board of Directors possess a variety of backgrounds ranging from a physician and other private business interests to professional educators.

Exhibit 3-2
RESC 3 Board of Directors
June 2004

Name	Title	District	Term Expires	Length of Service as of 5/04	Occupation
Dr. Rolando Arafiles		Charter Schools	2005	0	Physician
Mrs. Shirley Blundell	Vice Chair	Yoakum	2005	11	Retired Educator
Mr. David Bowman		Goliad	2006	13	Retired DuPont Corporation
Mr. Reggie Brisco	Secty	Sheridan	2004	9	Insurance Representative
Mr. Ronald Flournoy	Chair	Port Lavaca	2004	4	Retired Alcoa Plant Manager
Mrs. Sandra Kimball		Bay City	2006	1	Retired Educator
Mr. Lloyd Nelson		Louise	2005	2	Retired Educator; President, Nelson Flyers, Inc.
Mr. Wilbert Treybig		Victoria	2005	5	Retired Educator

Source: RESC 3, Executive Director, 2004.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The RESC 3 Policy and Procedures Manual is current and up-to-date reflecting a condition that is untypical of many organizational policy and procedural documents. Additionally, RESC 3, as a result of ISO (International Organization for Standardization) Quality Management System planning has developed detailed operational and procedures documents.

The RESC contracts with the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) for regular updates to its policy manual. An examination of board meeting minutes shows that routinely the administration provides recommendations for updating and including new provisions based upon the TASB information. The service is provided to the RESC at an annual cost of $800, a very nominal amount (some districts in other states such as Florida pay up to $4,000 per year for such services from private vendors and in two instances consortiums pay from $10,000 to $12,000 per year for updates to a model manual from which districts can select policies and adapt to their particular circumstances). RESC representatives report that TASB will be providing an online manual from which updates may be drawn for a one-time set-up fee of $1,800 and annually at the regular subscription price.

MGT consultants' review of policy manuals for various educational clients seldom finds policy manuals maintained in such a good condition. The process for monitoring policy is time-consuming and often is reported as not having a high priority. RESC 3 has overcome these barriers.

Accomplishment: RESC 3 administration and the Board of Directors have maintained an up-to-date policy and procedures manual at a minimum cost.

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Member districts report remarkably strong support for RESC 3 services and programs, and state that services and programs are of a high quality.

During 2003–04, RESC 3 had 22 superintendent's meetings and 11 advisory committee meetings. Additionally, superintendent study groups, executive committee meetings, superintendent cluster meetings, and various advisory committees met regularly. These advisory groups included Career and Technology, Media and Technology, Safe and Drug Free Schools and

Communities, TAKS Data Disagregating Program Advisory Committee, Texas Beginning Educator Support System, Title III English Language Acquisition, and others.

Interviews with RESC 3 personnel and board members, and the MGT survey of superintendents, show that RESC 3 is highly responsive to client feedback and requests for services. When asked to respond to the statement, "The RESC in our region is responsive to complaints," 100 percent of the respondents indicated that they strongly agreed or agreed. In addition, overall survey responses to the MGT survey provided exceptional support for RESC 3.

Exhibit 3-3 provides the supporting responses for Region 3.

Exhibit 3-3
Survey of School District Superintendents
RESC 3 Respondents
Perceptions about services provided by the
Regional Education Service Centers (RESCs)

Statement	Percentage (SA+A)/(D+SD)*
1. Our district frequently utilizes services provided by our RESC.	100/0
2. The services provided by our RESC are critical to the success of our district's programs and operations.	100/0
3. Many of the current RESC services to districts could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by TEA.	5/95
4. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by other sources such as universities or private vendors.	0/95
5. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by allocating the dollars to districts and allowing them to purchase services from the most appropriate sources.	5/81
6. Many of the current RESC services to districts duplicate services provided by TEA.	0/100
7. Many of the services offered by RESCs around the state are critical to the success of many districts.	100/0
8. The RESC in our region is highly efficient and effective.	100/0
9. The RESC role in providing services to districts should be expanded.	67/10
10. The RESC in our region is highly responsive to the service needs of our district.	100/0
11. The RESC in our region provides quality services.	100/0
12. There are adequate channels of communication with the RESC in our region.	95/0
13. The RESC in our region is responsive to complaints.	100/0
14. The RESC in our region is responsive to requests for services.	100/0
15. The RESC in our region listens and tries to meet the needs of the school district.	100/0

Source: Prepared by MGT Of America, July 2004.
** (SA+A)/(D+SD): Strongly Agree + Agree/Disagree + Strongly Disagree*

As can be seen, 100 percent of the respondents noted strongly agree or agree with the following important statements:

- Our district frequently uses services provided by our RESC.
- The services provided by our RESC are critical to the success of our district's programs and operations.
- The RESC in our region is highly efficient and effective.
- The RESC in our region is highly responsive to the service needs of our district.
- The RESC in our region provides quality services.
- The RESC in our region is responsive to complaints.
- The RESC in our region is responsive to requests for services.
- The RESC in our region listens and tries to meet the needs of the school district.

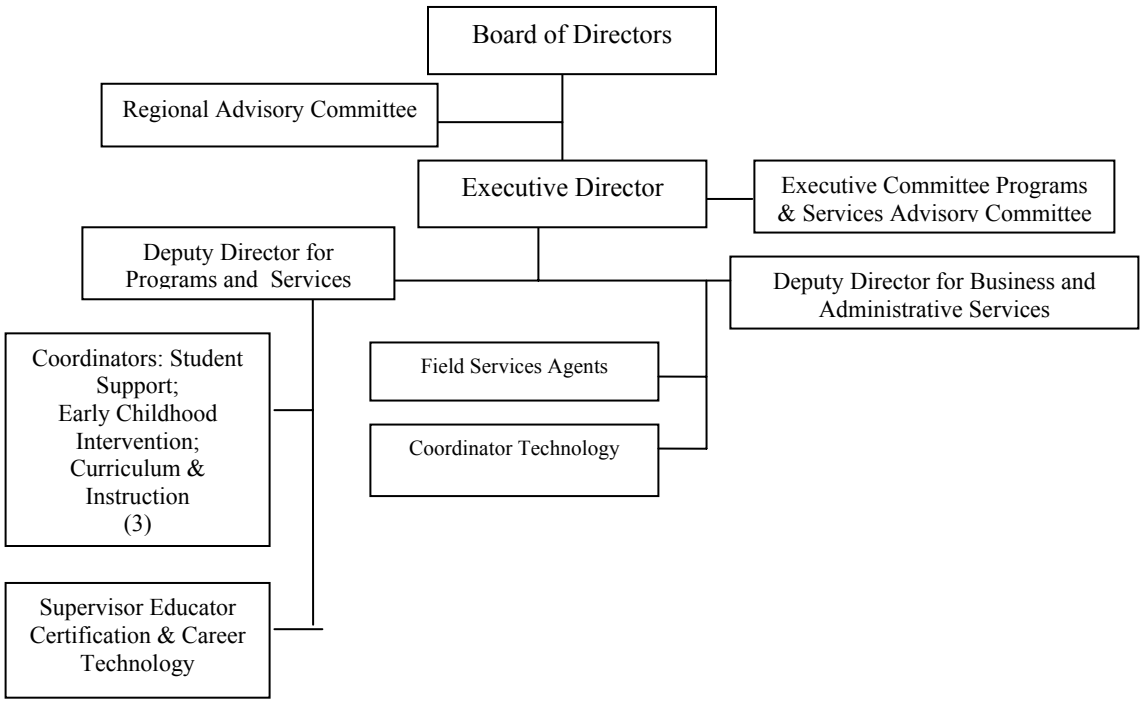
Accomplishment: RESC services and programs receive high marks and strong support from clients, reporting that services and programs are of a high quality and that the RESC is effectively providing support.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The RESC 3 organization is efficiently organized, and employees report a high degree of job satisfaction.

Exhibit 3-4 shows the organization of services within RESC 3.

Exhibit 3-4
RESC 3 Organization
May 2004



Source: Prepared by MGT of America from RESC 3 records, July 2004.

As can be seen in **Exhibit 3-4**, the organization includes two deputy directors, one field service agent, and one coordinator for technology positions reporting directly to the executive director. The deputy director for Programs and Services is supported by a series of three coordinator and one supervisor positions, while the other deputy manages responsibilities through non-administrative personnel. This model represents a very flat organizational structure with substantial spans of control at the deputy level of management.

Such an arrangement can be very effective if three primary criteria are met: first, there must be employment stability for personnel holding key positions; second, personnel in those positions must have a high degree of skill in managing personnel; and third, these personnel must have a strong commitment to the organization and fully understand the mission and goals.

Exhibit 3-5 presents responses from 26 employees of RESC 3 related to their work environment. It is important to note that 92 percent strongly agreed or agreed with the statement "I find my RESC to be an exciting, challenging place to work." When responding to the statements "I am actively looking for a job outside of my RESC and I feel that there is no future for me at the RESC" only one respondent (8 percent) strongly agreed or agreed. Responses to statements were highly supportive of the RESC.

Interviews with these personnel indicate a high level of development in each of these three cardinal areas. This evidenced commitment is further supported by the survey of personnel.

Exhibit 3-5
Survey of RESC 3 Personnel
Perceptions About The Work Environment

Statement	Percentage (%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. I find my RESC to be an exciting, challenging place to work.	92/4
2. RESC officials enforce high work standards.	96/4
3. RESC employees who do not meet expected work standards are disciplined.	52/8
4. I feel that I have the authority to adequately perform my job responsibilities.	96/4
5. I have an up to date and comprehensive job description.	88/8
6. I have adequate facilities in which to conduct my work.	76/16
7. I have adequate equipment and computer support to conduct my work.	96/0
8. No one knows or cares about the amount or quality of work that I perform.	12/88
9. I am very satisfied with my job.	88/8
10. I plan to continue my career in my RESC.	76/4
11. I am actively looking for a job outside of my RESC.	8/72
12. Salary levels at my RESC are competitive.	28/60
13. I feel that my work is appreciated by my supervisor(s).	80/16
14. I feel that I am an integral part of the RESC team.	88/4
15. I feel that there is no future for me at the RESC.	8/92
16. My salary level is adequate for my level of work and experience.	24/60
17. Most administrative practices in the RESC are highly effective and efficient.	76/12
18. Administrative decisions are made promptly and decisively.	68/12
19. My RESC administrators are easily accessible and open to input.	76/16
20. Major bottlenecks exist in many administrative processes which cause unnecessary time delays.	20/72
21. My RESC has too many layers of administrators.	4/76
22. Most of RESC administrative processes (e.g., purchasing, travel requests, leave applications, personnel, etc.) are highly efficient and responsive.	68/16

Source: Prepared by MGT of America, July 2004.
** Percent responding Agree or Strongly Agree/Percent responding Disagree or Strongly Disagree.*

Accomplishment: RESC 3's organizational pattern represents an efficient and cost-effective method for ensuring that services and programs are provided to clients and that employees are highly satisfied with their jobs.

DATA-DRIVEN PLANNING

Systematic, thorough, data-driven planning is evidenced throughout RESCs program and service development resulting in providing data to support decision making. This is an important aspect of a healthy and productive organizations.

The mission and vision of the organization are carried out through the RESC's formalized planning processes that emphasize data-driven decisions. To this end, the RESC is fully committed to a Quality Management System driven by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). This results in the development of a Regional ESCs Scorecard and related Scorecard Strategy Map.

To this end, the RESC 3 administration and staff developed and are using a *Comprehensive Quality Manual*. This manual includes the following:

- introduction and distributions;
- quality management systems;
- management responsibilities;
- resource management;
- product realization;
- measurement, analysis, and improvement; and
- appendix containing quality procedures and quality records.

This planning system is internationally recognized and represents the epitome of best practices.

Accomplishment: RESC 3 uses an internationally recognized planning system for developing programs and services.

BALANCED SCORE CARD

RESC 3 is an integral part in the development of the statewide Balanced Score Card and the center serves as a central collection point for information. This action is resulting in the development of a model mechanism for demonstrating high standards of operational accountability throughout Texas.

To continue to provide a high level of customer service and demonstrate high standards of operational accountability, the executive directors of the RESCs established a Management Quality Initiative in March 2003. Key to this initiative is the RESC Management Scorecard. The scorecard combines education policy and regional purpose, using strategy, performance measures, and management accountability for results to tie regional achievement of the state's public education goals to the operational effectiveness of each service center.

The decision was made by the group to appoint a committee to serve as the steering committee for the development of this management tool. The executive director of RESC 3 was appointed chair. Also serving on the committee were executive directors from Regions 5, 10, 14, 16, and 19. The team began its meetings using a trained facilitator. Through this process the committee developed Key Performance Indicators in the following perspectives: Learning & Growth; Internal Process; Customer; Stakeholder; and Attainment. Through a series of meetings of the committee, the Commissioner's Cabinet for Regional Services, and key RESC staff, the Balanced Score Card was completed. In September 2003, a computerized template was developed by RESC 3 for the reporting process.

Currently, data from each of the service centers on 31 core measures are transmitted via email to a central collection point, RESC 3. The data are compiled and reported monthly at the Commissioner's Cabinet for Regional Services meeting. The executive directors established the 2003–04 school year as the benchmark year for this new tool.

The Balanced Score Card represents the development of a best practice for developing

data to demonstrate operational accountability for the service centers.

Accomplishment: RESC 3 plays a key role in the development of the Balanced Score Card and serves as the central collection point for information.

FACILITIES MASTER PLAN

RESC 3 provides well-maintained adequate facility space to deliver educational services to its customers. The center has funded facilities and technology needs without state provisions for such needs.

The RESC 3 owns a 33,981 square foot office building and a 4,800 square foot warehouse. RESC 3 also leases an office space in Wharton for the Early Childhood Intervention Program staff. The main facility has the proper controls in place for efficient maintenance and operations. The facilities maintenance personnel include professional project manager (.15 FTE), secretary (.25 FTE), receptionist (1 FTE), and maintenance professionals (1.75 FTE). The center uses up-to-date maintenance program procedural manuals.

By providing effective maintenance, custodial services, and support services, RESC 3 is able to maximize facility use and provide state-of-the art training through its advanced technology setup.

Accomplishment: With limited resources, RESC 3 is providing for its space needs and is using the facilities appropriately for delivering services.

TECHNOLOGY FOR LEARNING

RESC 3 uses technology to provide cost-effective learning opportunities to its member districts and schools.

Other RESCs are not taking advantage of the technology developments made possible by the talents of the RESC 3 staff and administration. These include both the distance learning program and online professional development. In 2003–04, most member districts participated in the distance-learning program, offering two-way interactive video-conferencing communication. These meetings, workshops, courses, and special activities were offered via video broadcast and allowed the teachers, administrators, educators, board members, parents, and community members the opportunity to participate at low cost and convenience. Through the regional network (NET 3) and RESC meetings and workshops, member districts are also able to train staff in mandatory new regulations and procedures without having to pay to send them to the RESC or TEA. The RESC 3 facilitator works with a consortium representing the other RESCs to coordinate and improve distance-learning services across the state.

Accomplishment: The RESC 3 uses technology efficiently to offer its customers cost-effective ways to improve learning opportunities.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

RESC 3 has a comprehensive instrument and system in place to evaluate program and service effectiveness which results in information used to determine the continuation and/or modification of services and products.

The instrument ascertains the level of client satisfaction of individual programs in five areas: 1) overall quality; 2) follow-up services; 3) frequency of services offered; 4) prompt and efficient services; and 5) effectiveness of staff providing service. The instrument is designed so that only recipients of the services respond.

Exhibit 3-6 is a table summarizing the latest results of the survey. As shown, there are no evaluations citing that services are average or lower; only good and superior.

Exhibit 3-6
2003 Annual Evaluation Survey Results*

Respondent Group	Quality of Service	Follow-up after Service	Frequency of Service	Promptness and Efficiency	Effectiveness of Staff
Overall	4.56	4.42	4.43	4.54	4.61
District Administrator	4.66	4.60	4.55	4.65	4.69
Campus Administrator	4.37	4.23	4.22	4.33	4.36
Teacher	4.60	4.38	4.43	4.57	4.62
Support Staff	4.50	4.38	4.39	4.50	4.58
Other	4.45	4.29	4.33	4.47	4.57
Did not Indicate	4.55	4.41	4.32	4.27	4.41
Parents	4.80	4.73	4.78	4.82	4.88

Source: Region 3 Annual Evaluation, 2002–03.
**1 = Poor, 2 = Below Average, 3 = Average, 4 = Good, and 5 = Superior*

RESC 3 has a data-driven model to determine what programs or services are offered to member districts. Program personnel review all sources of data pertaining to the service (needs assessments, program evaluations, workshop evaluations, committee evaluations, and input from participants). The proposed changes to the program are discussed with management, users, and other program personnel. Adjustments are made according to the indications specified by the users. Notification of changes is then sent to the customers.

Exhibit 3-7 is the RESC 3 Plan of Operation Framework.

Accomplishment: RESC 3 has a comprehensive, data-driven process for evaluating the quality and use of all programs and service offerings.

LOW-PERFORMING SCHOOLS

RESC 3 has an exemplary data-driven written plan of action for assisting low-performing campuses resulting in school districts having the data to assist in determining priorities for allocating resources for school improvement.

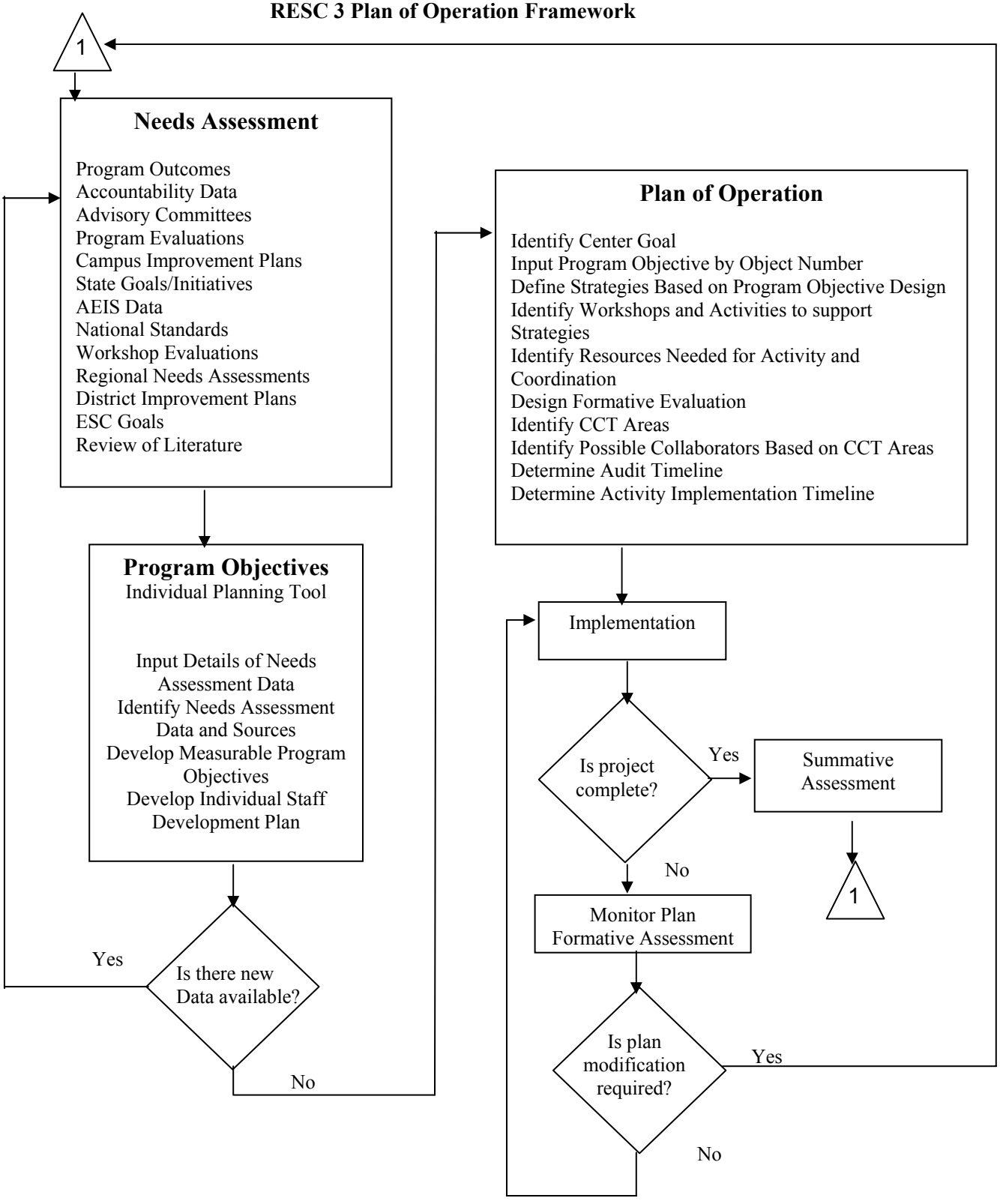
RESC 3 takes the initial step when data are made available to the region. All data for school campuses are reviewed and prioritized based on the following: TAKS, SDAA, and RPTE data, AEIS reports, PAS/DAS for federal programs, NCLB, and RESC 3 disaggregated data reports.

Once the low-performing campuses are identified, contact is made with the school administrators via telephone and letter. The program specialists then work with the coordinators to determine services that need to be provided. A work plan is then established with timelines. Then the program specialists implement the work plan with frequent progress monitoring.

Exhibit 3-8 shows a list of High Priority Campuses identified and served in 2004.

Accomplishment: RESC 3 develops a data-driven, written plan of action to assist low performing schools in member districts.

Exhibit 3-7
RESC 3 Plan of Operation Framework



Source: RESC 3 planning document, July 2004.

Exhibit 3-8
RESC 3 High Priority Campuses
2004

District	Campus	Subject Area
Bay City ISD	Bay City Jr. High	Math
Bay City ISD	McAllister Jr. High	Reading
Bay City ISD	Bay City High	Language Arts
Bloomington ISD	Bloomington High	Math
Bloomington ISD	Bloomington Jr. High	Math
Boling ISD	Boling High	Math
Calhoun Co. ISD	Calhoun High	Language Arts
Columbus ISD	Columbus High	Language Arts Reading
East Bernard ISD	East Bernard High	Reading
Edna ISD	Edna High	Math
El Camp ISD	El Campo High	Science
Ganado ISD	Ganado High	Math Science Social Studies
Kenedy ISD	Kenedy High	Language Arts Math Science Social Studies
Kenedy ISD	Kenedy Elementary	Reading
Kenedy ISD	Kenedy Middle	Math
Louise ISD	Louise High	Math
Matagorda ISD	Matagorda Elementary	Reading
Outreach Word Charter	Outreach Word Academy	Reading
Palacios ISD	Palacios High	Language Arts Science
Refugio ISD	Refugio High	Language Arts
Rice CISD	Eagle Lake Middle	Math
Rice CISD	Rice High	Language Arts
Tidehaven ISD	Tidehaven High	Language Arts
Van Vleck ISD	E. Rudd Intermediate	Reading Writing
Victoria ISD	Hopkins	Science Writing
Victoria ISD	Memorial High	Language Arts Math Science
Wharton ISD	Wharton High	Language Arts Reading Science

Source: Prepared by MGT of America from RESC 3 records, July 2004.

MEETING CUSTOMER NEEDS

RESC 3 evaluates programs to ensure appropriateness, efficiency, effectiveness and if the center is meeting the needs of the appropriate customers. Assisting administrators with ensuring that the resources allocated to instructional programs produce continual improvements in student performance is a goal of RESC 3.

This effort includes monitoring and evaluating programs, and involves maintaining a comprehensive program that evaluates student achievement across all content areas and grades. RESC 3 consistently evaluates its programs to ensure that they are appropriate, efficient, and effective and meet the needs of the appropriate customers.

Evaluation procedures for programs include monthly time and effort records of all staff by program/project, monitoring of program objectives, evaluations of workshops, program needs assessments, evaluations of contracted or shared services, mid-year evaluations, and final program evaluations. Education specialists are responsible for continuously monitoring and adjusting programs and services based on the most current data available, most current research methods, and input from stakeholders.

Exhibit 3-9 shows a summary of the core services being provided to school districts by RESC 3.

Exhibit 3-9
Core Services
2004

Subject	Percent of Districts* Using Staff Development	Percent of Districts* Using On-Site Services
Reading	88%	56%
Math	73%	51%
Science	54%	51%
Social Studies	63%	32%
Language Arts/Writing	98%	37%

Source: Region 3 ESC Curriculum and Instruction, 2003–04.

**Considers only districts located within the geographical boundaries of RESC 3.*

Some examples of changes made due to continuous evaluation used by RESC 3 include:

- The RESC 3 Principal Academy was expanded to include leadership training for all administrative levels. The name changed from Principal Academy to Leadership Academy. A need was indicated through the evaluations and the program was adjusted to serve superintendents, central office administrators, finance and business administrators, special education directors, and campus administrators.
- First-Time Campus Administrator Mentoring program was discontinued due to low participation.
- The general management training program has changed to school board and superintendent training. This change was made due to its general name and specific training purpose. Customers were not clear whether RESC 3 was providing additional management training, so the name was changed to make the purpose of the training more clear.

Accomplishment: RESC 3 continuously evaluates its programs to ensure

appropriateness, efficiency, effectiveness, and whether the center is meeting the needs of the appropriate customers.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

In spite of reductions in state funding, RESC 3 has increased staff development in the areas of programs and services, and technical assistance.

Exhibit 3-10 indicates the number of participants by component for the past two years in professional development. As can be seen, while services for education certification declined from 2002–03 to 2003–04 the overall level of services increased from 965 in 2002–03 to 1,163 in 2003–04. Note, too, that the 2003–04 services were rendered over the shorter 10-month rather than 12-month period.

Exhibit 3-11 shows technical assistance to clients for 2003–04. In addition, RESC staff report that the number of technical assistance instances represents in excess of 12,309 hours of assistance.

By focusing on relevant staff development, RESC 3 has maintained its commitment to client districts and schools to provide the essential services needed to improve student achievement and reflected in Texas statute.

Accomplishment: Although state funding has decreased, RESC 3 continues to increase services in its program and service areas and provide technical assistance.

Exhibit 3-10
RESC 3 Staff Development by Component

Component	2002–03	2003–04
Business Administration	450	350
Education Certification	4,653	2,159
Technology	3,021	1,918
Curriculum and Instruction	8,539	6,261
Student Support	4,806	2,958
Programs and Services	965	1,163

Source: Region 3 ESC Staff Development by Component.
Note: 2002–03 = September 2002 through August 2003
2003–04 = September 2003 through June 21, 2004

Exhibit 3-11
RESC 3
Technical Assistance by Component

Component	2003–04
Business Administration	436
Education Certification	918
Technology	2,892
Curriculum and Instruction (C & I)	2,714
Student Support	Reported w/ C & I
Programs and Services	Reported w/ C & I

Source: Region 3 ESC Technical Assistance data, July 2004.

PERSONNEL COOPERATIVE

RESC 3 assists school districts with finding qualified, degreed, and certified teachers and other personnel through a cooperative with school districts.

In order to satisfy the needs of districts, two options were created. First, an RESC 3 representative attends college and university job fairs to advertise the personnel needs of districts within Region 3. Information is collected to indicate positions of employment and it is disseminated at job fairs to interested persons. A generic application was created and posted on the RESC 3 Web site. The second option is the Job Post/Job Search service where districts are given access to the RESC 3 database where they can input available jobs and search for existing applicants. The RESC 3 staff receives an email notification after district personnel list a job announcement. Once approved by RESC 3 staff, the job is posted on their Web site.

Accomplishment: RESC 3 is meeting the needs of its customers by creating a cooperative that assists with recruiting qualified, degreed, and certified teachers to Region 3.

WEB-BASED EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION

RESC 3 maintains a comprehensive, well-organized *Personnel Procedures Manua*l and Web site resulting in a model for other organizations to adopt.

This document is stored and updated electronically on the center's Intranet site to help decrease use of paper; however, important sections are printed and distributed to new employees. An up-to-date reference hardcopy is maintained in the executive director's office. The Web site contains job vacancy listings, sample forms, procedures, and other very useful and important human resource information.

As organizations strive to streamline operations and reduce costs, they are turning to new technologies. RESC 3 provides an extremely comprehensive Web site that accomplishes this purpose and increases the efficiency of staff assigned human resources related tasks. The RESC 3 Web site allows applicants to complete and submit job application forms and other documents online. This results in saving the RESC personnel time that would otherwise be spent processing walk-in customers. Additionally, applicants are spared the travel and waiting time required of a visit to the RESC facility.

This represents an application of state-of-the-art technology. The manual and Web site contain complete information on:

- hiring/employment procedures;
- employee compensation and benefits;
- job requirements; and
- conclusion of employment.

Accomplishment: RESC 3 communicates important employment and job information by maintaining a comprehensive and easily accessible *Personnel Procedures Manual* and user friendly Web site.

WORK ENVIRONMENT

RESC 3 maintains an exceptionally positive work environment resulting in a high level of employee job satisfaction.

RESC 3 employees indicated that they are extremely pleased with their jobs and co-workers, and that they enjoy each day's work at the center. While many staff reported working long hours, they indicated that they are willing to "go the extra mile" because they are all working together towards a common mission and purpose. They stated that the executive director is hard working and exceptionally knowledgeable about technology. Observations of the state of technology and statements from representatives of other RESCs confirm these statements.

Exhibit 3-5 (previously shown) reports employee survey results and as can be seen provides support for this finding.

Accomplishment: The leadership and staff of RESC 3 have developed a positive work environment that supports employee satisfaction and dedication.

JOB DESCRIPTIONS AND EMPLOYEE EVALUATIONS

RESC 3 maintains updated job descriptions and evaluates employees in a timely fashion with assessment instruments and job description documents correlated.

As each position becomes vacant and is advertised, a job description review process is initiated to ensure that it reflects current assigned responsibilities. A review of personnel files revealed that all employees have up-to-date and signed evaluations, supervisor evaluations, and job descriptions. The dates on the documents in these files indicate that the evaluation/review calendar is strictly observed and that evaluations take place for all employees annually.

It is rare that an organization so consistently adheres to its stated evaluation calendar, that job descriptions are maintained in an updated state, and that performance assessment and job description instruments are correlated.

Accomplishment: RESC employee job descriptions are in an updated condition and employee evaluations are conducted annually.

PURCHASING COOPERATIVE

RESC 3 has 35 school districts that participate in the RESC's 30 year old purchasing services. Additionally, RESC 3 has established a purchasing cooperative with Region 4. This has resulted in providing an important comprehensive purchasing service embracing nearly every needed service or product.

Districts are provided the opportunity to purchase via the Internet-based *BuyBoard, Texas Procurement Center* and *Texas Cooperative Purchasing Network* to supplement supplies/services offerings and not duplicate bidding services. The service center partners with RESC 4's purchasing program because they are larger and involve purchasing needs not covered by RESC 3.

The regional purchasing program offers its members advantages over individual buying. Benefits of cooperative purchasing realized by districts of all sizes include cost savings on products or service, savings on administrative costs, compliance with federal/state statutes and requirements; and accessibility to more products and services.

Members are eligible to purchase various supplies, equipment, and materials from the service center's cooperatives catalog discount bid, cafeteria food bid, bakery products, milk and juice, and technology services and equipment.

Specific bid categories include art supplies; athletic and physical education; audio visual equipment and supplies, batteries, cafeteria food, classroom furniture, instructional supplies and materials, math calculators, math manipulatives, maintenance supplies, building/janitorial, nurses supplies, office equipment and supplies, office furniture, science equipment and supplies, special education, and yard and grounds maintenance equipment and supplies.

Technology-related bid categories include computers and laptops, IP telephony, network assistance and wiring, network design and consultation, network electronics/equipment, network services, peripherals, software, storage devices, video conferencing equipment, services and maintenance agreements; Web based products and services, and other technology supplies. The technology bids developed by RESC 3 have made technology purchasing options available to all interested RESCs at costs below those offered by state sources and many other RESCs.

By establishing this collaborative partnership with Region 4, the center has capitalized on an established purchasing protocol that offers advantages to all center clients, including charter schools.

Accomplishment: RESC 3 effectively collaborates with Region 4 to offer school districts a variety of cost saving purchasing options.

TECHNOLOGY APPLICATIONS

RESC 3 was the first center in the state to implement an H.323 network using wireless technology to reduce costs to school districts. RESC 3 has been a leader in technology applications among the RESCs.

The NET 3 technology is used by 38 of the 40 school districts in the region and used for dual enrollment with Victoria College, Wharton County Junior College, and other ad hoc providers such as NASA and Annenburg. RESC 3 receives high evaluations from the users of this technology.

The executive director is involved in all aspects of technology within RESC 3 operations. The director encourages the use of technology in all departments and is personally involved in the development and use of technology. Interviews with RESC personnel, Board of Directors and other RESCs' personnel indicate that RESC 3 and its personnel provide essential leadership to RESCs in the state in the area of technology development and applications.

The RESC 3 offers a full range of technological services. These services include the areas of RESC core technology, management information services, NET3 services, instructional media services, and internal data processing. A variety of technical assistance is given to schools and school districts in areas such as using software in the MIS areas, management tools, grade reporting and other matters. Teachers are also trained in the use of technology in the classroom.

Accomplishment: RESC 3 is a leader in the development and implementation of technology among the 20 RESCs.

PEIMS PROGRAMS

RESC 3 MIS support emphasis has been on data quality in the PEIMS programs resulting in unprecedented zero percent error rates.

For 2002–03 and 2003–04, RESC PEIMS personnel and RESC program specialists in areas of gifted and talented, CATE, bilingual/ESL, special education, and other areas have delivered collaborative training to district teams of PEIMS and program coordinators. This training was delivered through 8-12 NET3 (video conferencing) sessions each year and was attended by every district in the region.

Results of the training have been improved data accuracy and program communication through each PEIMS submission for each district. Additionally, the PEIMS support team has worked closely with school personnel to achieve excellent data standards on the TEA required PID error rate.

Exhibit 3-12 shows the error rates for the two-year period of 2001–03 and the data available at the time of this review for 2003-04.

Accomplishment: MIS support on data quality in the PEIMS programs in RESC 3 results in zero percent error rates.

Exhibit 3-12
Region III PID Error Rate

School Year	Maximum Rate	Fall Total	Percent	Summer Total	Percent
2001-02	5.00%	214	.3225%	180	.3003%
2002-03	4.00%	322	.5110%	103	.1728%
2003-04	3.00%	82	.1174%	0	.0%

Source: RESC 3 MIS data, August 2004.

DETAILED FINDINGS

BOARD STANDING COMMITTEE

The RESC 3 Board of Directors does not have standing committees. Such committees are often a means for developing appropriate board involvement in agency or organizational policy and planning development, promoting the services or value of an organization, and other activities.

The RESC 3 Board of Directors meets six times per year (every other month) for regularly scheduled meetings and other meetings are called as the need arises. MGT consultants do not believe that the board needs to meet more often; however, greater board involvement in planning activity, services development, and essential RESC promotion activity among the region's districts and other stakeholders may well require more individual board member involvement and could result in producing a means by which board members can actively affect the public's and others' understanding of RESC services and products.

As previously noted and confirmed by the participants, the board of directors is not actively involved in strategic planning while they do review such documents. Their role in this and fiscal matters is limited in scope to a simple review and approval process. Additionally, many personnel interviewed expressed concerns that, other than the client stakeholders and possibly TEA personnel, few other parties really understand the role and contributions of the RESCs. Senior managers believe this situation is partially the result of legislative prohibitions against lobbying by the education community.

Many effective organizations involve their board of directors in carefully crafted committee work or ad hoc committee activity to contribute to overall effectiveness and as an effective tool for overcoming external barriers to success in many areas of concern. One of the areas of concern voiced by the executive director and other RESC personnel relates to strengthening relationships with external audiences (an area addressed by RESC 2, Corpus Christi, with the establishment of a marketing position with key responsibility for marketing conferencing services and facility use and promoting the services and products among non-service customers).

RESC 3 should establish a standing committee structure of the RESC 3 Board of Directors. The implementation of this recommendation should result in a careful analysis of potential board committee activity designed to promote the work of the RESC and support important planning activity.

The implementation of this recommendation can lay the groundwork for developing the RESC 3 Board of Directors infrastructure to deal with issues related to the perception that important education stakeholders do not adequately understand the nature and purpose of the RESC organization and related programs and services provided the school districts of Texas. This perception was gained in the initial briefing of consultants and further confirmed in interviews with various RESC personnel. This is further supported by the fact that the Texas Legislature prohibits education-related personnel from lobbying for legislative support and funding.

This recommendation is based upon the premise that current RESCs and their boards are not proactive in promoting RESC value nor are there established working relationships with local school district boards to identify effective means of educating the public.

This recommendation may lead to the development of one or more of the following committees:

- strategic planning;
- cooperatives' development;
- finance;
- facilities; or
- external relations.

This recommendation should be implemented through the following steps:

- The executive director should review the recommendation with the Region 3 Board of Directors.

- Once agreed upon, the Board of Directors should direct the Executive Director to prepare the necessary policy and procedures to guide the proposed committee(s) development and activity.

- Potential committee membership should be identified with attention to involvement of member school district representation.

- The executive director should identify a RESC liaison for each established committee.

- The chair of the RESC 3 Board of Directors should appoint a three-member committee assigned the task of implementing the recommendation—that is, preparing a plan for an RESC board external relations program.

The effective implementation of this recommendation can contribute to making stakeholders informed supporters of the services and program work of RESC 3 and provide for policy-level board involvement.

FIELD SERVICE AGENT

The field service agent in Region 3 provides valuable services that should be continued.

The State Council on Competitive Government (CCG) conducted a review of RESCs and prepared a January 9, 2004 report that, among a series of recommendations, proposed elimination of field service agent positions for RESCs. SCCG's recommendation is based on the assumption that the elimination of such positions by five RESCs as a result of recent budget reduction activity provides evidence of a lack of need for field service agents.

MGT's review of RESC's historical and current assignments of responsibilities to these positions did not confirm the findings of the State Council on Competitive Government with regard to RESC 3. To the contrary, RESC 3's two half-time field service agents provide the following services to school districts:

- provide support in the areas of school finance, particularly for new superintendents in small school districts, districts having lost their finance directors or business agents, and districts experiencing fiscal difficulties;

- provide school board training that is mandated by Texas law;

- work with boards and superintendents in team building;

- work in training new superintendents via the Leadership Academy and other leadership training activity;

- conduct a assessment and feedback sessions with campus administrators;

- provide services that TEA is unable to supply due to lack of personnel (These involve such matters as preparing for audits and other types of program reviews); and

- give attention to other matters as the need may arise.

Plans for training in Instructional Leadership Development and Professional Development Appraisal System are in the early implementation stages.

The executive director reports that the field service agent position is an essential element in the RESC's organizational structure. RESC 3 intentionally seeks to employ veteran principals or superintendents in field service agent positions because of the background they bring to the position. As former school and district administrators, they are in an

eminent position to serve as mentors and advisors to these key school district personnel.

Some personnel interviewed expressed the opinion that retired superintendents are employed to these positions to simply provide additional income. MGT consultants could not verify this opinion. MGT consultants find that the individuals filling these positions for RESC 3 have documentation that they are actually performing duties over a time period in excess of their contractual responsibilities. This is due, at least in part, by the driving time required because of the 10,000 plus square mile size of the region.

RESC 3 should continue the use of the field service agent position to support RESC 3 member school districts, their school boards, and superintendents. The implementation of this recommendation can result in continuing a service that the superintendents and executive RESC personnel consider vital. The rationale employed by the State Council on Competitive Government in its January 2004 report is based on an incomplete analysis of how other RESCs use field service agents.

CONTRACT WITH LEGAL FIRM

There is no written contract setting out the terms and conditions of legal services provided by the law firm representing the board. It is a standard practice of agencies and education organizations to have such documents.

Board Policy BDD requires that services performed by the attorney and/or firm be paid by the board as included in the contract between the board and the attorney or law firm. RESC 3 Board of Directors has no written contract with the law firm appointed to represent the service center.

The failure to have this contract represents a violation of policy and places the board and RESC in jeopardy of a major misunderstanding regarding fees for services. Further, misunderstandings could occur regarding how expenses are to be computed and reimbursed.

RESC 3 should develop and approve a written contract with the law firm representing the RESC 3 and the Board of Directors. The executive director should negotiate with the law firm and establish the services to be performed and compensation to be paid. A contract containing the services to be performed and compensation to be paid should be taken to the RESC 3 Board of Directors for approval. An approved, written contract with the law firm representing the board should be maintained and updated annually.

The contract should, minimally, contain the following provisions:

- compensation terms for attorneys, paralegals, clerks, and other firm personnel services, including billing cycle;
- conditions for reimbursement for expenses;
- if a retainer is to be paid, the services to be included for the fixed fees;
- procedures to be used by the firm if outside counsel is required; and
- other provisions as deemed necessary.

FACILITIES MASTER PLAN

RESC 3 does not have a facilities master plan that can be directly translated into immediate, mid-term and long-term projects. The lack of this master plan creates a series of difficulties including not having addressed long-term parking needs and raising questions regarding long-term retrofitting of facilities to meet the rapidly changing demands of modern technology.

A number of planning processes and documents can be used to build and maintain facilities that meet the changing needs of a region. A facilities master plan is the result of these planning efforts and becomes the organization's policy statement for allocating resources and developing alternatives for facility improvement. Facility master plans

become increasingly important as a district's enrollment changes and facilities age. Even for a small organization like RESC 3, a facilities master plan can be used to plan appropriately.

The center does not have a dedicated facilities planning function, but rather uses a business officer to develop scenarios for consideration with growth.

The lack of a facilities master plan hinders planning for growth. A facilities master plan is based on verified existing data, a complete understanding of both facilities conditions, and the future implications of needs for the educational service center. An effective master plan includes an accurate inventory of each room, current internal room utilization, current external room utilization and assessments of all repairs, and renovations necessary for long-tem use.

Many larger organizations hire professionals to develop all or parts of the facilities master plan. RESC 3 has existing staff that can create a simple facilities master plan.

RESC 3 should conduct a facilities analysis and incorporate results into a long-range facilities master plan. The implementation of this recommendation should result in a useable long-range facilities use master plan. The plan should include specific recommendations that reflect the identification of deferred maintenance needs, documented cost estimates and a timeline to address these recommendations. Development of the plan should be coordinated with the Board of Directors. Once the plan has been completed, it should be reviewed and updated annually and approved by the RESC 3 Board of Directors.

UTILITY AUDIT

RESC 3 does not conduct utility management audits resulting in a lack of data to support decisions on energy management and other related potential cost savings.

Utility management firms are often hired once per year to obtain all telephone, gas, electricity, water, long distance, and Internet records. These firms audit records to identify potential savings. The records are also compared to records obtained from provider utility companies. Discrepancies in records often result in returned savings to the RESC. Typically, the utility management firms keep a percentage of identified savings as a fee for the services.

By not conducting these audits, the center may be missing opportunities for conserving expenditures that may be better used in delivering educational services to client.

RESC 3 should conduct utility management audits. The implementation of this recommendation should result in conserving energy with resulting savings in expenditures. Conducting utility audits for the service center and providing guidance to school districts on use of utility audits should produce much needed increased efficiency and economies for Region 3.

Typically organizations can secure assistance with utility management audits from a variety of sources. The RESC should contact the local public utilities service provider for assistance. If the public utilities provider does not offer this service, then the RESC should turn to the private sector providers such as Honeywell Corporation or Johnston Controls Corporation. These types of firms usually offer the audit at no cost to the organization with optional retrofitting services paid for through identified savings as they occur.

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources. The results of the audits will vary, but often results in funds being returned to the service center through a reduction in utilities expenses.

MIGRANT EDUCATION

RESC 3 has no work plan to increase district participation in the Migrant Education Program. Due to involved reporting issues required by migrant program schools, some districts have expressed an interest in forming an SSA. RESC 3 offers assistance to any district that chooses to become a program district.

The RESC 3 employs one specialist and two support staff for the Migrant Education Program (Title I, Part C). The specialist oversees the program, communicates with the districts, and helps with the required documentation. A migrant recruiter (employed for 24 hours per week) works in the field three days each week, recruiting eligible students and recording the correct data for each student. The recruiter also helps students enroll in specific programs available to migrant students. Another staff member is responsible for keeping information in the New Generation System (NGS), a Web-based network that stores demographic, educational, and health data for migrant students.

The majority of districts in Region 3 do not participate in the program; however, 32 districts receive technical assistance related to migrant issues. Assistance to districts includes latest updates and new information about the program, providing professional development, and facilitating an annual employment survey to the entire student population in the region. There are 38 districts not requiring RESC 3 migrant services (29 districts with a total of 386 identified students and 9 districts with no identified students).

Two districts have chosen to become migrant program schools. These districts receive additional assistance with reporting issues involved in receiving program funds—one school district has 192 students and another has two students. With only two school districts participating in the project, two personnel can coordinate the Migrant Education Program and the released resources can be used to increase district involvement.

Effective practices suggest that existing resources should be focused, where feasible, on developing support for existing services that are not fully used. This action can develop additional revenue streams that can be used to strengthen program services in the related area.

RESC 3 should reassign responsibilities among the migrant support positions to focus on developing a work plan to increase district participation. The implementation of this recommendation should result in providing resources to permit the development of a district participation plan. Additional emphasis in the developed plan should be placed on providing quality services to non-participating school districts.

There is an unmeet need of at least 386 identified students in school districts that should be participating in the program and using the services provided by RESC 3.

This recommendation should result in the center surveying other RESCs in Texas and other states with large migrant programs to identify existing programs that have resulted in improved district participation.

The implementation of this recommendation can be accomplished with existing personnel reassigned responsibilities for developing the plan.

GRANT WRITING

RESC 3 does not have a grant writing position on staff nor have grant writing responsibilities been assigned to any specific position.

RESC 3 has the potential to capitalize on additional grant funding by hiring a specialist to write grants for the center or assigning such responsibilities to another position. No personnel are assigned to routinely assist the region's schools and districts in writing grants. RESC 3 has offered workshops and technical assistance in writing the Reading First grants and Title I grants, as well as disseminating grant opportunities to districts through workshops, email, and other means. These activities are conducted by the Programs and Services Division, but no one position has the assigned responsibility.

As an example, RESC 2 (Corpus Christi) benefits from having a full-time grant writer and continuously pursues external funding. **Exhibit 3-13** indicates RESC 2 grant funds earned since 2000 total over $11 million.

Exhibit 3-13
Grants Received with RESC 2 as Fiscal Agent

Grant/Contract Name	Amount	Year	Source
Academic 2000	$5,823,272	1998–2002	Texas Education Agency
Quality Development of Childcare Services	400,000	2000	Workforce Development Board
TxBESS	300,000	2000	State Board for Educator Certification
TxBess	235,574	2001	State Board for Educator Certification
Regional Fine Arts Summit Support	2,000	2001	Texas Commission on the Arts
Quality Development of Childcare Services	366,000	2001	Workforce Development Board
Regional ESC Innovative Grants Program	125,000	2001	Texas Education Agency
Quality Development	363,000	2002	Workforce Development Board
Regional ESC Innovative Grants Program	120,000	2002	Texas Education Agency
Rural Utilities Service Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grant Program	499,073	2002	U.S. Department of Agriculture
Teaching American History Grants	966,965	2002	U.S. Department of Education
Quality Development	383,110	2003	Workforce Development Board
Teaching American History Grants	965,650	2003	U.S. Department of Education
	258,640	2003	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Target	296,500	2004	Texas Education Agency
Target	292,482	2005	Texas Education Agency
Total Amount in Grants	$11,389,266		

Source: RESC 2, Business Department, 2004.

Best practices include an aggressive grant writing and development program to enhance educational programs and services.

RESC 3 should examine RESC 3 staffing levels to see if grant writer responsibilities can be created and assigned in order to increase grant opportunities for the RESC and member districts. The implementation of this recommendation can result in generating additional revenue for the RESC and its member school districts. The revenues can compensate the RESC for its investment in grant writing activity and related training provided school district personnel.

These assigned responsibilities can focus primarily on writing grants for RESC 3 and member districts. Additionally, this can permit the development and provision of training in grant writing and development. The grant specialist should also work as a technical advisor and increase available RESC provided services to school districts.

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources if an internal grant writer is identified, and can result in increased revenue by securing additional grants.

HEAD START

RESC 3 is not the fiscal agent for the federally-funded Head Start Program. The agency has the potential to capitalize on additional funding by acting as a fiduciary agent for Head Start. The RESC applied during the open application period, but was not successful. Other RESCs and school districts around the country often serve as the fiscal agents for these types of programs and other federal or grant-driven projects and/or services.

Among the many services that the RESCs operate from federal funds are Head Start

programs. RESCs in Regions 7, 9, 10, 14, 16, 19, and 20 serve as the prime sponsors for federal Head Start projects, and received more than $43 million during the 2001–02 school year.

Exhibit 3-14 displays information on the total Head Start funding that the RESCs managed. These funds comprised 20 percent of total federal revenues during FY 2001.

Some other RESC staff commented they have not fully explored or pursued operating a Head Start Program in their region. Securing the fiscal agent status for Head Start or other federally-funded programs provides funds to amortize existing administrative expenses and/or expand or refine services to school districts and schools.

Exhibit 3-14
2001–02 Head Start Revenues Received by the RESCs

RESC	Headquarters	Head Start Funding Level	Number of Counties Served	Number of Student Served
7	Kilgore	$8.8 million	12	2,000
9	Wichita Falls	$1.2 million	4	610
10	Richardson	$3.6 million	5	698
14	Abilene	$0.7 million	5	144
16	Amarillo	$6.8 million	14	1,429
19	El Paso	$20.2 million	2	3,994
20	San Antonio	$1.7 million	3	380

Source: 2001 ESC Annual Financial Audits and FY 2003 ESC Annual Data Collection.

RESC 3 should investigate the federal Head Start Program and other opportunities in Region 3 and determine whether or not RESC 3 can apply for and obtain fiduciary responsibility for the program to enhance revenue. Although RESC 3 was not a successful previous applicant for Head Start, a careful study of strategies to be designated should occur. Additionally, the implementation of this recommendation should involve an examination of all other possible future options to serve as a program fiscal agent.

In other Regional Education Service Centers, Head Start has provided much needed revenue to sustain the service center. This new service line can provide additional funding to RESC 3 and result in providing valuable services to the Region 3 communities.

CROSS-TRAINING

RESC 3 has no system for cross-training personnel in key support positions except for the business office.

Several staff members report an awareness of their colleagues' responsibilities, and that they frequently assume some of those tasks when an individual is absent or unavailable. This practice is handled informally, however, and staff members have not been specifically trained to assume the responsibilities of their co-workers. This is true even for positions that have functions that frequently overlap, such as the education specialists for Bilingual/ESL and Migrant Education. Additionally, the executive director's executive assistant, who has prepared a detailed list of her responsibilities and tasks, does not have any specific staff member cross-trained to the position.

RESC 3 does have detailed written procedures for critical job functions (the executive director's executive assistant, positions with assigned human resources functions, and others).

Failure to cross-train personnel in key support positions can result in neglecting to complete important tasks including reports and other

documents. This void can lead to loss of revenue, reduction in employee productivity, and other difficulties.

RESC 3 should provide for systematic cross-training of personnel in key positions. Through cross-training, RESC 3 could both maximize efficiency and ensure that essential responsibilities can be appropriately assumed in the event of untimely or extended absences. This effort can focus on positions in which there is a natural overlap, and where individuals have already begun to share responsibilities. These include: the executive director's executive assistant; payroll; the education coordinators, and State/Compensatory Education specialists; and complementary personnel in the Computer Services Department.

This process should be scheduled to commence upon approval of the recommendation by the RESC leadership.

BUSINESS COOPERATIVE

Small districts often lack the personnel and resources needed to efficiently perform all required business functions. RESC 3 assists some of the districts in the area of finance and bookkeeping. However, there are other districts that could potentially benefit from additional assistance.

Very small school districts in Texas typically do not have the resources to establish sophisticated and comprehensive business services divisions. RESCs and larger school districts have business services divisions that could easily provide cooperative services to smaller districts.

The RESCs and cooperatives (or like organizations in other states) frequently organize payroll services, accounts payable services, purchasing, asset management, and other necessary business related services for small school districts. Such a service could assist many of the small member districts in RESC 3.

RESC 3 should conduct a feasibility study to determine if a finance cooperative organization pattern for small districts would be beneficial. Personnel from within the Finance Division can conduct a study to determine which districts have difficulties handling financial and business affairs because of the lack of or a shortage of qualified personnel on staff. Once this determination has been made, the districts identified can be invited to an information sharing meeting. A task force can be established to determine if a finance cooperative could effectively be developed and which finance services can be offered.

This study can include reviewing the option of using a large district capacity to provide a group of small school districts with some or all fiscal services. This can result in small districts outsourcing identified services to the larger district and reducing costs and increasing efficiencies.

The financial impact of this recommendation can be minimal. Expenses can be limited to meals and travel, with each agency paying for their own expenses. There is a potential savings in personnel cost by the districts if some or all of their financial responsibilities were taken over by a finance cooperative. Additionally, personnel could be reassigned resulting in an increase in the availability of district personnel to meet other needs.

CASH DEPOSITS

RESC has not complied with cash deposit requirements as recommended by auditors.

RESC 3 does not take the necessary steps to ensure that cash deposits are not undercollateralized. RESC 3's cash deposits were noted in the audits for 2002 and 2003 as being undercollateralized for several days. Failure to comply with deposit requirements can create the perception that cash is being handled inappropriately resulting in potentially serious consequences for involved personnel.

RESC 3 is required by law to have an independent financial audit done annually. The audit for each of the past four years was reviewed and contained a *Report on Compliance and on Internal Control over Financial Reporting Based on an Audit of Financial Statements Performed in Accordance with Government Auditing Standards and a Report on Compliance with Requirements Applicable To each Major Program and Internal Control over Compliance In Accordance With OMB Circular A-133*.

The RESC 3 was found to have complied each year, in all material respects, with requirements that are applicable to each of its major federal programs. The audit findings found no material weaknesses for internal controls, financial reporting or within the RESC's financial operation except as previously noted.

The Texas Education Agency, Division of School Financial Audits, performs a Program, Management and Financial review every five years. Their latest audit was reported June 6, 2003. The report for this audit was positive and had only a few minor recommendations.

RESC 3 should ensure that cash deposits are not undercollateralized. The implementation of this recommendation can eliminate the undercollatorization problem. The Finance Department should monitor the principal balance of the pledged mortgage-backed securities to assure that it does not decrease below the appropriate level. An annual report on the status of collatorization along with other fiscal data should be provided to the board of directors for informative purposes.

TECHNOLOGY TRAINING

Some school administrators and other school district staff do not maximize technology use resulting in an identified need for additional training.

Superintendents requested the RESC to conduct the annual needs assessment and evaluation online. Slightly less than 50 percent of the selected participants (teachers, principals, superintendents, and others) responded to the Web-based survey. This response rate is an indication that many personnel do not use email capabilities.

Increasing the use of available technology is a generally accepted practice for increasing productivity and efficiency of personnel. Overcoming reluctance to use new means for accomplishing tasks requires a concerted effort to educate potential users as to the value of new practices.

RESC 3 should market and provide essential training in the advantages and use of technology applications offered by RESC 3. The implementation of this recommendation should result in providing technology application information to school districts and schools, establishing additional training sessions, and increasing efficiencies in job performance for newly trained users. The marketing materials can be developed internally by the RESC staff and distributed to schools and school districts through existing means. These include the courier system and personnel who visit the school districts and schools as a part of their regularly assigned responsibilities.

The financial impact of this recommendation would be minimal. Expenses would be limited to meals and travel, with each agency paying for their own expenses. The actual cost of marketing and training cannot be estimated until the marketing plan is developed and the number and frequency of training sessions is determined. However, marketing expenses can be minimized by distributing information to clients via the existing courier system and with personnel who visit the school districts and schools as a part of their regularly assigned responsibilities.

FISCAL IMPACT

None.

CHAPTER 4:

HOUSTON

CHAPTER 4

HOUSTON

Regional Education Service Center 4 (RESC 4) provides services to the seven southeastern Texas counties of Brazoria, Chambers, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Liberty, and Waller. Region 4 includes 54 districts and approximately 929,383 students and 57,851 teachers. RESC 4 includes some of the largest school districts in the state, with Houston ISD enrolling over 212,000 students. However, it also includes many smaller districts, with 12 that have fewer than 2,000 students.

In addition to these 54 districts, RESC 4 also serves 50 state-approved charter schools and multiple private, parochial, alternative, and juvenile justice schools. In total, Region 4 represents 1,232 campuses.

The students in RESC are quite diverse. Approximately 38 percent of students are Hispanic, 35 percent are White, and 22 percent are African American. In addition, almost half of students in RESC 4 are classified as economically disadvantaged. The diversity in RESC 4 necessitates that it is responsive to the needs of some of the state's highest performing schools as well as some of the state's most challenged schools.

The RESC 4 has embraced this challenge and brings to its work a truly entrepreneurial spirit. Evidence of the success of RESC 4's approach is the broad usage of materials and services. There are organizations throughout the state, in other states, and even other countries that are using or expressed interest in RESC 4 products and services.

The changes in the state funding formula for state funding significantly reduced RESC 4's overall budget. The total 2003–04 budget for RESC 4 was approximately $42.9 million; in 2002–03 this amount was $67.4 million. State grants and change in the level of state base accounted for the majority of the reduction in funding.

RESC 4 has approached its budget with a practical and sound business plan. It recognizes that there is a need to pursue grants and other limited-term resources, but that these resources cannot be depended upon to meet RESC 4's operating needs. RESC 4 has developed a model for creating products and services that are intended to meet the needs of schools and districts within their region, but when appropriate may also have application for education agencies outside the region. Materials produced by RESC 4 are being used by education agencies outside of the region, state, and country**.** RESC 4 is proud of its ability to have weathered significant reductions in state funding and attributes this ability in large part to the quality of its products as evidenced by the wide demand for what they produce.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- RESC 4 is a highly functioning organization that emphasizes and properly uses long-term strategic planning to direct its short-term goals as well as its continuing self-assessment and improvement efforts.
- RESC 4 maintains a strong emphasis on customer service and satisfaction.
- RESC 4 maintains an exceptional level of communication among its stakeholders—its board of directors, district trustees, district superintendents, executive leadership, and rank-and-file employees.
- RESC 4 successfully uses strategic partnerships with public and private sector entities to expand service offerings.
- RESC 4 offers programs designed to help districts build internal capacity for sustained and continued improvements.
- RESC 4 develops and sells innovative products designed to assist educators across the state and nation in improving student achievement.
- Region 4 has created a cost-effective bilingual teacher recruitment program

that is highly regarded by participating districts.
- The Region 4 leadership team has successfully navigated a large-scale transformation after losing the majority of its state base and grant funding streams.
- Region 4 has achieved a high standard of excellence in governmental accounting and financial reporting.
- Region 4 does an exemplary job of providing goods and services through TCPN to school districts (and other government agencies) at or below industry competitive costs.
- Region 4 offers valuable asset and risk management consulting services to school districts across the state through a network of expert risk management consultants.
- Region 4, in creating escWorks, has designed and developed a valuable software tool for both education service centers and school districts that provides professional development tracking, event scheduling, and accountability.

FINDINGS

- The charter school representative does not have adequate contact with RESC 4's charter school constituents. This representative is appointed by the state, but no mechanism is in place for assistance in providing representation for all the charters schools in this region.
- Region 4 not only maintains its own facilities in an outstanding manner, it is on the forefront of providing maintenance training and consulting services to the districts it serves. Its activities have saved districts money and improved their operations.
- RESC 4 is not maximizing local revenues on its available rental space. Region 4 has 15 meeting/training rooms in its Professional Development Center, including a computer training room. These facilities are currently underutilized.
- Annually, RESC 4 provides each district in its service area with a report of the assistance it received from the RESC. While highly detailed, its value to customers could be improved.
- RESC 4 has several long-term vacancies in the Education Services Division that each year result in significant salary savings being redirected to a one-time function.
- RESC 4 has been delivering commercial materials from external entities for distribution at school sites without a documented or district-approved policy.
- Region 4 performance evaluations are not yet aligned with job descriptions, nor do they include an employee self-evaluation process. Moreover, job descriptions are not up-to-date.
- Region 4 supports the recruitment of teachers, administrators, and staff for all districts in its service area by maintaining an employment section on its Web site.
- Currently, there is not a link on the Region 4 home page for employees to access information regarding benefits. The Human Resources (HR) Division provides benefits information in only hard copy format.
- Region 4 is using a pencil-and-paper approach to manage incoming calls for technical support from the districts it serves.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 4-1: Provide opportunities for greater communication between the state-appointed charter representative and the charter schools the appointee represents.** Creating greater communication between the charter school board member and the charter schools would serve two purposes. First, it would help ensure

that the board member gains a broad a perspective regarding the needs and issues of charter schools within the region. Second, it would ensure that charter schools are aware of the representation provided by the board member and give them the opportunity to voice any concerns they may have. Implementing this recommendation may also create a greater sense of community among the charter schools and, as these schools learn more about each other, lead to less reliance on RESC 4 for some services.

- **Recommendation 4-2: Monitor and expand successful Facilities Department services including necessary staff as warranted and cost effective.** Currently, most of the consulting services provided to districts in the service area are completed or coordinated by the Facilities director. However, the need for these types of services will likely expand in the future, as districts seek ever-greater efficiency and effectiveness from all parts of their organizations. If this type of service becomes a growth area for Region 4, it could be cost-effective for it to add full-time professional staff to the department.

- **Recommendation 4-3: Pursue more rental income from the Professional Development Center.** Given the current underutilization of the center and the continuing need to increase local funding, Region 4 should explore this potential source of additional revenue. If Region 4 determines that it is unable to achieve more significant utilization of the classrooms in the center, it should complete a cost/benefit analysis of converting some of the training space to storage space and ending its rental of off-site warehouse space.

- **Recommendation 4-4: Improve the quality of the data supplied to escWorks so that superintendents and RESC personnel will have a more valuable tool.** It is as important to track each interaction with the districts accurately as it is to track all such interactions. The RESC 4 leadership should determine what types of interactions should be included in each category, and perhaps create an additional category to track their proactive dissemination of important information. They should then provide clear definitions to their staffs as to which types of interactions should be included in each category.

- **Recommendation 4-5: Eliminate long-term vacant positions and develop a policy and procedure for addressing vacancies that includes active recruitment, evaluation of position-justification for any vacancy open for more than six months, and clear budgeting guidelines for the use of salary savings.** While it is commendable that RESC 4 maintains high standards for staff, having long-term position vacancies distorts the budget for salary and staff. Long-term position vacancies distort the overall organization's budget and may result in reliance on one-time salary savings as ongoing resources to meet budget needs. The RESC 4 should immediately review all vacant positions and eliminate positions for which there is not an expectation that a qualified candidate can be found within a reasonable period of time. At this point, it appears that at least three to 13 positions that are vacant have been posted for more than one-year. These positions should be eliminated.

- **Recommendation 4-6: Develop, document, and implement a policy that governs decisions of what materials are appropriate to include**

in the weekly van delivery. The delivery of materials may provide a valuable service to schools, but superintendents must be informed of this process and feel comfortable that it will not be misused. Establishing a policy would serve to clarify the practice and insulate RESC 4 from being accused of misusing its position. Furthermore, it may allow RESC 4 to increase the revenue it generates from this service by increasing the amount of materials that are delivered.

- **Recommendation 4-7: Complete the revision of the job descriptions to meet ISO 9000 standards, update as needed, and ensure that job descriptions and performance evaluations are aligned.** Accurate job descriptions should inform the performance evaluation process. Employee self-evaluations can enhance the performance evaluation process and should be incorporated. To provide appropriate performance assessments of employees, the first step is for the employee to understand their job responsibilities, duties, and what factors will be evaluated during the performance assessment. This can be accomplished through the job description, which includes job duties, responsibilities, and qualifications. If the employee is evaluated on factors that are not identified in the job description, the region can encounter a legal liability and possible legal action. The employee self-evaluation process can be a valuable tool when used in conjunction with the performance assessment process. Through self-evaluations, employees can view their performance introspectively and recognize areas needing improvement while gaining a sense of empowerment and responsibility for their own individual performance.

- **Recommendation 4-8: Improve the ease of use and functionality of the employment section of the Region 4 Web site.** Region 4 could improve this section of its Web site by:

  - including more information on the resume posting process;
  - highlighting the fact that both RESC and district position openings are included;
  - linking directly from a selected job opening to the district listing; and
  - providing a link for "on-line registration."

- **Recommendation 4-9: Expand the Region 4 Web site to include employee benefit information.** The region's home page should be expanded to include a link that provides employee benefit information and access to the employee handbook. New employees should be given an information sheet that instructs them on how to use the Web site to obtain information about their benefits and how to review the employee handbook on-line. The site should also provide an email address or link to send questions to the Human Resources Division.

- **Recommendation 4-10: Use escWorks to track incoming network trouble calls from districts for network support.** Once trends are identified, a strategy should be implemented to reduce or hopefully eliminate future problem calls. In addition, as information is collected from clients, a knowledge base of problems and resolutions should be captured. As problems are encountered and reported, the database should be searched when a call is received to seek a quick resolution, decreasing resolution time and effort

DETAILED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

STRATEGIC PLANNING

RESC 4 has a strong and vigorous history of strategic planning and continuous self-improvement efforts. This foundation has enabled the RESC to not only survive, but also thrive in the face of recent state funding cuts.

RESC 4 first began strategic planning in 1990. In that year, a 141-member committee comprised of representatives from local school districts and state organizations drafted a strategic plan to fulfill a mission of serving "education with vision and resources that impact learning communities." In 1992 and 1997–98, the strategic plan was revised to respond to new statewide initiatives and changes in the Education Code.

In 1999, RESC 4 contracted with an outside consulting firm to complete an organizational review. The consulting firm made 16 recommendations to improve operational effectiveness and efficiency through strengthened functional alignment and integration. The RESC implemented all the recommendations.

In 2001, the Association of Educational Service Agencies (AESA) completed an on-site review of RESC 4, focusing on the functions, programs, and services provided by the divisions within the RESC. The national panel of experts comprising the review team concluded that RESC 4 is "an exemplary service center with an exceptionally strong staff." The report included 17 recommendations; among them was to reconsider the RESC's strategic plan now that it had implemented various structural changes. The remaining recommendations were largely to ensure that various divisions were aligned with a new vision and that communications and internal processes were in place to meet the needs of the strategic vision. In the same year, the RESC's Leadership Council revised its mission and vision to create a business model based on the Malcolm Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence.

In the last three years, RESC 4 has continued its pursuit of the Baldrige Quality Award, as well as ISO 9001:2000 certification. It has developed a Balanced Scorecard, conducted organizational self-assessments, benchmarked itself against other service agency organizations, administered an employee opinion survey, contracted with an outside firm for an annual customer satisfaction survey, and trained internal auditors to support ISO initiatives. Through these efforts, the RESC has developed its core purpose statement, "to make a difference in learning communities," and its new long-term vision, "to be the first choice for educational services and solutions."

RESC 4 has developed five intermediate strategic goals that it believes can be reached by 2008 and that relate to the TEA Balanced Scorecard goals:

- make every customer a "Raving Fan" (relates to the TEA goal of "promote educational excellence");
- establish and maintain a supportive work environment (relates to "recruit and retain a skilled workforce");
- increase effectiveness of organizational processes (relates to "improve RESC efficiency");
- build human resources to support innovation (relates to "recruit and retain a skilled workforce"); and,
- achieve financial independence (relates to "leverage external funding and partnerships").

Each of these intermediate goals has strategies and target measures. Each division within RESC 4 has specific target measures that relate to the intermediate goals, although some are still in development. To assess division progress, the managing directors meet quarterly and review their specific goals, recent activities, and any resources needed for further improvement.

Against this backdrop of strategic planning and self-assessment, RESC 4 has encountered a continuing decline in state funding. In FY 2002, the TEA provided RESC 4 with $5.2 million in funding, based on a funding formula that included $700,000 in base funding, plus adjustments for the number of campuses served, the square mileage served and the ADA. In that year, RESC 4 received the highest funding from the TEA; the next highest funding was $3.8 million to Region 10. However, on a per student basis, RESC 4 received the lowest amount of funding – just $6.07 per student versus a state average of $14.00. In FY 2003, the TEA provided the RESC with $5.2M in funding, a reduction to $5.97 per student, versus a state average of $13.98. In FY 2004, the budget was further reduced to provide approximately $1.07 per student, versus the state average of $5.11.

In response to the shifts and declines in funding, as well as its new strategic vision, this year RESC 4 has reorganized its divisions and reduced its staffing. The Field Services Division was largely eliminated. Some functions, including driver education, were also eliminated. **Exhibit 4-1** shows the change in RESC 4 staffing levels over the past three years.

Exhibit 4-1
Decline in RESC 4 Staffing

Employee Type	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004-05
Full-time	329	291	250	240
Part-time	192	363	70	64
Total	**521**	**654**	**320**	**304**

Source: RESC 4 Personnel Rosters, June 2004.

To survive and thrive in an environment of constantly changing funding, the RESC has adopted financial independence as one of its strategic goals. This refocus has required what the executive director termed a "total change of budget philosophy." Each division within the RESC must support itself with the revenues it generates, outside of overhead costs. This is a dramatic shift from a grant cost recovery focus, yet it has been embraced by RESC 4 staff. In interviews, all division leaders indicated a clear understanding of this shift, how it aligned with the long-term vision, how it impacted their operations, and how they planned to be successful in the new environment.

MGT interviewed all eight of the board members, including the state-appointed representative for the charter schools. All eight commented positively on how RESC 4 transformed itself from being primarily grant-funded to being more entrepreneurial. Board members indicated that the most recent strategic planning and reorganization were handled extremely well. They stated that the RESC did a "remarkable" and "masterful" job in managing the transition.

To be truly strategic in nature, a long-range plan must be holistic, that is, it must consider the organization as a whole. Strategic planning is the activity by which an organization deals with its the major strategic decisions.

Strategic decisions are characterized as:

- defining the organization's relationship to its environment;
- considering the whole organization as the unit of analysis;
- depending on inputs from a variety of functional areas; and
- providing direction for, and constraints on, administrative and operational activities throughout the organization.

More simply put, strategic planning addresses these three questions:

- Where are we today?
- Where are we going?
- How do we get there?

RESC 4 clearly adheres to best practices in its strategies planning efforts.

Accomplishment: RESC 4 is a highly functioning organization that emphasizes and properly uses long-term strategic planning to direct its short-term goals as well as its continuing self-assessment and improvement efforts.

EFFECTIVE CUSTOMER SERVICE

As part of its strategic plan, RESC 4 is seeking to make every customer a "raving fan." This plan component has led to a strong emphasis on effective customer service.

On the MGT survey of superintendents conducted for this study, a higher percentage of RESC 4 superintendents indicate their RESC is "highly responsive" to services needs of their districts than did superintendents statewide (93% versus 85%). Moreover, RESC 4 superintendents believe that their RESC is more responsive to complaints that did superintendents statewide (94% versus 82%).

For the past several years, RESC 4 has contracted with an external consultant to conduct an evaluation of the products and services offered by the service center. The survey evaluates products and services along several criteria that focus on awareness, utilization, and effectiveness. The evaluations use two types of questionnaires: the *Superintendent's Revie*w, which specifically asks district superintendents their views of RESC 4, RESC products and services, and departmental surveys, which targets actual users of the specific services and programs. Results of these surveys have consistently shown a high level of satisfaction with RESC 4 products and services.

In an effort to provide professional development for all those who wish it, the Education Services Division implemented several new initiatives in the past few years. When a course offering is expected to be very popular, the division will offer essentially open enrollment. A popular class may be listed as having only a certain number of seats, but the division will plan for a larger crowd and be able to accommodate an oversubscription if it occurs. RESC 4 has started to overbook many of its classes because there is, on average, a 10 percent no show rate. This helps ensure that courses reach a maximum number of district personnel.

In the event that a customer in the RESC 4 service region is unable to get into a desired class, the division will often offer to go to that customer's district and provide the class on-site. In the last four years, the division has made a strong effort to generally bring more training classes to district sites, recognizing that this saves districts travel costs and time. When training is done at a district site, the district receives some seats for free, while the RESC gains use of the district facility for free. In this way, training offered in a particular district can be opened to personnel in neighboring districts without creating cost issues.

RESC 4 has a goal of ultimately providing two-thirds of its training at district locations; currently they are completing 60 percent in districts, a significant increase from the 30 percent offered in districts in 2000–01. Each year, RESC 4 calculates how much money in mileage reimbursements it has saved districts by providing training on-site; in 2002–03, it estimated a savings of more than $571,000.

RESC 4 routinely compares the prices of the professional development courses it offers with similar courses offered through alternative sources to ensure it is price-competitive. **Exhibit 4-2** provides a sample of price comparisons RESC 4 completed in 2002.

Exhibit 4-2
Price Comparison of Professional Development Offerings

Course/Seminar	RESC 4 Price	Comparable Vendor Price
Basic Accounting	$15	$125
Effective Documentation	80	150
Web Pages 101	100	179
Windows Basics for the Classroom Teacher	50	215
Ready to Read	100	129
Conflict Resolution	50	99

Source: RESC 4 RESC Price Comparison Chart, September 2002.

Maintaining a strong customer focus ensures that an organization remains viable and relevant to its customers.

Accomplishment: RESC 4 maintains a strong emphasis on customer service and satisfaction.

COMMUNICATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS

RESC 4 maintains an aggressive level of open communication with its stakeholders. Board members and district superintendents are kept up-to-date and have opportunities to provide substantive input. Executive leaders met regularly to assess progress and actively deal with issues. Employees are well-informed and exhibit a high level of morale.

Exhibit 4-3 outlines the major meetings scheduled by RESC 4 to maintain open communications among its various stakeholders. Based on meeting agendas, meeting minutes, and feedback from employees, MGT determined that each of these meetings has a clear purpose and provides value in the management of the RESC.

Exhibit 4-3
Calendar of Major RESC 4 Meetings
2003–04

Event	Frequency	Attendees/Content
Board of Directors meeting	Every other month	Board of Directors, executive director, all senior and managing directors
Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) Annual Business meeting	Two days each October	Board of Directors, Boards of Trustees, district superintendents, executive director, all senior and managing directors
Superintendent/RAC Meeting	Monthly	district superintendents, executive director, all senior and managing directors
Executive Directors meeting	Twice per month	executive director, all senior and managing directors, director of customer relations
Mini-council meeting	Monthly	executive director, all senior and managing directors, director of customer relations
Long-Range Planning meeting	Monthly	executive director, all senior and managing directors, director of customer relations
Leadership Council	Once or twice per month	executive director, all senior and managing directors, director of customer relations
District Administrators meeting	Quarterly	All district administrators, executive directors, senior and managing directors
Staff meeting	Quarterly	All RESC 4 staff
Charter School Administrator's Meeting	Quarterly	All charter school administrators, all RESC 4 department directors
Core Service Collaboratives	3 to 5 meetings per year	All district administrators with similar jobs, RESC 4 department directors and/or specialists

Source: Created by MGT based on interviews and RESC 4 calendars, June 2004.

In addition to these meetings, the executive director frequently attends meeting of district boards of Trustees. His goal is to attend meet with each of the 54 district superintendents at their district sites each year.

RESC 4 closely tracks all district participation in its offerings and presents summaries of this participation to district superintendents in both a book form and during the annual RESC 4 RESC Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) meeting. This report allows superintendents to assess their district's ongoing needs and to provide feedback to the RESC.

All eight board members reported that they receive a wealth of information on issues facing RESC 4, that background materials are provided in a timely manner, and that any questions they have are answered promptly and completely. MGT reviewed samples of several packages provided to board members and found them to be consistently comprehensive and well-organized.

All eight board members acknowledged their role as the policy-making and budget approval body for the RESC. New members receive a thorough orientation from the executive director and his subordinates, and both recent board additions rated the orientation as excellent.

Each month, RESC 4 provides a written summary to the board members. The summary includes highlights of activities by each division and a report of the number of professional development workshops offered, the number of attendees, and the number of conference rooms used. It also includes a detailed listing of workshop dates, workshop titles, the number of RESC 4 participants, the number of non-RESC 4 participants, and the duration of each workshop.

RESC 4 also provides summaries to the board members detailing which schools and districts have used which RESC services. Several board members indicate that they use these summaries to follow up with the superintendents they serve if they feel participation has decreased. In return, board members reported that superintendents frequently contact them regarding RESC issues, thus creating a constant circle of communication.

In interviews, members of the RESC 4 leadership team exhibited a high degree of unity and clarity of common vision. Despite the recent large-scale organizational changes, which necessitated significantly reducing the number of full- and part-time staff, division leaders expressed a high level of satisfaction with the organization.

All staff members have the opportunity to participate in quarterly RESC-wide meetings, in addition to more typical department and division meetings. In a 2003 employee opinion survey completed by an outside consultant, employees ranked in the top 10 percent on a morale index that compared RESC 4 to other benchmark organizations.

With the staffing reductions attendant to the reorganization process, only one employee whose position was eliminated filed a complaint, an indication of how well the process was handled (the complaint was later denied by the EEOC). In interviews with numerous RESC 4 staff members, all commented positively on the process used to downsize the organization. Employees who were initially identified as candidates for the reduction in force were informed as early as possible. Employees who were ultimately let go were assisted in every way possible to make the transition, and most found alternate employment in the school districts served by RESC 4. Some employees, in fact, went through RESC 4's own alternate certification program to become teachers.

Highly effective organizations prize open communications among its stakeholders as a critical component of their success. The most effective organizations incorporate multiple and frequent channels of communication.

Accomplishment: RESC 4 maintains an exceptional level of communication among its

stakeholders—its board of directors, district trustees, district superintendents, executive leadership, and rank-and-file employees.

BRAILLE SERVICES

One unusual function offered through RESC 4 is Braille services. RESC 4's Braille Center is one of the largest Braille production facilities in the US. In addition to Brailled textbooks that it sells nationwide, the department provides a variety of test materials for school districts and educational agencies in 27 states (including Texas) and Washington, D.C. Each year, RESC 4 participates in competitive bids for Braille services.

The staff of the Braille Services Department includes production specialists, computer networking specialists, computer operators, and braillists/proofreaders certified by the National Library Service, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. The director of the Braille Services Department is a member of the Board of Directors of the National Braille Association and serves on a tactile graphics technical committee for the Braille Authority of North America. Staff members conduct workshops on the preparation methods of tactile graphics at conferences across the country for the National Braille Association.

Accomplishment: RESC 4 has outstanding Braille services as evidenced by national recognition and use.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

RESC 4 has formed numerous strategic partnerships that have allowed it to increase the breadth of its services.

These external collaborations are with entities ranging from IBM to the United States Department of Education. The nature and purposes of these partnerships vary, including agreements to join The Cooperative Purchasing Network (TCPN), collaborations on product development, and teacher training and recruitment arrangements. **Exhibit 4-4** summarizes some of these partnerships.

These products and services are designed to help RESC 4's member districts improve instruction and gain increased access to cost-effective purchasing options. Partnerships have allowed the RESC 4 to leverage and augment its own abilities, thereby providing its member schools with increased volume and quality of resources.

Accomplishment: RESC 4 successfully uses strategic partnerships with public and private sector entities to expand service offerings.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

RESC 4 develops and delivers professional development opportunities that are specifically designed to help participants increase internal capacity for future improvements.

Many of the center's training programs, and particularly those that are presented to large school districts, follow the "trainer of trainer" (TOT) model. This model allows select district staff to take what they learn from the RESC and disseminate the information to their own personnel. Benefits of the TOT approach for districts include:

- **Cost savings**: additional staff can receive information without the district having to pay travel or enrollment fees for them to attend the training at the RESC.
- **Capacity building**: trainees expand their knowledge and build expertise within the district, reducing future dependency on outside resources.

Exhibit 4-4
RESC 4 Strategic Partnerships

Partners	Nature of Relationship
Brainchild	Collaborated on *TAKS Achiever Math* TEKS-based assessment and instruction product.
Dell Computers, Gateway Computers, Hewlett-Packard, IBM, Office Depot, Williams Scotsman, Xerox	Participating vendors in TCPN; offer more competitive prices for TCPN members.
Edusoft	Collaborated on a product to connect assessments with paper-to-web scoring and easy data analysis.
Texas A & M University System	Collaborated on Leadership Academies in reading and mathematics and on principal assessment.
Texas Instruments	Collaborated on materials to provide teachers and students guidance in the use of Texas Instruments TI-83 plus graphing calculators and data collection devices in secondary mathematics.
Texas Tech University, Stephen F Austin University, Southwest State University	Collaborate on certifying teachers in visual impairment and orientation and mobility.
Texas Women's University	Collaborate on training speech-language pathologists and sign language interpreters.
TEA, the Gale Group, the Publisher's Resource Group	Collaborated on the Biology Pilot Project, exploring the use of a web interface for TEKS-aligned, biology-oriented curriculum materials.
TEA, University of Texas Center for Academic and Reading Skills, Wireless Generation	Collaborated on the Texas Primary Reading Inventory (TPRI) pilot project, exploring the use of handheld personal digital assistants (PDAs) to collect student performance data.
The Charles A. Dana Center at the University of Texas at Austin	Collaborated on development of *Foundations of Functions*, a resource for vertical teams of middle and high school mathematics teachers.
The Rice University School Mathematics Project	Collaborated on development of the *Geometry Module*, a comprehensive teacher training module.
U.S. Department of Education	Collaborated to develop and deliver a training-of-trainers model on federal No Child Left Behind legislation to superintendents across the nation.
Universidad Autónoma de Guadalajara (Guadalajara, México), Universidad Regiomontana (Monterrey, México)	Collaborate managing the *Transition to Teaching in Texas* alternative certification program, designed to train and place bilingual teachers from Mexico into Texas schools.
University of Houston, Museum of Fine Arts Houston	Collaborated on the development and implementation of *ePath*, a statewide electronic project providing Texas teachers advanced instruction in American History.
University of Nebraska, University of Texas	Collaborated on Texas Virtual Schools initiative.
Yavapai County Education Service Agency	Collaborate to expand membership of TCPN.

Source: RESC 4 Documentation and Web site, 2004.

In addition, the region offers multiple professional development programs explicitly intended to help schools and districts build internal capacity for sustaining improvements. One such program is the *Building Inclusive Schools Initiative* (BISI). Funded with federal IDEA monies, this initiative is designed to help schools develop and maintain structures to ensure that students with disabilities are instructed in the least restrictive environments, and to promote continuous integration between general and special education. Interested schools apply, then those selected are required to commit to continue participating in the program for three years. The RESC 4 works intensively with the selected schools for all three years, helping them to review and develop their inclusion plans, design professional development plans, and implement and measure successful steps toward inclusion. In 2002–03, 63 campuses

and seven charter schools participated in the BISI program.

Another professional development program designed to help districts to build internal capacity is the RESC 4's Aspiring Superintendents' Academy. This program, consisting of seven full-day training sessions, was developed so that districts could begin to "grow their own" leaders. Typical participants in this academy are educators who have been identified by current superintendents as having the potential to become effective district superintendents. RESC 4 districts benefit from this program in that when a superintendent position becomes vacant, they do not always have to conduct costly and time-intensive searches for outside applicants. They have a ready pool of trained individuals who are already familiar with the region and its issues. In 2002–03, 21 educators participated in the Aspiring Superintendents' Academy. Approximately 111 individuals have gone through the Academy since it was initiated, and of those approximately 10 have since been hired to superintendent positions.

Accomplishment: RESC 4 offers programs designed to help districts build internal capacity for sustained and continued improvements.

EDUCATIONAL PRODUCTS

Region 4 has developed many products designed to improve educational instruction and student performance.

Drawing upon the expertise of its staff, the center makes a deliberate effort to develop, document, publish, and make widely available any resources it feels will be helpful to educators across the state and nation. Staff from RESC 4 have developed instructional resources in every subject area which are now being sold to and utilized by educators within and outside of RESC 4. These products include the following:

- ***TAKS Preparation Series***: A comprehensive set of instructional materials designed to give educators the tools to prepare students for TAKS. Available for purchase in each grade level (K-11 Exit) and subject area (reading, mathematics, science, and social studies), the preparation packets include performance assessments and selected-response assessments. The teacher's edition for each grade and subject area also contains classroom-ready instructional materials, including an explanation of the curriculum/instruction/assessment framework. The materials are designed to go beyond test practice by impacting and improving classroom instruction.

- ***Benchmark Performance Assessments***: Developed with a grant from TEA, these are designed to assess student mastery as a result of TEKS-based instruction and serve as an indicator for student success on TAKS. The web-based assessments have been developed for mathematics, reading, social studies and science, and are available online as a free resource for educators, parents and students. The public web site includes assessment questions, sample student work, and a master rubric to analyze a student's conceptual knowledge, procedural knowledge, and communication skills. A separate, password protected administrators' site provides districts with a database of questions that could be used to district-made benchmark assessments. Over 120 tasks per grade level or subject are disseminated either in the public site or a separate site for administrators. The RESC 4 will also develop on-demand customized benchmark assessments for individual districts for a fee.

- **Scope and Sequence with Curriculum Based Assessment**: Provides teachers and other school personnel with scope and sequence to support TEKS. The produce exists for

all grade levels in mathematics, science, social studies, and reading/language arts.

- **Mathematical Models with Applications**: Curriculum designed as either a companion to Algebra II or as a stand-alone course to prepare students for the Exit TAKS.

- **Resources for Early Literacy Development**: Include a series of six teacher resource books addressing the components of the Texas Prekindergarten Language and Early Literacy Curriculum Guidelines, and a series of five *Reading First* teacher handbooks.

- **Resources for Teaching Special Populations**: Include resource guides, manuals, tools, and training-of-trainer binders for bilingual/ESL; dyslexia and related disorders; inclusion; and special education.

- **Administrative Resources**: Include manuals, tools, and guides for monitoring and compliance; federal and state programs; planning and decision making; and risk analysis.

Region 4 has been recognized as a major provider of educational products and services.

Accomplishment: RESC 4 develops and sells innovative products designed to assist educators across the state and nation in improving student achievement.

BILINGUAL EDUCATORS

RESC 4 actively participates in recruiting, training, and certifying bilingual educators for the districts in its service area. This effort assists districts in a vital teacher shortage area.

Approximately 17 percent of students in RESC 4 are classified as limited English proficient. Filling bilingual teacher vacancies is a chronic problem for many districts in the region and the state. For the past 10 years, Region 4 has managed a bilingual educator program to help stem the shortage and has thus far graduated more than 500 bilingual teachers.

Region 4 recruits potential bilingual teachers through various methods, including online, and applications are accepted from the Spring through June of each year. In the 2004 cycle, more than 1,400 interested individuals attended information sessions about the program. The first year the program began it had 20 participants. This year, there are 107 bilingual teacher candidates in the program. Region 4's goal for the upcoming year is to recruit 200 applicants, targeting the Mexican cities of Mexico City, Guadalajara, Tampico, Puebla, and Monterrey.

Training sessions for accepted candidates begin each September. The applicants pay to participate and Region 4 oversees a variety of activities, including:

- an application process that requires passing the TOEFL and a minimum of three courses offered by universities (English composition, math, and U.S. history);

- pre-assignment training in Mexico, which includes intensive weekend studies with the same content as that provided in the US, through agreements with the Autonomous University of Guadalajara, Regiomontana University, Iberoamericana University, Intercontinental University;

- immigration filing;

- relocation assistance;

- internships at participating districts; and

- bilingual EC-4 certification.

Participants can teach under a probationary period for one year after they receive their certificates. Teaching certificates are valid for

five years. More than 90 percent of the bilingual teachers recruited through Region 4 are employed by the participating school districts.

Within Region 4, seven school districts (including Houston ISD) are currently participating in the bilingual teacher recruiting program. Five districts outside the Region 4 service area – Austin ISD, Conroe ISD, Dallas ISD, Garland ISD, and Navasota ISD are also participating.

On MGT's survey of district superintendents undertaken as part of this study, 100 percent of the Region 4 superintendents rated their satisfaction with the assistance provided in teacher certification as strong or very strong. Of the 30 areas MGT asked Region 4 superintendents to assess, only two received this high a rating (special education support was the other). Statewide, only 84 percent of the superintendents rated their satisfaction with teacher certification support as strong or very strong. While teacher certification encompasses more than the recruiting of bilingual teachers, effective bilingual teacher recruiting does play a role. Moreover, 90 percent of the Region 4 superintendents rated their satisfaction with the RESC's support for bilingual education and ESL as strong or very strong. Statewide, only 85 percent of superintendents did the same, also indicative of the success of the bilingual recruiting program.

Accomplishment: Region 4 has created a cost-effective bilingual teacher recruitment program that is highly regarded by participating districts.

FUNDING TRANSFORMATION

Despite an extreme reduction in state funding, Region 4 will add to its fund balance for 2003–04. Region 4 has reacted swiftly and successfully to the challenge raised by a shift in funding sources. From 2002–03 to 2003–04, Region 4 lost $31.6 million in state base and state grant funding. The reduction in state base funding was due to a change in the statewide RESC allocation formula.

Exhibit 4-5 shows the trend in state funding for the past three years.

Exhibit 4-5
Decline in Region 4 State Base and State Grant Funding

Funding Source	2002–03	2003–04	Year Over Year Percent Change
State Base	$4,690,339	$993,189	(79%)
State Grant	$30,390,532	$2,517,395	(92%)

Source: Region 4 Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports, 2002, 2003.

Exhibit 4-6 details how Region 4 is using remaining state funds and provides a statement of the revenue and expenses of state base funds as of June 30, 2004. As the exhibit shows, most of the state funds are directed toward Math/Science/Social Studies and Reading/Language Arts.

This reduction in state funding created a significant shortfall in RESC 4's financial resources. To deal with these budget cuts, Region 4 was forced to make drastic changes in its business operations to remain open and continue to provide services to the school districts. Once the extent of the funding reductions was known, the Region 4 leadership team established a collaborative process to determine the future course of the RESC 4 area. The team determined that a charge back program for services offered to the districts is a viable source of stable future revenue. The leadership team also determined that grant funding is a viable source of revenue for service offerings to the districts, but the income is not guaranteed. Therefore, Region 4 continues to apply for grant funds, but has reworked its business operations to focus on services that will generate local revenue.

Exhibit 4-6
Region 4 Use of State Base Funding
2003–04

Program	Use	Realized Revenue	Expenditures Incurred	Remaining Balance
102	State ESC-PEIMS	$50,000.00	$38,814.29	$11,185.71
102	School Finance Specialist	50,000.00	44,562.59	5,437.41
102	ESC State School Board/Super Training	50,000.00	50,000.00	0.00
102	ESC State Math/Science/Social Studies	412,345.00	227,864.42	184,480.58
102	ESC State Leadership	60,500.00	43,194.24	17,305.76
102	ESC State Reading/Language Arts	180,344.00	166,457.18	13,886.82
102	ESC State Acct./Compliance	40,000.00	64,497.73	75,502.27
102	ESC State Instruct/Technology	50,000.00	25,152.43	24,847.57
	Total	**$993,189.00**	**$660,542.88**	**$332,646.12**

Source: Region 4 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report ,2003-04.

By providing valuable services that the districts are willing to pay for, the region believes it creates a more consistent and reliable revenue source. The leadership team has challenged each division in the region to develop and market appropriate service offerings for their area. Members of the leadership team also indicated in interviews that they believe future forecasting and planning will be more predictable with this redirected approach to managing the region's business. Some of the revenue-generating initiatives and services now offered by the Region 4 include the TCPN purchasing cooperative, consortiums, escWorks, and PEIMS Enhanced support.

One of the questions on MGT's survey undertaken as part of this study, superintendents were asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement with the statement, "The RESC in our region is adequately funded." Just three percent of the Region 4 superintendents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, while 73 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed. In contrast, 15 percent of superintendents statewide agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, while 60 percent statewide disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Unlike school districts, RESCs have no local taxing authority. In order to provide for a physical plant, plant operation, maintenance, renovation, self-insurance, and the like, RESCs must maintain fund balances.

Exhibit 4-7 shows Region 4's fund balances for the past three years. The sharp decline from 2002–03 to 2003–04 can be attributed to the substantial total loss of state base and state grant funding. However, given the current financial status, it is anticipated that Region 4 will actually add revenue to their fund balance this year.

Accomplishment: The Region 4 leadership team has successfully navigated a large-scale transformation after losing the majority of its state base and grant funding streams.

Exhibit 4-7
Trend in Region 4 Fund Balances

Fund Balance Dates	Designated Fund Balance	Designated Reserve	Undesignated Fund Balance	Total Fund Balance
Beginning Fund Balance: **September 1, 2002**	$329,764	$212,334	$3,300,128	$3,842,226
Beginning Fund Balance: **September 1, 2003**	$5,474,620	$329,566	$1,539,397	$7,343,583
Estimated Ending Fund Balance: **August 31, 2004**	$4,974,620	$350,000	$3,018,963	$8,343,583

Source: Region 4 Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports, 2001, 2002, 2003.

ACCOUNTING AND FINANCIAL REPORTING

Region 4 maintains a high standard of excellence in accounting and financial reporting.

MGT reviewed Region 4's audited financial statements for the years 1999 – 2003. MGT found the data presented in these reports to be accurate in all material respects and presented in a manner designed to fairly represent the financial position of the various funds and account groups of the RESC.

As a result, the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) awarded a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting to Region 4 for its Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CARF) for the fiscal year ending August 31, 2002. This certificate of achievement is the highest form of recognition in the area of governmental accounting and financial reporting. Earning this certificate represents a significant accomplishment by the Region and its management.

Accomplishment: Region 4 has achieved a high standard of excellence in governmental accounting and financial reporting.

PURCHASING NETWORK

Through the Texas Cooperative Purchasing Network (TCPN), Region 4 places purchasing power in the hands of school districts and local government entities.

Purchasing and contract management functions in Region 4 are divided into two distinct areas: Purchasing Services and the TCPN group. Purchasing Services provides internal purchasing functions for Region 4 and is staffed by two full-time employees. The TCPN group provides cooperative purchasing opportunities to a variety of public agencies. It is staffed with 10 full-time employees, headed by a director.

TCPN was formed seven years ago to provide cooperative purchasing opportunities to school districts and state and local government entities. The purpose of TCPN is to:

- provide school districts and other governmental agencies opportunities for greater efficiency and economy in acquiring goods and services;
- ensure that members are offered products and services that meet legal procurement requirements;
- provide competitive price solicitation and bulk purchasing for multiple government agencies;
- provide quick and efficient delivery of goods and services; and
- allow districts of all sizes to experience greater purchasing economies of scale.

Approximately 140 vendors participate in the cooperative and approximately 1,000 entities are currently members. Approximately 55 percent (565 entities) of the members are school districts, including 51 of the 54 districts in Region 4. The cooperative is available for use by all public and private schools, colleges, universities, cities, counties, and all other government entities in the State of Texas. Participation in TCPN provides legally required contract competition for commonly purchased items that public agencies must seek. Vendors and public entities both benefit from this arrangement, by avoiding the cost and time associated with multiple bid processes. To ensure that it offers customers the best prices available, every TCPN contract is reviewed for performance-based compliance during the first year, usually in the ninth or tenth month.

In 2002–03, the TCPN members used TCPN contracts to purchase $110 million in goods including office supplies, HVAC services, network capacity, musical instruments, and minor construction contracts. Region 4 earns a two percent residual on every dollar that flows through the cooperative. The revenue from the program is used to fund this initiative for the region. The residual revenue TCPN generates pays for all administrative costs associated with TCPN and the region returns 25 percent of the proceeds to the other participating RESCs.

On MGT's survey of superintendents undertaken as part of this project, 94 percent of Region 4 superintendents indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied with the TCPN purchasing cooperative. This is significantly higher than the 84 percent of superintendents statewide who were satisfied or very satisfied with purchasing cooperatives in their regions. Similarly, 94 percent of Region 4 employees indicated they are satisfied or very satisfied with the TCPN purchasing cooperative; just 86 percent of RESC employees statewide said the same.

Each year, Region 4 provides the superintendents in its service area with a summary of the services received by the district, including the amount of money each district saved by purchasing through TCPN. In 2003–04, districts within Region 4 saved an estimated total of $15.7 million by using TCPN. Of this total, Houston ISD saved $12 million and Clear Creek ISD saved $1.1 million.

Accomplishment: Region 4 does an exemplary job of providing goods and services through TCPN to school districts (and other government agencies) at or below industry competitive costs.

RISK MANAGEMENT CONSULTANTS

The Region 4 Risk Management Services (RMS) provides a range of asset and risk management consulting services including property/casualty and employee benefits insurance and risk management solutions to school districts and other publicly funded educational entities in Texas.

RMS maintains relationships with carriers, specialized service vendors and pools offering underwriting, cost management, claims adjusting and risk engineering services. RMS team members strive to see problems from the districts' perspective and each solution is tailored to the unique needs of the district. The small educational entities are receiving high quality services at a competitive price.

The Financial and Administrative Services team provides full-scale business office functions on a daily basis for charter schools and small school districts across the state. The list of services includes payroll, accounts payable, financial reporting, federal grant accounting, and basic accounting procedures according to the guidelines set forth by TEA.

The scope of the consulting services offered by the Financial and Administrative Services team is tailored to the needs of the district. Full range services, which are offered on a contract basis, include needs assessment plan design, procurement compliance, bid analysis and recommendation to the school staff. RESC 4 performs an assessment of vendor costs for

like services offered in the geographic region to determine cost effective pricing for the districts.

The Region 4 team also provides a broad array of staff development offerings to assist districts in effective asset and risk management. Regular training opportunities are offered in the areas of:

- investment officer training;
- risk management seminars;
- basic accounting; and
- business managers academy.

Region 4 hosts quarterly CFO meetings for all CFOs of districts in the service area.

Accomplishment: Region 4 offers valuable asset and risk management consulting services to school districts across the state through a network of expert risk management consultants.

escWORKS

Region 4 has developed an administrative management system called escWorks that offers valuable application functionality. It provides an effective tool for both education service centers and school districts.

The escWorks is an administrative information system that uses Microsoft architecture, including a .NET front-end with a SQLServer back-end. Seagate's Crystal Reports provides reporting and charting capabilities. Region 4 provides hosting services for this Web-based application.

The escWorks has multiple modules. The accountability module tracks information on assistance provided to clients. The professional development module enables event scheduling, event attendee tracking, and payment processing functions. Participants can register for classes online. escWorks can process purchase orders or credit cards for payment of courses. Other modules provide information on contacts, clients, and events.

"My shoebox" is an escWorks feature that tracks individual teacher training. Training taken from Region 4 is automatically added to a teacher's shoebox and is maintained for five years. Teachers can also enter outside training undertaken, including required training such as SBEC. Region 4 uses escWorks internally for tracking training completed by its own employees and then analyzes the data for future staff development needs.

In addition, escWorks can be used to provide balanced scorecard information and reports. With real-time access to information and comprehensive reporting features, escWorks provides practical, customizable functionality for districts and education service centers.

Built-in security for the system allows "view only" and/or "update" capabilities. Users profiles allow the proper authority to perform specific functions.

The annual fee for escWorks is based upon modules and usage ranging from $5,500 to $25,000 (depending on the amount of customization). **Exhibit 4-8** provides the modules and associated prices for escWorks components.

The system is designed to allow modules and Web page interfaces to be rapidly deployed and customized to end users' needs. Region 4 can provide customer training on-site or through WebX. Region 4 staff can also do the set-up on the back-end if necessary.

Current customers of escWorks include RESCs 4, 6, and 19; Learn Education Service Agency (Connecticut); 14 Arkansas service centers; Cypress Fairbanks ISD (Texas); and Cabot ISD (Arkansas). These agencies are all using the professional development, registration tracking, reports, and user modules. Regions 4, 6, 19 and the Learn Service Agency are also using the Accountability module.

Accomplishment: Region 4, in creating escWorks, has designed and developed a valuable software tool for both education service centers and school districts that provides professional development tracking, event scheduling, and accountability.

Exhibit 4-8
escWorks Modules and Pricing

Module	Annual License Fee
Administrator Basic Manager	$5,000
Location Manager (includes region, organization, site)	500
User Manager	250
Employee Manager	250
Presenter Manager	250
Sponsor Manager	250
Budget Manager	250
Event Scheduler	2,000
Master Event Manager	250
Attendee Manager	1,000
Facilities Manager	500
Attendance Module	1,000
Online Registration	2,000
Credit Card Processing Module (plus 1% per transaction fee + credit card processing fee of 3.72% + .28 per transaction)	2,000
Assistance (module + up to 2 forms)	2,000
Time Sheet	250
Reports Module	2,000
Training and Implementation per day plus expenses	1,000
Additional custom forms (minimum charge plus 20% annual maintenance)	250
Custom Modules	Available by Quote
Custom Reports	Available by Quote
User Licenses	Annual Fee
1 to 5 users	150
6 to 10 users	300
11 to 20 users	600
21 to 50 users	1,500
51 to 100 users	2,700
101 to 250 users	5,250
Over 201 users	Available by Quote

Source: escWorks, 2004.

DETAILED FINDINGS

CHARTER SCHOOL INVOLVEMENT

The charter school representative does not have adequate contact with RESC 4's charter school constituents. This representative is appointed by the state, but no mechanism is in place for assistance in providing representation for all the charters schools in this region.

RESC 4 currently serves 50 charter schools. Several staff members reported that serving the charter schools requires significant time, more than most of the individual schools within the districts the RESC serves.

Examples of recent services provided to charter schools include:

- education services in the areas of reading/language arts, math, science, social studies, special education, and accountability and compliance;
- purchasing through the TCPN purchasing cooperative;
- PEIMS technology services;
- assistance in instructional technology;

- business office/bookkeeping services;
- print services;
- assistance in administrative information services; and,
- human resources in the areas of background checks, the alternative certification program, and general HR services.

The charter school representative to the board of directors was first appointed two years ago by the Texas Commissioner of Education. This position is a non-voting member of the board that serves for a one-year term that may be extended for up to three years by the commissioner.

The charter school representative also serves on the board of a charter school within RESC 4. With 50 charter schools to serve, communication between RESC 4 and charter schools occur primarily through quarterly meetings. While the charter school board member expressed an interest in communicating more directly with the charter schools he is assigned to represent, such communication may not be a practical expectation. RESC 4 has provided a list of charter schools and contacts, as well as reports of what RESC services charter schools are receiving; however, strong relationships have not yet been developed with at least some of the charter schools, in particular some of the underperforming ones.

RESCs with ongoing and open communications between charter schools, their respective RESC board members and other governing boards help ensure that the RESC board member gains a broad a perspective regarding the needs and issues of charter schools within the region. This practice also ensures that charter schools are aware of the representation provided by the board member and gives them the opportunity to voice any concerns they may have.

RESC 4 should provide opportunities for greater communication between the state-appointed charter representative and the charter schools the appointee represents. Creating greater communication between the charter school board member and the charter schools would serve two purposes. First, it would help ensure that the board member gains a broad a perspective regarding the needs and issues of charter schools within the region. Second, it would ensure that charter schools are aware of the representation provided by the board member and give them the opportunity to voice any concerns they may have. Implementing this recommendation may also create a greater sense of community among the charter schools and, as these schools learn more about each other, lead to less reliance on RESC 4 for some services.

FACILITIES SERVICES

Region 4 not only maintains its own facilities in an outstanding manner, it is on the forefront of providing maintenance training and consulting services to the districts it serves. Its activities have saved districts money and improved their operations.

Region 4 operates from two main facilities: a 97,000 square foot main office building, originally constructed in 1980, that accommodates most of its personnel and an adjacent 49,000 square foot Professional Development Center constructed in 1995. The Professional Development Center contains classrooms, a technology lab, and a software previewing area, all connected to the main building by interior hallways. The Braille Services Department is housed in 2,400 square feet at a separate office building nearby. The Region rents a warehouse of 11,600 square feet in an off-site storage facility. The warehouse holds materials such as Braille paper and restroom supplies, as well as some records.

Region 4 does not have any deferred maintenance on its own facilities and has outsourced many of the facilities functions, including:

- HVAC preventative maintenance;
- lawn maintenance;
- janitorial services;
- pest control services;
- security services;
- elevator maintenance; and
- vehicle maintenance and service.

The main functions of the Facility Services Department are to:

- coordinate the maintenance of the RESC's facilities and grounds in support of the RESC's mission and strategies; and

- provide oversight for the development and delivery of professional staff development training opportunities in the area of school district facilities operations.

The region has a facilities staff of six and two temporary workers. The staff does a variety of daily tasks, including minor maintenance and repair, room set-ups for training sessions, delivery of materials to districts, warehouse receiving and distribution, and offices moves. In 2002–03, the department responded to 3,592 internal maintenance requests and 209 phone system services requests. The department has cut its staff by three positions in the last three years in response to budget constraints.

During a tour of the facilities, MGT found them to be generally well-maintained, with no major problems evident. On MGT's survey of district superintendents undertaken as part of this study, more Region 4 superintendents rated their RESC facilities as exceptional than did superintendents statewide (75% versus 69%).

In addition to maintaining their own facilities, the facilities director provides a wealth of services to Region 4 districts. Training classes are offered in:

- TASBO Statewide Certification Courses
- TASBO Maintenance and Operations Academy
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Indoor Air Quality Tools for Schools
- Integrated Pest Management
- Asbestos Management
- Facility Management
- Energy Management
- Director and Supervisor Personnel Management
- Preventative Maintenance Program Design
- Playground Safety

In addition to training, Region 4 provides facility consulting services in the areas of:

- Facility Services Management Reviews
- Transportation management Reviews
- Indoor Air Quality
- Environmental Regulatory Compliance
- Construction Management Issues

Fees for consulting services are based on an estimated number of consultant days required to achieve the desired scope of work. The Facilities director leads these consulting engagements and sometimes contracts with outside consultants to complete portions of the work. In reviewing several facilities consulting contracts, MGT found the fees for the scope of services provided to be quite reasonable.

In 2003–04, the Facilities Department provided:

- facilities director/supervisor services to 25 districts within the Region 4 service area;
- facilities management services to six districts; and,
- construction management services to two districts.

Currently, the ESC 4 facilities director is serving as an interim facilities maintenance and operations director for Lamar ISD on an annually renewable contract. This contract provides a small school district with a high level of professional service that it might not be able to afford were it hire someone for its permanent staff.

MGT reviewed one of the recent performance reviews that the Facilities Department completed. This review, done for Hempstead ISD, analyzed the district's maintenance, custodial, transportation, and food services departments. The report provided several recommendations in each area that could either save district funds or improve effectiveness. For example, Region 4 found that the district's food service employees all receive a paid lunch, which most districts do not. In the transportation area, Region 4 documented several bus safety issues.

For Huffman ISD, Region 4 is providing construction management expertise. In Hitchcock ISD, it is assisting in developing the long-range facilities plan. These are services that often a small school district would not be able to afford from an outside consulting firm. Moreover, because RESC 4 has long-standing relationships with the districts in its service areas, it is able to provide ongoing, long-term support.

Region 4 personnel played a key role in the 2003 Energy for Schools Project. Superintendents in the service area express appreciation to Region 4 personnel for their responsiveness in assisting districts with energy deregulation. The region projects a potential savings for more then $40 million for the 150 school districts and other entities involved in this project. Overall, the Region 4 Facilities Department provides superior, innovative services to both its internal and external customers.

RESC 4 should monitor and expand successful Facilities Department services including necessary staff as warranted and cost effective. Currently, most of the consulting services provided to districts in the service area are completed or coordinated by the Facilities director. However, the need for these types of services will likely expand in the future, as districts seek ever-greater efficiency and effectiveness from all parts of their organizations. If this type of service becomes a growth area for Region 4, it could be cost-effective for it to add full-time professional staff to the department.

This recommendation should only be implemented if the region determines that the fees charged to districts for consulting services would cover the costs of any additional personnel.

FACILITIES RENTAL

RESC 4 is not maximizing local revenues on its available rental space. Region 4 has 15 meeting/training rooms in its Professional Development Center, including a computer training room. These facilities are currently underutilized.

As a result, Region 4 has less revenues available to offset the cost of operating its facilities. At the time of its construction, the Education Services division provided most of its workshops at the ESC facility. Even as recently as 2000–01, the division delivered 70 percent of its training sessions in the Professional Development Center. With the recent renewed strategic emphasis on customer service, the division had now made it a goal to provide two-thirds of its workshops on-site in district facilities. Currently, the division provides 60 percent of its workshops in districts, leaving a minority of its workshops to be conducted in the Professional Development Center. This new emphasis has left the center underutilized.

In interviews, Region 4 personnel indicate that there are periods during the year when the training rooms are largely unused, particularly Fridays and Saturdays. MGT reviewed ESC 4's by date report of Center usage for the last year and found few days when more than half of the training rooms were utilized. Moreover, only a very small percentage of the rooms

were rented by outside groups. These organizations included:

- Houston ISD Speech Therapy Department
- Texas Department of Human Services
- Harris County Appraisal District
- Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts
- Texas Federation of Teachers
- Fast for Word Inc.
- Texas Notary Public Association
- Apple Computer
- Harris County Public Health

Exhibit 4-9 lists the current room rental rates. MGT found these rates to be comparable to rates for non-profit groups in similar facilities outside the downtown area of Houston. The region also charges outside groups for coffee service and maintains a list of nearby caterers.

Exhibit 4-9
Room Rental Rates in the ESC 4 Professional Development Center

Room Type (Number)	Square Footage	Maximum Capacity	Half Day Internal Charge
General Training (1)	3,965	250	$140
General Training (4)	1,240 – 1,280	40	60
General Training (3)	1,141	22 – 25	60 – 72
General Training (1)	2,320	100	100
General Training (1)	2,016	100	100
General Training (2)	1,978 – 2,021	90 – 100	80
Meeting (2)	235 – 236	12	20
Computer Lab (1)	1,141	25	750 (whole day only)
Total	**521**	**523**	**287**

Source: Budget Manual, Other Budgeting Rates, FY 2004–05.

In this current environment of continuing budget constraints, RESC 4 should thoroughly examine all reasonable sources for additional local revenue. At the current rates, each one percent increase in occupancy by outside groups, assuming 290 potentially desirable rental days (no Sunday or holiday rentals), would generate an additional $7,800 in annual income. Achieving a reasonable figure of 15 percent annual occupancy by outside groups would generate income of more than $117,000.

RESC 4 should pursue more rental income from the Professional Development Center. Given the current underutilization of the center and the continuing need to increase local funding, Region 4 should explore this potential source of additional revenue. If Region 4 determines that it is unable to achieve more significant utilization of the classrooms in the center, it should complete a cost/benefit analysis of converting some of the training space to storage space and ending its rental of off-site warehouse space.

This recommendation can initially be implemented with existing resources. The managing director of Financial Services can develop a plan to publicize the center's facilities, focusing initially on government and non-profit organizations that could be sources of repeat rentals. Support staff in Financial Services can be tasked with implementing the plan. If the initiative is very successful, Region 4 could consider partially funding a position to coordinate a high volume of rental activity. In the first year, MGT estimates that the initiative will be only moderately successful, resulting in just a three percent increase in non-ESC 4 occupancy. MGT estimates that this rate can then be increased conservatively by one percent each year.

Each one percent occupancy rate by outside groups, distributed evenly over the various rooms, generates $7,813 in income. A contract

with an outside computer training firm to regularly rent the technology lab could generate significantly more savings.

DATA RESOURCES

Annually, RESC 4 provides each district in its service area with a report of all the assistance it received from the RESC; while highly detailed, its value to customers could be improved. Refinements to the categorizations and data supplied to this report through escWorks would increase the value of this report for both district recipients and RESC 4 personnel.

Every year, RESC 4 provides each district in its service area with a *Summary Usage Report of RESC 4 RESC Products and Services*. The report, sent to the superintendent, includes a summary table of RESC 4 usage by all the districts in the region and a detailed breakdown of the types and amount of assistance given to each school within the superintendent's district, including charter schools.

Receiving this type of analysis allows district superintendents to better plan subsequent budgets; compare participation in RESC services with student achievement at the campus and classroom level; analyze the cost-effectiveness of services; and target certain campuses or employees who might benefit from increased services. Tracking and analyzing participation data also aids the Center in targeting outreach and recruitment to new participants who are underutilizing RESC 4 services, ensuring that all schools in the region are receiving the full benefit of the center's many programs.

The summary table lists how many times the district received some form of technical assistance from RESC 4, how many site visits were completed, the number of participants in professional development, and an estimate of the savings from RESC-provided professional development. This one-page overview allows a superintendent to quickly determine whether the district is comparatively using more or less RESC services than districts of a similar size. Overall, for 2003–04, RESC 4 provided 23,027 instances of technical assistance, completed 2,503 site visits, provided professional development for 45,798 district personnel (57 percent of all the district personnel in the service area) and estimated that it saved districts more than $42 million in professional development costs.

The detailed breakdown sections of the report divide RESC 4's interactions with district personnel into either technical assistance or professional development. Technical assistance is categorized as on-site at the district/campus, on-site at the RESC 4 office, resource distribution, or responses by telephone, e-mail, fax, or mail. Examples of the kinds of interactions included in each category are provided in **Exhibit 4-10.**

Exhibit 4-10
Examples of Technical Assistance Provided by RESC 4
2003–04

Category of Technical Assistance	Examples of Technical Assistance Provided
On-site: District/Campus	• Made an on-site visit regarding Title 4 Community Service amendment • Provided collaborative planning on TEKS/TAKS Preparation Books
On-site: RESC 4 RESC	• Delivered and reviewed Tarleton Assessment of Principals assessment report and collaboratively created a professional development plan • Provided one day training on Reading Facilitation Follow-Up
Resources Distributed	• Provided information for GEAR UP Counselors toolkit training • Checked out a laptop and portable printer • Printed 1,700 Middle School Student Handbooks • Provided summary of 2003–04 statewide TPRI training
Response by Telephone, E-mail, Fax, Mail	• Provided information on 504 training • Provided technical assistance on using Braille notetaker

Sources: Summary Usage Reports of RESC 4 RESC Products and Services provided for Houston ISD and Aldine ISD, 2003–04.

Attendance by district personnel in professional development opportunities is compiled in a separate section of the report. Examples of the training provided by RESC 4 in 2003–04 include:

- meeting the needs of the gifted/talented in advanced placement classes;
- building foundations in assistive technology;
- culinary techniques; and
- understanding the state accountability system.

This extremely detailed report allows a superintendent to easily understand the value the RESC has provided throughout the year. A superintendent can see which schools have sought the most assistance and in what areas and even which staff members have attended which professional development classes.

However, further refining the data provided in the technical assistance section of the report would make the report more valuable for district and RESC personnel. There appears to be some confusion regarding technical assistance provided on-site and professional development activities. For example, in the Houston ISD report, one department recorded as an on-site technical assistance visit what it described as a "one day training." Clearly, this was actually professional development activity. MGT found several instances where training workshops were categorized as technical assistance items.

Some of the actions listed as technical assistance should not be included at all. In the Aldine ISD report, one department recorded the delivery of invoices for services provided as "responses by telephone, e-mail, fax, or mail." While this is a form of district interaction, it should not be considered technical assistance to the district.

In addition, some of the items included in the "response by telephone, e-mail, fax, or mail" category were not actually responses to district questions, but rather proactive efforts on the part of RESC 4 to distribute information. For example, one RESC 4 department recorded a total of 579 responses by telephone, e-mail, fax, or mail provided to Houston ISD. However, the vast majority of these "responses" were actually a distribution of materials on the part of the department, listed as either "provided information concerning professional development training" on 8/11/2003 or "sent information concerning professional development…" on 11/25/2003. Clearly, not all of the Houston schools called to request the same information on the same day; these must have been actions taken by RESC staff.

District leaders would be better served by having a truer count of when their personnel actually sought out the assistance of the RESC. Tracking information efforts in another category would provide a more accurate count.

RESC 4 should improve the quality of the data supplied to escWorks so that superintendents and RESC personnel will have a more valuable tool. It is as important to track each interaction with the districts accurately as it is to track all such interactions. The RESC 4 leadership should determine what types of interactions should be included in each category, and perhaps create an additional category to track their proactive dissemination of important information. They should then provide clear definitions to their staffs as to which types of interactions should be included in each category.

VACANT POSITIONS

RESC 4 has several long-term vacancies in the Education Services Division that each year result in significant salary savings being redirected to a one-time function.

There are currently 78 positions funded in the Education Services Division. As of May 2004, the RESC 4 organizational chart indicated that an additional 13 positions remained opened, posted, or vacant. According to the managing director and unit directors, several of these positions have been posted and left vacant for over one year. RESC 4 periodically receives

applications for these positions, but has not identified candidates that meet the position requirements. The region is very selective in its hiring, requiring high standards for all employees' backgrounds and qualifications . The executive director also requires that all staff at RESC 4 be service oriented.

Funds for unfilled positions are currently recognized as salary savings each year and used for one-time purposes. While the resources are directed to worthwhile one-time expenses, there are potentially more prudent longer-term uses for such funds.

RESC 4 should eliminate long-term vacant positions and develop a policy and procedure for addressing vacancies that includes active recruitment, evaluation of position-justification for any vacancy open for more than six months, and clear budgeting guidelines for the use of salary savings.

While it is commendable that RESC 4 maintains high standards for staff, having long-term position vacancies distorts the budget for salary and staff. Long-term position vacancies distort the overall organization's budget and may result in reliance on one-time salary savings as ongoing resources to meet budget needs. The RESC 4 should immediately review all vacant positions and eliminate positions for which there is not an expectation that a qualified candidate can be found within a reasonable period of time. At this point, it appears that at least three to 13 positions that are vacant have been posted for more than one-year. These positions should be eliminated.

If there is an established need for these positions, a new recruitment effort should begin and every effort made to fill the positions within less than six months. By eliminating three long-term vacancies, RESC 4 will realize savings of approximately $240,000 (estimating $80,000 for each position in salary and benefits costs).

DELIVERY VAN SERVICES

RESC 4 has been delivering commercial materials from external entities for distribution at school sites without a documented or district-approved policy. The RESC 4 operates a van delivery service that supports the delivery and collection of materials from all schools, including private schools in Region 4. The van comes to each site once a week and delivers materials such as RESC 4's professional development calendar and center newsletters. It also picks up registration materials and other correspondence between schools and RESC 4. In addition, the van picks up media equipment that needs repair and deliver it to a repair shop as a free service to schools. All deliveries are made directly to school sites, with the exception of Houston ISD which has requested that most materials be distributed through the district office. The service is funded as part of the RESC 4 overhead, with each unit within RESC 4 contributing.

In addition to RESC 4 materials, the delivery van has included occasional delivery of information materials from outside organizations for a small fee. These materials include general notices about special events taking place at area museums and community centers. There are currently no written policies in place that govern the selection of materials that would be appropriate for delivery, nor have superintendents been informed about or approved this practice. Currently, interested parties will contact the RESC 4 instructional media office and request that their materials be included in a future delivery.

The director of Instructional Media determines whether he feels the materials are appropriate for sending, but no written criteria exist to ensure that the decisions are acceptable to the schools that will be receiving the materials. In 2003–04, a total of seven organizations provided materials for RESC 4 to deliver. For this service, RESC collected $3,318 in revenue. While this practice generates revenue for RESC 4 that helps to offset the costs of providing the service, districts are not aware of this practice and may not approve of the

distribution of materials if they were aware of such practices. RESC 4 needs to clearly communicate with its area districts regarding this practice to ensure that they approve and consent to delivery of non-RESC or school district materials.

RESC 4 should develop, document, and implement a policy that governs decisions of what materials are appropriate to include in the weekly van delivery. The delivery of materials may provide a valuable service to schools, but superintendents must be informed of this process and feel comfortable that it will not be misused. Establishing a policy would serve to clarify the practice and insulate RESC 4 from being accused of misusing its position. Furthermore, it may allow RESC 4 to increase the revenue it generates from this service by increasing the amount of materials that are delivered.

JOB DESCRIPTIONS

Region 4 performance evaluations are not yet aligned with job descriptions, nor do they include an employee self-evaluation process. Moreover, job descriptions are not up-to-date.

On MGT's survey of RESC employees, 87 percent of Region 4 employees agree or strongly agree that they have up-to-date and comprehensive job descriptions. While a significant majority, it falls below the 96 percent of RESC employees statewide who believe they have up-to-date and comprehensive job descriptions. Up-to-date and accurate job descriptions are critical to enforce standards of performance and evaluation of staff.

Region 4 recently hired a new managing director for its Human Resources (HR) Division. The director has undertaken a number of positive initiatives. One of these initiatives is to update all job descriptions, both in order to comply with new Fair Labor Standards Act regulations and to meet ISO 9000 standards. The RESC is working to complete this review by August 2004. Managing directors of each division are required to review job descriptions within their areas and check the accuracy of titles, pay grades, exempt status, and major job duties.

Region 4 performance evaluations are not yet aligned with job descriptions. In addition, Region 4 does not have an employee self-evaluation process.

RESC 4 should complete the revision of the job descriptions to meet ISO 9000 standards, update as needed, and ensure that job descriptions and performance evaluations are aligned accurate job descriptions should inform the performance evaluation process. Employee self-evaluations can enhance the performance evaluation process and should be incorporated.

To provide appropriate performance assessments of employees, the first step is for the employee to understand their job responsibilities, duties, and what factors will be evaluated during the performance assessment. This can be accomplished through the job description, which includes job duties, responsibilities, and qualifications. If the employee is evaluated on factors that are not identified in the job description, the region can encounter a legal liability and possible legal action.

The employee self-evaluation process can be a valuable tool when used in conjunction with the performance assessment process. Through self-evaluations, employees can view their performance introspectively and recognize areas needing improvement while gaining a sense of empowerment and responsibility for their own individual performance.

WEB SITE RECRUITMENT

Region 4 supports the recruitment of teachers, administrators, and staff for all districts in its service area by maintaining an employment section on its Web site. Candidates can search through available job postings and post their resumes for consideration, but some of the functionality is awkward and could be improved.

Ensuring that potential job applicants can easily access information about employment opportunities serves many purposes. For instance, providing complete and accurate information minimizes the amount of time staff spend answering questions and reviewing applicants that do not meet minimum position criteria.

Job opportunities for the region are currently available on the Web site, www.esc4.net, by clicking on "General Public" and then clicking "Educator Employment." Applicants from around the country, and potentially from around the world, can search for positions in the school districts as well as available positions in the region. **Exhibit 4-11** provides a sample of the positions that were recently listed on the Web site.

In addition to browsing existing openings, interested potential employees can post their resumes. However, it is not clear where the resume is to be posted and potential employers, presumably districts within the service area, are not clearly identified. Providing more information about the resume posting process, including who will have access to the resume and how long it will be active, would improve the functionality of the posting process.

Some portions of the Web site are difficult to navigate. For example, the site has information about RESC and district employment opportunities; yet, it is not immediately obvious that users may select positions in a specific district. When a user visits the site, they must first click "General Public" from the RESC 4 home page and then select the "Educator Employment" link. To make information about the range of employment opportunities more immediately available and clear, the site could restructured to offer two options: 1) school district employment opportunities, and 2) Region 4 employment opportunities. This would allow users to recognize the availability of district employment options as well as RESC 4 opportunities.

Exhibit 4-11
Job Openings Listed on the Region 4 Web site

Category	Position Type	Location
Administration	Assistant Principal	Cypress-Fairbanks ISD
	Administrative – Non-Instructional	Lamar CISD
	Principal	Alief ISD
Elementary	Bilingual/Spanish Teacher	Brazosport ISD
	Music Teacher	Crosby ISD
Elementary Special Education	Profoundly Handicapped	Fort Bend ISD
	Speech Therapist	Hitchcock ISD
Pupil Service	Counselor	Alvin ISD
	Education Diagnostician	Conroe ISD
Secondary	Coaching with English	Stafford MSD
	Foreign Languages	Angleton ISD
	Generic Special Education	Tomball ISD
Secondary Special Education	Life Skills	Harris County
Administrative/Professional	Accounting Supervisor	RESC 4
	Education Specialist, ESL	RESC 4
Clerical/Technical	Booking Clerk	RESC 4
	Technical Typist, Braille Services	RESC 4
Manual Trades	Media Driver	RESC 4

Source: Region 4 Web site, www.esc4.net, July, 2004.

Another area that is difficult to navigate is the position search section. The "educator position search" provides the capability to drill-down to categories. When an interested job seeker selects a position, the individual is linked to the individual school district's homepage and then has to drill down through the school district site to find the desired position. Linking directly from the desired specific RESC posting to the district's specific job posting would provide a more user-friendly interface.

Interested applicants can download applications for positions and obtain information on certification exams, including ExCET, TExES, TExMAT, TASP, TOPT, TASC and TASC-ASL. The Web site provides information that online registration is available for at least some of these certification exams; however, there is not a link for "online registration."

Exhibit 4-12 below identifies the most popular Web pages on the RESC 4 Web site, shows how often pages were viewed, and displays the average length of time the page was viewed. As shown in **Exhibit D-2**, almost 15 percent of the visits occur to pages regarding employment opportunities.

RESC 4 should improve the ease of use and functionality of the employment section of the Region 4 Web site. Region 4 could improve this section of its Web site by:

- including more information on the resume posting process;
- highlighting the fact that both RESC and district position openings are included;
- linking directly from a selected job opening to the district listing; and
- providing a link for "online registration."

Exhibit 4-12
Most Popular RESC 4 Web Pages

	Pages	Views	Percentage of Total Views	Visits	Average Time Viewed
1	**Region IV Education Service Center** http://www.esc4.net/	53,732	16.70%	28,666	00:03:22
2	**Region IV ESC – Recruiting** http://www.esc4.net/recruiting/	12,994	4.04%	9,545	00:01:07
3	**Region IV ESC - Recruiting - Job-Post | Search** http://www.esc4.net/recruiting/job-post/public/	18,945	5.89%	7,993	00:00:43
4	**Region IV Education Service Center** http://www.esc4.net/educators/preparation/acp/Default.asp	9,686	3.01%	6,407	00:01:08
5	**Region IV ESC - Campus Personnel** http://www.esc4.net/educators/preparation/	7,177	2.23%	5,365	00:00:43
6	**Region IV Education Service Center** http://www.esc4.net/educators/preparation/acp/tour/Default.asp	4,960	1.54%	3,847	00:00:40
7	http://www.esc4.net/recruiting/job-post/public/position.aspx	5,010	1.55%	3,675	00:03:56
8	http://www.esc4.net/recruiting/job-post/public/esc.aspx	10,943	3.40%	3,581	00:01:06
9	**Region IV ESC - About Us** http://www.esc4.net/aboutus/	4,385	1.36%	3,237	00:02:27
10	http://www.esc4.net/educators/preparation/acp/tour/tour_files/outline.htm	9,582	2.97%	3,147	00:00:04

Source: www.webtrends.com report, July 2004.

HUMAN RESOURCES BENEFITS

Currently, there is not a link on the Region 4 home page for employees to access information regarding benefits. The Human Resources (HR) Division only provides benefits information in hard copy format.

Much of the information that employees need regarding their benefits and Region 4 policies changes little from month-to-month. However, providing the information in a paper format is not always completely effective. For example, employees may receive a document on leave policies when they first join the RESC, but not need it for several years and not be able to locate it at that time. Thus, a Web site, with its ability to provide information on demand at any time, is often a more effective option for employees.

The Web site can provide information about employee benefits such as:

- doctors or pharmacies in their area;
- retirement eligibility;
- new HR legislation;
- co-pay requirements;
- Employee Assistance Plan (EAP) resources;
- grievance processes;
- leave policies;
- employee handbook (region policies and procedures);
- workers' compensation insurance;
- W-4 forms;
- payroll information; and
- wellness activities.

The Web site is missing links to other sites that have information pertinent to Region 4 benefits. As a result of not providing HR information online inteferes with the efficiency and effectiveness of the division. Specifically, adequate online information could:

- decrease the number of benefit information requests calls to the HR Division;
- reduce time spent answering calls by quickly directing callers to information provided on the Web site;
- avoid printing costs associated with hard copy benefits packages; and,
- avoid printing and distribution costs by providing the employee handbook online.

RESC 4 should expand the Region 4 Web site to include employee benefit information. The region's home page should be expanded to include a link that provides employee benefit information and access to the employee handbook. New employees should be given an information sheet that instructs them on how to use the Web site to obtain information about their benefits and how to review the employee handbook online. The site should also provide an email address or link to send questions to the Human Resources Division.

The primary benefit from this recommendation will be improved services to Region 4 employees. However, the organization will also realize some cost savings by reducing its printing of employee handbooks and various benefits forms. The Human Resources Division will also realize some savings in staff time that can then be applied elsewhere in other Human Resources functions. Based on the experience of other RESCs it seems reasonable to expect that RESC 4 will have savings from reduced printing costs from $3,000 to $8,000 and be able to divert at least 0.25 FTE of staff time to other responsibilities.

NETWORK SUPPORT TRACKING

Region 4 is using a pencil-and-paper approach to manage incoming calls for technical support from the districts it serves. This information is entered into escWorks in the Technical Assistance module. Tracking of statistics and trends, ensuring appropriate follow through and follow-up, and assigning responsibility are difficult without an automated approach. As a result, information is not accurately tallied and statistics are not as accurate as they could be – decisions are not based on the best information.

There are people providing network support services for RESC 4 and the districts in its service area. Handling trouble calls from the districts currently consumes the majority of network support's time. As calls are received, network support records them and tracks its responses using notepads and pencils. Such a system hinders any kind of quantitative or qualitative analysis of the kinds of calls received, assessments of the region's response times and solutions, and identification of trends.

Understanding the nature and frequency of calls received in a help support area can ensure that personnel implement proactive solutions. An automated solution for trouble call tracking can offer valuable information, decrease problem resolution time, and improve service delivery. Additional benefits of implementing automated solution call tracking include:

- a database of statistics, such as the caller-id, phone number, location, time, and date of call, etc., that can be used to measure the volume of support provided;
- a database of the types of problem reported that can be used to measure the depth of support provided;
- reporting features to ensure follow-up and identify problem areas; and
- the ability to identify trends and implement proactive solutions, such as future staff development efforts.

RESC 4 should use escWorks to track incoming network trouble calls from districts for network support. Once trends are identified, a strategy should be implemented to reduce or hopefully eliminate future problem calls. In addition, as information is collected from clients, a knowledge base of problems and resolutions should be captured. As problems are encountered and reported, the database should be searched when a call is received to seek a quick resolution, decreasing resolution time and effort.

FISCAL IMPACT

	Recommendation	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	5-Year (Costs) or Savings	One-Time (Costs) or Savings
4-3	Pursue rental income.	$23,438	$31,250	$39,063	$46,876	$54,688	$195,315	
4-5	Eliminate long-term vacancies (three positions).	$0	$240,000	$240,000	$240,000	$240,000	$960,000	
4-9	Put benefits on Web site.	$0	$5,500	$5,500	$5,500	$5,500	$22,000	
	TOTAL	**$23,438**	**$276,750**	**$284,563**	**$292,376**	**$300,188**	**$1,177,315**	**$0**

CHAPTER 5:

BEAUMONT

CHAPTER 5

BEAUMONT

Regional Education Service Center V (RESC 5) provides services to the six southeastern Texas counties of Hardin, Jasper, Jefferson, Newton, Orange, and Tyler, plus High Island Independent School District (located in Galveston County). Region 5 includes 30 districts and five charter schools. Brookeland and Burkeville ISDs are the furthest distance from the RESC 5 facility, at approximately 89 miles. Sabine Pass ISD has the largest square mileage (611.01 square mileage), yet serves the smallest number of students (149). In total, Region 5 represents 178 campuses and approximately 84,375 students and 6,100 educators.

Many of the districts served by RESC 5 are small; 16 of the districts and charters in Region 5 have under 1,000 students. Only two districts, Beaumont ISD and Port Arthur ISD, serve over 10,000 students. However, Region 5 has a lower percentage of small (under 1,000 students) districts and charters than the statewide distribution, and a significantly higher percentage of mid-size districts (3,000 to 9,999). Statewide, 60 percent of districts and charters have under 1,000 students, whereas in RESC 5, approximately 46 percent of the districts in the region have under 1,000 students.

Almost half of the students in RESC 5 are economically disadvantaged. The majority (58 percent) of students are White, 31 percent are African-American, and eight percent are Hispanic.

Besides its services for traditional K-12 schools, RESC 5 also runs an adult education program for Jasper, Newton and Tyler counties and Vidor ISD, which served approximately 320 adults in 2003–04. In addition, the center is the fiscal agent and instructional program monitor for two county juvenile justice alternative education programs (JJAEP), the Hardin County JJAEP and Jefferson County Youth Academy. Both JJAEP programs are operated with the assistance and cooperation of county officials.

RESC 5's main center of operations is located in the city of Beaumont. This facility houses the Business and Administrative Services Department, including the areas of Educational Technology and Information Management. Since 1997, RESC 5 has also maintained a conference center in Silsbee which is where most RESC 5 customer meetings, workshops, and staff development opportunities are offered. The Silsbee satellite facility, located approximately 20 miles from Beaumont, also contains offices for RESC staff in the Instructional Services Department. In addition to these two facilities, RESC staff are housed at the two JJAEP sites and the RESC 5 adult education facility in the city of Jasper. In 2003–04, RESC 5 employed 100 full-time equivalent staff members, a reduction from 115 in 2002–03.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- RESC 5 has implemented an organizational structure that will allow it to more effectively meet the needs of its member districts.
- RESC 5 provides a comprehensive analysis of statewide test data, enabling schools to plan and deliver targeted instruction.
- RESC 5 serves the educational needs of at-risk youth in the region by providing instructional and organizational services to JJAEPs.
- Staff members from RESC 5 have developed and distributed resources that have provided value to users across the region and state.
- Through the establishment of numerous collaborative arrangements, RESC 5 provides its customers with cost-effective opportunities to use the center's services.

FINDINGS

- RESC 5 does not have a strategic plan.
- Placing special education and general education programs within the same department is a significant organizational improvement. While it is reasonable to expect the deputy executive director of Instructional Services will be able to provide support and guidance to both areas, additional support is needed to ensure that the needs associated with special education are adequately met.
- Maintenance of RESC 5's two facilities can be provided at lower cost through outsourcing.
- RESC 5 should follow the example of other RESCs that have realized significant savings from conducting energy efficiency reviews.
- While most of the cooperatives offered by RESC 5 are well received, there are several that have fairly low participation; these cooperatives should be either consolidated or eliminated.
- RESC 5 is not strategic or systematic about how it establishes rates and fees for its services.
- RESC 5 does not consistently analyze or share data regarding service use with its member districts.
- The numerous service areas of the Instructional Services Department exist as independent units and all staff report directly to the deputy executive director. This is not an effective mode of delivery.
- RESC 5 is not providing sufficient support to its regional districts in the area of State Compensatory Education.
- RESC 5 completes annual performance appraisals for all employees, but the process does not allow for sufficient employee input.
- Region 5 has developed a valuable Web site tool for districts to use for recruiting teachers, administrators, and other school staff, but the center does not provide the same functionality for the RESC.
- RESC 5 is using financial management software to manage and monitor its budget, but it needs to increase the functions that it uses from this software to improve its budget management process.
- Local resources are a critical revenue stream for all RESCs. RESC 5 does not have in place a process for ensuring that its local revenue is collected in a manner that is consistent and equitable. In the current environment of state funding reductions and uncertain funding sources, RESCs must maintain as much of a financial footing as they can with local revenues.
- RESC 5 contracting procedures rely on standard cost-reimbursement or deliverables-based contracts. The center could realize cost-savings or improved vendor performance through implementation of performance-based contracts.
- RESC 5 has procured insurance coverage, but does not have a documented process in place for annually reviewing the appropriateness of the coverage level, cost for coverage, and coverage areas.
- There are several districts and charter schools in RESC 5 that have a PEIMS error rate exceeding the TEA-allowable rate of two percent. RESC 5 does not have adequate staff to address the needs of districts in the region for PEIMS support.
- RESC 5 needs to develop a technology plan that addresses its technology needs related to its core mission and goals. In absence of such a plan, RESC 5 risks creating new initiatives that do not contribute to the RESC's overall goals and mission.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 5-1*:* Develop a strategic plan that maintains linkages and consistency with the statewide comprehensive plan, internal evaluation, and Balanced Score Card, and put into place a process for implementing the plan.** To be truly strategic in nature, a long-range plan must be holistic, that is, it must consider the organization as a whole. Strategic planning is the activity by which an organization deals with its the major strategic decisions. Strategic decisions are characterized as:

  - defining the organization's relationship to its environment;
  - considering the whole organization as the unit of analysis;
  - depending on inputs from a variety of functional areas; and
  - providing direction for, and constraints on, administrative and operational activities throughout the organization.

  More simply put, strategic planning addresses these three questions:

  - Where are we today?
  - Where are we going?
  - How do we get there?

  Documenting and maintaining a strategic vision and plan are essential to RESC 5's ability to provide high-quality services. This plan should reflect legislative requirements and the statewide RESC vision, but should also be tailored to the individual needs and issues of Region 5. It should both guide decision-making and ensure consistency and quality of services. It should incorporate and coordinate with the data collection efforts currently underway for the Comprehensive Plan, Internal Evaluation, and Balanced Score Card, to eliminate duplication of effort. The absence of such a plan inhibits RESC 5 from taking deliberate, coordinated and long-range action. Using the statewide RESC Strategic Plan as a model and guideline, RESC 5 should engage in the process of developing a plan specific to its regional characteristics, member district needs, and unique vision. It may want to consider acquiring the services of an experienced outside consultant to facilitate this effort. An alternative and potentially more cost-effective option might be to engage the short-term assistance of an individual from another RESC or a large school district who specializes in supporting strategic plan development. The planning process should begin with the development of an explicit vision statement that outlines RESC's core values and mission. Center staff should then articulate key goals and objectives to accomplish over the designated time period (three to five years). The next step is to develop specific strategies for accomplishing those goals, identifying a reasonable implementation timeline, and assigning responsibility for overseeing and accomplishing activities. Finally, a process must be established for ongoing monitoring of activities and plan implementation to ensure that the plan remains a dynamic, relevant, and "live" guiding document.

- **Recommendation 5-2: Hire a director or coordinator of Special Education to serve under the deputy executive director of Instructional Services.** Appointing a new special education director will allow RESC 5 to continue to meet the needs of its member districts. This position should facilitate regular meetings with both TEA and district special education directors, serve as the contact for technical assistance requests, and take primary responsibility for passing

along necessary and helpful information to member districts through regular communication. The deputy executive director of Instructional Services should continue to be involved in meetings with districts and participate in planning activities with the designated special education coordinator/director, but will not be solely responsible for special education coordination. These responsibilities should be handled by an individual with special education expertise who can dedicate an appropriate level of time to meeting district needs. While it may be that serving as director of Special Education is only a 50 percent or less position, the responsibilities of serving as deputy executive director of Instructional Services require more than this allotment of time and attention. Oversight of special education does not necessarily need to be an additional fully funded position, but could likely be handled by promoting a special education staff specialist to serve as a coordinator of Special Education, continuing with direct services part-time and assuming management responsibilities part-time.

- **Recommendation 5-3: Outsource custodial and janitorial services.** Region 5 expends over $100,000 a year in custodial expenses for the two facilities. Compared to other RESCs this is well above the amount spent by RESCs that outsource such services. RESC 5 stands to significantly reduce the amount it spends on facility maintenance by outsourcing this function. Based on the experience of other RESCs, it is estimated that the overall facilities maintenance costs would be no more that $50,000 per year should RESC outsource this function. Furthermore, the costs of RESCs staff and supplies for custodial and janiortial support have been rising 5 to 10 percent per year. Should RESC outsource for such services, rates may increase each year, but by no more than 5 percent per year.

- **Recommendation 5-4: Conduct an energy efficiency study and implement recommendations to realize savings in utility costs.** Energy efficiency studies and related improvements pay for themselves in a matter of a few years. The costs of the studies are modest compared to the savings. Managing the costs of utilities is an important way that RESCs can responsibly manage resources. RESC 5 should expect to reduce its total annual utility costs by 25 percent to 35 percent annually. It is highly recommended that RESC 5 seek a vendor that will enter into a performance-based contract. Such a contract limits RESC 5's liabilities and provides strong incentives for results on the part of the vendor. The year the review is conducted will yield limited savings. Savings will begin to be realized in the year following the study.

- **Recommendation 5-5: Consolidate or eliminate service cooperatives with low participation rates.** While RESC 5 is commended for offering member districts the opportunity to save money through collaborative efforts, it is unclear whether service cooperative with low participation rates are actually cost-effective options for districts or the Center. Some collaborative efforts have very few school or district members, including the Aspiring Principals Academy (three members), the Teacher Leaders Academy (2 members) and the Campus Leaders Academy (two members). There are four additional cooperatives with only four members each. RESC 5 should evaluate whether some of these cooperatives can be consolidated or

additional members can be recruited to increase economies of scale. If these are not viable options, the Center may want to consider eliminating certain cooperative efforts that are not cost-effective for members or RESC 5. Undertaking the cost study suggested in Recommendation 5-6 will provide helpful data to inform this decision.

- **Recommendation 5-6: Conduct a cost study to determine the appropriate rates to charge for services.** While RESC 5 should be commended for trying to keep rates low for their customers, it is important that their fee structure provide sufficient revenue to support the services it provides. Without this type of methodology, there is potential for districts to be over or under charged, and for RESC 5 to risk financial instability and impacted services. This risk could be as minor as the center not recouping costs for a particular workshop, or as major as being unable to pay staff salaries and provide essential services if participation in cooperatives were to drop. RESC 5 must be strategic about their fees-for-services to ensure fairness and plan for their own fiscal stability, especially as they face uncertain funding from the state level. RESC 5 should undertake a comprehensive cost study to accomplish the following:

  - a comprehensive assessment of the costs to deliver cooperative services by cooperative as well as workshops and trainings that are outside of the cooperative service arrangements. (The analysis should include all costs including personnel, contracted support, building and operations, supplies, equipment, travel, and administrative. In addition, the assessment should review revenue that is attributable to each service areas to assess the appropriateness of existing rates);
  - review utilization patterns and rates by cooperative members;
  - examine rates charged by other RESCs for similar services;
  - develop and document a fee schedule for all services provided by Region 5; and
  - develop and document a fee policy structure and review on an annual basis.

  This study should result in documented criteria for establishing and revising an appropriate fee structure for RESC 5 services. Regional superintendents should be consulted before finalizing a new fee structure. Once a structure is determined, it should be shared with regional superintendents.

- **Recommendation 5-7: Develop processes to use data to assess service usage, target outreach efforts to districts, and share usage information with districts.** While service cooperatives can be cost-effective for district participants, if schools within the member districts are not sufficiently using RESC 5's services then joining the cooperative may be more expensive than purchasing services on an as-needed basis. The deputy executive director of Instructional Services should provide districts with annual RESC 5 participation data to conduct this cost-benefit analysis before deciding upon cooperative agreements each year. Tracking and analyzing participation data can also aid the center in targeting outreach and recruitment to new participants who are under-utilizing RESC 5's services, ensuring that all schools in the region are receiving the full benefit of the center's many programs. The deputy executive director of Business and

Administration should develop and implement a process for tracking and reporting on this information. The deputy director of Instructional Services should develop and implement a process where instructional services staff review and analyze participation data on a regular basis, and follow-up with personalized outreach to district and campus staff throughout the year. The Business and Administration Department should handle production of participation/usage reports. Reviewing and acting on this data should be part of the regular job responsibilities of the Instructional Services Department's deputy executive director and staff.

- **Recommendation 5-8: Reorganize instructional services functions into clear sub-departments, appoint staff members to serve as coordinators, and update job descriptions.** RESC 5 could increase effectiveness and efficiency by combining complementary service areas into subject-based sub-departments. For instance, the Math and Science, Curriculum Leadership Co-op, Curriculum, Instruction, Texas Math and Reading Initiative, and TPRI staff and services could all be organized into a "Curriculum" sub-department. Similarly, CATE, Advanced Academic Service & Safe and Drug Free Schools, Federal Programs/Special Populations, ESL/Bilingual Support, and Migrant Education could all be categorized as "Special Programs." This reorganization allows for increased collaboration among complementary service offerings. It may also provide opportunities for consolidation of responsibilities and elimination of positions. Because MGT consultants were not provided up-to-date job descriptions, we are unable to make specific recommendations as to which areas should be combined and which positions should be eliminated. As part of its continuing reorganization efforts, RESC 5 management should assess allocation of responsibilities, identify areas where efficiency can be improved, and make decisions accordingly. It must also ensure that all staff have appropriate oversight. Once new sub-departments have been identified, the deputy executive director should select one education specialist from each department to serve as a coordinator. This will facilitate communication within the Instructional Services Division, and provide the deputy executive director with a "point person" through whom information can be passed. It will also improve efficiency over the current system, under which the deputy executive director must communicate directly with approximately 60 employees. Furthermore, the RESC 5 may also want to consider making these coordinators supervisory positions, or directors, with responsibility for overseeing staff in their sub-departments. This would appropriately reduce the oversight responsibilities of the deputy director, who currently oversees approximately 60 employees. If this is cost-prohibitive, the coordinator positions could remain non-hierarchical and be used solely for communication purposes.

- **Recommendation 5-9: Enhance at-risk and State Compensatory Education services.** While RESC 5 has taken steps to improve its at-risk and SCE services, its customers indicate that they are still in need of additional support. The center should review and modify its at-risk and SCE service offerings to better meet its customers' needs. This should be done in consultation with advisory groups and district representatives to ensure that customer needs are accurately

communicated and represented. This will likely entail a revision and clarification of what programmatic support RESC 5 provides to schools and districts. RESC 5 should ensure that sufficient services are provided to all campuses who need them and not just those designated as low-performing or those facing audit visits.

- **Recommendation 5-10: Finish the review of job descriptions and add employee self-evaluations to the performance evaluation process.** Upon completion of the job description update, management should review the job description with appropriate personnel and once approved, the job description should be incorporated into performance plans. Through self-evaluations, employees can view their performance introspectively and recognize areas needing improvement. Self-evaluations give employees a sense of empowerment and responsibility for their performance.

- **Recommendation 5-11: Expand the Region 5 Web site to include RESC job postings and benefits information, and better functionality for searching existing openings.** MGT recommends performing a usability study on the Region 5 Web site to improve functionality and navigation. The process should include electronic access and submission of all required forms, resumes, and applications via email or through the region's Web site. New employees should be given an information sheet that instructs them on how to use the Web site to obtain benefits information and how to review the employee handbook online. The site should also provide an email address or link to send questions to the HR Division.

- **Recommendation 5-12: Use all relevant RSCCC business software functions to improve the RESC budget process and provide useful reports for the management team to support sound financial management and budgetary planning.** RESC 5 uses RSCCC business software, which includes budget and next year budget systems integrated into the application. Specifically, the budget and accounting processes could be improved by:

  - clear delineation of the allocation of Chapter 41 funding;
  - clear delineation of the use of State base funding;
  - associate revenue from RESC services with the program area providing the service;
  - comparison of budget and actual data on a monthly or quarterly basis; and
  - comparison of revenue and expenses on a monthly or quarterly basis.

  RESC 5's current financial management team can support these recommended improvements. The above improvements should be made immediately to ensure proper budget oversight and sound financial management. The Deputy Director for Administrative Services should be responsible for overseeing that the improvements are made within a six-month period.

- **Recommendation 5-13: Develop and implement a balanced and equitable pricing strategy for RESC 5 services.** RESC 5 should develop and implement a process to set appropriate rates for services with the objective of increasing local revenue to the RESC, while balancing the needs and budgetary constraints of the districts. In addition, the Center should make

every effort to associate the estimated revenue from these services to the appropriate budgetary program. This pricing should be sufficient to cover the costs of providing the services. In addition, the region should actively market these services to the districts. Specifically, RESC 5's Business Management Team should perform the following tasks:

- review all current service offerings to the districts;
- analyze the cost effectiveness of each service to determine if the service is providing desired value to the district while balancing the revenue needs of the RESC;
- evaluate current pricing and propose revised pricing for applicable services; and
- review proposed pricing and services with the districts prior to finalization of changes.

These changes should be implemented in September, coinciding with the new Fiscal Year (FY 2004-05).

- **Recommendation 5-14: Examine the viability of entering into a performance-based contract with specific vendors to achieve potential cost savings during 2004-05.** Vendors that may be suitable for performance-based contracting services include:

  - maintenance and operations related to RESC 5 facilities;
  - vehicle maintenance; and
  - investment portfolio management.

  This list is not intended to be all inclusive, but exhaustive; rather a sample of potential areas, which may be suitable for performance-based contracting. The region should review current vendor contracts to determine relevance to current and future needs of the center to achieve cost savings in the upcoming fiscal year.

- **Recommendation 5-15: Review insurance coverage on an annual basis to ensure that the contribution and coverage provided by the Texas Association of School Boards Risk Management Fund is adequate and appropriate to cover the potential of loss to RESC 5.** Maintaining adequate insurance is a critical requirement of all RESC's. Given the RESC 5 has only recently purchased necessary insurance coverage, it is critical that RESC 5's Business Management Team review this coverage annually. The policy should be reviewed to ensure that it appropriately meets the needs of the RESC. As part of the annual budget process, the Business Management team should review the policy in August, prior to the onset of the new fiscal year.

- **Recommendation 5-16: Add one additional PEIMS staff to fill a vacant position and train and support the school districts within Region 5 with PEIMS data preparation and testing.** PEIMS is a critical and intensive process required by TEA and a primary responsibility of the regions. If necessary, develop a rate structure and service offering for specialized PEIMS services and charge districts for these services to recoup costs associated with the specialized assistance.

- **Recommendation 5-17: Develop a Region 5 technology plan that addresses the technology needs of the school districts and the RESC.** The plan should include goals, objectives and strategies. The plan should be based on the Texas Education Agency Long Range Plan for Technology, the No Child Left Behind requirements for technology,

the requirements of the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) Schools and Libraries Division – Technology Plan, and other related technology initiatives such as TETN.

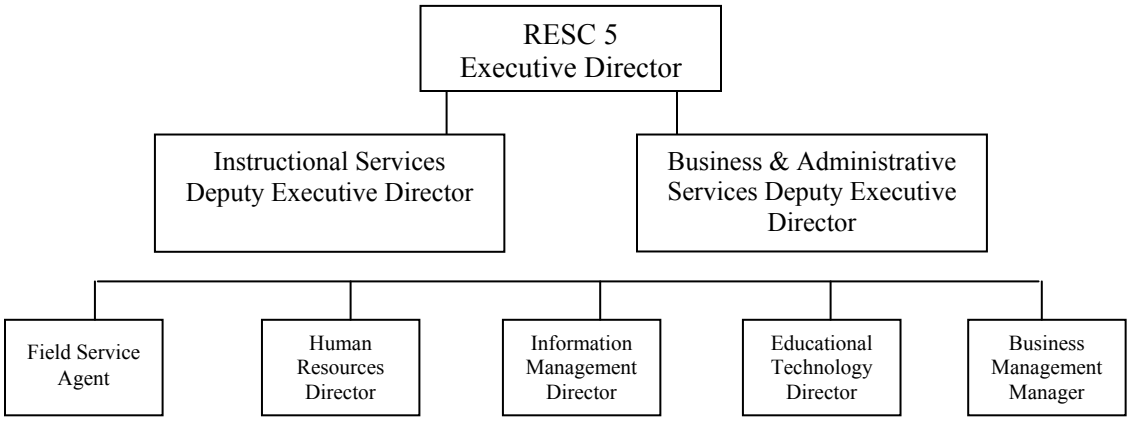
DETAILED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

RESC 5 has recently reorganized its management structure for improved functioning. On-site interviews and document reviews found the reorganized systems effective.

In the spring of 2004, the executive director (with Board of Directors' approval) consolidated the Business Management, Administrative Services, Human Resources, School Finance and Operations/RESC Internal Audits, Educational Technology, and Information Management departments. A new deputy executive director position was created to oversee this new division, titled Business and Administrative Services. In the previous organizational model, component directors of each of these departments reported directly to the executive director. The new structure appropriately removes some responsibility for day-to-day center functions from the executive director, and improves efficiency by placing the complementary functions of administrative and business services under the same department. The new organizational structure is illustrated in **Exhibit 5-1**.

Exhibit 5-1
RESC 5 Management Structure
2003–04



Source: RESC 5, Executive Director, 2004.

The reorganization also placed special education services under the Instructional Services deputy executive director, whereas previously it existed separately and under a different director who reported to the executive director. That director position has now been eliminated. Furthermore, general education staff are now housed together with special education staff at the Silsbee facility; previously general education staff were based in Beaumont while special education was based in Silsbee. Moving these staff members to one facility and under the same department supports increased collaboration between general and special education services.

As a result of the reorganization, RESC 5 is better prepared to provide its member districts with professional development and technical assistance that supports inclusion, access to core curriculum, and meeting the needs of

students with special needs in mainstream settings. It also provides opportunities to leverage funding and define positions that work on both IDEA grant responsibilities and general education tasks. While some staffing inadequacies may remain (see **Recommendation 5-2**), placing general and special education under the same department and deputy executive director is likely to improve the instructional services RESC 5 provides.

Accomplishment: RESC 5 has implemented an organizational structure that will allow it to more effectively meet the needs of its member districts.

TAKS DATA

RESC 5 provides districts with helpful direction in interpreting and responding to Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) data.

As part of the services offered under the Field Service Agents Cooperative, of which 29 of the 30 Region 5 districts are members, RESC 5 staff disagregate TAKS data by school, grade level, subject area, and student population group. Performance data are also considered relative to a school's instructional expenditures. These data are first analyzed and discussed by instructional staff and the field service agent at the RESC so that program staff can develop a working knowledge of their districts' needs and design/target services accordingly. RESC 5 staff then share this detailed information with district and site-level staff, helping them to understand and analyze the data to inform improvements in instructional delivery. This process typically involves helping them plan targeted staff development, writing district and campus improvement plans, and designing interventions and instructional programs that address low performing student groups and/or underdeveloped skill areas.

Region 5 superintendents' survey responses gave consistently high marks to RESC 5's assistance related to TEKS support and training (87 percent satisfied or very satisfied), as well as training and assistance with campus planning and improving student performance (86 percent satisfied or very satisfied).

Accomplishment: RESC 5 provides a comprehensive analysis of statewide test data, enabling schools to plan and deliver targeted instruction.

ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION

RESC 5 has partnered with two county juvenile boards and several regional school districts to form two juvenile justice alternative education programs (JJAEP) and serve the needs of at-risk students in the region.

Juvenile boards in counties with populations greater than 125,000, such as Jefferson county, are required by law to develop JJAEPs for students who are expelled from school or ordered by courts to be educated in alternative settings. Recognizing that RESC 5 had greater expertise in educational instruction than did law-enforcement entities, in 1995 the Jefferson County Juvenile Board collaborated with RESC 5 to develop the Jefferson County Youth Academy (JCYA). Although its population is not large enough to mandate the formation of a JJAEP, in 1997 Hardin County also approached RESC 5 to assist in developing an alternative program for its at-risk students, leading to the creation of the Hardin County JJAEP (HCJJAEP). These programs serve youth who have been ordered by the juvenile court to attend a JJAEP, as well as students who do not face court orders, but have been expelled or are facing expulsion by their schools and districts. The JYCA currently offers placement for 69 students and the HCJJAEP has placements for 19.

RESC 5 serves as fiscal agent for these programs and has nine instructional responsibilities as outlined in **Exhibit 5-2**. The two host counties, participating school districts, and county juvenile courts and juvenile boards are responsible for the additional tasks necessary to run these programs.

Exhibit 5-2
RESC 5 Responsibilities for JCYA and HCJJAEP

1. Provide required, base level and enriched curriculum and instruction to appropriately identified and placed at-risk students as described, but not limited to, TEC 28.801 Compensatory, Intensive, and Accelerated Instruction, 37.007 Expulsion for Serious Offenses, and 37.008 Alternative Education Programs.
2. All fiscal requirements for the maximum number of students allowable by facilities and staff.
3. Hire and evaluate the education program personnel.
4. Coordinate the acquisition of educational materials and furniture.
5. Oversee the education, and assessment of the program.
6. Complete any and all Texas Education Agency forms, process, and/or requirements related to JJAEP instructional program.
7. Specify the payment amounts from each school district to the fiscal agent, Region 5, for the JJAEP.
8. Implement state assessments as per TEC 37.011(h).
9. Provide attendance and academic data to the designated contact person at the district for students enrolled and dismissed. One standard academic reporting method will be developed and used for all students.

Source: Annual Revision (8/03) and Readoption of the JCYA Memorandum of Understanding, 2004.

RESC 5 contributes instructional and organizational expertise to these programs, thereby enhancing the educational opportunities available to at-risk youth. Due to their troubled academic records, this population of students typically face significant learning gaps and deficiencies, and are close to dropping out of, or being removed from, the educational system altogether. For many of these students, the JJAEP is essentially a "last shot" at getting an education. Providing a research-based curriculum, highly-skilled instructors, and a well-planned educational program is fundamental to their success. RESC 5 contributes the education-based resources and knowledge to provide this type of program; a level of expertise that might be lacking were the juvenile boards to run the JJAEPs without the center's assistance.

Accomplishment: RESC 5 serves the educational needs of at-risk youth in the region by providing instructional and organizational services to JJAEPs.

INNOVATIVE PRODUCTS

RESC 5 has developed several innovative products that are used by its member districts and other customers throughout the state and nation. These include:

- **The Texas Comprehensive Educator Planning Tool (TCEPT).** Developed by the RESC 5 staff, this tool provides electronic lesson plan templates for hundreds of courses in grades 6-12. The TCEPT templates, available on CD-ROM, include: applicable content-specific Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS); TAKS objectives; modifications for special education, gifted and talented, and LEP students; Bloom's Taxonomy; instructional methodologies; and technology applications. Approximately 111 schools and/or teachers in Region 5 and 148 outside the region have ordered these materials.

- **The Principal Individual Assessment (PIA).** This assessment tool was developed by RESC 5 staff in response to the Texas Administration

Code (19 TAC, Chapter 241) that mandates principal assessment as a requirement for continuing education. The PIA is one of only 12 State Board for Educator Certification-approved principal assessment tools in the state of Texas, and one of only two developed by RESCs. It has been approved for use at five of the 22 approved principal assessment providers throughout the state, including RESCs 1, 5, 10, 11, and 13.

- **The Curriculum Leadership Cooperative (CLC).** Since 1991, RESC 5 staff have developed and updated documents and resources to help guide instruction for districts who join the CLC cooperative. The CLC documents consist of standards-based benchmarks, goals, skills spreadsheets, and Pre–K–12 resources, all presented in a core curriculum approach. There were 52 CLC members in 2003–04, approximately half of which were districts, private or charter schools in Region 5 or its border area, and half of which were located outside of Region 5 and its border area.

RESC 5 has shared the fruits of its expertise and effort through the development and distribution of innovative and helpful resources such as these. Educators and students throughout Region 5 and the state have benefited from access to these original products.

Accomplishment: Staff members from RESC 5 have developed and distributed resources that have provided value to users across the region and state.

SERVICE COOPERATIVES

RESC 5 has developed numerous service cooperatives in an effort to provide cost-effective services to its customers.

RESC 5's motto, displayed on all center publications, is "strength through cooperation." This is reflective of the center's collaborative efforts to make the most of its own and its regional districts' limited funding. For almost all of its service offerings, districts have the option of paying one annual fee to join a particular collaborative, which entitles them to unlimited services including technical assistance, professional development, and on-site support. Collaborative membership fees are set based on district size (see **Exhibit 5-3**).

Exhibit 5-3
District Classification System
Used to Set RESC 5 Fee Structure

District Classification	Number of Students
1A	1-179
2A	180-344
3A	345-899
4A	900-1909
5A	1910+

Source: RESC 5 Instructional Services Department; District classification information 2002–03, 2003–04.

By pooling resources, member districts save funds. Similarly, the collective funds afford RESC 5 the ability to offer services that funding from one district could not possibly finance alone. As shown in **Exhibit 5-4**, many of its 30 member districts and five charter schools, as well as several additional community organizations, have taken advantage of these cooperative opportunities.

Some of these arrangements, including the Food Service Cooperative and Southeast Texas Cooperative Purchasing Organization, provide members with increased bargaining and purchasing power, and the ability to negotiate lower prices through higher volume. Others, including Advanced Academic Services, Multimedia Training, and the School Board Member Training Cooperative, supply RESC 5 with enough pooled funds enable it to provide services to several districts simultaneously. Without these shared service agreements, Region 5 might not have the resources to provide these services on a district-by-district basis.

Exhibit 5-4
RESC 5 Cooperative Members
2003–04

Cooperative Name	Number of Members
Administrative Leadership Team Cooperative	4
Advanced Academic Services Support Cooperative	19
Aspiring Principals Academy	3*
Campus Leaders Academy	2*
Career and Technology Education (CATE) Cooperative	8
Career and Technology Shared Services	12
Commodity Processing	27
Curriculum Leadership Cooperative	52
Educators Placement Service Cooperative	15
Field Service Agents Cooperative and/or School Board Member Training Cooperative	29
Food Service Cooperative	30
Hardin County Juvenile Justice AEP	6
Induction/Mentoring (Re5PASS) Academy	4*
Jefferson County Youth Academy AEP	6
Math/Science Cooperative	14
Middle Schools Cooperative	8*
Migrant Cooperative	5
Multimedia Library	18
Multimedia Training	16
Principal Individual Assessment	5*
Reading Recovery Cooperative	4*
RSCC Cooperative	19
Safe and Drug Free Schools Cooperative	14
Site-Based Decision Making	4*
Southeast Texas Cooperative Purchasing Organization	36
Teachers-Leaders Academy	2
Title III	17

Source: Cooperative Participation Documentation provided by RESC 5, 2004.

* *In 2004-05, RESC 5 eliminated eight collaboratives due to low participation rates. The services are still available, but on a cost-recovery basis. In addition, the Multimedia Library and Multimedia Training Collaboratives were combined.*

One of the most well-utilized of these collaborative efforts is the Food Service Cooperative, with 30 members. In addition to providing member districts enhanced purchasing power and cost savings, the RESC 5 Food Service Cooperative also offers members the opportunity to participate in special events including a Summer Workshop for Child Nutrition Program professionals, and an annual Food Show where students of member schools are given the opportunity to sample and vote on menu selections for the coming year.

As noted in Recommendation 5-7, it is important that member districts be provided with data showing that their participation in these collaboratives is a worthwhile investment; that is, that paying one annual fee for unlimited technical assistance and professional development services is more cost-effective than paying for each usage of the RESC. Provided that this is the case, RESC 5 service collaboratives can be valuable cost-saving opportunities for Region 5 customers.

Accomplishment: Through the establishment of numerous collaborative arrangements, RESC 5 provides its customers with cost-effective opportunities to use the center's services.

DETAILED FINDINGS

STRATEGIC PLAN

RESC 5 does not currently maintain a strategic plan. RESC 5 staff annually participate in the development of a "Comprehensive Plan." However, this consists primarily of the specific activities RESC 5 will undertake in a given year, along with some identification of how to measure successful implementation. RESC 5 also produces an annual "Internal Evaluation" document, which measures the success of activity implementation (primarily through satisfaction survey data). These efforts lack the core components of a strategic planning document. RESC 5 has not documented a strategic vision for its specific goals and objectives, or timeline and strategies for accomplishing those goals and objectives. Their planning process has been more tactical than strategic. The executive director indicated an intention to develop a center-based strategic plan based on the statewide RESC Strategic Plan once that document is finalized.

In addition to the Comprehensive Plan, RESC 5 is working to meet the reporting requirements for the Balanced Score Card required by TEA. This is the first year of a new format and RESC 5 staff are still compiling all of the necessary data, which is scheduled to be reported in September of 2004.

Developing and following a strategic plan can be very important to focus an organization's actions on clear goals. In the absence of a strategic plan, RESC 5 has approached its work from a tactical rather than strategic approach. It meets needs as they become apparent, but is not in a position to pursue new initiatives to anticipate needs that may emerge.

RESC 5 should develop a strategic plan that maintains linkages and consistency with the statewide Comprehensive Plan, internal evaluation, and Balanced Score Card, and put into place a process for implementing the plan.

To be truly strategic in nature, a long-range plan must be holistic, that is, it must consider the organization as a whole. Strategic planning is the activity by which an organization deals with its the major strategic decisions. Strategic decisions are characterized as:

- defining the organization's relationship to its environment;
- considering the whole organization as the unit of analysis;
- depending on inputs from a variety of functional areas; and
- providing direction for, and constraints on, administrative and operational activities throughout the organization.

More simply put, strategic planning addresses these three questions:

- Where are we today?
- Where are we going?
- How do we get there?

Documenting and maintaining a strategic vision and plan are essential to RESC 5's ability to provide high-quality services. This plan should reflect legislative requirements and the statewide RESC vision, but should also be tailored to the individual needs and issues of Region 5. It should both guide decision-making and ensure consistency and quality of services. It should incorporate and coordinate with the data collection efforts currently underway for the Comprehensive Plan, Internal Evaluation, and Balanced Score Card, to eliminate duplication of effort. The absence of such a plan inhibits RESC 5 from taking deliberate, coordinated and long-range action.

Using the statewide RESC Strategic Plan as a model and guideline, RESC 5 should engage in the process of developing a plan specific to its regional characteristics, member district needs, and unique vision. It may want to consider acquiring the services of an experienced outside consultant to facilitate this effort. An alternative and potentially more cost-effective option might be to engage the short-term assistance of an individual from another RESC or a large school district who specializes in supporting strategic plan development.

The planning process should begin with the development of an explicit vision statement that outlines RESC's core values and mission. Center staff should then articulate key goals and objectives to accomplish over the designated time period (three to five years). The next step is to develop specific strategies for accomplishing those goals, identifying a reasonable implementation timeline, and assigning responsibility for overseeing and accomplishing activities. Finally, a process must be established for ongoing monitoring of activities and plan implementation to ensure that the plan remains a dynamic, relevant, and "live" guiding document.

If managed internally, this recommendation will require dedication of some staff time but, can be implemented with existing resources.

SPECIAL EDUCATION COORDINATOR

Placing special education and general education programs within the same department is a significant organizational improvement. While it is reasonable to expect the deputy executive director of Instructional Services will be able to provide support and guidance to both areas, additional support may be needed to ensure that the needs associated with special education are adequately met.

With the recent consolidation of the general and special education departments, the special education component director position has been eliminated. Thus, the deputy executive director now oversees approximately 60 staff members in approximately 15 to 33 service areas (see Recommendation 5-8). In addition to managing department staff and services, this position is now also responsible for assuming the special education director responsibilities, which include serving as the liaison between USDOE, TEA, other RESCs, and district special education coordinators. This position also serves as the main contact for special-education technical assistance requests from schools and districts. These requests are typically numerous given the complicated nature of special education laws, and have reportedly increased since TEA's recent staff reduction. The TEA also follows a decentralized model with regard to special education, giving the RESCs increased responsibilities for implementing services.

The current deputy executive director of Instructional Services has shown she can manage the responsibilities of supporting special education and her position with RESC 5 garners respect from district special education directors. At the time of this review, the duties to oversee special education are being transitioned to the deputy executive

director. All responsibilities will be fully transitioned by Fall 2004. At this time, the deputy executive director expects to spend upwards of 50 percent of her time on special education issues. Given the other expected duties of the deputy executive director, this represents a significant amount of time that will be diverted from other duties and may result in a lower than desirable level of oversight.

RESC 5 should hire a director or coordinator of Special Education to serve under the deputy executive director of Instructional Services. Appointing a new special education director will allow RESC 5 to continue to meet the needs of its member districts. This position should facilitate regular meetings with both TEA and district special education directors, serve as the contact for technical assistance requests, and take primary responsibility for passing along necessary and helpful information to member districts through regular communication. The deputy executive director of Instructional Services should continue to be involved in meetings with districts and participate in planning activities with the designated special education coordinator/director, but will not be solely responsible for special education coordination.

These responsibilities should be handled by an individual with special education expertise who can dedicate an appropriate level of time to meeting district needs. While it may be that serving as director of Special Education is only a 50 percent or less position, the responsibilities of serving as deputy executive director of Instructional Services require more than this allotment of time and attention. Oversight of special education does not necessarily need to be an additional fully funded position, but could likely be handled by promoting a special education staff specialist to serve as a coordinator of Special Education, continuing with direct services part-time and assuming management responsibilities part-time.

The fiscal impact of this recommendation will depend upon the approach taken by RESC 5. Based on the salary of area directors in the Business and Administrative Services Department, filling this position full-time would require approximately $50,000 to $75,000 each year, plus benefits.

This position should be fully funded out of federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) funds. The center will need to reexamine its use and allocation of these monies to make funds available for this vital director or coordinator position.

OUTSOURCING FACILITIES

Maintenance of RESC 5's two facilities can be provided at lower cost through outsourcing.

RESC 5 owns two facilities for operating the RESC including one building in Beaumont and the second in Silsbee. **Exhibit 5-5** describes the RESC 5 facilities:

Exhibit 5-5
Region 5 Facilities

Facility	Acreage	Year Purchased	Square Feet	Additions
Beaumont	2.6	1979	21,018	1992 (8,101 sq. ft.)
Silsbee	25.0	1997	24,394	none

Source: Region 5 Facility Uses and Management file #162.

On the MGT surveys completed as part of this review, Region 5 superintendents generally rated lower the quality of RESC facilities than did superintendents statewide. Just 27 percent of Region 5 superintendents rated their RESC facilities as exceptional; in contrast, 69 percent of superintendents statewide did so. Twenty (20) percent of Region 5 superintendents rated their RESC facilities as only adequate. In contrast, just seven percent of superintendents statewide did the same.

This lower opinion of Region 5 facilities was also borne out in the employee surveys. Just 25 percent of Region 5 employees rated their facilities as exceptional. In contrast, 63 percent of employees statewide thought their facilities were exceptional. At the other end, 25 percent of Region 5 employees rated their facilities as only adequate. Only seven percent of employees statewide did the same.

RESC 5 currently employs two full-time custodians, a part-time custodian, and two receptionists to support facility maintenance. As shown in **Exhibit 5-6**, RESC 5 expends over $100,000 each year on staff and supplies. With the exception of FY 2004, these costs have increased at a rate of five to 10 percent a year for the past three years. In FY 2004, RESC 5 restructured positions to reduce costs by approximately $14,000.

Exhibit 5-6
Custodial and Janitorial Staff and Supplies for RESC 5

Expenditure	FY01	FY02	FY03
Custodian (full-time)	$23,280	$25,727	$26,304
Custodian (full-time)	$19,824	$21,480	$22,368
Custodian (part-time)	$7,000	$7,500	$7,000
Receptionist (full-time)	$23,760	$25,680	$26,760
Receptionist (full-time)	$18,000	$19,440	$20,160
Janitorial Supplies	$10,000	$12,000	$12,000
Total Custodial Expenses	**$101,864**	**$111,827**	**$114,592**

Source: Region 5 Facility Uses and Management file #169.

Compared to RESCs that have outsourced custodial services, RESC 5 is spending at least 50 percent more than comparably sized RESCs. For example, Region 1 is currently spending approximately $56,400 for outsourced janitorial services for a 74,760 square foot building and Region 13 pays $27,000 per year for similar services for a total square footage of 34,880. Outsourcing of custodial functions can be fiscally more prudent and provide greater leverage to enforce high standards for facility maintenance.

RESC 5 should outsource custodial and janitorial services. Region 5 expends over $100,000 a year in custodial expenses for the two facilities. Compared to other RESCs this is well above the amount spent by RESCs that outsource such services. RESC 5 stands to significantly reduce the amount it spends on facility maintenance by outsourcing this function. Based on the experience of other RESCs, it is estimated that the overall facilities maintenance costs would be no more that $50,000 per year should RESC outsource this function. Furthermore, the costs of RESCs staff and supplies for custodial and janiortial support have been rising five to 10 percent per year. Should RESC outsource for such services, rates may increase each year, but by no more than five percent per year.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY REVIEWS

RESC 5 should follow the example of other RESCs that have realized significant savings from conducting energy efficiency reviews.

According to the information provided by Region 5, it has not conducted a systematic review of energy usage at its facilities. **Exhibit 5-7** shows RESC 5's budget for electricity for the last three fiscal years.

Exhibit 5-7
Electricity Expense for Region 5

Expenditure	FY01	FY02	FY03	Total
Electricity	$55,000	$90,000	$90,000	$235,000

Source: Region 5 Facility Uses and Management file #169.

A model that has proven effective was used by RESC 1. RESC 1 entered into a performance-based contract with TAC Energy Solutions (TAC), a private company that focuses on energy projects for school districts and higher education. The contract is performance-based. Savings from the project should cover the costs of implementing the solutions over a certain period of time, or TAC will be financially responsible for the shortfall. The performance-based contract will enable Region 5 to pay for facility improvements with guaranteed energy savings. New, more efficient equipment and facility automation should generate guaranteed utility savings.

The review should at a minimum consider energy conservation opportunities in the following areas of:

- lighting
- control and management measures
- air system measures
- HVAC equipment measures
- electrical system measures
- miscellaneous measures
- utility system measures

RESC 1's utility costs prior to the review were approximately $155,000 annually. Following the review, RESC 1 was able to generate savings of approximately $51,400 annually, or 33 percent. If RESC 5 were to experience similar savings, it could reduce its electricity costs by approximately $30,000 annually.

RESC 5 should conduct an energy efficiency study and implement recommendations to realize savings in utility costs. Energy efficiency studies and related improvements pay for themselves in a matter of a few years. The costs of the studies are modest compared to the savings. Managing the costs of utilities is an important way that RESCs can responsibly manage resources. RESC 5 should expect to reduce its total annual utility costs by 25 percent to 35 percent annually. It is highly recommended that RESC 5 seek a vendor that will enter into a performance-based contract. Such a contract limits RESC 5's liabilities and provides strong incentives for results on the part of the vendor. The year the review is conducted will yield limited savings. Savings will begin to be realized in the year following the study.

There are a number of firms that conduct energy efficiency reviews. Most offer at least two options for conducting reviews. The first option is to pay a fixed fee for the review without obligation to implement improvements. This option usually costs $5,000 to $15,000 depending on the size and complexity of the facility. The second option is to enter into a performance contract for the review with improvement implementation. The costs for this approach vary based on the types of improvements that are identified. There are financing plans available that allow for the costs of improvements to be spread over up to 15 years at a low interest rate. During 2004-05, the year the study is conducted there should be no costs and no savings. However, once the improvements are underway RESC 5 should begin to see immediate benefits. While it is difficult to estimate the actual costs for RESC 5 to implement improvements, it seems reasonable to expect that these costs may be fully offset by reduced energy costs after the first year of implementation.

COOPERATIVES WITH LOW PARTICIPATION

While most of the cooperatives offered by RESC 5 are well received there are several that have fairly low participation and should be either consolidated or eliminated.

As shown in **Exhibit 5-4**, 10 of the 27 cooperatives offered by RESC have six or fewer members. In 2004-05, RESC 5 plans to eliminate eight of the collaboratives and combine Multimedia Library and Multimedia Training. The planned adjustments are appropriate. If the goal of the cooperatives is to increase buying power and leverage resources there needs to be a minimum level of participation to offset RESC 5's costs and efforts to support the cooperative. There may be value to the few members of the offered services, in which case RESC 5 should evaluate how it might combine the services into other cooperatives. However, there may be some cooperatives that are not cost-effective.

RESC 5 needs to continue to regularly evaluate the efficiency and efficacy of the cooperatives that it supports to ensure that all members are receiving needed and cost-effective services.

RESC 5 should consolidate or eliminate service cooperatives with low participation rates. While RESC 5 is commended for offering member districts the opportunity to save money through collaborative efforts, it is unclear whether service cooperative with low participation rates are actually cost-effective options for districts or the Center. As detailed in **Exhibit 5-4**, some collaborative efforts have very few school or district members, including the Aspiring Principals Academy (three members), the Teacher Leaders Academy (2 members) and the Campus Leaders Academy (two members). There are four additional cooperatives with only four members each.

RESC 5 should evaluate whether some of these cooperatives can be consolidated or additional members can be recruited to increase economies of scale. If these are not viable options, the Center may want to consider eliminating certain cooperative efforts that are not cost-effective for members or RESC 5. Undertaking the cost study suggested in Recommendation 5-6 will provide helpful data to inform this decision.

FEES FOR SERVICES

RESC 5 is not strategic or systematic about how it establishes rates and fees for its services. Currently, cooperative fees are charged based on the size of the district. It uses a five tier rate structure, as shown in **Exhibit 5-3**. Rates also differ by service collaborative and offering. RESC 5 has not adjusted its rates for several years, despite inflation and a reduction in revenue to the center from the state.

In addition to annual cooperative fees, workshop participants are asked to pay an attendance fee which varies for each event. Usually this fee differs depending upon whether the participant's school or district belongs to a particular cooperative, with members paying a lesser fee than non-members. RESC 5 does not have any documented criteria for setting workshop fees. Staff consultant set fees based on a "cost recovery" model. Cost recovery is generally limited to the costs for printing and special materials, the fees charged by external presenters, and the cost of a meal if one is provided. RESC 5 does not maintain documented criteria for determining the full costs of conducting a workshop, such as RESC 5 staff time, building and operations costs, etc., Consequently, the current cost recovery model is incomplete.

In similar fashion, RESC 5 has not documented the costs of providing on-site technical assistance or professional development. Cooperative members are generally entitled to this type of assistance at no additional fee, provided it pertains to the subject matter of the cooperative to which they belong. Non-cooperative members pay a flat fee of $500 per day and $250 per half day for on-site assistance. RESC 5 consulted with other RESCs when developing this fee schedule and determined that their fees were somewhat lower (for example, neighboring RESC 4 charges $800 per day and $500 per half day for on-site assistance). The review team did not find evidence of a cost analysis or documentation outlining the criteria that was used to set these fees.

There is evidence that some superintendents in Region 5 do not understand and/or are not pleased with the center's fee structure. In the review team's survey of superintendents, 67 percent agreed or strongly agreed that "the amount charged to our district by the RESC is appropriate for the quality and amount of service provided." This is significantly less that the 78 percent of superintendents who agreed or strongly agreed with this statement statewide.

RESC 5 should conduct a cost study to determine the appropriate rates to charge for services. While RESC 5 should be commended for trying to keep rates low for their customers, it is important that their fee structure provide sufficient revenue to support the services it provides. Without this type of methodology, there is potential for districts to be over or under charged, and for RESC 5 to risk financial instability and impacted services. This risk could be as minor as the center not recouping costs for a particular workshop, or as major as being unable to pay staff salaries and provide essential services if participation in cooperatives were to drop. RESC 5 must be strategic about their fees-for-services to ensure fairness and plan for their own fiscal stability, especially as they face uncertain funding from the state level.

RESC 5 should undertake a comprehensive cost study to accomplish the following:

- a comprehensive assessment of the costs to deliver cooperative services by cooperative as well as workshops and trainings that are outside of the cooperative service arrangements. (The analysis should include all costs including personnel, contracted support, building and operations, supplies, equipment, travel, and administrative. In addition, the assessment should review revenue that is attributable to each service areas to assess the appropriateness of existing rates);
- review utilization patterns and rates by cooperative members;
- examine rates charged by other RESCs for similar services;
- develop and document a fee schedule for all services provided by Region 5; and
- develop and document a fee policy structure and review on an annual basis.

This study should result in documented criteria for establishing and revising an appropriate fee structure for RESC 5 services. Regional superintendents should be consulted before finalizing a new fee structure. Once a structure is determined, it should be shared with regional superintendents.

DATA ANALYSIS FOR SERVICES

RESC 5 does not consistently analyze or share data regarding service usage with its member districts.

Based on interviews and a review of documents, it is also unclear how much of this information is tracked and used. The workshop registration system maintains attendee information at the individual level, including name, school and district. Some center staff report reviewing numbers of program participants, but such data are not consistently analyzed at the district and school level. For instance, a staff member may note that a series of workshops was fully attended and determine that it was "well-utilized;" however those attendees might represent only a handful of districts. Additionally, there could be some districts or schools that never attend those workshops. Because participation data are not typically analyzed at the district or school level, RESC staff are not able to conduct outreach to encourage increased participation from sites who rarely take advantage of certain services.

RESC 5 should develop processes to use data to assess service usage, target outreach efforts

to districts, and share usage information with districts. While service cooperatives can be cost-effective for district participants, if schools within the member districts are not sufficiently using RESC 5's services then joining the cooperative may be more expensive than purchasing services on an as-needed basis. The deputy executive director of Instructional Services should provide districts with annual RESC 5 participation data to conduct this cost-benefit analysis before deciding upon cooperative agreements each year. Tracking and analyzing participation data can also aid the center in targeting outreach and recruitment to new participants who are under-utilizing RESC 5's services, ensuring that all schools in the region are receiving the full benefit of the center's many programs.

The deputy executive director of Business and Administration should develop and implement a process for tracking and reporting on this information. The deputy director of Instructional Services should develop and implement a process where instructional services staff review and analyze participation data on a regular basis, and follow-up with personalized outreach to district and campus staff throughout the year. The Business and Administration Department should handle production of participation/usage reports. Reviewing and acting on this data should be part of the regular job responsibilities of the Instructional Services Department's deputy executive director and staff.

INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES

The numerous service areas of the Instructional Services Department exist as independent units and all staff report directly to the deputy executive director. This is not an effective mode of delivery. RESC 5 is aware of this and is working to implement a new organizational structure that blends staff and functions within RESC 5.

These functions have not been organized into sub-departments. Based on interviews with, and documentation provided by center staff, RESC has approximately 15 different functional areas within the Instructional Services Department. Each service area exists independently and the deputy executive director communicated directly with one to three staff members in each area. This issue is compounded by the recent organization restructuring, which combined general and special education under one department. Due to how recently this shift occurred and the retirement of several staff members, RESC 5 was unable to provide the review team with an updated department organization chart or current job descriptions. According to the executive director, the planning organizational improvements should address the need for a more integrated structure.

RESC 5 should reorganize instructional services functions into clear sub-departments, appoint staff members to serve as coordinators, and update job descriptions. RESC 5 could increase effectiveness and efficiency by combining complementary service areas into subject-based sub-departments. For instance, the Math and Science, Curriculum Leadership Co-op, Curriculum, Instruction, Texas Math and Reading Initiative, and TPRI staff and services could all be organized into a "Curriculum" sub-department. Similarly, CATE, Advanced Academic Service & Safe and Drug Free Schools, Federal Programs/Special Populations, ESL/Bilingual Support, and Migrant Education could all be categorized as "Special Programs." This reorganization allows for increased collaboration among complementary service offerings. It may also provide opportunities for consolidation of responsibilities and elimination of positions.

Because MGT consultants were not provided up-to-date job descriptions, we are unable to make specific recommendations as to which areas should be combined and which positions should be eliminated. As part of its continuing reorganization efforts, RESC 5 management should assess allocation of responsibilities, identify areas where efficiency can be improved, and make decisions accordingly. It must also ensure that all staff have appropriate oversight.

Once new sub-departments have been identified, the deputy executive director should select one education specialist from each department to serve as a coordinator. This will facilitate communication within the Instructional Services Division, and provide the deputy executive director with a "point person" through whom information can be passed. It will also improve efficiency over the current system, under which the deputy executive director must communicate directly with approximately 60 employees.

Furthermore, the RESC 5 may also want to consider making these coordinators supervisory positions, or directors, with responsibility for overseeing staff in their sub-departments. This would appropriately reduce the oversight responsibilities of the deputy director, who currently oversees approximately 60 employees. If this is cost-prohibitive, the coordinator positions could remain non-hierarchical and be used solely for communication purposes.

Due to lack of clear information about the current staffing of the Instructional Services Department, MGT is unable to make concrete fiscal estimates. The fiscal impact of this recommendation will depend upon the number of sub-departments created, the extent of supervisory responsibilities assigned to coordinators, and the number of positions eliminated.

It is appropriate that each coordinator receive some additional annual salary compensation for increased communication and organization responsibilities, on the order of $500 to $2,000 each. If RESC 5 chooses to give sub-department coordinators director-level staff-oversight and evaluation responsibilities, then further salary compensation would be appropriate. Salaries for directors in the Business and Administration Department range from approximately $51,000 to $75,000. However, this is not a totally comparable model as the pay-structure for education specialists is already approaching the lower-end of this scale; most earn approximately $50,000 to $55,000 without oversight responsibilities. Should it choose to implement director-level positions in the Instructional Services Department, the RESC 5 will have to develop an appropriate pay scale.

The fiscal impact of promotion compensation can be offset through elimination of positions as part of the department reorganization. As noted, MGT is does not have the necessary information to fully assess the potential for position reduction or cost savings.

STATE COMPENSATORY EDUCATION

RESC 5 is not providing sufficient support to its regional districts in the area of State Compensatory Education (SCE).

In September 2002 TEA conducted a Management and Service (M & S) audit of RESC 5. Among its documented findings, the audit stated that RESC 5 "did not provide adequate, comprehensive, and continuous training and technical assistance for State Compensatory Education." RESC 5's written audit response indicated that it would "develop a School Finance and Operations Support Program," and that SCE would be "specifically addressed in terms of determining district needs in order to provide targeted training and support."

The review team found evidence that these steps have been implemented. The Center's Directory includes a "School Finance and Operations" function, stating that RESC 5 provides appropriate technical support including, but not limited to:

- conduct training sessions in school finance for school personnel as well as board members;
- assess and identify any fundamental operational weaknesses in financial management procedures in school business offices; and
- assist districts with the use of all modules of the Web-based Foundation School Program payment system to

promote better budget development and implementation practices.

In addition to fiscal assistance, there is evidence that RESC 5 provides some programmatic technical assistance related to Title I programs; however, these efforts do not appear to have been constant over the past several years. It is also unclear whether they have been made available to all regional schools. RESC 5 Internal Evaluation for 2002–03 indicates that Title I services focused solely on schools designated as "low performing" by TEA, of which there were only three in Region 5 that year. Region 5 2003–04 Comprehensive Plan states that the objective of the Consolidated Administrative Funds (Title I) program was to provide technical assistance to districts related to the District Effectiveness and Compliance (DEC) and Federal Compliance Monitoring (FCM) reviews. The current RESC 5 Web site describes the Center's Title I School Support program as providing technical assistance to schools in competing the comprehensive needs assessment and in designing and implementing new approaches to Title I programs.

Despite evidence that the center has taken steps to improve at-risk and SCE services, feedback from Region 5 customers indicates that they require additional assistance. Three separate surveys of RESC 5 customers indicated that improvements could be made regarding at-risk and SCE services.

- RESC 5 survey of Region 5 superintendents (Spring 2002): only 45 percent satisfied or very satisfied with services.
- TSPR survey of RESC customers (Fall 2003): only 51 percent Region 5 customers satisfied or very satisfied, compared to 56 percent of statewide respondents.
- MGT survey of superintendents (June 2004): only 73 percent Region 5 superintendents satisfied or very satisfied, compared to 89 of statewide respondents.

RESC 5 should enhance at-risk and State Compensatory Education services. While RESC 5 has taken steps to improve its at-risk and SCE services, its customers indicate that they are still in need of additional support. The center should review and modify its at-risk and SCE service offerings to better meet its customers' needs. This should be done in consultation with advisory groups and district representatives to ensure that customer needs are accurately communicated and represented. This will likely entail a revision and clarification of what programmatic support RESC 5 provides to schools and districts. RESC 5 should ensure that sufficient services are provided to all campuses who need them and not just those designated as low-performing or those facing audit visits.

If it is necessary for RESC 5 to offer additional services, it will likely need to generate additional revenue to support them. Since direct RESC state-level Title I funding has been eliminated, it may be appropriate for RESC 5 to charge a fee to schools requiring technical assistance with SCE. This should be done on a cost-recovery basis using established criteria to determine the fee (see Recommendation 5-6).

PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

RESC 5 completes annual performance appraisals for all employees, but the process does not allow for sufficient employee input.

RESC 5 has developed job descriptions for all positions. A copy of the job description is placed in the employee's personnel folder. Due to state funding cuts, RESC 5 recently revised its organizational structure. From the organizational changes, job responsibilities, positions, and duties changed. Job descriptions associated with the new organizational structure are currently being revised. Changes to the job descriptions are the responsibility of each supervisor and require the approval of the executive director.

There are three sections to the performance evaluation: general indicators, department indicators, and individual indicators. Each evaluation form is tailored for the specific department and position.

Annual performance appraisals are completed for all region employees in March. Supervisors write the appraisals and meet with employees individually to review it. A copy of the evaluation is placed in the individual's personnel folder and maintained for two years.

However, there is no opportunity for employees to provide feedback on the performance assessments. Performance assessments are driven by the management with employee input only requested during the development of the job description.

The employee self-evaluation process can be a valuable tool when used in conjunction with the performance assessment process. By including a self-evaluation, the employee is empowered to provide input into their assessment. This facilitates an open discussion between the employee and supervisor and can result in a more objective representation of the employee's performance. Any areas of discrepancy can be discussed and resolved during the employee/supervisor evaluation meetings.

RESC 5 should finish the review of job descriptions and add employee self-evaluations to the performance evaluation process. Upon completion of the job description update, management should review the job description with appropriate personnel and once approved, the job description should be incorporated into performance plans. Through self-evaluations, employees can view their performance introspectively and recognize areas needing improvement. Self-evaluations give employees a sense of empowerment and responsibility for their performance.

WEB-BASED RECRUITMENT

Region 5 has developed a valuable Web site tool for districts to use for recruiting teachers, administrators, and other school staff, but the center does not provide the same functionality for the RESC. In addition, the Web site does not provide benefits information for current employees.

On the Region 5 homepage there is a link for "Educator Job Listings." RESC 5 has received a good response from districts wishing to list their vacancies on the Web site. The Web site allows districts to log on using a user-ID and password to add district job postings. There is a link for applicants to search the database of job postings. In addition, job applicants can fill out an application online and submit it to the online "Educator's Placement Service."

On the "Educator Job Listings" function, the user must select a district from a drop down list. If no district is selected, an error occurs. Currently each district is listed multiple times – it appears to correspond with the number of job listing there are for the district. This could be confusing for job seekers. Each district should be listed only once with the multiple job postings appearing when a specific district is selected. There should be a message that tells the user to "please select a district" when no district has been selected, rather than presenting the user with an error message. In addition, there should be an option in the drop down list for "all districts" so that job seekers can see all available positions at once.

Region 5 Web site does not have a link that provides information about employee benefits. The Human Resources Department provides benefits information only in hard copy form. The same is true of the Region's employee handbook.

Providing benefits information and the employee handbook online would be more effective for most employees. For example, employees may receive a document on leave policies when they are first employed by the RESC, but not need it for several years and

not be able to locate it when they do need it. Thus, a Web site, with its ability to provide information on demand at any time, is often a more effective option for employees. The Web site can provide information directly as well as links to other sites that have information about their benefits, such as:

- doctors or pharmacies in their area;
- retirement eligibility, request for estimating retirement benefits, leave policies, Family Medical Leave Act Request Forms, worker's compensation procedures, grievance processes;
- new HR legislation;
- co-pay requirements;
- Employee Assistance Plan (EAP) resources;
- Employee handbook (region policies and procedures);
- W-4 forms, payroll information, change of address forms, direct deposit forms;
- wellness activities;
- calendar of events;
- Dental insurance application;
- organization chart and phone list; and
- Beneficiary Designation Forms.

When changes are made in region policies and procedures, they can be immediately posted on the Web site. HR personnel can then send an e-mail to all employees alerting them to the change.

One RESC calculated that it saved $3,300 in annual printing costs by providing its employee handbook online. That RESC is larger, so region 5 could expect to save approximately $1,000 by not printing employee handbooks. The region could expect to save another portion of its printing costs by providing extensive benefits information online.

RESC 5 should expand the Region 5 Web site to include RESC job postings and benefits information, and better functionality for searching existing openings. MGT recommends performing a usability study on the Region 5 Web site to improve functionality and navigation. The process should include electronic access and submission of all required forms, resumes, and applications via email or through the region's Web site. New employees should be given an information sheet that instructs them on how to use the Web site to obtain benefits information and how to review the employee handbook online. The site should also provide an email address or link to send questions to the HR Division.

MGT estimates that improving the benefits information and the job application functionality on the region's Web site will cost approximately $950. This includes a total of 13 hours of services: three hours for Web site design at $70 per hour; four hours of Web site content at $55 per hour; four hours of programming at $55 per hour; and, six hours of testing and implementation at $50 per hour.

MGT estimates that approximately 400 staff hours per year will be saved in not processing the current volume of job applications manually. Valued at $10.00 per hour, the region should save approximately $4,000 per year.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE

RESC 5 is using financial management software to manage and monitor its budget, but it needs to increase the functions that it uses from this software to improve its budget management process.

RESC 5 experienced a decrease in state base funding during FY 2003-04. RESC 5 initiated a responsive plan for reorganization to address the significant funding reductions. The reorganization included reduction in staff and changes to staff roles, responsibilities and assignments. From 2002-03 to 2003-04, RESC 5 experienced approximately 16.5 percent decrease in state base funding.

Exhibit 5-8 shows the trend in state funding for the past two years, depicting the reduction in the current fiscal year.

Based upon MGT's survey results, RESC 5 superintendents feel that the RESC is not funded adequately. More than 46 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement "RESC 5 in our RESC 5 is adequately funded." Only seven percent agreed or strongly agreed with that statement. In contrast, 60 percent of superintendents statewide disagreed with the statement and 15 percent agreed with it. In addition, 86 percent of RESC 5 superintendents indicated that the RESC should continue to be funded by the state.

Exhibit 5-8
Decline in RESC 5 State Base Funding

Funding Source	2002-03	2003-04
State Base	$1,073,774	$895,449

Source: Region 5 Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports, 2002,2003.

Exhibit 5-9 shows RESC 5's use of state base funds for FY 2003-04, year-to-date. As indicated, the majority of state base funds are allocated to Information Systems Technology Support, the Executive Director's Office and the Business Office.

Exhibit 5-9
RESC 5 Use of State Funds - Current Fiscal YTD

Use of Funds	Realized Revenue	Expenditures Incurred	Fiscal YTD Revenue	% Of State Funding
Curriculum and Staff Development	$255,000	$139,658	$139,658	$100%
School District Administrative Support	131,600	101,652	101,652	100%
Information Systems Technology Support (including PEIMS support)	184,183	184,183	184,183	100%
Executive Director Office	162,333	153,280	153,280	100%
Business Office	162,333	153,455	153,455	100%
Total	**$895,449**	**$732,228**	**$732,228**	**100%**

Source: Region 5 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report ,2003.

Based upon MGT's review of the Region's current budget processes, it is not clear how Chapter 41 money is actually allocated to the districts. RESC 5 is striving toward improving the overall financial accounting processes. The region recently hired a new deputy executive director for Business and Administrative Services to be responsible for improvements in this area, beginning with the 2004–05 budget.

Unlike school districts or county Boards of Education, RESCs have no local taxing authority. In order to provide for a physical plant, plant operation, maintenance, renovation, self-insurance, and the like, RESCs must maintain fund balances.

Exhibit 5-10 shows RESC 5's fund balances for the FY 2003-04, year-to-date. As depicted, the fund balance for the current fiscal year has decreased by approximately 23 percent from the prior fiscal year.

Exhibit 5-10
Trends in RESC 5 Fund Balances

Use	Designated Fund Balance	Undesignated Fund Balance	Total
Beginning Fund Balance: ***September 1, 2002***	$785,000	$775,622	$1,506,622
Beginning Fund Balance: ***September 1, 2003***	$785,000	$861,724	$1,646,724
Estimated Ending Fund Balance: ***August 31, 2004***	$420,000	$850,000	$1,270,000

Source: Region 5 Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports, 2001, 2002, 2003.

RESC 5 uses the RSCCC Business Software, which includes current year budget and next year budget systems as integrated features of the application.

RESC 5 should use all relevant RSCCC business software functions to improve the RESC budget process and provide useful reports for the management team to support sound financial management and budgetary planning.

RESC 5 uses RSCCC business software, which includes budget and next year budget systems integrated into the application. Specifically, the budget and accounting processes could be improved by:

- clear delineation of the allocation of Chapter 41 funding;
- clear delineation of the use of State base funding;
- associate revenue from RESC services with the program area providing the service;
- comparison of budget and actual data on a monthly or quarterly basis; and
- comparison of revenue and expenses on a monthly or quarterly basis.

RESC 5's current financial management team can support these recommended improvements. The above improvements should be made immediately to ensure proper budget oversight and sound financial management. The Deputy Director for Administrative Services should be responsible for overseeing that the improvements are made within a six-month period.

PRICING STRATEGY

Local resource are a critical revenue stream for all RESCs. RESC 5 does not have in place a process for ensuring that its local revenue is collected in a manner that is consistent and equitable. In the current environment of state funding reductions and uncertain funding sources, RESCs must maintain as much of a financial footing as they can with local revenues.

RESCs must actively seek out local revenue sources in a consistent manner across all districts. RESC 5 provides services to the school districts to improve their economy and efficiency through the services they offer. Service offerings specific to the financial area include:

- **school finance and operations** – provides technical support in the financial arena to school districts and charter schools;
- **school business and finance cooperative** - provides the districts with budget development and management assistance; and
- **Management Services for Federal Fund Cooperative** – provides a management service related to federal funds.

In addition, RESC 5 operates two purchasing cooperatives:

- Food Services Cooperative; and
- Southeast Texas Cooperative Purchasing Organization

These cooperatives enable the school districts to purchase items at a reduced cost. The food cooperative has 28 member districts, which serve a combined total of 73,000 meals per day. The food cooperative hosts an Annual Food Show and Tasting event for all districts in the region. This event enables participants to evaluate new food and beverage for purchase through the cooperative for member district school cafeterias. The Southeast cooperative focuses on providing food products at competitive costs to member districts.

RESC 5 should develop and implement a balanced and equitable pricing strategy for RESC 5 services. RESC 5 should develop and implement a process to set appropriate rates for services with the objective of increasing local revenue to the RESC, while balancing the needs and budgetary constraints of the districts. In addition, the Center should make every effort to associate the estimated revenue from these services to the appropriate budgetary program. This pricing should be sufficient to cover the costs of providing the services. In addition, the region should actively market these services to the districts.

Specifically, RESC 5's Business Management Team should perform the following tasks:

- review all current service offerings to the districts;
- analyze the cost effectiveness of each service to determine if the service is providing desired value to the district while balancing the revenue needs of the RESC;
- evaluate current pricing and propose revised pricing for applicable services; and
- review proposed pricing and services with the districts prior to finalization of changes.

These changes should be implemented in September, coinciding with the new Fiscal Year (FY 2004-05).

PERFORMANCE-BASED CONTRACTING

RESC 5 contracting procedures rely on standard cost-reimbursement or deliverables-based contracts. The center could realize cost-savings or improved vendor performance through implementation of performance-based contracts where appropriate.

RESC 5 uses a purchase order (PO) process to support the center's purchasing needs. A PO is encumbered when the PO number is assigned. When a purchase order is received in the business office, the vendor is verified to make sure they are on an approved bid list. Each line item on the purchase order is verified through finance inquiry to ensure that funds are available for the purchase. If the amount of the purchase order is over $500, the business manager's signature is required. If the amount is over $1,000, the executive director's signature is also required on the purchase order. The PO is kept until all deliveries and correct invoices have been received. They are then submitted to accounts payable and the bookkeeper for payment. The RSCCC accounts payable software currently used by Region 5 is being updated to include a web based requisition system. RESC 5 also uses the RSCCC software for requisition processing.

Purchases are competitively bid according to the guidelines established by the State. Goods and services over $25,000 are competitively bid following the state guidelines. RESC 5 uses the Southeast Texas Cooperative Purchasing Organization for it own purchases. RESC 5 has not entered into any performance based contracts with any of the current vendors.

RESC 5 should examine the viability of entering into a performance-based contract with specific vendors to achieve potential cost savings during 2004-05. Vendors that may be suitable for performance-based contracting services include:

- maintenance and operations related to RESC 5 facilities;
- vehicle maintenance; and
- investment portfolio management.

This list is not intended to be all inclusive, but exhaustive; rather a sample of potential areas, which may be suitable for performance-based contracting. The region should review current vendor contracts to determine relevance to current and future needs of the center to achieve cost savings in the upcoming fiscal year.

INSURANCE COVERAGE

RESC 5 has procured insurance coverage, but does not have a documented process in place for annually reviewing the appropriateness of the coverage level, cost for coverage, and coverage areas.

The center purchased commercial insurance to cover general liabilities in 2003. Prior to this, the RESC was exposed to various risks of loss related to torts, theft damage, destruction of assets, errors and omissions, injury to employees, and natural disasters. RESC 5 became aware of this deficiency and took the proper action to remedy the risk.

RESC 5 should review insurance coverage on an annual basis to ensure that the contribution and coverage provided by the Texas Association of School Boards Risk Management Fund is adequate and appropriate to cover the potential of loss to the RESC. Maintaining adequate insurance is a critical requirement of all RESC's. Given the RESC 5 has only recently purchased necessary insurance coverage, it is critical that RESC 5's Business Management Team review this coverage annually. The policy should be reviewed to ensure that it appropriately meets the needs of the RESC. As part of the annual budget process, the Business Management team should review the policy in August, prior to the onset of the new fiscal year.

PEIMS STAFFING

There are a several districts and charter schools in RESC 5 that have a PEIMS error rate exceeding the TEA-allowable rate of two percent. Providing high quality PEIMS support is a critical function of RESCs. RESC 5 does not have adequate staff to address the needs of districts in the region.

RESC 5 PEIMS Coordinator retired in August 2003. A contractor is providing support, quality data control, and training through August 2004. The Information Management Director is currently serving as the PEIMS Coordinator. A full-time PEIMS position has been posted to begin on August 1, 2004. Three Region staff members are allocated to providing PEIMS training, but all have other responsibilities in addition to PEIMS. These staff members support all 30 RESC 5 districts, five charters schools, and seven districts from other regions. Charter schools often require substantial assistance meeting the PEIMS requirements, much more than the average school in a school district. Some of the districts can use the data standards and do not require much assistance, but there is regular turnover in the PEIMS Coordinator positions across the region.

PEIMS is a critical and intensive process required by TEA and a primary responsibility of the RESC. It should be a high priority for the RESC. Services that could be offered with additional staff might include:

- taking a more proactive approach to capturing data required for the Texas Education Agency (TEA) by assisting schools in verifying and analyzing the data to measure student performance, assess funding, determine future strategies, identify staff development needs, and evaluate their business;
- providing timely and appropriate training prior to each of the four TEA submission cycles;

- spending more time with the superintendents directly to encourage accountability and accuracy of data submissions;
- offering customized reports and download of data for districts to run special reports;
- providing 24x7 on call support, especially during submission cycles;
- recognizing districts with low PID rates in its service area; and
- providing access online through the region's Web site for such items as:
  - downloads of PEIMS data for districts to run special reports
  - links to TEA information, including prior reports
  - leavers procedures manual
  - timelines for submissions
  - listing of PEIMS Coordinators in the region
  - PEIMS Archive for prior submissions.

Other RESCs have successfully implemented a fee program for enhanced services. In one RESC, the lowest fee for enhanced services is $500 per year, per district.

RESC 5 should add one additional PEIMS staff to fill vacant position to train and support the school districts within Region 5 with PEIMS data preparation and testing. PEIMS is a critical and intensive process required by TEA and a primary responsibility of the regions. If necessary, develop a rate structure and service offering for specialized PEIMS services and charge districts for these services to recoup costs associated with the specialized assistance.

The PEIMS support person should be classified as Grade 8. The average salary and benefits cost of such a position is expected to $33,000.

Other regions have successfully implemented a fee for enhanced services. In one region, the lowest fee for enhanced services is $500 per year, per district. If all 30 districts in RESC 5 purchase a similar type of service, $15,000 would be generated annually to offset the cost of the additional PEIMS staff.

TECHNOLOGY PLAN

RESC 5 needs to develop a technology plan that addresses its technology needs related to its core mission and goals. In absence of such a plan, RESC 5 risks creating new initiatives that do not contribute to the RESC's overall goals and mission.

Region 5 is involved in multiple technology initiatives for the districts and the RESC. Descriptions of the services offered by the Educational Technology and the Information Management departments are available on the Web site and provide valuable information to the districts seeking assistance. However, there does not appear to be an overall technology plan, vision, or direction for the future.

Region 5 is currently working in a variety of technology areas to provide services for districts, teachers, and students. Some of these areas include:

- Esc5.net Web site – provides a variety of information on RESC services for potential customers as well as information for RESC employees;
- RSCCC -- Region 5 is working collaboratively with Region 20, assisting in the development and testing of this product;
- Distance Learning – thus far, a total 1, 273 students served;
- Back to School Technology Conference – last year this conference had approximately 1,000 attendees;
- Basic application, how to use multi-media in the class – PC and MAC lab. Put application courses online. Back to school technology conference. NASA and librarian training.
- Technology taskforce group – the group meets once a month/

- TTCC –RESCs in Texas have joined together to offer a statewide certification program designed to meet the needs of teachers, districts, and the state of Texas. The Texas Teacher Technology Competencies Certification (*TexasTTCC*) program provides a system that meets the requirements of
  - **The federal program *No Child Left Behind*** by providing valid third-party assessment to document the numbers of teachers who are meeting state standards in technology;
  - **The Texas Long-Range Plan for Technology and the Texas Education Agency** by providing a "procedure for measuring and reporting the extent to which educators meet the SBEC Technology Applications proficiencies" and providing a tool for TEA to use in "requiring SBEC Technology Applications standards as the technology proficiencies for all educators;"
  - **Districts** needing a performance-based method to document the technology proficiencies of their teachers; and
  - **Teachers** seeking ways to demonstrate to their current or future employers that they meet the state standards in technology.
- Technology coordinator advisory meetings – meetings are held at the beginning, middle and end of each school year; all public, charter and private schools are invited to attend to discuss:
  - Initiatives to meet state mandates;
  - Plans for technology training needs;
  - Technology software and hardware needs for the schools; and
  - Technology Application Teacher Certification Program – working collaboratively with two other RESCs to provide this program to Region 5 districts.

In addition, the Educational Technology Division provides services in the areas training, integration into classroom, independent studies, a media library, and van delivery. The division also supports the SETTN which provides internet, video conferencing, and email services.

However, all of these activities are not currently guided by a unified vision in a well-developed technology plan. A lack of such direction can lead to duplication of services, the provision of less valuable services at the expense of services that are ultimately more important, and confusion among employees providing the services.

A technology plan should include:

- a mission statement specific to technology that supports the RESC mission;
- goals, objectives, strategies for technology;
- timelines to implement goals and measurements to determine progress;
- a comprehensive needs assessment to determine current and future technology needs of the RESC, districts, and charter schools;
- schematic of the current technology infrastructure;
- schematic of the desired future technology infrastructure;
- budget preparation and justification; and
- resource allocation required to meet the stated goals.

Some initiatives that can be considered within the scope of a comprehensive technology plan include:

- RSCCC directions and service offering;
- Needs assessment initiatives to drive the technology plan;
- Fee structures to compensate for service offerings;
- Identification of Grant opportunities;
- Technology policies and procedures;
- Web site content development, management, and usability ;
- Current and Future Technology Infrastructure;
- Disaster recovery planning and testing;
- Documentation of the technology infrastructure;
- Identification of vendor partnership opportunities;
- Policies for software procurement;
- Asset management and inventory program; and
- Web site development, content management and usability.

In developing a technology plan, an agency should seek input from all of its stakeholders. For Region 5 those stakeholders would include a variety of committees, councils, and organizations, including district superintendents, technology directors, and library coordinators.

RESC 5 should develop a Region 5 Technology Plan that addresses technology needs of the school districts and the RESC. The plan should include goals, objectives and strategies. The plan should be based on the Texas Education Agency Long Range Plan for Technology, the No Child Left Behind requirements for technology, the requirements of the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) Schools and Libraries Division – Technology Plan, and other related technology initiatives such as TETN.

FISCAL IMPACT

Recommendation		2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	5-Year (Costs) or Savings	One-Time (Costs) or Savings
5-1	Hire new full-time special education director.	$0	($78,328)	($78,328)	($78,328)	($78,328)	($313,312)	
5-3	Eliminate RESC custodial and janitorial staff and outsource services.	$0	$65,500	$67,000	$68,500	$70,000	$271,000	
5-4	Conduct energy audit and implement improvements for reduced energy costs.	$0	$0	$5,000	$10,000	$10,000	$25,000	
5-11	Improve Web site and eliminate staff time spent on processing manual applications.	$0	$4,000	$4,000	$4,000	$4,000	$16,000	($950)
5-15	Hire one additional PEIMS support person and charge districts for enhanced PEIMS services.	$0	($18,000)	($18,000)	($18,000)	($18,000)	($72,000)	
	TOTAL	**$0**	**($26,828)**	**($20,328)**	**($13,828)**	**($12,328)**	**($73,312)**	**($950)**

CHAPTER 6:

HUNTSVILLE

CHAPTER 6

HUNTSVILLE

Regional Education Service Center 6 is located in Huntsville, Texas, and operates out of a main facility (61,943 square feet on 10.66 acres) and has a small two-story downtown site (4,800 square feet on a small parcel with limited parking) for adult education. RESC 6 serves 56 school districts and four charter schools enrolling a total of 142,153 students in membership and on 271 campuses. The RESC encompasses 15 Texas counties covering 12,163 square miles of area.

Exhibit 6-1 provides information comparing all RESCs and an analysis of the exhibit's data shows that RESC 6:

- ranks eighth in student membership among the 20 RESCs and is nearly tied with RESC 12;
- along with RESCs 8 and 9 has the highest percentage of White ethnic population students;
- has the fourth smallest percentage of Hispanic population students and compares at 19.4 percent to 42.7 percent for the average for all RESCs; and
- has the seventh largest African American population and is approximately equal to the average of 14.3 percent for all RESCs.

Services to the clients are rendered through 315 full and part-time employees including one executive director, two deputy directors, and six component directors in the Instructional Services Division and two department secretary positions (one vacant) in the Administrative Services and Controller Division.

The stated mission, reported on the RESC Web site, is "to assist districts in improving student performance, to enable districts to operate more effectively and economically, and to implement state-wide initiatives." The vision states that "Region 6 is a proactive organization of highly qualified professionals who provide visionary support to our districts so that all students are successful."

The goals developed to support these statements include that by the year 2005:

- All students will be safe at school.
- Personnel shortages will no longer exist.
- The high school graduation rate will be 100 percent.
- All learners will meet or exceed state standards.
- All educators will demonstrate effective use of technology.
- All districts will be fiscally accountable and financially sound.
- All districts will have an exemplary academic program, a positive image, and strong parent/community support.

The three primary goals listed on the Web site and reviewed with the on-site team include working with districts to:

- improve student achievement;
- help districts become more cost-effective and efficient; and
- implement new laws and regulations passed by the State Board and Legislature.

Exhibit 6-1
Student Composition of Each RESC
2002–03 School Year

Esc Region	Regional Student Membership	Percent African American	Percent Hispanic	Percent White	Percent Other	Percent Economically Disadvantaged	Percent LEP
1	328,518	0.2	96.1	3.3	0.4	84.5	38.5
2	106,986	3.7	67.6	27.4	1.4	58.6	6.2
3	54,982	10.8	44.0	43.8	1.3	51.6	4.9
4	924,052	21.5	39.3	33.7	5.6	50.2	17.2
5	84,875	31.2	8.4	57.6	2.7	49.2	3.7
6	142,153	13.9	19.4	64.9	1.8	42.1	7.0
7	159,855	21.2	15.7	62.2	0.9	50.0	7.5
8	55,911	23.0	10.9	65.1	1.1	51.7	5.7
9	40,289	9.1	16.9	71.7	2.3	44.7	3.1
10	635,621	20.8	33.1	41.1	5.0	45.4	17.2
11	446,247	13.4	24.2	58.3	4.2	36.0	11.1
12	138,152	23.2	21.9	52.7	2.2	49.6	5.5
13	288,335	9.6	36.3	51.0	3.1	39.2	10.3
14	45,834	6.7	27.5	64.7	1.0	49.7	2.7
15	49,286	3.6	49.4	46.2	0.7	56.4	7.4
16	77,449	5.5	36.6	56.1	1.7	51.5	8.6
17	78,236	8.2	48.9	41.9	1.0	55.8	5.1
18	76,139	5.6	54.4	39.0	1.0	54.9	11.1
19	163,170	2.7	87.2	9.1	1.0	74.7	30.5
20	343,821	7.0	64.9	26.6	1.5	61.6	10.4
State Total	**4,239,911**	**14.3**	**42.7**	**39.8**	**3.2**	**51.9**	**14.9**

Source: TEA 2002–03 AEIS RESC reports.

The RESC 6 Web site also includes a listing of the eight-member Board of Directors, the 20 member Executive Committee, RESC personnel, and details relating to districts and charter schools served, along with a comprehensive list and description of programs and services.

RESC 6 has established partnerships with Texas A & M University, Sam Houston University, Blinn College, and Montgomery College as part of their services portfolio to member school districts and schools.

The Programs and Services and Resources menu of the RESC Web site shows an array of options including products and services as noted:

- Communications Services
- Governance Technical Assistance
- Grant Writing
- Management Studies
- School Board Training
- Adult Continuing Education
- Brazos Valley Workforce Mobile Computer Lab
- Bus Driver Training
- Defensive Driving Course
- Driver Education
- Drug and Alcohol Driving Awareness Program (DADAP)
- Drug and Alcohol Testing Consortium
- GED Testing
- Preparation for the General Educational Development (GED) Certificate
- Project Great
- Self Sufficient Workers Achievement Training (SWAT)

- Region VI Interlocal Purchasing Cooperative
- Region IV Purchasing Cooperative
- Texas Association of School Boards Statewide Purchasing Cooperative
- The Store at Region VI
- Career & Technology Education Consortium
- Career & Technology Education Technical Assistance
- CISCO Networking Academy Services
- Curriculum: Systemic Opportunities to Build District Capacity
- Fine Arts Initiative
- Health: Texas Comprehensive School Health Network
- Learn and Serve America/CHESP
- Literacy Assistance
- Master Reading Teacher Preparation and Certification Program (MRTPCP)
- Mathematics Assistance
- Math/Science Fee Service
- Personal Graduation Plan (PGP) Planner
- Science Assistance
- Social Studies Assistance
- State Developed Reading Professional Development
- TAKS Academic Skills Assistance
- WebCCAT: Web-Accessed Comprehensive Curriculum Assessment Tool
- Administrative Data Processing
- PEIMS
- Pentamation
- RSCCC
- Win School
- CommNet Regional Services
- Distance Learning Program
- Distance Learning Instructor Training
- E-rate Training
- Instructional Technology Audit
- Library Services Co-op & Library Audit
- Media Services
- Network Services
- NovaNet
- Online Technical Training: LearnKey (Microsoft Office / Adobe / Macromedia)
- Project Integrate
- Regional and On-Site Staff Development
- Tech Leaders / CommNet / Title II Part D Resources
- Technology Planning Institute
- Technology Preview Center
- Texas Education Telecommunications Network (TETN)
- Textbooks
- Title IID Contracted Services
- Video Tape Duplication Service

A review of leadership team meeting minutes and documents provided to the Board of Directors showed that prior to the on-site dates having been established and the RESCs notified of the visitation schedule, RESC 6 management and staff had indicated that they were desirous of volunteering for this review.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- The Board of Director's membership possesses a variety of backgrounds ranging from banking and other private business interests to education and varied board experience.
- RESC 6 administration and the Region 6 Board of Directors maintain an up-to-date policy and procedures manual at a minimum cost.
- RESC services and programs receive high marks and strong support from clients who report that services and programs are of a high quality and follow-up on problem areas is prompt and effective.
- The RESC 6 organizational pattern represents an efficient and cost-effective method for ensuring that services and programs are provided to clients.
- RESC 6 plans to use the Balanced Score Card results to support improving services and demonstrating accountability.

- RESC 6 has developed a state-of-the-art Professional Staff Development Center and office space.
- RESC 6 maintains an excellent level of facility cleanliness at a labor level below the industry standard.
- RESC 6 provides targeted programs and services to assist regional schools in improving student achievement.
- RESC 6 uses technology efficiently to offer its customers cost-effective ways to improve learning opportunities.
- RESC 6 has produced and distributed a resource document that provides helpful information to educators working with students with special needs across the state and country.
- RESC 6 services are designed and tailored to meet the needs of customers in member districts.
- The leadership and staff of RESC 6 have developed a positive work environment that supports employee satisfaction and dedication.
- RESC 6 has performed an outstanding job of complying with Government Auditing Standards and in establishing good internal control of their financial reporting.
- The RESC 6 is involved in cost-effective purchasing cooperatives with a number of districts and other RESCs.
- RESC 6's Risk Management Program has full insurance coverage, is well managed, and results in a focus on safety support for clients.
- RESC 6 provides a wide variety of services including the training of personnel in the use of the different systems and provides trouble shooting or technical assistance as needed by clients.

FINDINGS

- The board of directors does not have standing committees. Such committees are often a means for developing appropriate board involvement in agency or organizational policy and planning development. Board members have served on strategic planning committees and plans to update the current plan include appointing a member to the committee.
- Field service agents provide valuable services in Region 6 resulting in direct services to school districts and their boards that should be continued.
- The new state-of-the-art Professional Staff Development Center is equipped with heavy, difficult to move and store, eight foot long narrow folding tables to be used in training and meeting functions.
- RESC 6 does not have a comprehensive system in place to evaluate program effectiveness and use resulting in a need for additional information to guide decisions on program development and modification.
- RESC 6 has the potential to capitalize on additional grant funding resulting in revenues for improving instruction and other support activities.
- RESC 6 does not maintain a system for cross-training personnel in all key and complementary positions. This failure can result in important duties not being carried out with a potentially adverse affect on other personnel and/or client services.
- RESC 6 does not offer a business cooperative or related direct business operational services other than technical assistance provided by field service agents and the executive director and training opportunities through the Bottom Line workshops, and facilitating professional meetings.
- RESC 6 is using different software programs, with various school districts, to collect and report some of the same data resulting in reducing the RESC technical support efficiency.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 6-1: Establish a board standing committee structure.** Implementing this recommendation should result in a careful analysis of potential board committee activity designed to promote the work of the RESC and support important planning activity. The implementation of this recommendation can lay the groundwork for developing Board of Directors infrastructure to deal with issues related to the perception that important education stakeholders do not adequately understand the nature and purpose of the RESC organization and related programs and services provided to the school districts of Texas (this perception was gained in the initial briefing of consultants and further confirmed in interviews with various RESC personnel). This is further supported by the fact that the Texas Legislature prohibits education-related personnel from lobbying for legislative support and funding. This recommendation is based upon the premise that current RESCs and their boards are not proactive in promoting RESC value nor are there established working relationships with local school district boards to identify effective means of educating the public. This recommendation may lead to the development of one or more of the following committees:

  - Strategic planning;
  - Cooperatives' development;
  - Finance;
  - Facilities; and/or
  - External relations.

  This recommendation should be implemented through the following steps:

  - The executive director should review the recommendation with the Board of Directors;
  - Once agreed upon, the Board of Directors should direct the executive director to prepare the necessary policy and procedures to guide the proposed committee(s) development and activity;
  - Potential committee membership should be identified with attention to involvement of member school district representation;
  - The executive director should identify a RESC liaison for each established committee; and
  - The chair of the Board of Directors should appoint a three-member committee assigned the task of implementing the recommendation—that is, preparing a plan for an RESC 6 board external relations program.

  The effective implementation of this recommendation can contribute to making important stakeholders informed supporters of the important services and program work of RESC 3 and provide for policy-level board involvement.

- **Recommendation 6-2: Continue the use of the field service agent position to support RESC 6 client school districts, their school boards, and superintendents.** The implementation of this recommendation should result in continuing a service that the superintendents and executive RESC 6 personnel state is vital. The rationale employed by the State Council on Competitive Government in its January 2004 report is based on an incomplete analysis of how other RESCs utilize the field service agents. Such reported use is not consistent with the purposes of the field service agent positions in RESC 6.

- **Recommendation 6-3: Replace worn and old conference tables with the new light-weight tables available through office supply/equipment outlets.** This recommendation can be implemented as the current tables become excessively worn and damaged and must be replaced. Over a period of several years, all tables should be replaced with the light-weight versions. Taking this action should result in workers being able to move tables with greater ease and less chance of on-the-job injury. Additionally, the lighter tables can more easily be stored in the limited available storage space since they can easily be placed on end against the wall of the storage rooms.

- **Recommendation 6-4: Implement a comprehensive and systematic process for evaluating the quality and use of all programs and service offerings.** The RESC leadership team should continue working with staff to design and implement data-driven methods of evaluating and improving program quality. Emphasis should be placed on what data are important to collect and consider. For instance, while exit/satisfaction surveys for a workshop on Reading Instruction can provide some useful information for "tinkering" with workshop content and format, they do not provide concrete data as to whether the presentation met its stated objectives. This would necessitate future follow-up with workshop participants to see whether they used the information they learned to improve reading instruction in their classrooms. In addition to evaluating program quality, the RESC staff should also engage in more in-depth analysis of program participation and usage. The escWorks system can facilitate this process. This will allow the Service Center to identify districts and schools that are not utilizing its services and increase outreach to those populations. This consideration and outreach should include the Windham School District and Region 6 charter schools. Analysis of participation at the district and school-level can also facilitate outreach to customers that do currently use the RESC's services. Providing a summary report of program participation allows district stakeholders such as superintendents and school board members to conduct cost-analyses regarding RESC utilization, and may encourage increased usage.

- **Recommendation 6-5: Expand the grant specialist from a part-time to a full-time position.** Increasing the amount of staff time allocated to grant development should allow RESC 6 to augment the level of funding flowing into the service center and its member districts. Enhancing the grant writer position would allow more schools and districts to utilize this service; currently only about one quarter of the Region 6 districts are being served. In addition, increasing to full-time would enable the grant writer to allocate additional time to writing grants for the service center itself. Realizing additional grant funding for RESC 6 would allow it to offer additional services and/or offset fees it would otherwise need to charge member schools and districts for services. The individual currently serving in the grant specialist position has personal circumstances that only allow him to work part-time. Because he has a comprehensive working knowledge of available grants and how to craft a winning proposal, in addition to well-established relationships with Region 6 districts, RESC 6 may choose to retain this individual in a part-time capacity and seek to supplement the position with another part-time staff member. This could be accomplished internally by adapting the role of an

educational specialist to allow for part-time grant writing responsibilities. The service center currently has three separate staff members allocated to school safety initiatives (one Safe and Drug Free Schools specialist, one Counseling specialist, and one Safe and Secure Schools specialist). These responsibilities could easily be consolidated to allow for one of these individuals to serve as a part-time grant writer under the supervision of the current grant specialist.

- **Recommendation 6-6: Provide for systematic cross-training of personnel in complementary positions.** Through cross-training, RESC 6 could both maximize efficiency and ensure that essential responsibilities can be appropriately assumed in the event of untimely or extended absences. This effort should focus on positions in which there is a natural overlap, and where individuals have already begun to share responsibilities. These include: the administrative assistants for payroll and human resources; the education specialists for Bilingual/ESL, Migrant Education, and State/Compensatory Education; the education specialists for Counseling, Safe and Secure Schools, and Safe and Drug Free Schools; complementary personnel in the Educational Technology department; and complementary personnel in the Computer Services department.

- **Recommendation 6-7: Conduct a feasibility study to determine if a finance cooperative organization pattern for small districts would be beneficial**. Personnel from within the Administrative Services and Controller Division with input from the field agents should conduct a study to determine which districts have difficulties handling their financial and business affairs because of the lack of qualified personnel on staff. Once this determination has been made, the districts identified should be invited to an information sharing meeting. A task force should be established to determine if a finance cooperative could effectively be developed and which finance services should be offered. This study should include reviewing the option of utilizing a large district(s) capacity to provide a group of small school districts with some or all fiscal services. This could result in small districts outsourcing identified services to the larger district and reducing costs and increasing efficiencies.

- **Recommendation 6-8: Evaluate needs in member districts and available software programs to determine if a single program could be used to meet data collection and reporting needs.** Implementing this recommendation should lead to putting in place a standardization best practice that should lead to greater efficiency of services to all clients. This, in turn, should result in reducing training costs to the RESC over time. RESC 6 staff should analyze the different software programs presently being used to determine which may be producing the same data. Meetings should be held with representatives from the school districts to discuss and study the feasibility of all districts using the same software programs. A determination should be made as to which program(s) can most efficiently be used. The use of the same software program with all districts should cause the RESC staff to have fewer programs on which to stay current. All district personnel could attend the same update trainings which would save the service center time and money. There would be more school district personnel who could serve as a

resource to each other since they would all be using the same applications. If this recommendation is found to be beneficial, but meets with resistance from some districts' representatives, then the changes could be phased in gradually as new hardware is acquired by the client districts and data demands change.

DETAILED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

BOARD MEMBERS

The membership on the Board of Directors of RESC 6 is representative of both private and public sector interests with both experienced and new members included.

Exhibit 6-2 shows the following:

- three members, including the charter school representative, represent the private sector;
- four members are pubic education educators;
- four members have fewer than four years of board experience;
- two have four years of board experience; and
- two have in excess of eight years of board experience.

Interviews with Board of Directors indicated a clear understanding of their respective roles and the distinctions between the policy and approval of recommendations' processes and the function of the RESC administration. Furthermore, where requested by the administration, board members provide essential support for the development of services to clients and the planning and funding of necessary facilities.

The membership on the Board of Directors reflects a cross-section of board experiences and is shown in **Exhibit 6-2**. Furthermore, board members possess a variety of backgrounds ranging from banking and other private business interests to all levels of education, past and present.

Accomplishment: The Board of Director's membership is composed of a variety of backgrounds ranging from banking and other private business interests to education and varied board experience.

Exhibit 6-2
RESC 6 Board of Directors
June 2004

Name	Title	District	Term Expires	Length of Service as of 5/04	Occupation
Dr. John Webb		1	2006	3	Retired Educator
Curtis Kimbro		2	2006	0	Retired Educator
Donald Strickland	Vice Chair	3		4	Business Owner – Funeral Home
Charles Park	Secretary	4		0	Retired Educator
Eldon Ball		5		9	Retired Educator
Dr. James Stegall	Chair	6		14	Retired Banker
Rev. Paul Eaton		7		4	Retired Minister
Thomas Buzbee		Charter Rep		1	Charter School Director

Source: RESC 6, Executive director, 2004.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

RESC 6 Policy and Procedures Manual is maintained in a current and up-to-date condition reflecting a condition that is not typical of organizations' policy and procedural documents.

The RESC contracts with the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) for regular updates to the policy manual. An examination of Board of Directors' meeting minutes shows that routinely the administration provides recommendations for updating and including new provisions based upon the TASB information. The service is provided to the RESC at an annual cost of $800, a very nominal amount (some districts in other states such as Florida pay up to $4,000 per year for such services from private vendors and in two instances consortiums pay from $10,000 to $12,000 per year for updates to a model manual from which districts can select policies and adapt to their particular circumstances). The RESC representatives report that TASB will be providing an online manual from which updates may be drawn for a one-time fee of $1,800 and the regular annual fee.

MGT consultants' review of policy manuals for various educational clients seldom finds policy manuals maintained in an up-to-date and comprehensive condition. The process for monitoring policy is time-consuming and often is reported as not having a high priority. RESC 6 has overcome these barriers.

Accomplishment: RESC 6 administration and the Board of Directors maintain an up-to-date policy and procedures manual at a minimum cost.

QUALITY OF PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Member districts report remarkably strong support for RESC services and programs and state that services and programs are of a high quality.

Annually, all school district superintendents are surveyed to determine the degree of satisfaction/dissatisfaction with RESC 6 services and programs. This survey, titled *Annual Evaluation of Education Service Center, Region 6 Products and Services*, is divided into ten sections each concluding with a provision for specific comments. The sections include:

- Administrative Services
- Adult/Safety Education
- Business Services
- Computer Services
- Curriculum/Instruction
- Educational Technology
- Internal Operations
- Leadership/Development
- Special Education
- Special Programs

Each of the sections identifies the key RESC staff member having responsibility for the area. Respondents note the level of service on a scale of one through five, with one signifying "Highly Satisfied," two "Satisfied," three "Dissatisfied," four "Highly Dissatisfied," and five "Doesn't Apply/Don't Know."

The executive director follows up on any responses that do not indicate satisfaction with services or products. Corrective actions, if warranted, are taken immediately.

Interviews with RESC personnel and board members and MGT survey of superintendents reveals that the RESC is highly responsive to client feedback and requests for services. When asked to respond to the statement, the RESC in our region is responsive to complaints, 100 percent of the respondents indicated that they strongly agreed or agreed. In addition, overall survey responses to the RESC survey and the MGT survey provided exceptional support for the RESC. **Exhibit 6-3**, Survey of School District Superintendents, Part B: General, Perceptions about services provided by the RESCs for RESC 6 provides the supporting responses.

Exhibit 6-3
Survey of School District Superintendents
Perceptions about services provided by the
Regional Education Service Centers (RESCs)

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. Our district frequently utilizes services provided by our RESC.	100/0
2. The services provided by our RESC are critical to the success of our district's programs and operations.	100/0
3. Many of the current RESC services to districts could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by TEA.	0/94
4. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by other sources such as universities or private vendors.	0/97
5. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by allocating the dollars to districts and allowing them to purchase services from the most appropriate sources.	3/88
6. Many of the current RESC services to districts duplicate services provided by TEA.	0/94
7. Many of the services offered by RESCs around the state are critical to the success of many districts.	100/0
8. The RESC in our region is highly efficient and effective.	100/0
9. The RESC role in providing services to districts should be expanded.	70/6
10. The RESC in our region is highly responsive to the service needs of our district.	100/0
11. The RESC in our region provides quality services.	100/0
12. There are adequate channels of communication with the RESC in our region.	100/0
13. The RESC in our region is responsive to complaints.	100/0
14. The RESC in our region is responsive to requests for services.	100/0
15. The RESC in our region listens and tries to meet the needs of the school district.	100/0

Source: Prepared by MGT of America, July 2004.

Accomplishment: RESC services and programs receive high marks and strong support from clients who report that services and programs are of a high quality and follow-up on problem areas is prompt and effective.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

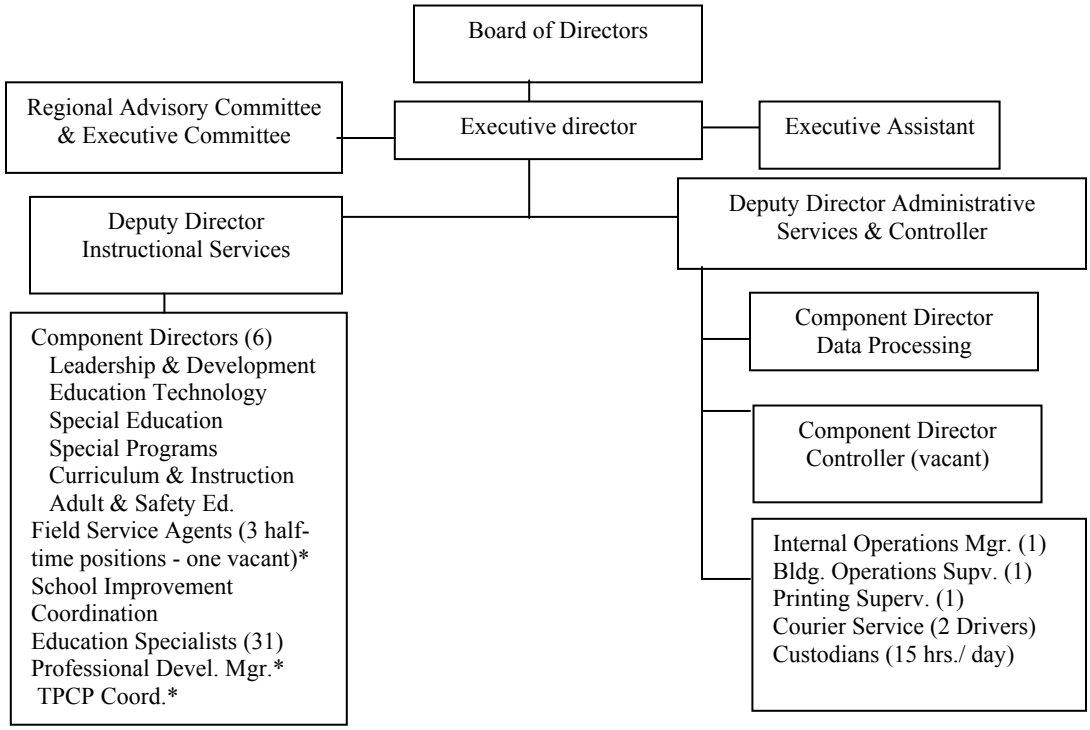
RESC 6 organization is efficiently organized and clients report a high level of satisfaction with services and products (see **Exhibit 6-3)**.

Exhibit 6-4 shows the organization of services within RESC 6. The vacant component director, controller function, is assigned to the deputy director for administrative services at the present time. As can be seen the organization includes two deputy director positions supported by a series of component director positions. This model represents a flat organization with substantial spans of control at the deputy level of management. Such an arrangement can be very effective if three primary criteria are met: first, there must be employment stability for personnel holding key positions; second, personnel in those positions must have a high degree of skill in managing personnel; and third, these personnel must have a strong commitment to the organization and fully understand the mission and goals.

Interviews with these personnel indicate a high level of development in each of these three cardinal areas.

Accomplishment: The RESC 6 organizational pattern represents an efficient and cost-effective method for ensuring that services and programs are provided to clients.

Exhibit 6-4
RESC 6 Organization
May 2004



Source: Prepared by MGT of America from RESC 6 records, July 2004.
**Reports to the Department Secretary for Leadership & Development*

BALANCED SCORE CARD

RESC 6 plans to use data from the Balanced Score Card to continue providing a high level of customer service and demonstrating high standards of operational accountability.

The directors of the Regional Education Service Centers established a Management Quality Initiative in March 2003. Key to this initiative is the ESC Management Scorecard. The scorecard combines education policy and regional purpose, using strategy, performance measures, and management accountability for results to tie regional achievement of the state's public education goals to the operational effectiveness of each service center.

The Balanced Score Card contains Key Performance Indicators in the following perspectives: Learning & Growth; Internal Process; Customer; Stakeholder; and Attainment.

In September 2003, a computerized template was developed by RESC 3 for the reporting process. Currently, data gathered from RESC 6 on 31 core measures is transmitted via email to a central collection point, RESC 3. The data are compiled and reported monthly at the Commissioner's Cabinet for Regional Services meeting thus providing a continuum of information to guide planning and decision making. The 2003–04 school year is the benchmark year for this new tool.

The Balanced Score Card represents the development of a best practice for developing accountability data for the RESC.

Accomplishment: RESC 6 plans to use the Balanced Score Card results to support continuing service improvement and accountability.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER

RESC 6, without a designated capital projects funding source, has acquired and developed 10.66 acres of property and, recently, expanded the facility to include a 34,495 square foot state-of-the-art Professional Staff Development Center and office space resulting in increasing capacity to meet client training and meeting needs.

The facility expansion cost $4.2 million with $2.5 acquired through a property lease/purchase agreement with LaSalle Bank National Association and due over a period of 12 years at an interest rate of 5.3 percent. All related transactions were consistent with adopted Board of Director's policies and state requirements.

A physical examination of the newly developed facility showed that it is designed with maximum flexibility of use as a guiding principle. The central large training area is designed so that it can be divided in up to six individual conferences or training areas, each fully equipped for use of both distant and internal technologies. The core area is bordered by an extensive corridor into which open additional training rooms along the perimeter. Each training room is comparably equipped for effective use of technology applications.

Accomplishment: RESC 6 has developed a state-of-the-art Professional Staff Development Center and office space.

FACILITIES MAINTENANCE

RESC 6 maintains a properly cleaned facility and does so efficiently and economically. This level of cleanliness is achieved with fewer personnel hours assigned than the best practices for the custodial industry.

The RESC has assigned a total of 15 regularly scheduled hours of custodial labor to provide cleaning services for 66,743 square feet of space located on two sites. The standard for the industry is generally accepted at 19,000 square feet of building space for each full-time equivalent position (eight hours of labor). If the industry standard were to be applied the number of hours would be expected at 28.1. The assigned number of hours is only increased when an unusually high building use is scheduled. The assigned custodial staff is not expected to shampoo carpets and this process is outsourced on an as needed basis.

The MGT consultants' inspection of all facilities showed that the RESC 6 custodial staff maintains exceptionally clean facilities with a labor assignment that is 13 hours below the generally accepted standard.

Accomplishment: RESC 6 maintains an excellent level of facility cleanliness at a labor level below the industry standard.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT ASSISTANCE

RESC 6 provides targeted services that are explicitly designed to assist schools in improving student achievement.

The state and federal governments designate schools that do not make adequate yearly progress toward statewide proficiency goals as “low-performing" or “academically unacceptable” campuses. The TEA mandates that schools receive this designation receive intervention and assistance services. Throughout the state, the RESCs typically provide these types of services to academically unacceptable schools, and the RESC 6 is no exception.

What is unique about the RESC 6 is the initiative it takes to identify and reach out to its struggling schools. While some RESCs may wait for low-performing schools to contact them for assistance, RESC 6 actively contacts and provides services to its underperforming schools. The School Improvement Team at RESC 6, composed of members of the Leadership and Development Department, has developed a fairly standardized set of services designed to assist with low performing campus interventions. The typical scope and sequence of these interventions are detailed in **Exhibit 6-5**.

Exhibit 6-5
RESC 6 Low Performing Campus Intervention Program Steps

1. The RESC 6 receives TAKS scores from TEA and a staff member desegregates the data to the campus and classroom level. The staff analyzes the data to identify trends, areas of significant strengths and weaknesses, and underperforming campuses.
2. TEA delivers final accountability ratings, identifying schools that have been designated as academically unacceptable.
3. Schools targeted for intervention are divided among the six members of the team. The team chair contacts the campus principal within forty-eight hours of receipt of the ratings from TEA.
4. An appointment is made for the principal and chair to meet at the school within two weeks.
5. The team member visits the campus principal taking a folder which contains campus AEIS data from the prior year, accountability table, and contract. During this visit, the team chair outlines the accountability process and describes the RESC intervention plan. The chair brings a copy of the campus plan back to the RESC.
6. The team chair and campus principal mutually schedule dates for the proposed interventions. A copy of the schedule is sent to the superintendent.
7. The team chair oversees each step in the intervention process, the Texas School Improvement Initiative (TSII) visit, and the follow-up activities.
8. Each low-performing campus is asked to evaluate the service each May. That input is used to refine the service the next year.

Source: RESC 6 Low Performing Campus Interventions Program Description, 2004.

Intervention services provided by RESC 6 staff typically include technical assistance in the following areas:

- analyzing current and prior-year data;
- analyzing, revising, and/or critiquing the campus plan and school needs assessment;
- planning and/or implementing staff development activities based on campus needs; and
- planning for, conducting, and following-up after TSII visit.

Notably, all of these services are provided at no charge to the schools. Also, the extent of intervention services the center provides in Region 6 is commendable. In addition to the schools labeled as being academically unacceptable by TEA, RESC 6 also identifies an additional group of schools it feels could benefit from targeted intervention assistance. Based on its desegregation and analysis of student performance data, staff at the RESC 6 identify the 25 lowest performing schools in the region (including those designated by TEA), carry out the steps outlined above in **Exhibit 6-5**, and offer the complete menu of intervention services at no fee. In 2002–03, nine Region 6 campuses were designated as low performing (one appealed and was later removed from the list). The RESC 6 offered individual intervention plans including specialized technical assistance and professional development for these schools and an additional 16 in the region.

In addition to this targeted intervention program, RESC 6 has also developed the School Effectiveness Audit service offering. This service is not limited to low-performing campuses but is offered to all schools in Region 6 for a fee. These campus-based audits are designed to provide a "snapshot" of what a school's instructional program looks like on a given day. The audit team measures observations and findings against a set of standards, analyzing data from four sources: AEIS and other data, a parent survey, teacher interviews, and classroom observations. The audits are designed to generate findings,

commendations, and recommendations that can be used to revise campus improvement plans and enrich instructional programs. They offer school personnel independent, external, non-punitive feedback on their instructional programs, and help provide data to facilitate plans for long-term improvements.

Accomplishment: RESC 6 provides targeted programs and services to assist regional schools in improving student achievement.

USE OF TECHNOLOGY FOR INSTRUCTION

RESC 6 has utilized technology to provide cost-effective learning opportunities to a large audience. These include both the Distance Learning (DL) program and Canter Online professional development opportunities.

In 2003–04, 34 of the region's districts participated in its DL Program, offering two-way interactive video-conferencing communication. **Exhibit 6-6** provides a summary of the Region 6 activities offered via DL in 2003–04.

Because these meetings, workshops, courses, and special activities are offered via video broadcast, the teachers, administrators and educators have the opportunity to participate at low cost and with high convenience. In some cases, DL offered participants experiences that would not otherwise have been available to them, as in the case of the group of students who took a virtual field trip to Antarctica.

Exhibit 6-6
RESC 6 Distance Learning Program Activities
May 2003–May 2004

Activity	Provider	Number/Population Served
Concurrent Enrollment	Angelina College, Blinn College	405 high school students
"Share-A-Course" Collaborative	Texas School for the Deaf	4 high school students
Higher Education Classes	Sam Houston State University, Angelina College	142 teachers/administrators working on advanced degrees
Special Purpose Sessions	Texas School for the Deaf	1 teacher preparing for sign language certification
Virtual Field Trips	Varied (including NASA, Vanderbilt University, and the Museum of Science and Industry)	In excess of 1005 students and their teachers
Texas Education Telecommunications Network (TETN) Sessions	TETN	113 teachers/administrators
Satellite Learning Opportunities	StarNet (Region XX), Spanish Via Satellite (Kansas)	Varying numbers of students per district
Regional Meetings and Workshops (49 sessions)	RESC 6 Specialists	Many teachers and administrators
Online Learning Opportunities (19 Academic Interactive courses, 9 Advanced Placement courses)	Texas Virtual School (consortium of 11 RESCs)	Many students

Source: RESC 6 Distance Learning Program Summary Report, 2003–04.

Through the virtual TETN and RESC meetings and workshops, member districts were also able to train staff in mandatory new regulations and procedures without having to pay to send them to the RESC (Huntsville) or TEA (Austin). Partnerships with colleges and universities allowed for high school students to gain college credit, and teachers and administrators to pursue advanced degrees, regardless of their geographic locations. The RESC 6 DL facilitator works with a consortium representing the other RESCs to coordinate and improve DL services across the state. The technology of the system has had an exceptional success rate; in the past 12 months of service, RESC 6's DL program experienced equipment failure only three times.

In addition to the DL program, RESC 6 has also developed an arrangement with Canter Online (formerly WebED), which offers regional teachers the opportunity to complete online coursework for a discounted price. The RESC has purchased a number of "key codes" from the company, allowing teachers to enroll through the center and pay $135 per class rather than $150. In the two years since it purchased the codes this program has not had a high rate of participation; however, the RESC is hopeful that new Temporary Teacher Certificate training course requirements will result in increased usage of this option.

Accomplishment: RESC 6 uses technology efficiently to offer its customers cost-effective ways to improve their learning opportunities.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

The staff in the RESC 6 Special Education Department has developed and distributed a practical resource to help teachers tailor instruction for students with special needs.

The document is entitled *The Mystery of Modifying: Creative Solutions*, and was first developed in 1988 for use by instructional leaders and teachers. It provides specific information about types of learners and effective teaching strategies, and is designed to be appropriate for all grade levels and subject areas. The manual is distributed free of charge at trainings and by request; the RESC 6 special education department subsidizes printing and distribution costs. Over 8,000 copies of the manual have been distributed throughout the nation. **Exhibit 6-7** summarizes this distribution.

A document containing best practices and distributed nationwide constitutes an important method for ensuring that professional educators and others are equipped with important instructional strategies.

Accomplishment: RESC 6 has produced and distributed a resource document that provides helpful information to educators working with students with special needs across the state and country.

CUSTOMER INPUT

RESC 6 is service and customer-driven, and staff seeks and uses input from its customers when making decisions regarding which programs and services to offer.

This feedback is collected through multiple measures, including a) an annual superintendent survey; b) annual meetings with "User Committees" made up of representatives from all positions and all districts; c) annual meetings with an Executive Committee consisting of one superintendent from each county within the region; and d) a review of usage data to identify under-utilized services. Through these processes, programs, and services are analyzed each year to determine how valuable they are to the region's schools and districts. Services that are found to be under-utilized or judged to be unnecessary are discontinued. These input forums are also used to propose and approve the initiation of new service offerings.

Exhibit 6-7
***Mystery of Modifying: Creative Solutions* Summary of Distribution**
1988 – 2004

Recipient	Number of Copies
Attendees of RESC 6 trainings	2,030
RESCs other than RESC 6	988
Districts within Region 6	1,965
Districts outside of Region 6	1,030
Parochial Schools	560
International Schools	12
Conference Attendees	625
Colleges/Universities	140
Telephone/Written Requests (Region 6)	800
Telephone/Written requests (statewide and national)	240

Source: RESC 6 Special Education Department summary documentation, 2004.

The unofficial motto of the RESC 6 is "you call, we haul;" center staff reiterated this phrase repeatedly throughout the review team's visit. Many staff report that they spend the majority of their time on-site visiting schools, and that they have been instructed by the executive director that their first priority is to respond to school/district requests. The majority of this assistance is provided to districts at no charge, or for a minimal cost-recovery-based fee.

This hands-on, customer service-oriented approach is reflected in the high satisfaction ratings RESC 6 received in the MGT superintendent survey. Region 6 superintendents rated RESC 6's responsiveness better in every area compared to aggregate statewide responses for each RESC. One hundred percent of responding Region 6 superintendents agreed or strongly agreed with the following statements:

- The RESC in our region is highly responsive to the service needs of our district (compared to 93 percent statewide).
- The RESC in our region is responsive to requests for services (compared to 94 percent statewide).
- The RESC in our region listens and tries to meet the needs of the school district (compared to 95 percent statewide).

Accomplishment: RESC 6 services are designed and tailored to meet the needs of customers in member districts.

WORK ENVIRONMENT

RESC 6 maintains an exceptionally positive work environment resulting in high employee morale and job satisfaction.

Nearly all interviewed employees volunteered that they are extremely pleased with their jobs and co-workers, and that they enjoy coming to work at the center each day. No employee grievances have been filed. While many staff reported working long hours, they indicated that they are willing to "go the extra mile" because they are all working together towards a common mission and purpose.

The center also maintains an employee-appreciation group entitled the Society for Employee Individual Security (SEIS), made up of and governed by RESC employees. The stated objective of the group is to "promote harmonious personal working relationships." This organization provides and maintains a daily coffee bar, sends flowers to hospitalized staff/family members, and organizes three luncheon functions a year. The SEIS is "designed to assist and encourage the members of the ESC-6 family."

Exhibit 6-8 shows the survey result of RESC 6 personnel and supports the contention that the work environment is exceptional.

Exhibit 6-8
RESC 6 Employee Responses to Work Environment Survey
June 2004

Statement	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. I find my RESC to be an exciting, challenging place to work.	100/0
2. RESC officials enforce high work standards.	100/0
3. RESC employees who do not meet expected work standards are disciplined.	72/7
4. I feel that I have the authority to adequately perform my job responsibilities.	100/0
5. I have an up to date and comprehensive job description.	97/3
6. I have adequate facilities in which to conduct my work.	100/0
7. I have adequate equipment and computer support to conduct my work.	100/0
8. No one knows or cares about the amount or quality of work that I perform.	7/93
9. I am very satisfied with my job.	100/0
10. I plan to continue my career in my RESC.	100/0
11. I am actively looking for a job outside of my RESC.	10/86
12. Salary levels at my RESC are competitive.	62/38
13. I feel that my work is appreciated by my supervisor(s).	97/3
14. I feel that I am an integral part of the RESC team.	100/0
15. I feel that there is no future for me at the RESC.	3/93
16. My salary level is adequate for my level of work and experience.	62/38
17. Most administrative practices in the RESC are highly effective and efficient.	93/0
18. Administrative decisions are made promptly and decisively.	90/3
19. My RESC administrators are easily accessible and open to input.	97/0
20. Major bottlenecks exist in many administrative processes which cause unnecessary time delays.	7/90
21. My RESC has too many layers of administrators.	3/97
22. Most of RESC administrative processes (e.g., purchasing, travel requests, leave applications, personnel, etc.) are highly efficient and responsive.	93/3

** Percent responding Agree or Strongly Agree/Percent responding Disagree or Strongly Disagree.*

Accomplishment: The leadership and staff of RESC 6 have developed a positive work environment that supports employee satisfaction and dedication.

FINANCIAL AND PROGRAM AUDITS

RESC 6 has had exemplary financial and program audits for the past four years while other RESCs and educational organizations seldom achieve this level of compliance.

RESC 6 is required by law to have an independent financial audit done annually. The audit for each of the past four years was reviewed. Each audit contained a *Report on Compliance and on Internal Control over Financial Reporting Based on an Audit of Financial Statements Performed in Accordance with Government Auditing Standards and a Report on Compliance with Requirements Applicable To each Major Program and Internal Control over Compliance In Accordance With OMB Circular A-133*. RESC 6 was found to have complied each year, in all material respects, with requirements that are applicable to each of its major federal programs. In each year's

audit, no matters were noted involving the internal control over financial reporting and its operation that were considered to be material weaknesses.

The Texas Education Agency, Division of School Financial Audits, performs a Program, Management and Financial review every five years. Their latest audit of RESC 6 was performed February 10-14, 2003. The report for this audit was positive and provided only a few minor ministerial recommendations.

Accomplishment: RESC 6 has performed an outstanding job of complying with Government Auditing Standards and in establishing good internal control of their financial reporting.

COOPERATIVE PURCHASING

The service center offers a number of fees service/shared service and other cooperative purchasing plan opportunities that school districts are using and is continuously updating related practices.

RESC 6 reports that one hundred (100) percent of the school districts in the RESC 6 participate in fee service/shared services provided by the RESC. On the average, districts participate in 15 different services with the range being from three to 25 districts. Seventy-five percent of school districts in RESC 6 report they choose the service center's programs and services over other vendors because the RESC offers a better value in terms of quality, price, or delivery mode. RESCs 6 and 4 have a purchasing cooperative. Many school districts already outsource to the service center and the service center outsources with others such as the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB), training consultants, and others. Finance department personnel report in interviews that the TEA and service centers are considering ways to revamp purchasing procedures so they would become even more efficient and cost-effective.

The practice of constantly updating purchasing options and capitalizing on collaborative/cooperative arrangements represents a strong commitment to member districts and schools to provide high quality, efficient services. Best practices support the creation and use of purchasing cooperatives and other means of reducing cost for goods and services.

Accomplishment: RESC 6 is involved in cost-effective purchasing cooperatives with a number of districts and other RESCs.

RISK MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

RESC 6 has full coverage in its Risk Management Program resulting in providing important protection to the RESC and in providing a full range of support services to member school districts and schools.

The service center contracts through the Texas Association of School Boards Risk Management Fund for coverage of Property, Equipment Breakdown, Miscellaneous Property, Liability, Fleet Liability, Crime and Unemployment Compensation. An examination of risk management records shows that records and reports are in excellent order. A thorough job is done in keeping complete and organized records of all coverage areas and claims made against the service center.

As an outgrowth of this well-managed program the RESC has developed and provides to member districts and schools a variety of risk related training and related matters, including:

- proper and safe use of cellular telephones to prevent accidental discharges while fueling, reducing possibilities of accidents while driving and other related issues;
- defensive driving for all employees with training updates every three years;
- development of model safety and crisis management plans;

- various operations manuals for use of hazardous materials and equipment and providing guidance in inspection of equipment and facilities; and

- other training and risk minimizing related actions.

Not only does the RESC secure a full coverage program, it has developed follow-up services for member school districts and schools representing a best practice for ensuring a safe and secure learning and work environment for all.

Accomplishment: RESC 16's Risk Management Program has full insurance coverage, is well managed, and results in a focus on safety support for clients.

TECHNOLOGY TRAINING

RESC 6 Data Processing Department provides a wide variety of services including the training of personnel in the use of the different systems and provides trouble shooting or technical assistance as needed by clients. Without this level of service school districts could not meet state requirements for data transmission, have data support for important student related decisions, and other matters.

RESC 6 provides employees with access to the service center's electronic communication system including the Internet. The intent of this system is to increase the service center's intracommunication and communication with school districts, enhance productivity, and assist service center employees in upgrading their skills and knowledge through greater exchange of information with their peers.

The RESC Web site is exceptionally comprehensive and user-friendly. A variety of informational and resource sites can be accessed. Statistics compiled for the Web server show there are 73,348 average successful requests per day. There are 27 districts in the Com Net Cooperative. Free training in how to build their own Web site is offered to teachers in schools and other personnel.

Thirty-seven small districts outsource to the service center for the Win School software program which produces student data. Service center staff provides training to local district personnel and troubleshooting or technical assistance as needed. Twelve schools in RESC 6, plus one school in another service center outsource to the RESC 6 for support with the Pentamation software program which assists in fiscal areas such as payrolls, assets, budgets, and other related matters. Service center staff provides training to local district personnel and troubleshooting or technical assistance as needed.

RESC 6 outsources to RESC 20 for the maintenance of the RSCCC software program for the support of school districts that use RSCCC (38 districts). Service center staff provides training and troubleshooting or technical assistance to local district personnel as needed. The Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) is used to gather student information, fiscal and staff data. Data from this system are reported to the state four times a year. The service center staff uses the PEIMS data for planning, reports, and other identified needs. The File Maker Pro software generates reports on professional development workshops and documents staff time spent providing workshops, the audience and number served, and other useful information.

Technical services provided by RESC 6 and the system of outsourcing in conjunction with these services represent an effective model for creating an efficient service system that includes a wide-range of services.

Accomplishment: RESC 6 provides a wide variety of services including the training of personnel in the use of the different systems and provides trouble shooting or technical assistance as needed by clients.

DETAILED FINDINGS

BOARD STANDING COMMITTEE

The Board of Directors do not have standing committees, while such committees are often a means for developing appropriate board involvement in agency or organizational policy and planning development. Board members have served on strategic planning committees and plans to update the current plan include appointing a member to the committee.

The Board of Directors meets quarterly for regularly scheduled meetings and other meetings are called as the need arises. Additionally, the board schedules meetings in both the Huntsville office and in College Station (this is not a satellite location). This reduces the travel time for some members and brings meeting activity closer to the more western located school districts. MGT consultants do not believe that the board needs to meet more often; however, greater board involvement in planning activity, services development, fiscal matters, and essential RESC promotion activity among the region's districts and other stakeholders may well require more individual board member involvement and could result in producing a means by which board members can actively affect the public's and others' understanding of RESC services and products.

As previously noted and confirmed by the participants, while the Board of Directors has a representative on the strategic planning group it does not establish committees focused on fiscal matters, policy development, or other matters. Their role in this and fiscal matters is limited in scope to a simple review and approval process. Additionally, many personnel interviewed express concerns that, other than the client stakeholders and possibly TEA personnel, few other parties really understand the role and contributions of the RESCs. This situation, interviewees state, is partially the result of legislative prohibitions against lobbying by the education community.

Many effective organizations involve the Board of Directors in carefully crafted committee work or ad hoc committee activity to contribute to overall effectiveness and as an effective tool for overcoming external barriers to success in many areas of concern. One of the areas of concern voiced by the executive director and other RESC personnel relates to strengthening relationships with external audiences (an area addressed by RESC 2 with the employment of a marketing person who has a key responsibility in marketing conferencing services).

RESC 6 should establish a board standing committee structure. Implementing this recommendation should result in a careful analysis of potential board committee activity designed to promote the work of the RESC and support important planning activity.

The implementation of this recommendation can lay the groundwork for developing Board of Directors infrastructure to deal with issues related to the perception that important education stakeholders do not adequately understand the nature and purpose of the RESC organization and related programs and services provided to the school districts of Texas (this perception was gained in the initial briefing of consultants and further confirmed in interviews with various RESC personnel). This is further supported by the fact that the Texas Legislature prohibits education-related personnel from lobbying for legislative support and funding. This recommendation is based upon the premise that current RESCs and their boards are not proactive in promoting RESC value nor are there established working relationships with local school district boards to identify effective means of educating the publics.

This recommendation may lead to the development of one or more of the following committees:

- Strategic planning;
- Cooperatives' development;
- Finance;
- Facilities; and/or
- External relations.

This recommendation should be implemented through the following steps:

- The executive director should review the recommendation with the Board of Directors;
- Once agreed upon, the Board of Directors should direct the executive director to prepare the necessary policy and procedures to guide the proposed committee(s) development and activity;
- Potential committee membership should be identified with attention to involvement of member school district representation;
- The executive director should identify a RESC liaison for each established committee; and
- The chair of the Board of Directors should appoint a three-member committee assigned the task of implementing the recommendation—that is, preparing a plan for an RESC 6 board external relations program.

The effective implementation of this recommendation can contribute to making important stakeholders informed supporters of the important services and program work of RESC 3 and provide for policy-level board involvement.

FIELD SERVICE AGENT

Field service agents provide valuable services in Region 6 resulting in direct services to school districts and their boards and should be continued.

The State Council on Competitive Government (CCG) conducted a review of RESCs and prepared a January 9, 2004 report that, among a series of recommendations, proposed elimination of RESC field service agent positions. The CCG's recommendation as reported is based on the assumption that the elimination of such positions by five RESCs as a result of recent budget reduction activity provides evidence of a lack of need for field service agents. MGT consultant's review of RESC's historical and current assignments of responsibilities to these positions did not confirm the findings of the CCG as regards to RESC 6.

To the contrary, RESC 6's three half-time field service agent positions (one position is vacant) provide the following services to school districts:

- provide support in the areas of school finance, particularly for new superintendents in small school districts, districts having lost their finance directors or business agents, and districts experiencing fiscal difficulties;
- provide school board training that is mandated by Texas law;
- work with boards and superintendents in team building;
- work in training new superintendents and serve in a mentoring/learning partnership role;
- provide services that TEA is unable to supply due to lack of personnel (These involve such matters as preparing for audits and other types of program reviews);
- are available to school boards to temporarily cover vacated business management positions or even superintendent positions; and
- give attention to other matters as the need may arise.

The executive director reports that the field service agent position is an essential element in the RESC organizational structure and they will continue to work toward filling vacant positions. RESC 6 intentionally seeks to

employ veteran principals and/or superintendents in field service agent positions because of the background they bring to the position. As former principals/superintendents they are in an eminent position to serve as mentors and advisors to these key school district personnel.

Some personnel interviewed expressed the opinion that retired superintendents are employed to these positions to simply provide additional income. MGT consultants could not verify this opinion. MGT consultants find that the individuals filling the positions (one position was vacant at the time of the on-site visit) for RESC 6 can provide documentation that they actually perform duties over a time period in excess of their contractual responsibilities. This is due, at least in part, by the driving time required because of the 12,000 plus square mile size of the region.

RESC 6 should continue the use of the field service agent position to support RESC 6 client school districts, their school boards, and superintendents. The implementation of this recommendation should result in continuing a service that the superintendents and executive RESC 6 personnel state is vital. The rationale employed by the State Council on Competitive Government in its January 2004 report is based on an incomplete analysis of how other RESCs utilize the field service agents. Such reported use is not consistent with the purposes of the field service agent positions in RESC 6.

CONFERENCE TABLES

The new state-of-the-art Professional Staff Development Center is equipped with heavy, difficult to move and store, eight foot long narrow folding tables to be used in training and meeting functions.

These tables are sturdy, steel superstructure, with particle board plastic laminate tops. The tables are heavy and difficult for one person to knock down and set up and remove to storage. MGT consultants noted that each day personnel are moving these tables from one location to another to accommodate room use needs. Because of the size and weight, the process is cumbersome and slow, requiring a strong and fit person. The person handling this task was well up to it but at some point in his career with the RESC, he will be unable to do the job effectively and without the potential for injury.

RESC 6 should replace worn and old conference tables with the new light-weight tables available through office supply/equipment outlets. This recommendation can be implemented as the current tables become excessively worn and damaged and must be replaced. Over a period of several years, all tables should be replaced with the light-weight versions. Taking this action should result in workers being able to move tables with greater ease and less chance of on-the-job injury. Additionally, the lighter tables can more easily be stored in the limited available storage space since they can easily be placed on end against the wall of the storage rooms.

This recommendation can be implemented over the next few years with resources that are normally budgeted for replacement of worn and obsolete furniture and equipment and at no additional cost to the RESC. However, should the RESC determine that they wish to implement this recommendation in the next fiscal year, it is estimated that each replacement table costs approximately $46.00 each if purchased in quantities. The MGT consultants counted over 120 such tables and noted another 20 in cartons. Consequently the one-time cost to replace 140 tables could be approximately $6,440.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

RESC 6 does not yet have a comprehensive system in place to evaluate program effectiveness and usage resulting in a need for additional information to guide decisions on program development and modification.

As noted in the aforementioned commendation, RESC 6 has implemented multiple methods of ensuring that its services are appropriate; however, it is still in the process of developing processes to make certain that they are high-quality and wide-reaching.

Two years ago, the RESC began to develop profiles for each of its program offerings, including the identification of:

- program overview;
- goals and objectives;
- evaluation of goals and objectives;
- needs and trends; and
- recommendations.

Programs currently have different ways of evaluating whether they are meeting stated objectives. Some programs assess their success by considering school TAKS scores, others conduct customer surveys, and some track participation rates. In addition, district superintendents complete annual surveys evaluating program quality. While these surveys and program profiles are a good starting place, RESC 6 does not yet have a data-driven, comprehensive system in place to ensure that all programs and services are continuously improving. Under the current system, program managers are responsible for developing their own evaluation criteria, and in some cases depend upon subjective measures such as their own impressions or opinions. The deputy director of Instructional Services has indicated that this is an area of future focus for the RESC.

Analysis of data regarding program usage has also lacked standardization. Center staff consistently review numbers of program participants, but these data are not always analyzed at the district and school level. For instance, participation numbers may indicate that a certain service offering is "well-utilized," yet those participants might represent only a handful of districts. Furthermore, there could be some districts or schools that rarely take advantage of certain services. RESC 6's Annual Activities and Long Range Plan (AARLP) system has the capability to produce reports at the district, school, and even individual level. The newly implemented escWorks system can also generate this type of data. Staff from some programs is analyzing participation data in order to better target outreach efforts; however, this level of analysis is not yet taking place for all programs.

RESC 6 should implement a comprehensive and systematic process for evaluating the quality and use of all programs and service offerings. The RESC leadership team should continue working with staff to design and implement data-driven methods of evaluating and improving program quality. Emphasis should be placed on what data are important to collect and consider. For instance, while exit/satisfaction surveys for a workshop on Reading Instruction can provide some useful information for "tinkering" with workshop content and format, they do not provide concrete data as to whether the presentation met its stated objectives. This would necessitate future follow-up with workshop participants to see whether they used the information they learned to improve reading instruction in their classrooms.

In addition to evaluating program quality, the RESC staff should also engage in more in-depth analysis of program participation and usage. The escWorks system can facilitate this process. This will allow the Service Center to identify districts and schools that are not utilizing its services and increase outreach to those populations. This consideration and outreach should include the Windham School District and Region 6 charter schools.

Analysis of participation at the district and school-level can also facilitate outreach to customers that do currently use the RESC's services. Providing a summary report of program participation allows district stakeholders such as superintendents and school board members to conduct cost-analyses regarding RESC utilization, and may encourage increased usage. An example of such a district-level report is presented as **Exhibit 6-9**.

Exhibit 6-9
Example of District-Level Participation Summary Report

REGION 6 BILINGUAL ESL CONTRACTED SERVICES SUMMARY- ISD 2003–04

Region 6 Bilingual Contracted Services assist districts with the development and evaluation of effective bilingual/ESL programs and resources. Services are provided through regional trainings and technical assistance via phone, email or on-site visits.

Type of training	**Number of ISD participants** who attended training in 2003–004	**Materials fee paid per person as a Bilingual/ESL Coop. member** (there are no workshop fees for members)	**Total paid** for this type of training by **ISD** for 2003–2004	Workshop and materials fees **per person** if **non-member**	Workshop and materials **fees for same number of attendees trained if ISD were a non-member district**
LPAC Training	25	$20	$500	$140	$3,500
ESL Texas Academies for ESL Certification	36	15	540	185	6,660
TOPT	1	15	15	185	185
Spanish Academy	2	20	40	185	370
Activities for the Spanish Language Classroom	2	No Fee	0	125	250
Totals	66		**$1,095**		**$10,965**

Savings difference for workshop fees due to joining the Bilingual/ ESL Contracted Services (not including technical assistance through on-site meetings): **$9,870**

Contract amount paid by ISD for contracted services membership: **$4,500**

Besides these specific workshops that ISD personnel have attended, as per contracted services, unlimited phone and email technical assistance has been utilized quite frequently by various campus and district personnel. There is not an additional fee for on-site visits or meetings which are charged to non-member districts.

Source: RESC 6, ESL Department, 2004.

GRANT FUNDING

RESC 6 has the potential to capitalize on additional grant funding resulting in revenues for improving instruction and other support activities.

In 2002–03, RESC 6 hired a part-time specialist to write grants for the center and assist the region's schools and districts in writing grants. In 2002–03 17 districts participated in this service and together with the RESC realized $1,000,211 in grant revenue. In 2003–04 15 districts participated in the grant collaborative and realized $1,485,000 (as of May 15, 2004). In addition, several grant writing and grant information workshops were offered to Region 6 districts.

The current part-time grant specialist position essentially "pays for itself" through realized grant revenue.

While the grant writing program has accomplished a positive success rate (approximately 25 percent), it has been restricted by limited resources. One part-time staff member is not adequate to provide needed technical assistance to build grant-writing capacity within more than approximately 15 districts a year.

These time constraints also prohibit the individual in this position from dedicating sufficient time to researching and writing successful grants for the RESC. It is likely that

both the RESC and an increased number of regional schools and districts could realize additional grant funding if they had the resources and assistance with which to pursue it.

As an example, RESC 2 (Corpus Christi) benefits from having a full-time grant writer. RESC 2 has a grant writer on staff and continuously pursues external funding. **Exhibit 6-10** indicates RESC 2 grant funds earned since 2000 total over $11 million.

Exhibit 6-10
Grants Received with RESC 2 (Corpus Christi) as Fiscal Agent

Grant/Contract Name	Amount	Year	Source
Academic 2000	$5,823,272	1998–2002	Texas Education Agency
Quality Development of Childcare Services	400,000	2000	Workforce Development Board
TxBESS	300,000	2000	State Board for Educator Certification
TxBess	235,574	2001	State Board for Educator Certification
Regional Fine Arts Summit Support	2,000	2001	Texas Commission on the Arts
Quality Development of Childcare Services	366,000	2001	Workforce Development Board
Regional ESC Innovative Grants Program	125,000	2001	Texas Education Agency
Quality Development	363,000	2002	Workforce Development Board
Regional ESC Innovative Grants Program	120,000	2002	Texas Education Agency
Rural Utilities Service Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grant Program	499,073	2002	U.S. Department of Agriculture
Teaching American History Grants	966,965	2002	U.S. Department of Education
Quality Development	383,110	2003	Workforce Development Board
Teaching American History Grants	965,650	2003	U.S. Department of Education
	258,640	2003	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Target	296,500	2004	Texas Education Agency
Target	292,482	2005	Texas Education Agency
Total Amount in Grants	$11,389,266		

Source: RESC 2, Business Department, 2004.

Best practices include an aggressive grant writing and development program to enhance educational programs and services.

RESC 6 should expand the grant specialist from a part-time to a full-time position. Increasing the amount of staff time allocated to grant development should allow RESC 6 to augment the level of funding flowing into the service center and its member districts. Enhancing the grant writer position would allow more schools and districts to utilize this service; currently only about one quarter of the Region 6 districts are being served. In addition, increasing to full-time would enable the grant writer to allocate additional time to writing grants for the service center itself. Realizing additional grant funding for RESC 6 would allow it to offer additional services and/or offset fees it would otherwise need to charge member schools and districts for services.

The individual currently serving in the grant specialist position has personal circumstances that only allow him to work part-time. Because he has a comprehensive working knowledge of available grants and how to craft a winning proposal, in addition to well-established relationships with Region 6 districts, RESC 6 may choose to retain this individual in a part-time capacity and seek to

supplement the position with another part-time staff member. This could be accomplished internally by adapting the role of an educational specialist to allow for part-time grant writing responsibilities. The service center currently has three separate staff members allocated to school safety initiatives (one Safe and Drug Free Schools specialist, one Counseling specialist, and one Safe and Secure Schools specialist). These responsibilities could easily be consolidated to allow for one of these individuals to serve as a part-time grant writer under the supervision of the current grant specialist.

If filled internally by reallocating staff specialist responsibilities, this recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

CROSS-TRAINING

RESC 6 does not maintain a system for cross-training personnel in all key and complementary positions. This failure can result in important duties not being carried out with a potentially adverse affect on other personnel and/or client services.

The RESC has begun building cross-training requirements into complementary positions and operational areas such as payroll are now covered. However, program areas are not included in the current plan.

Several staff members report an awareness of their colleagues' responsibilities, and that they frequently assume some of those tasks when an individual is absent or unavailable. This practice is handled informally, however, and staff members have not been specifically trained to assume the responsibilities of their co-workers. This is true even for positions that have functions that frequently overlap, such as the administrative assistants for payroll and human resources, or the education specialists for Bilingual/ESL and Migrant Education.

Effective organizations striving to operate in the most effective and efficient manner ensure that complementary and key positions are cross-trained to prevent a breakdown in service and program delivery in the event of an unexpected absence of employees assigned these responsibilities.

RESC 6 should provide for systematic cross-training of personnel in complementary or over-lapping and key positions. Through cross-training, RESC 6 could both maximize efficiency and ensure that essential responsibilities can be appropriately assumed in the event of untimely or extended absences. This effort should focus on positions in which there is a natural overlap, and where individuals have already begun to share responsibilities. These include: the administrative assistants for payroll and human resources; the education specialists for Bilingual/ESL, Migrant Education, and State/Compensatory Education; the education specialists for Counseling, Safe and Secure Schools, and Safe and Drug Free Schools; complementary personnel in the Educational Technology department; and complementary personnel in the Computer Services department.

The implementation of this recommendation could be accomplished with existing resources by pairing existing personnel on a scheduled basis to be oriented and trained in essential job responsibilities and tasks.

BUSINESS COOPERATIVE

RESC 6 does not offer a business cooperative or related direct business operational services other than technical assistance provided by field service agents and the executive director and training opportunities through the Bottom Line workshops, and facilitating professional meetings.

The RESC business office is developing for distribution to school districts a working resource document that lists all scheduled district business office deadlines and requirements.

Small districts often lack the personnel and resources needed to efficiently perform all of their required business functions and, consequently devote a disproportionate level

of resources for this function or they experience significant fiscal difficulties.

The service center and field agents serve as a resource to these small districts in a number of different ways including assisting new superintendents in budget development, monitoring expenditures, and other ways. The service center currently orients all new employees on the payroll process. Districts within the service center's area are given assistance as needed with payroll questions at no cost. There are written procedures that outline the service center's budget building process. However, the small districts would benefit by having even more assistance with their financial processes.

Some consortia or cooperatives in service centers in other states sponsor a series of business-related services for the very small districts. These may include accounts payables, funds investment, payroll, reporting processes, and other fiscal related services. This best practice permits the member districts to focus resources on their primary mission while obtaining needed services at an optimum cost.

RESC 6 should conduct a feasibility study to determine if a finance cooperative organization pattern for small districts would be beneficial. Personnel from within the Administrative Services and Controller Division with input from the field agents should conduct a study to determine which districts have difficulties handling their financial and business affairs because of the lack of qualified personnel on staff. Once this determination has been made, the districts identified should be invited to an information sharing meeting. A task force should be established to determine if a finance cooperative could effectively be developed and which finance services should be offered.

This study should include reviewing the option of utilizing a large district(s) capacity to provide a group of small school districts with some or all fiscal services. This could result in small districts outsourcing identified services to the larger district and reducing costs and increasing efficiencies.

The financial impact of this recommendation would be minimal. Expenses would be limited to meals and travel, with each agency paying for their own expenses. There is a potential savings in personnel cost by the districts if some or all of their financial responsibilities were taken over by a Finance Cooperative. Alternatively, personnel could be reassigned resulting in an increase in the availability of district personnel to meet other needs.

SOFTWARE PROGRAMS

RESC 6 is using different software programs, with various school districts, to collect and report some of the same data (e.g., Win School and RSCCC) resulting in reducing the RESC technical support efficiency.

This requires personnel to be knowledgeable regarding a variety of different software programs and applications. In addition, they have to train and work with personnel in different school districts using these different programs. This variation in use of software creates inefficiencies in delivering services to clients.

RESC personnel report a number of factors entering into the decision to continue the existing systems. These include the desire of specific district or school based personnel to use one type of software as opposed to another because of their familiarity with it. To change would mean additional training and becoming fluent in the use of new applications.

As economic resources become more scarce, one of the elements of best practices is to promote standardization as a means to increase efficiency of actions and ultimately productivity.

RESC 6 should evaluate needs in member districts and available software programs to determine if a single program could be used to meet data collection and reporting needs. Implementing this recommendation should lead to putting in place a standardization best

practice that should lead to greater efficiency of services to all clients. This, in turn, should result in reducing training costs to the RESC over time.

RESC 6 staff should analyze the different software programs presently being used to determine which may be producing the same data. Meetings should be held with representatives from the school districts to discuss and study the feasibility of all districts using the same software programs. A determination should be made as to which programs can most efficiently be used.

The use of the same software program with all districts should cause the RESC staff to have fewer programs on which to stay current. All district personnel could attend the same update trainings, which would save the service center time and money. There would be more school district personnel who could serve as a resource to each other since they would all be using the same applications.

If this recommendation is found to be beneficial, but meets with resistance from some districts' representatives, then the changes could be phased in gradually as new hardware is acquired by the client districts and data demands change.

The financial cost of this recommendation would be minimal. Expenses would be limited to meals and travel, with each agency paying for their own expenses. There is a potential positive fiscal impact that could be achieved by not needing to purchase as many software programs and the need for fewer training sessions.

FISCAL IMPACT

Recommendation		2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	5-Year (Costs) or Savings	One-Time (Costs) or Savings
6-3	Purchase 140 light-weight 8' tables.							($6,440)
	TOTAL	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**($6,440)**

CHAPTER 7:

KILGORE

CHAPTER 7

KILGORE

Regional Education Service Center 7 located in Kilgore is an intermediate educational unit that provides training, technical assistance, administrative support, and an array of other services as determined by the Texas State Legislature, the Commissioner of Education, and the expressed needs of local school districts and charter schools. Historically, RESC 7 exists to provide assistance to rural and small school districts.

RESC 7 is approximately 40 miles west of the Louisiana State border and 223 miles from Austin, the State Capital. RESC 7 serves 96 school districts (see **Exhibit 7-1**) and eight charter schools scattered over more than 13,300 square miles and 17 counties. Region 7 also maintains two Head Start Centers, one each in Kilgore and Jacksonville. Approximately 159,855 students are served along with nearly 11,770 FTE teaching staff and 975 administrators. The student population is approximately 62 percent White, 16 percent Hispanic, 21 percent African American, .7 percent Asian/Pacific Islander and .3 percent Native American. Fifty (50) percent of RESC 7 students are economically disadvantaged. The average daily attendance (ADA) at 34 percent of the region's schools is less than 500, with another 28 percent having an ADA of 501-1000.

Conditions at RESC 7 of material importance to this management and performance audit include:

- an executive director who was hired 18 months ago as a "child-centered" educator with an extensive classroom and administrative career in Texas K-12 education. The executive director is focused on (1) serving students through training and support for teachers, administrators and boards, (2) improving student performance, (3) improving efficiency, (4) assisting the Texas Education Commissioner in the implementation of state initiatives in Region 7 member districts, and (5) providing strong leadership and support for center staff as they develop, prepare and deliver services;
- 259 RESC 7 employees (255 FTE) comprise a highly professional and dedicated staff of skilled and collaborative educators and support personnel;
- a history of strong support from member districts for the RESC 7;
- a dedicated board providing vision, support, and high expectations;
- the reorganization of the center's human resources to optimize efficiency of management and operations throughout the system, while maintaining extensive, high quality services; and
- a healthy financial condition and ownership of real property.

RESC 7 adheres to the clearly defined purposes established by the Texas Legislature. These purposes are to:

- assist school districts in improving student performance in each region of the system;
- enable school districts to operate more efficiently and economically; and
- implement initiatives assigned by the Legislature or the Commissioner of Education.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- RESC 7 administration develops a comprehensive meeting agenda and supporting information packet that is delivered to the board of directors well in advance of each board meeting for review and pre-meeting clarifications.

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Exhibit 7-1
RESC 7 School Districts
and Charter Schools

	School Districts and Charter Schools	Enrollment
1	Alba-Golden	751
2	Alto	685
3	Arp	950
4	Athens	3,443
5	Azleway*	81
6	Beckville	431
7	Big Sandy	737
8	Broaddus	457
9	Brownsboro	2,611
10	Bullard	1,498
11	Carlisle	514
12	Carthage	3,007
13	Cayuga	562
14	Center	2,454
15	Central	1,621
16	Central Heights	729
17	Chapel Hill	3,012
18	Chireno	336
19	Cross Roads	609
20	Cumberland Academy*	186
21	Cushing	509
22	Diboll	1,898
23	Douglass	336
24	Eagle Academy*	226
25	East Texas Charter*	170
26	Edgewood	907
27	Elkhart	1,194
28	Elysian Fields	978
29	Etoile	133
30	Eustace	1,574
31	Excelsior	60
32	Frankston	797
33	Fruitvale	437
34	Garrison	692
35	Gary	268
36	Gilmer	2,338
37	Gladewater	2,221
38	Grand Saline	1,247
39	Hallsville	3,761
40	Harleton	623
41	Harmony	963
42	Hawkins	715
43	Hemphill	953
44	Henderson	3,516
45	Hudson	2,336
46	Huntington	1,673
47	Jacksonville	4,717
48	Joaquin	661
49	Karnack	316
50	Kilgore	3,640
51	La Poynor	445
52	Laneville	206
53	Leveretts Chapel	249
54	Lindale	3,041

Exhibit 7-1 (continued)
RESC 7 School Districts
and Charter Schools

	School Districts and Charter Schools	Enrollment
55	Longview	8,303
56	Lufkin	8,216
57	Malakoff	1,115
58	Marshall	6,004
59	Martins Mill	470
60	Martinsville	327
61	Mineola	1,560
62	Mt. Enterprise	412
63	Murchison	161
64	Nacogdoches	6,288
65	Neches	310
66	New Diana	837
67	New Summerfield	410
68	Ore City	854
69	Overton	494
70	Palestine	3,384
71	Panola*	75
72	Pine Tree	4,640
73	Piney Woods Community School*	182
74	Quitman	1,148
75	Rains	1,507
76	Ranch Academy*	42
77	Rusk	1,919
78	Sabine	1,341
79	San Augustine	992
80	Shelbyville	696
81	Slocum	382
82	Spring Hill	1,670
83	Tatum	1,186
84	Tenaha	401
85	Timpson	582
86	Trinidad	291
87	Troup	981
88	Tyler	17,031
89	Union Grove	738
90	Union Hill	331
91	Van	2,198
92	Waskom	797
93	Wells	320
94	West Rusk	782
95	West Sabine	634
96	Westwood	1,825
97	White Oak	1,324
98	Whitehouse	4,043
99	Winnsboro	1,507
100	Winona	1,015
101	Woden	842
102	Yantis	364
103	Zavalla	450

Source: RESC 7 Administrative Office, 2004.
** Charter Schools*

- RESC 7 provides board training services to all school districts within its service area, collaborates with all other RESCs to develop legislative updates that are consistent statewide, and delivers required training at substantial savings to member school districts.
- RESC 7 conducts an interactive board meeting each June with its school superintendents, creating an even greater transparency of the center's programs, practices and service delivery, and providing yet another check on the districts' program and service needs
- RESC 7 publishes an internal newsletter promoting a positive organizational culture, and distributes it electronically, thus saving costs on printing and delivery.
- RESC 7 creates and publishes a newsletter for distribution to all of its districts, thus providing a vehicle for greater communication, sharing and collaboration throughout the region.
- RESC 7 outsources all maintenance areas for which specialized licensing is required and high levels of liability exposure would be borne by the center if handled internally.
- RESC 7 rents its facilities, as available, as a service to outside organizations and to offset some costs of facility maintenance.
- RESC 7 provides a comprehensive, on-site assistance to schools and districts who receive Title I funds.
- RESC 7 offers a camp for homeless students to help them learn peer mediation, conflict resolution skills, and how to make appropriate choices and decisions that affect their lives.
- RESC 7 develops and implements a comprehensive, secure data management system at an affordable cost to districts, which ensures districts receive the training and technical assistance to interpret the data for the purpose of improving student performance.
- Regional Education Service Center 7 pays special attention to student assessment data (TEKS and TAKS) for the purposes of improving student performance.
- RESC 7 has an effective and efficient system of regionwide communication, and maintains a high level of visibility throughout Region 7.
- RESC 7 provides support and assistance to educators and schools that are seeking recognition in the Showcase of Promising Practices Initiative .
- RESC 7 provides a comprehensive child nutrition program that includes trainings for educators on how to teach healthy nutritional habits.
- RESC 7 has implemented a cost-effective Gifted and Talented Cooperative.
- RESC 7 takes an active and comprehensive approach to assisting teachers in helping students improve performance standards in math and science.
- RESC 7 is committed to providing Fine Arts educators in the region with best practices in dance, music, theatre arts, and visual arts based upon and aligned with the Fine Arts TEKS.
- RESC 7 provides comprehensive technology, media, and library services to member districts.
- RESC 7 has an effective Head Start Program which serves all 12 counties served by the service center.
- RESC 7 effectively assists schools and districts in its use of Carl D. Perkins funds.
- RESC 7 provides comprehensive technical assistance for districts who serve limited English speaking students in a timely, efficient, and effective manner.
- Data show that RESC 7 collaborates effectively with higher education

institutions to provide a quality alternative certification program.

- RESC 7 responds to the requests of superintendents and rural school districts that are having difficulty recruiting and keeping certified educators by creating a Personnel Services Cooperative.
- Regional Education Service Center 7 actively seeks and recruits minority employees.
- Regional Education Service Center 7 Human Relations Department provides an effective personnel cooperative to participating school districts.
- Regional Education Service Center 7 has a comprehensive employee orientation. RESC 7 has strengthened internal accounting controls and improved cash management.
- RESC 7 closely monitors center finances and reports actual to budget comparisons to the board of directors on a monthly basis.
- The RESC restructured the administrative oversight of the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program through assignment of this responsibility to an existing school district position, and continued to provide this program to member districts while realizing a cost saving.
- RESC 7 developed a series of informational/educational meetings to increase the budgeting and accounting knowledge of those staff members responsible for developing and monitoring program and service budgets.
- RESC 7 Purchasing Office administers the purchasing cooperative in an efficient manner, resulting in significant savings to member districts.
- RESC 7 has reduced risk to the center's assets, employees and board members by maintaining adequate insurance coverage obtained at competitive prices.
- RESC 7 has reduced risk to the center and increased credibility with the public by bonding all employees.
- RESC 7 has reduced risk by forming a building safety committee to evaluate and recommend procedures for improving safety and security.
- RESC 7 has effectively reduced risk to the center through outsourcing high risk services and providing safety training to staff.
- RESC 7 fully complies with GASB 34 and 35 as mandated by the State of Texas and, in addition, has created a written asset disposal plan.
- RESC 7 Technical Services' adoption of RSCCC results in a Texas specific, all encompassing software package that encourages easy exchange of information with state agencies, school districts and other regional services centers.
- RESC 7 provides highly effective training and assistance to school districts and charter schools resulting in high levels of satisfaction and improved PID rates.
- RESC 7's adoption of the Management Information Systems software has resulted in a highly effective, economical tool that saves significant time and money for the center.
- RESC 7 has provided E-rate assistance given to area school districts resulting in savings of $1.8 million over the past years.
- RESC 7'S Technology Leadership Academy improves communications with superintendents, shares best practices, and assists in pooling resources with other regional service centers.

FINDINGS

- Annually, the board of directors evaluates the RESC 7 executive director, although the board does not

participate in a formal evaluation of itself. As a result, the board misses the opportunity to consider ways in which they might improve their own functioning.

- The RESC 7 Board of Directors does not have any standing committees, resulting in a lack of appropriate board involvement in agency or organizational policy and planning development, promoting the services or value of an organization, and other activities.
- Field service agents provide a valuable service in Region 7 that should be continued.
- The RESC 7 does not have a facilities master plan that can be directly translated into immediate.
- RESC 7 does not conduct utility management audits resulting in a lack of data to support decisions on energy management and other related potential cost-savings.
- RESC 7 conducted a self-assessment during the 2002–03 school year in order to assure compliance with 45 CFR 1304.51 (i)(1) of the Head Start Program Performance Standards; however, Region 7 has not developed an effective action plan to address its deficiencies.
- RESC 7 does not have a simple cash flow model which takes advantage of its existing software.
- Region 7's Annual Financial Report is not prepared in a manner to receive a certificate of excellence award.
- RESC 7 did not meet two of the "Financial Integrity Rating System Relevant Indicators" for 2003–04 and is not monitored closely.
- RESC 7 has no effective plan in place to upgrade technology if state funds are not reinstated.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 7-1: Provide for an annual self-evaluation of the board.** Providing feedback, both formally and informally, is one of the "basics" in any improvement process. Structured feedback in the form of an evaluation instrument can supplement honest ongoing dialogue and discussion.

- **Recommendation 7-2: Establish a standing committee structure.** Implementing this recommendation should result in a careful analysis of potential board committee activity designed to promote the work of RESC 7 and support important planning activity. The implementation of this recommendation can lay the groundwork for developing board of directors infrastructure to deal with issues related to the perception that important education stakeholders do not adequately understand the nature and purpose of the RESC organization and related programs and services provided the school districts of Texas. This is further supported by the fact that the Texas Legislature prohibits education-related personnel from lobbying for legislative support and funding. This recommendation is based upon the premise that current RESCs and their boards are not proactive in promoting RESC value nor are there established working relationships with local school district boards to identify effective means of educating the publics. This recommendation may lead to the development of one or more of the following committees:

  - strategic planning;
  - cooperatives development;
  - finance;
  - facilities; and/or
  - external relations.

  This recommendation should be implemented through the following steps:

- The executive director should review the recommendation with the board of directors;
- Once agreed upon, the board of directors should direct the executive director to prepare the necessary policy and procedures to guide the proposed committee(s) development and activity;
- Potential committee membership should be identified with attention to involvement of member school district representation;
- The executive director should identify a RESC liaison for each established committee; and
- The chair of the board of directors should appoint a three member committee assigned the task of implementing the recommendation—that is, preparing a plan for an RESC board external relations program.

The effective implementation of this recommendation can contribute to making stakeholders informed supporters of the important services and program work of RESC 7 and provide for policy-level board involvement.

- **Recommendation 7-3: Continue the use of the field service agent position to support RESC 7 client school districts, their school boards, and superintendents.** The implementation of this recommendation should result in continuing a service that the superintendents and executive RESC personnel state is vital. The rationale employed by the State Council on Competitive Government in its January 2004 report is based on an incomplete analysis of how other RESCs utilize the field service agent positions to meet assessed client needs.

- **Recommendation 7-4: Conduct a facilities analysis and incorporate results into a long-range facilities master plan.** The implementation of this recommendation should result in a useable long-range facilities use master plan. The plan should include specific recommendations that reflect the identification of deferred maintenance needs, documented cost estimates and a timeline to address these recommendations. Development of the plan should be coordinated with the board of directors. Once the plan has been completed, it should be reviewed and updated annually and approved by the board of directors.

- **Recommendation 7-5: Conduct utility management audits.** The implementation of this recommendation should result in conserving energy with resulting savings in expenditures. Utility audits for the service center and guidance to school districts on use of utility audits should produce much needed increased efficiency and economies for Region 7**.** Typically organizations can secure assistance with utility management audits from a variety of sources. The RESC should contact the local public utilities service provider for assistance. If the public utilities provider does not offer this service then the RESC should turn to the private sector providers such as Honeywell Corporation of Johnston Controls Corporation. These type of firms usually offer the audit at no cost to the organization with optional retrofitting services paid for through identified savings as they occur.

- **Recommendation 7-6: Review all findings listed in the 2004 Self - Assessment and develop an action plan that includes timelines and cost projections to address areas of non-compliance.** By reviewing the results of the self assessment, the service

center will be able to correct and make adjustments to deficiencies in a timely manner. (Note: After the on-site reviews for this report, corrective action documents were sent to the federal agencies. RESC 7 received a written letter of resolution.)

- **Recommendation 7-7: Create a simple cash flow model using existing electronic spreadsheet software.** A cash flow model will enable RESC 7 to predict its cash requirements for a year in advance. The model should recognize federal, state, and local revenues, payroll and accounts payable expenditures should also be included. Both revenue and expenditure patterns should be predicted using historical information. Any future receipt or expenditure anomalies should be entered into the model.

- **Recommendation 7-8: Prepare future Annual Financial Reports in a manner consistent with the guidelines that would qualify the report to earn the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting.** Information regarding the preparation of a CAFR, to include copies of the checklist used to review the financial reports can be obtained from GFOA by emailing a request to *CAFRProgram@gfoa.org*. RESC 4 has received a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting from GFOA and copies of its report could provide a format to be used. The Certificate of Achievement is less important than the preparation of a Comprehensive Annual Financial Report that will more effectively communicate the financial position of the Center and relate the financial results with the original budget document.

- **Recommendation 7-9 Monitor all "financial integrity rating system relevant indicators" for the remainder of the fiscal year.** Monitoring the indicators on a regular basis will reduce the risk of noncompliance. The corrective action plan provided to the board of directors should provide adequate oversight. After the end of the corrective action plan timeline, the RESC fiscal officers should periodically inform the executive director and the board about ongoing compliance past the plan end date.

- **Recommendation 7-10: Develop an alternate funding plan to restore technology funds through local sources if legislative action is not taken to restore funding levels back to the pre-June 2003 levels for Texas RESCs.** The core of the operations of all the RESC's is based on dependable electronic transmission of data and educational information. The loss of technology funds in June of 2003 may cause many RESCs to eliminate or reduce other educational services, or to rely on possible grant money to maintain and upgrade equipment. If the regions are not successful in this endeavor, the result may be unreliable service and or poor quality data, voice and video transmission.

DETAILED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

BOARD MEETING PACKET

The board of directors receives a complete, concise packet of meeting materials 10 days prior to each scheduled meeting, resulting in efficient and effective board meetings. Board packets include the agenda and minutes from the previous meeting, a current agenda and supporting materials, and an updated line item budget. Current expenditures and remaining or new funds are discussed and amended, as needed, at each meeting. A conscious decision has been made *not* to use a consent agenda, as the executive director and board agree that it is important to specifically address each agenda

item, and that each meeting provides an opportunity for the board to learn more about the RESC and, in particular aspects of funding and accounting unique to this entity.

The typical meeting lasts two hours, with the longest approximately three hours. Meetings are held each month, except in May and November. Receipt of a complete board packet well in advance of each meeting allows members to prepare for discussions and votes. It is a best practice for governing boards to receive complete packets prior to meetings, except in emergency situations. RESC 7 uses each meeting as a teaching and learning opportunity.

Accomplishment: The RESC 7 administration develops a comprehensive meeting agenda and supporting information packet that is delivered to the board of directors well in advance of each board meeting for review and pre-meeting clarifications.

SCHOOL BOARD TRAINING

RESC 7 provides thorough, economical school board training to all of its districts. There are three levels of school board training required for experienced school board members and another three levels required of those serving their first year on a local school board.

- **Level I** training is an update of the Texas Education Code, with three hours required for new members during their first year, and two hours required annually for experienced board members. The Level I update is developed collaboratively by all 20 RESCs. Following each legislative session, they meet to develop a common update available to all Texas school districts. This update is saved on a compact disk.
- **Level II** is a required three-hours, each year, of team building and conflict management for both experienced and new members. Typically, this training is customized to the unique needs of the district contracting services.
- **Level III** is continuing education, with 10 hours required during the first year of new members' tenures, and five hours required annually for experienced members. Much of this requirement can be satisfied by attendance at sessions offered at the Fall Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) meeting. This training is commonly referred to as "customized" training. Field Service Agents, employed by Regional Educational Service Center 7 commonly do most school board training.

Charter schools' boards are required to have 12 hours of training by June 1 of each year. All 96 school districts within RESC 7 use the board training service offered by the center. This training is offered at a substantial savings over the cost of outside vendors. For example, TASB charges $1,500 for three hours of board training, while RESC 7 charges $450 for three hours. In addition, districts can realize further savings by combining training for three boards (maximum) and sharing the $450 cost. This service prepares well-informed, trained school boards for 100 percent of the RESC's member districts. On-going board training and development not only is a board best practice, but it assists the region's board in complying with Texas State Law.

Accomplishment: RESC 7 provides board training services to all school districts within its service area, collaborates with all other RESCs to develop legislative updates that are consistent statewide, and delivers required training at substantial savings to member school districts.

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

By conducting interactive board meetings, Region 7 has excellent communication among its districts and board of directors. The executive director has initiated the practice of inviting all RESC 7 school superintendents to the RESC 7 June board meeting. The executive director views all RESC staff as employees of the region's school districts and,

designed this annual meeting to be interactive in nature so that the superintendents can present reports directly to the board regarding the RESC's services and support for the previous year. Bringing these groups face-to-face each year has resulted in direct communication among districts and the board and a firsthand report on each member district's needs.

Accomplishment: RESC 7 conducts an interactive board meeting each June with its school superintendents, creating an even greater transparency of the center's programs, practices and service delivery, and providing yet another check on the districts' program and service needs.

INTERNAL NEWSLETTER

An internal newsletter, *Inside Story*, is an electronic newsletter created by the Communications Department during a time of significant organizational change in order to increase communication among areas within the RESC and to promote high staff morale. This monthly newsletter provides information regarding staff birthdays, personal information, RESC events, and introductions of new staff members. As a result, staff members gain organizational information, staffing updates, personal news regarding colleagues and an increased sense of involvement and inclusion with the center as a whole.

The implementation of successful change is often cited as the single most difficult activity any organization can undertake. The development of this internal document during this period of major change provided a necessary connection, a common body of information and a sense of continued unity for staff.

Accomplishment: RESC 7 publishes an internal newsletter promoting a positive organizational culture, and distributes it electronically, thus saving costs on printing and delivery.

EXTERNAL NEWSLETTER

An external newsletter, *Caught You Doing Something Good*, is a relatively new publication created exclusively by Region 7 to increase communication among its districts. Bi-annually the communication specialist visits districts that have a "best practice" or program they want to share with other districts. Each issue highlights several schools detailing these programs and practices. The newsletter is printed in-house, is distributed free of charge, enhances professional development by providing detailed information on "best practices" and support for continued innovation and sharing.

Accomplishment: RESC 7 creates and publishes a newsletter for distribution to all of its districts, thus providing a vehicle for greater communication, sharing and collaboration throughout the region.

FACILITIES MAINTENANCE

RESC 7 effectively outsources its facilities maintenance services, resulting in center efficiency. The outsourced services include:

- lawn care;
- building security;
- elevator maintenance and inspections;
- HVAC repair;
- plumbing repair;
- pest control; and
- fire extinguishers maintenance.

The facility use and management functions for the RESC 7 are administered by the executive director with direct oversight provided by another administrator. The RESC has 4.0 FTE custodial employees who handle the day-to-day cleaning tasks. The executive director oversees the planning, design, and constructing of new facilities, as needed.

The main facility has 77,297 square feet. The region's facility was previously a trucking firm company, and has been remodeled into a facility housing all Region 7 offices and services, and includes a tiered auditorium and large presentation/workshop spaces. The

remodel was planned to support teamwork, place administrators with their associated staff and maintain adequate flexibility. The original RESC 7 facility has 34,692 square feet and is currently used only as storage. Two additional facilities house Head Start administrative and support staff. One, located in Kilgore, has 13,159 square feet and the other, in Jacksonville, has 6,892 square feet. The Head Start program staff are in the classrooms in school districts.

Accomplishment: RESC 7 outsources all maintenance areas for which specialized licensing is required and high levels of liability exposure would be borne by the center if handled internally.

FACILITIES RENTAL

To offset cost, RESC 7 rents its facilities on a cost-recovery basis to outside organizations when not needed for programs and services offered by the center. The established list of facility fees range from $35/day (capacity 48) to $50/day (capacity 78 – 117). The auditorium fee is $150/day (capacity 187). By policy, the facility is used for educational purposes first. If space allows and requests are made, the facilities may be used by outside organizations. No requests have been made for the center to serve as a polling site.

Accomplishment: RESC 7 rents its facilities, as available, as a service to outside organizations and to offset some costs of facility maintenance.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

RESC 7 provides comprehensive technical assistance and professional development for educators, schools, and districts serving students who receive Title I services.

Technical assistance may include, but is not limited to, offering intensive training for schools not meeting AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress); on-site, assistance in preparation for desk audits required by TEA; paraprofessional training, preparation of applications for federal funding, and assistance with annual E-Grants and Annual Report on Students. Title I consultants make frequent, on-site follow up visits to help educators implement the strategies learned at the workshops. Research based strategies are used to identify needs and target specific actions that must occur in order for students to meet AYP (Annual Yearly Progress) standards.

Professional development workshops for educators working with Title I students are offered through out the year. One of the workshops offered for educators is called CHAMPS. This program is designed to help teachers design and implement classroom management plans to reduce off-task and inappropriate behavior. Other topics covered in the workshops include, but are not limited to TEKS training, systems thinking, developing, aligning, and auditing curriculum, at-risk intervention strategies, total quality management in schools, test strategies, and best practice models used through out the state of Texas.

Accomplishment: RESC 7 provides a comprehensive, on-site assistance to schools and districts who receive Title I funds.

HOMELESS CHILDREN PROGRAM

RESC 7 provides effective programs for homeless children to its member districts.

Choices is a summer program designed to address academic achievement gaps inherent in homeless students due to lapses in continuous education attendance. One hundred and thirty-five (135) homeless students are presently being served by this RESC 7 grant. They range in ages from four (4) years to sixteen (16) years. In addition this year, the service center offered a week-long summer camp for homeless children that included field trips to museums, guest speakers, service project activities, and virtual tours.

Although quantifiable data to show the benefits of programs are important, equally powerful are data based upon observations and comments from participants. During an MGT consultant's observation of the program, students listened to a rap song written and

produced by a school administrator from Dallas, Texas. The song encouraged students to reach for their dreams, hopes, and goals. The lyrics pointed out that even though everyone has limitations and face certain challenges, it is essential to stay focused, tell the truth, and be compassionate to others.

In a subsequent discussion, the instructor asked students what the song meant to them. One young person replied that even though he was unable to live with his parents, it did not mean they did not love him.

The benefit of this program is twofold. First, it gives disadvantaged homeless children the opportunity to learn more about their community, build their self esteem, and find strength in working with others. Secondly, it helps those who are more fortunate better understand the spirit of *No Child Left Behind* and the need to be proactive in promoting the American creed "justice for all."

Accomplishment: RESC 7 offers a camp for homeless students to help them learn peer mediation, conflict resolution skills, and how to make appropriate choices and decisions that affect their lives.

DATABASE APPLICATIONS

RESC 7 offers a Data Management and Assessment Cooperative (DMAC) to provide schools with affordable database applications for curriculum management and assessment data. Nearly 100 districts participate in this cooperative. In addition to iTEKStar and AEIS-It, the DEMAC offers the following: an online benchmark assessment tool that includes an item bank; an online tool to allow district personnel to quickly score and produce benchmark assessment results; an online system allowing users to collect and analyze data for the Texas Primary Reading Inventory; a program called Class Notes to facilitate teacher and parent communication; personal graduation plans; an online tool to allow district personnel to create a series of reports that range from district accountability in information to diagnostic data for individual students in one classroom; and a tool to assist educators with curriculum development, and assessment alignment.

An analysis of a cost comparison for DMAC versus those offered by commercial vendors shows that in every case, the DMAC program is less. The service center provides trainings and technical assistance for the usage of this program at no cost to school districts. The service center also ensures that all DMAC SQL Server 2000 databases operate at an optimal level while providing data integrity, minimal redundancy, and minimal inaccessibility.

Accomplishment: RESC 7 develops and implements a comprehensive, secure data management system at an affordable cost to districts, which ensures districts receive the training and technical assistance to interpret the data for the purpose of improving student performance.

STUDENT ASSESSMENT DATA

RESC 7 compiles detailed student assessment data in order to assist schools and teachers in meeting the requirements set forth by the TEKS and TAKS accountability system.

Data are used to help schools develop school improvement plans. In addition, service center staff use the data to assist with the planning of workshops and trainings. Trainings include, but are not limited to, test security measures; organizational procedures; connections between PEIMS; answer documents, and AEIS; and policy revisions.

An annual needs assessment survey is administered to determine how the service center can best keep districts, schools, and individuals informed to assessment and accountability changes and updates. In addition, the service center has developed a calendar that includes the test dates and report dates for the TAKS, the SDAAII, and other required reporting procedures.

Accomplishment: RESC 7 pays special attention to student assessment data (TEKS and TAKS) for the purpose of improving student performance.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

RESC 7 provides excellent administrative and instructional support to schools serving students who receive special education services.

Long-range planning is completed annually to project staff development and technical assistance needs for the coming year. Data for the 2003–04 school year reflects the following:

- 11,037 participants were trained in special education workshops;
- 6,662 hours of technical assistance was provided to clients; and
- 2,912 technical assistance contacts were made by special education staff.

Special Education consultants meet monthly to review and update the strategic plan, cross train, coordinate technical assistance, and share information regarding national, state, regional, and local issues. Both onsite visits and electronic devices are used to share this information with districts and campuses.

A coordinated system of communication to disseminate information throughout the region is used. Internet service, email, group meetings, and a special education calendar of events prevent duplication of services. Email Listservs are used to distribute TEA correspondence, changes in rules and regulations, comment periods for rules and regulations, workshop publicity, needs assessments, and evaluation surveys to school staff.

Accomplishment: RESC 7 has an effective and efficient system of regionwide communication, and maintains a high level of visibility throughout Region 7.

SHARING BEST PRACTICES

RESC 7 assists districts and charter schools with a program entitled Showcase of Promising Practices which permits other schools to learn best practices. Programs that meets stringent criteria and serve as a model classrooms for other schools in the region. The programs in the showcase are currently meeting specific challenges of special education and are providing quality services to students with disabilities in a designated category of service delivery.

The 2004 Showcase of Promising Practices was formally announced July 13, 2004 at the Texas Council of Administrators of Special Education's Summer Conference in Austin. During the 2004-05 school year, representatives of the practices networked with Texas school districts to further develop and improve special education services throughout the state. The Showcase of Promising Practices is a collaborative project among special education programs statewide, the state's 20 Education Service Centers and the Texas Education Agency.

Of the four practices selected to be included in the statewide showcase, two are from RESC 7. Weldon Intermediate School in Gladewater ISD was identified in the area of *Effective Teaching Strategies for Students with Disabilities.* This is the second consecutive year for Weldon Intermediate to be designated as a school with a Promising Practice. Elkhart Elementary School in the Elkhart Independent School District was identified in the category of *Effective Integration of Students with Disabilities with their Non-Disabled Peers*.

Accomplishment: RESC 7 provides support and assistance to educators and schools that are seeking recognition in the Showcase of Promising Practices Initiative.

NUTRITION TRAINING

RESC 7, in conjunction with the Texas Department of Agriculture, provides effective regional child nutrition support in accordance with the state plan for child nutrition and applicable federal regulations. The service center offers technical assistance, on-site visits, and trainings for school lunch personnel and other district officials who work in this area.

The service center collaborates with school health officials and others to ensure meals

meet daily nutritional requirements and the unique needs of students requiring special diets. Trainings and workshops are given to teachers on how they can incorporate good nutritional habits into their curriculum.

Accomplishment: RESC 7 provides a comprehensive child nutrition program that includes trainings for educators on how to teach healthy nutritional habits.

GIFTED TALENTED COOPERATIVE

RESC 7 provides a collaborative Gifted and Talented Cooperative to assist school districts in delivering cost-effective programs and services for gifted learners.

Districts pay fifty (50) percent of the gifted/talented state funding allotment awarded unless districts fall below the $2,750 minimum for participation. Local funds can then be used to join the cooperative. The annual budget for Gifted and Talented services is as follows:

- $459,368.00 Local
- $10,000.00 State
- $30,000.00 AP/IB Grant

The number of gifted students served in Region 7 is:

- 18,634 Total Students
- 1,735 African American Students
- 1,172 Hispanic Students
- 15,415 White Students
- 1,507 Economically Disadvantage Students

To meet state mandates, the service center offers trainings and workshops for member districts in the following areas: thirty (30) hours of basic gifted and talented professional development, advanced professional development for gifted talented teachers, professional development in the Texas Future Problem Solving and Destination Imagination, curriculum writing projects, enrichment sessions for parents of gifted and talented students, newsletters for teachers and parents of gifted students, and board training for gifted education. An annual Needs Assessment Survey is conducted to determine the types of services desired by participating districts. Suggestions for improvement and expansion are invited.

The service center also offers programs for gifted students to ensure they meet a state mandate requiring "students work together, work with other students and work independently." These offerings consist of student seminars, both long-term (year-long) and short-term (one-day). Students are eligible to receive scholarships to attend the seminars.

Accomplishment: RESC 7 has implemented a cost-effective Gifted and Talented Cooperative.

MATH/SCIENCE PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

RESC 7 provides effective technical assistance and professional development trainings in math and science to 100 percent of member districts (96 public and 8 charter). Services and programs include, but are not limited to, TEA updates to all curriculum directors and math and science teachers, workshops on helping students meet the academic standards set forth by TEKS and TAKS, school improvement strategies, and data analysis to help with curriculum alignment and professional development plans.

The service center has provided trainings for 5,080 individual teachers. On-site, follow-up visits are made by the service center staff to help teachers implement ideas and strategies learned at the trainings. Consultants maintain monthly calendars listing their on-site visits and trainings. In addition, consultants complete an Activities Consultants Detail Report listing the function, district, travel time, and service time. All activities are linked to a performance objective from the service center's strategic plan.

Accomplishment: RESC 7 takes an active and comprehensive approach to assisting teachers in helping students improve performance standards in math and science.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATIVE

RESC 7 offers timely and effective assistance to schools in fine arts through the Professional Development Cooperative.

Fine Arts specialists and regular classroom teachers receive professional development training in ensuring dance, music, theatre arts, and visual arts objectives are met and integrated into all content areas. Surveys from the yearly Fine Arts Summit and input from emails and phone calls are compiled and used to assess districts' needs.

A Fine Arts Strategic Plan is developed based upon needs assessments and program evaluations. Approximately 100 phone calls are received each month from educators in the region seeking technical assistance. In addition, service center staff use TAKS data to assess student needs and plan trainings for classroom teachers that teach strategies for helping improve student performance in higher order thinking skills, test-taking, and information transfer.

For many students, success in school is realized through their participation in fine arts programs and/or the integration of fine arts into core curriculum areas. The benefit of RESC 7's desire to help schools and educators implement quality fine arts programs is that students will have opportunities to extend themselves and acquire knowledge beyond the bounds of traditional subject matter. In addition, with the increased demands placed upon educators to produce high levels of achievement for all students, a more interdisciplinary approach to curriculum development will be needed. A concentrated effort to include Fine Arts programs in classrooms and schools gives educators another strategy to improve student growth.

Accomplishment: RESC 7 is committed to providing Fine Arts educators in the region with best practices in dance, music, theatre arts, and visual arts based upon and aligned with the Fine Arts TEKS.

INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY

RESC 7 offers a wide variety of up-to-date instructional technology, and library and instructional media support for participating districts.

Through a Target Grant, teachers receive trainings in the use of hardware, software, critical thinking skills, lesson plan development, and integrating technology into the curricula, and applying and aligning technology goals with TEKS.

The service center also offers an "ePower", IT (Information Technology) Cooperative where member districts receive on-site technology development sessions, Web-based instructional resources for district personnel, an "ePowering" Instructional Technology Newsletter, unlimited email and telephone technical support, technology planning, and E-Rate Assistance email. This service enables districts to centralize purchasing and standardization, assure new equipment and software is compatible with existing equipment and electronic infrastructures maximize current internetworking bandwidth, and receive an email filter.

Many schools in Region 7 do not have full-time, certified librarians. Therefore, a monthly series of library workshops to help librarians and library aides remain current with library resources and library operations is offered by the service center.

The service center houses a teacher production area that enables educators to access creative tools such as Ellison die-cuts, lamination, poster production, educational game production, stickers, and reward systems. For many teachers, these tools are not available in their schools. Other library and media materials include a 6,000 video and DVD library. The videos and DVD's are aligned to

the TEKS. The service center also maintains and updates the online Media Catalog and provides duplication rights of selected videos for local district use. AIMS, a digital curriculum that integrates searchable full-length curriculum-based videos, clips, and photos that are correlated to the TEKS and indexed by key concepts is also offered by the service center.

Accomplishment: RESC 7 provides comprehensive technology, media, and library services to member districts.

HEAD START PROGRAM

RESC 7 has implemented specific goals and strategies resulting in an effective Head Start Program. RESC 7 serves as the fiscal agent for 114 Head Start classrooms in forty nine (49) Region 7 school districts. Each classroom is staffed with a certified teacher and a teaching assistant. The service center employs approximately eighty (80) family services staff who work at each site facilitating the delivery of Head Start services.

In addition, the service center has over 60 management level staff providing oversight to ensure compliance with Head Start Performance Standards, and other statutory, regulatory, and policy requirements. During the funding year 2003–04, RESC 7 was awarded $10,656,761, to serve 2,039 children.

The goal of all Head Start programs in the region is to improve student performance. This goal is achieved by focusing on enhancing children's growth and development, strengthening families as the primary nurturers of their children, providing children with educational, health, and nutritional services, linking children and their families to needed community services, ensuring well-managed programs exist, and involving parents in decision-making.

The benefit of serving as the fiscal agent for Head Start in the region, is that it ensures students enrolled in the programs will have a seamless transition into Schools. Schools will have comprehensive information and data about children who participate in Head Start Programs in a timely manner and are organized under one management umbrella. This allows for continuity, a sharing of resources, and a greater likelihood that the goals and objectives listed above will be attained.

Accomplishment: RESC 7 has an effective Head Start Program which serves all 12 counties served by the service center.

CARL PERKINS FUNDS

By assisting member districts with effective spending of Carl D. Perkins funds, RESC 7 has provided critical technical assistance to improve career-related programs. RESC 7 provides critical technical assistance related to the Carl D. Perkins Act for school districts. The service center helps districts with the following activities: coordination of High Schools that Work and Tech Prep programs; completing the annual Carl D. Perkins application and developing and implementing related activities; and establishing and maintaining communications among local education agencies, workforce development boards, colleges and universities, and the TEA Career and Technology Education staff. Schools and districts are assisted with developing graduation plans that incorporate CATE classes and meet the standards set forth in *No Child Left Behind*. In addition, trainings and workshops are held for counselors and other school district personnel in helping at risk students. The service center also helps districts who have received grant money to give students an early awareness of potential college and university learning opportunities.

Accomplishment: RESC 7 effectively assists schools and districts in its use of Carl D. Perkins funds.

LIMITED ENGLISH STUDENTS

RESC 7 provides comprehensive technical assistance and professional development for school districts as they implement English language acquisition programs. This program is designed to assist English language learners learn English and meet challenging academic

content and student achievement standards. Basic services offered to districts include, but are not limited to, technical assistance and staff development for districts and charter schools to ensure compliance with TEC and NCLB; training in administration, scoring, and interpretation of required assessment for English language learners, provide technical assistance in completion of the Standard Application for federal funding; and technical assistance to districts in completion of Performance Based Monitoring Reports.

Ninety-six (96) school districts with 11,971 students receive assistance from the service center. In addition, the service center provides districts with information concerning new legislation and state and federal mandates pertaining to English language learners.

The service center also works with higher education entities such as Stephen F. Austin State University, University of Texas at Tyler, East Texas Baptist University, Texas State Technical College, Panola Junior College, and Kilgore Junior College to assist district personnel in meeting state and local certification licensing requirements for teaching English language learners.

Accomplishment: RESC 7 provides comprehensive technical assistance for districts who serve limited English speaking students in a timely, efficient, and effective manner.

ALTERNATIVE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

RESC 7, in conjunction with regional colleges and universities, offers an effective alternative certification program for students who have graduated from college and are seeking a teaching certificate. This year, 158 interns are enrolled in the program. Participants are required to work in a classroom one full year in addition to attending workshops that address technology, assessment, multicultural diversity, working with disadvantaged students, differentiating instruction, lesson planning, the reading and writing process, parent conferencing, behavior management, and critical thinking.

They are also required to take two (2) graduate level courses in education. On-site visits are conducted throughout the year to observe and evaluate intern performance. Close contact is maintained with the intern's direct supervisor. The service center prepares interns to take the Texas Certification Proficiency examination. Ninety two (92) percent of the interns in this program have passed the test on the first attempt.

Accomplishment: RESC 7 collaborates effectively with higher education institutions to provide a quality alternative certification program.

TEACHER RECRUITMENT

RESC 7 assists member districts in recruiting certified educators.

RESC 7 offers a Personnel Services Cooperative for school districts who have difficulty attracting qualified and certified educators. Seventy-seven (77) school districts participate in the cooperative. The service center maintains an online database of potential candidates from which all member districts may review applications. Service center staff attend educator career fairs through out the state and in neighboring states to help recruit educators.

Once an individual is hired, districts are given help in aligning teacher certificates with teaching assignments. The service center also provides technical assistance for all certification and permit issues, shares annual updates to the Teacher Certification Procedures Manual, supplies member districts with TExES/ExCET registration bulletins, helps districts determine whether teachers meet the *No Child Left Behind*: Highly Qualified Status, and conducts substitute teacher training.

Accomplishment: RESC 7 responds to the requests of superintendents and rural school districts that are having difficulty recruiting

and keeping certified educators through a Personnel Services Cooperative.

MINORITY RECRUITMENT

Regional Education Service Center 7 Human Resource Department has developed an excellent system for advertising vacancies and recruiting new personnel. One of the many advantages of this process has been Region 7's ability to employee a higher percentage of minority employs in 2002–03 than in the prior year, with 27.5 percent minority employees. Region 7 exceeds the minority employee rate for the region's education work force, which is 11 percent. These figures represent a 5.5 percent increase over the past year.

Posting employment openings with agencies and newspapers outside of the region increases the number of qualified applicants and allows the region to more closely match the ethnic profile of the area. The result is a strengthened image of the center as being responsive to the values and cultural sensitivities of the community.

Recruiting and hiring a greater number of people from different cultures, backgrounds, and races brings a different set of solutions and more ways of solving problems common to school districts throughout the region. A more diverse staff creates energy and increases the probability that decisions regarding programs and services will more adequately meet the needs of the center's clients. In addition, a diverse work force can generates unique, fresh, and innovative ideas and suggestions. Employees from diverse backgrounds share new knowledge and information about the needs of different groups. This diversity enhances the center's ability to respond to schools and districts in a creative manner.

Accomplishment: RESC 7 actively seeks and recruits minority employees.

PERSONNEL COOPERATIVE

RESC 7's member districts are well prepared to meet the *No Child Left Behind* highly qualified teacher and paraprofessional mandates.

Regional Education Service Center 7 Personnel Cooperative provides service to school district human relations departments, with 77 member districts participating. One component offered is a staff analysis to determine "highly qualified" status for *No Child Left Behind* requirements; 53 districts have requested technical assistance with this analysis since the service was initiated in November of 2003.

"Highly qualified" is a specific term defined by *No Child Left Behind*. The law outlines a list of minimum requirements related to content knowledge and teaching skills that a highly qualified teacher would meet. The law, however, also recognizes the importance of state and local control of education and therefore provides the opportunity for each state to develop a definition of highly qualified that is consistent with NCLB, as well as with the unique needs of the state.

Thus, *No Child Left Behind* includes provisions stating that all teachers in core academic areas must be highly qualified in the core academic subjects they teach by the end of the 2005–06 school year. It also requires that newly hired teachers in Title I programs or schools be highly qualified immediately. A more flexible timeline is allowed for teachers in eligible small, rural schools, who often teach multiple subjects.

All teachers hired after the first day of the 2002–03 school year in Title I schoolwide programs must be highly qualified. However, in Title I targeted-assistance schools, only those teachers paid with Title I funds need to be highly qualified immediately.

RESC 7 assists its member districts in meeting the requirements for "Highly Qualified" teachers and paraprofessionals in several departments. The Title I Contracted Services (55 LEAs) provides training on the requirements for the *No Child Left Behind* law. RESC 7 staff will visit the personnel

department of those member districts and help them determine if their teachers have met the requirements in the core academic subject area. HOUSE (high, objective, uniform standard of evaluation) is a method devised by the state to analyze these personnel records.

Districts not in the Title I contracted services have access to the above services through the Personnel CO-op, so all member districts much assistance in this area. The state law does not require a teacher employed by an open-enrollment charter school to be certifies unless the teacher is assigned to teach in special education or bilingual education program, in which case the appropriate state certification is required.

Paraprofessionals must meet rigorous standards through an approved assessment to meet these requirements. RESC 7 offers a three day Paraprofessional Academy that assists paraprofessionals in the instruction of reading, writing, mathematics, and classroom management. At the end of this training, they complete a rigorous assessment in these areas. In the past year, 378 paraprofessionals have been trained in 10 trainings.

Accomplishment: RESC 7 Human Relations Department provides an effective personnel cooperative to participating school districts.

EMPLOYEE ORIENTATION

Regional Education Service Center Human Resources has developed an effective new employee orientation process which includes policies and procedures for handling harassment and grievance issues. It is a collaboration between departments to ensure new hires are welcomed in a warm and organized fashion. New hires are given orientation at the administrative level that includes overall organizational makeup, benefits, compensation, policies and procedures, job description, and key access information. The purpose is to make a smooth transition for the employees to their new positions and to ensure their long term success in the center.

Regional Education Service Center 7 has developed in conjunction with Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) strong policies and procedures that include step-by-step sexual harassment and grievance procedures; these policies are reviewed and updated on an annual basis and passed through the center's board and Head Start Policy Council for approval. These policies and procedures coupled with in-service training for staff result in a safe and bias- free working environment.

Accomplishment: RESC 7 has a comprehensive employee orientation.

INTERNAL ACCOUNTING CONTROLS

RESC 7 has detailed policies and procedures, as well as internal controls to efficiently process the center's day-to-day business transactions and provide complete and timely information to the administration and the board of directors to facilitate decision making.

RESC 7 fiscal operations control the collection, disbursement, and accounting for federal, state, and local funds. All basic financial responsibilities for RESC 7, with the exception of budget management, occur within the Business Office. Budget management functions are shared with all departments, center-wide, through training, policies and procedures, and an automated purchase order approval process. The Business Office is organized by staff function and provides the following services:

- financial accounting and reporting;
- payroll;
- accounts receivable;
- accounts payable;
- cash management; and
- fixed asset management.

The Business Office uses the Regional Service Center Computer Cooperative (RSCCC) financial system developed by RESC 20 in San Antonio. (The RSCCC system also has a

student administrative system.) This system is utilized by most of the school systems in the state and is designed to meet specific requirements mandated by the state.

The Business Office developed and implemented procedures for daily cash collection and deposit and revenue recording, resulting in stronger internal controls and cash management. They initiated online banking access for better cash management, direct deposit recording, and monitoring of collateralized bank balances which resulted in enhanced controls, management and monitoring of the RESC's finances.

Accomplishment: RESC 7 has strengthened internal accounting controls and improved cash management.

FINANCIAL REPORTING

Seventy-two percent of the center's funds are received as cost reimbursements and there is *no single point* at which funds come in, thus the Business Office has developed procedures for regular draw down of funds on a cost reimbursement basis, to allow for consistent cash flow, to maximize cash balance maintenance, and to ensure compliance with grant and contract fiscal and reporting requirements. RESC 7 also provides a *Monthly Budget to Actual Comparison by Fund* report to the board.

The development of a budget-to-actual report allows the board and administrators to monitor the progress of the organization toward the revenues and expenditures of the annual budgeted amounts. Close monitoring of these ratios allows the leaders to monitor and adjust the financial activities of the organization, especially on the expenditure side.

Accomplishment: RESC 7 closely monitors center finances and reports actual to budget comparisons to the board of directors on a monthly basis.

AVID PROGRAM

Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) is an effective program "designed to increase schoolwide learning and performance," with particular support provided to "the least served students in the middle who are capable of completing a college preparatory path."

Eight RESC districts participated in the program this year at a fee of $4,500 each, for a total of $36,000. Previously, the center had an AVID Regional Director on staff. They supplemented the difference between the $12,900 from fees that was designated for that individual's salary and the total salary of $52,000. This year, at the suggestion of the deputy director for Instructional Services, an assistant principal in an AVID-participating district served as the AVID Director. The RESC saved $39,100 through reassignment of those responsibilities to an existing District position.

Accomplishment: RESC 7 restructured the administrative oversight of the AVID program through assignment of this responsibility to an existing school district position, and continued to provide this program to member districts while realizing a cost saving.

BUDGET TRAINING

The Business Office offers a series of "Accounting/Budgeting 101" meetings for program directors and coordinators to review budgets, account codes, general ledger reports and features of the accounting system. This innovative practice results in a greater understanding of the process by directors and coordinators as they approach budget development, and as they interpret financial information provided to them by the Business Office.

Accomplishment: RESC 7 developed a series of informational/educational meetings to increase the budgeting and accounting knowledge of those staff members responsible for developing and monitoring program and service budgets.

PURCHASING COOPERATIVES

Region 7 has a successful purchasing cooperative resulting in significant savings for the member districts.

The Region 7 Purchasing Cooperative is locally funded by yearly membership fees, vendor bid processing fees, marketing revenue, and miscellaneous administrative request fees. The cooperative effectively facilitates legal bid processes for 38 bid categories on behalf of 112 educational entities.

Solicitation of vendors is done through membership requests, vendor response to advertising in 15 newspapers and from vendors who have visited the purchasing cooperative Web site. The vendor database contains over 4,500 vendors. Online bid process and postings are being utilized and are proving to be both time efficient and cost effective.

Revenue is utilized for expenditures and budgeted to provide purchasing cooperative staff salaries, newspaper advertising, postage, telephone, printing, space utilization, travel, office equipment, supplies and materials.

Ninety-seven (97%) percent of Region 7 schools are members of the Purchasing Cooperative, with 17 additional member districts from outside the region. Participating school districts have saved an estimated $157,000 by participating in the cooperative.

Accomplishment: The Purchasing Office administers the purchasing cooperative in an efficient manner, resulting in significant savings to member districts.

RISK MANAGEMENT

Regional Education Service Center 7, like most organizations, has risk factors associated with doing business. Regional Education Service Center 7 has protected itself and its employees in several important ways. Since the Regional Education Service Center 7 is also a public entity and supported by public funds, it is doubly important that the center's assets, employees, and board members are protected by adequate levels of insurance.

Three types of insurance are typically found in governmental organizations: property insurance to protect the real property assets; liability insurance to protect the organization from errors and omissions; and health insurance to protect the personnel from loss.

RESC 7 has protected itself by having adequate levels of property and casualty insurance which are provided by a local agent. Workman's Compensation and Unemployment Insurance is provided by (TASB) Texas Association of School Boards Risk Management Fund. Employee insurance is provided by (TRS) health and medical.

The importance of this action is to reduce risk of lawsuits to the Region center and the volunteer boards who govern them, to provide needed health insurance to employees and their families and protect employees from loss of income through injury or loss of their jobs.

Accomplishment: RESC 7 has reduced risk to the center's assets, employees, and board members by maintaining adequate insurance coverage obtained at competitive prices.

EMPLOYEE BONDS

RESC 7 has implemented effective strategies to reduce risk to the center.

The Regional Education Service Center 7 has risk factors associated with employees working within the confines of the service center and traveling to member districts to provide school services and conferences.

Regional Education Service Center 7 has recognized potential risks associated with employees doing business both within the center and in member school districts. In order to reduce this risk to the district and its assets, it has purchased employee dishonesty bonds for $50,000 on the listed position of business manager, as well as $25,000 of basic coverage on all employees. Even though there is cost associated with this precautionary measure,

even one incident could offset premiums for several years. In addition, this action is an indicator to tax payers and school districts that every effort is being taken to protect their funds.

Accomplishment: RESC 7 has reduced risk to the center and increased credibility with the public by bonding all employees.

SAFETY COMMITTEE

Region 7 has formed an Ad Hoc Safety Committee to quickly address safety and security issues.

The process has been used to collectively "brain storm" issues, set objectives for the committee, set timelines, and develop a plan of action. Items addressed have included:

- visitor name tags;
- violent intruder;
- building signage;
- vendor visits;
- weekend and evening building use;
- theft;
- security lighting;
- accident prevention; and
- disaster-recovery planning.

Accomplishment: RESC 7 has reduced risk by forming a building safety committee to evaluate and recommend procedures for improving safety and security.

OUTSOURCING SERVICES

Regional Education Service Center 7 is effectively outsourcing grounds maintenance, plumbing, HVAC, pest control, elevator service, building security, and electrical maintenance. The center conducts background checks on all outsourced contractors. In addition, in-house custodians participate in annual workplace safety training. By contracting these services to professionals, safety and liability for the RESC 7 is increased while the background checks assist in maintaining safety and security for employees.

Accomplishment: RESC 7 has effectively reduced risk to the center through outsourcing high risk services and providing safety training to staff.

ASSET DISPOSAL PLAN

RESC 7 has created an effective asset disposal plan and fully complies with GASB 34 and 35.

All Texas state agencies must be in compliance with GASB 34 and 35 as outlined by the State. In addition, all agencies need to take measures to reduce the chance of loss through theft and outline a specific procedure. RESC 7 complies with GASB 34 and 35. There is a physical Inventory and annual reporting with capitalization of items over $5,000 while items valued $500-$,5000 are tracked with a detailed listing. The center has a written asset disposal plan that complies with state regulations. The purpose of GASB 34 and 35 is to create an inventory process that is similar to the system that is most often used by private agencies and in a process that is more easily understood by the general public.

Accomplishment: RESC 7 fully complies with GASB 34 and 35 as mandated by the State of Texas and, in addition, has created a written asset disposal plan.

TIMELY DATA

By adopting RSCCC, Region 7 has improved the exchange of timely data and information with other agencies.

RSCCC is a Texas-specific software package for business and instruction. It has been developed over a 30 year period by the RESC's. It is constantly being modified to meet educational needs and as a co-op product, it is reasonably priced. With this software package, member school districts have a total in-house solution. RESC 7 Technical services RSCCC application is designed as a client-server application and runs on Windows 2000 or 2003 Server. The current database engine is version 7 of Sybase's SQL Anywhere. Client workstations supported include both Windows 2000

Professional and Windows XP Professional editions.

Region 7 uses the capability of the RSCCC 2000 to utilize a largely paperless system. The center has the ability for real time financial information, literally at the director's and consultant's fingertips. At the same time, it reduces costs and eliminates bottlenecks by paper documents being misplaced. The result is a rapid and seamless system resulting in reduced work loads and improved communications within the center and improved services to the districts.

Accomplishment: RESC 7's adoption of RSCCC results in a Texas specific, all encompassing software package that encourages easy exchange of information with state agencies, school districts and other regional services centers.

TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

Survey results and high workshop ratings show that member districts are highly satisfied with Region 7's technology services.

Surveys conducted by Regional Education Service Center 7 concerning district satisfaction with training and support of the PEIMS database indicate a high degree of approval. Personal identification error rates for both district and charter schools have dropped during the last year. Districts are currently at 0.6, below the 1.0 percent state standard. In the State of Texas, the PEIMS data base is one of the single most important reporting systems in use. It requires four data submissions per year. As such, it is critical that RESC 7 conduct extensive training sessions for school districts and provide help desk activities to insure accurate reporting to the state. This training and support is provided free of charge to the districts and charters of Region 7.

Exhibit 7-2 provides summary information about the rating of the various workshops based on a scale of 1-5. The average rating was 4.65.

Accomplishment: RESC 7 provides highly effective training and assistance to school districts and charter schools resulting in high levels of satisfaction and improved PID rates.

Exhibit 7-2
Workshop Ratings for RESC 7

Date	Title	Participants	Rating Average
09/11/2003	Attend. Acct. Train	46	4.76
09/16/2003	PEIMS Orientation	33	4.60
09/16/2003	PEIMS Gen Student	172	4.63
09/16/2003	PEIMS Gen Business	31	4.58
09/26/2003	PEIMS Orientation	23	4.90
09/26/2003	PEIMS Gen Student	111	4.75
09/26/2003	PEIMS Gen Business	28	4.73
10/03/2003	PEIMS Orientation	38	4.29
11/05/2003	RSCCC Tech Trg 03-04	9	4.90
01/13/2004	DATA ACCURACY 03-04	49	4.70
01/15/2004	DATA ACCURACY 03-04	59	4.74
01/22/2004	DATA ACCURACY 03-04	36	4.80
02/17/2004	DATA ACCURACY 03-04	29	4.39
05/13/2004	WS PEIMS/EOY 03-04	5	4.05
08/10/2004	PEIMS ORIENT 04-05	24	4.32
08/12/2004	PEIMS ORIENT 04-05	9	5.00

Source: Add here.

SOFTWARE TRACKING SYSTEM

Management Information Systems (MIS) is a software tracking system used effectively in eight regional centers statewide (including Region 7). It is equally useful as both an internal and an external tracking tool for contract support and maintaining center and district staff development records.

This product was developed by the centers because there is no commercial product that will provide this data or provide it at a comparable price. In addition to being an excellent reporting tool, it has increased efficiency in distributing time sensitive documents while decreasing costs for postage, fax, phone calls and reproduction of documents.

The following are examples of saving time and funds through the current use of MIS software:

- District personnel may obtain and print their own staff development records from the MIS Web with a call to the Service Center and a subsequent mail-out of the staff development records. Prior to September 1, 2003 this was not a capability of the system.
- District superintendents and principals may also obtain all staff development records per campus from the MIS Web site. Per campus they can print out all workshops sessions attended by their campus personnel for the year including session title, dates, PDAS criteria, and credit hours earned. There are savings on phone calls, postage, and time efficiency by having these up-to-date and available over the Web.
- MIS replaced three programs that formerly cost approximately $40,000 to maintain yearly. Maintenance costs per year for the MIS program enhancements and upgrades, because it is split on a prorated basis with other RESCs, has spread the cost of ongoing maintenance to approximately $1,500-$3,000 per year.
- MIS is an integrated program which allows RESC personnel to access staff development technical assistance, and individual time and effort. Therefore, it eliminates duplication of effort in data entry and reporting.
- Workshop sessions are available on the Web for registration immediately upon creation.
- MIS built-in reports have information for district and the RESC that facilitate immediate decision making without the manual collection and analysis of information. These reports are used to facilitate backup documentation of services for districts when preparing for contract renewal.
- MIS enables the RESC to invoice districts within one week for workshop sessions. This improves the efficiency of the accounts receivable system and improves cash flow.
- The RESC staff has the ability to complete the MIS time accounting from anywhere and anytime there is Web access. This improves the efficiency of the time and effort reports.
- The MIS reporting capabilities have enabled the RESC to respond in a more timely fashion to requested reports from TEA or the State Legislature.
- MIS has saved time and effort in generating the KPI reports.
- There is no longer a need to produce hard copy or electronic copy of CenterPoint which has taken time and effort to deliver to districts. MIS produces its own workshop catalog and a calendar of events for all to see on the Web.
- The MIS can produce reports indicating which staff or program has helped that district with any kind of service or technical assistance.

Accomplishment: RESC 7's adoption of the Management Information Systems software has resulted in a highly effective, economical tool that saves significant time and money for the center.

E-RATE FUNDS

Regional Education Service Center 7 has provided training and support to approximately 33 member school districts for E-rate applications, saving Region 7 schools approximately $ 1.8 million in discounted services.

E-rate is a federal program of competitive grants based on district's free and reduced lunch percentage. The money can be used by the districts for purchase and installation of "pipes and wires" and associated hardware for improving the technology of the district.

The role of Instructional Technology is to provide quality professional development to meet the individual needs of participating districts and their staffs. The purpose is school improvement to better prepare students to cope with the challenges of the future. Region 7 Instructional Technology Department is typically involved in providing E-rate and Title II-D assistance for district evaluations. The department is also providing technology planning and technical assistance.

Accomplishment: RESC 7 has provided E-rate assistance given to area school districts resulting in savings of $1.8 million over the past years.

TECHNOLOGY LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

Regional Education Service Center 7 facilitated a "Technology Leadership Academy" to provide training for the Texas Association of School Administrators, resulting in increased communication with member districts. Approximately 80 administrators in Region 7 and 8 participated in the highly successful academy. The Academy provides an effective network of technological opportunities for participating superintendents, allowing them to have a better understanding of the capability of RESC's Management Information Systems Department, and exposes new technologies and training materials available for business operations, students, and teachers. The mission of the TASA/Texas Leadership Center Technology Leadership Academy is to ensure that Texas administrators have the leadership skills necessary to transform schools through systemic change efforts. To that end, school leaders must be knowledgeable of how technology can enhance teaching and learning. The first goal of the Academy is to help school leaders build a vision for the integration of technology into the curriculum. The second goal is to strengthen administrators' role in decision making about technology in their districts and on their campuses. Finally, school leaders must model the use of technology for colleagues, students, and staff.

All evaluation results were collected and analyzed by the Texas Association of School Administrators. The average response to the following evaluation questions was 2.79 (scale 0-3):

- Workshop objectives were clearly identified and accomplished.
- The workshop was well-organized well-presented and conducted in an appropriate manner.
- The information I received in this workshop was relevant.
- The pace of the activities in this workshop was appropriate relative to the content and number of participants.
- The workshop involved participants in activities appropriate to the topic and to the nature of the participants' work.
- The workshop modeled integration of technology into the learning objectives in an appropriate way.
- My level of comfort with technology-based learning was supported and enhanced by the end of the workshop.

Accomplishment: RESC 7'S Technology Leadership Academy improves

communications with superintendents, shares best practices, and assists in pooling resources with other regional service centers.

DETAILED FINDINGS

BOARD SELF-EVALUATION

Annually, the board of directors evaluates the RESC 7 executive director, although the board does not participate in a formal evaluation of itself. As a result, the board misses the opportunity to consider ways in which they might improve their own functioning.

Governing boards in any organization can improve their performance through a formal self-evaluation in addition to an informal feedback process. In addition, by conducting an annual evaluation, the board models for their members' boards the importance of the evaluation process. **Exhibit 7-3** is one example of a self assessment instrument used by some boards.

RESC 7 should provide for an annual self-evaluation of the board. Providing feedback, both formally and informally, is one of the "basics" in any improvement process. Structured feedback in the form of an evaluation instrument can supplement honest ongoing dialogue and discussion.

Exhibit 7-3
Sample Board Self Assessment Instrument

Meeting Evaluation

DIRECTIONS: By evaluating our past meeting performance, we can discover ways to make future meetings shorter and more productive. Check each item "Adequate" or "Needs Improvement". If you check "Needs Improvement, include suggestions for improvement.

Adequate	Needs Improvement	
_____	_____	Our meeting was businesslike, results-oriented and we functioned like a team.
_____	_____	Our discussion was cordial and well balanced (not dominated by just a few members).
_____	_____	We confined our discussion to agenda items only.
_____	_____	Our agenda included positive issues as well as problems.
_____	_____	We discussed policy issues rather than day-to-day management issues.
_____	_____	We followed parliamentary rules and consulted legal or professional counsel when needed.
_____	_____	The president or chairperson controlled and guided the meeting.
_____	_____	We dealt successfully with controversial items and attempted to develop solutions acceptable to all members.
_____	_____	Everyone contributed to the meeting.
_____	_____	All members were prepared to discuss material that was sent to them in advance.
_____	_____	Reports were clear, well prepared and provided adequate information for decision making.
_____	_____	Printed materials given to us were easy to understand and use.
_____	_____	Our meeting room was comfortable and conducive to discussion and decision making.
_____	_____	All members were in attendance and on-time - - and the meeting began and concluded on time.
_____	_____	For committees and ad hoc groups: There was adequate reason for us to meet.

My best suggestions for improving our next meeting is...

Source: MGT of America, 2004.

BOARD STANDING COMMITTEE

The RESC 7 Board of Directors does not have any standing committees, resulting in a lack of appropriate board involvement in agency or organizational policy and planning development, promoting the services or value of an organization, and other activities.

The board of directors meets every other month for regularly scheduled meetings and other meetings are called as the need arises. MGT consultants do not believe that the board needs to meet more often; however, greater board involvement in planning activity, services development, and essential RESC promotion activity among the region's districts and other stakeholders may well require more individual board member involvement and could result in producing a means by which board members can actively affect the publics and others' understanding of RESC services and products.

RESC 7 should establish a standing committee structure. Implementing this recommendation should result in a careful analysis of potential board committee activity designed to promote the work of RESC 7 and support important planning activity. The implementation of this recommendation can lay the groundwork for developing board of directors infrastructure to deal with issues related to the perception that important education stakeholders do not adequately understand the nature and purpose of the RESC organization and related programs and services provided the school districts of Texas. This is further supported by the fact that the Texas Legislature prohibits education-related personnel from lobbying for legislative support and funding. This recommendation is based upon the premise that current RESCs and their boards are not proactive in promoting RESC value nor are there established working relationships with local school district boards to identify effective means of educating the publics.

This recommendation may lead to the development of one or more of the following committees:

- strategic planning;
- cooperatives development;
- finance;
- facilities; and/or
- external relations.

This recommendation should be implemented through the following steps:

- The executive director should review the recommendation with the board of directors;
- Once agreed upon, the board of directors should direct the executive director to prepare the necessary policy and procedures to guide the proposed committee(s) development and activity;
- Potential committee membership should be identified with attention to involvement of member school district representation;
- The executive director should identify a RESC liaison for each established committee; and
- The chair of the board of directors should appoint a three-member committee assigned the task of implementing the recommendation—that is, preparing a plan for an RESC board external relations program.

The effective implementation of this recommendation can contribute to making stakeholders informed supporters of the important services and program work of RESC 7 and provide for policy-level board involvement.

FIELD SERVICE AGENTS

Field service agents provide a valuable service in Region 7 that should be continued.

The State Council on Competitive Government (SCCG) conducted a review of RESCs and prepared a January 9, 2004 report that, among a series of recommendations, proposed elimination of RESCs' field service agent positions. The SCCG's recommendation

as reported is based on the assumption that the elimination of such positions by five RESCs as a result of recent budget reduction activity provides evidence of a lack of need for field service agents. MGT consultant's review of RESC's historical and current assignments of responsibilities to these positions did not confirm the findings of the State Council on Competitive Government as regards RESC7. To the contrary, RESC 7s field service agents provide services to school districts on a wide range of educational topics which include, but are not limited to, the following areas:

- administrative issues;
- business procedures; and
- school finance.

The concept of Field Services is to provide districts with assistance that is data-driven, promotes the development and use of networks, values and sustains continuous learning and efficiently uses available technology.

The field service agent position is described by staff as an essential element in the RESCs organizational structure. RESC 7 employs veteran school administrators (e.g., superintendents, principals) as field service agents due to the strength of their backgrounds for the specific work involved in this position. As former principals/superintendents they are well-prepared to serve as mentors and advisors to key school district personnel.

After each legislative session, field service personnel conduct workshops for school boards and administrators. Support and technical assistance is provided to new superintendents in the areas of school finance, personnel issues, and all aspects of school district operations. On-site visits are made to help superintendents address unique problems that may arise in their districts. Field service agents are always available by phone and email.

The service center also conducts an annual regional superintendent's academy that focuses upon leadership skills, educational trends, and best practices in creating strong learning organizations. Field service agents also conduct all three levels of school board training through out the year. During the 2003-04 school year, 526 school board members were trained in seventy-six (76) districts. Three hundred and thirty one (331) board members received orientation training and 119 received team building training.

RESC 7 should continue the use of the field service agent position to support RESC 7 client school districts, their school boards, and superintendents. The implementation of this recommendation should result in continuing a service that the superintendents and executive RESC personnel state is vital. The rationale employed by the State Council on Competitive Government in its January 2004 report is based on an incomplete analysis of how other RESCs utilize the field service agent positions to meet assessed client needs.

FACILITIES MASTER PLAN

The RESC 7 does not have a facilities master plan that can be directly translated into immediate, mid-term and long-term projects. The lack of this master plan creates a series of difficulties including not having addressed long-term parking needs and raising questions regarding long-term retrofitting of facilities to meet the rapidly changing demands of modern technology.

A number of planning processes and documents can be used to build and maintain facilities that meet the changing needs of a region. A facilities master plan is the result of these planning efforts and becomes the organization's policy statement for allocating resources and developing alternatives for facility improvement. Facility master plans become increasingly important as a district's enrollment changes and facilities age. For an organization like RESC 7, a facilities master plan can be used to plan appropriately.

The lack of a facilities master plan hinders planning for growth. A facilities master plan is based on verified existing data, a complete understanding of both facilities conditions and the future implications of needs for the educational service center. An effective master plan includes an accurate inventory of each room, current internal room utilization, current external room utilization and assessments of all repairs, and renovations necessary for long-tem use.

Many larger sized organizations hire professionals to develop all or parts of the facilities master plan. RESC 7 has existing staff that can create a simple facilities master plan.

RESC 7 should conduct a facilities analysis and incorporate results into a long-range facilities master plan. The implementation of this recommendation should result in a useable long-range facilities use master plan. The plan should include specific recommendations that reflect the identification of deferred maintenance needs, documented cost estimates and a timeline to address these recommendations. Development of the plan should be coordinated with the board of directors. Once the plan has been completed, it should be reviewed and updated annually and approved by the board of directors.

UTILITY MANAGEMENT AUDIT

RESC 7 does not conduct utility management audits resulting in a lack of data to support decisions on energy management and other related potential cost-savings.

Utility management firms are often hired once per year to obtain all telephone, gas, electricity, water, long distance, and Internet records. They audit these records to identify potential savings. The records are also compared to records obtained from provider utility companies. Discrepancies in records often result in returned savings to the RESC. Typically, the utility management firms keep a percentage of identified savings as a fee for the services.

By not conducting these audits, the center may be missing opportunities for conserving expenditures that may be better used in delivering educational services to client.

RESC 7 should RESC 7 should conduct utility management audits**.** The implementation of this recommendation should result in conserving energy with resulting savings in expenditures. Utility audits for the service center and guidance to school districts on use of utility audits should produce much needed increased efficiency and economies for Region 7.

Typically organizations can secure assistance with utility management audits from a variety of sources. The RESC should contact the local public utilities service provider for assistance. If the public utilities provider does not offer this service then the RESC should turn to the private sector providers such as Honeywell Corporation of Johnston Controls Corporation. These types of firms usually offer the audit at no cost to the organization with optional retrofitting services paid for through identified savings as they occur.

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources. The results of the audits will vary, but often results in funds being returned to the service center through a reduction in utilities expenses.

HEAD START SELF-ASSESSMENT

RESC 7 conducted a self-assessment during the 2002–03 school year in order to assure compliance with 45 CFR 1304.51 (i)(1) of the Head Start Program Performance Standards; however, Region 7 has not developed an effective action plan to address its deficiencies.

The self assessment team was made up of one external consultant, coordinators and specialists from the program, school administrators, site staff, Policy Council members, parents, and grandparents. The self-assessment was done primarily to prepare for the Spring 2004 Head Start Federal PRISM review. This Head Start review resulted in

two areas of non-compliance: (1) all bus evacuation drills had not been done within 30 days of the start of the program year, and (2) five employees had not had physical examinations within 30 days of employment.

Bus evacuation drill must be done within 30 days of the start of the program year in order for the program to be fully compliant. In addition, employees must have physical examinations with 30 days of employment in order to be compliant.

While conducting a self-assessment is a positive step, necessary follow-up to address deficiencies must also be planned.

RESC 7 should review all findings listed in the 2004 Self Assessment and develop an action plan that includes timelines and cost projections to address areas of non-compliance. By reviewing the results of the self assessment, the service center will be able to correct and make adjustments to deficiencies in a timely manner. (Note: After the on-site reviews for this report, corrective action documents were sent to the federal agencies. RESC 7 received a written letter of resolution.)

CASH FLOW MODEL

RESC 7 does not have a simple cash flow model which takes advantage of its existing software.

Regional Education Service Center 7 has a detailed written cash management procedure, including daily deposit procedures and daily sales of workshop revenue. In addition to the bank depository operating and payroll accounts, excess funds are invested in (LOGIC) Local Government Investment Cooperative. This action conforms to good accounting practices and maximizes revenue by keeping idle cash invested in interest-bearing accounts. In addition, it shows intent to tax payers and participating school districts that RESC 7 is making every effort to show "greatest value" for every dollar. The Finance department appears to be maintaining adequate levels of operational cash.

Regional Education Service Center 7 has enjoyed a healthy fund balance for many years. The fund balance allows the RESC to cover any cash demands required by annual operations. Most funds are expenditure driven, thus requiring the expenditure of cash before TEA will reimburse the RESC. RESC financial personnel are unable to tell how close the cash demands come to exhausting the cash balance, but are confident that adequate cash supplies are always available. No cash flow model is in place.

Exhibit 7-4 is an example of a simple cash flow model that could be adapted for RESC 7 use.

RESC 7 should create a simple cash flow model using existing electronic spreadsheet software. A cash flow model will enable RESC 7 to predict its cash requirements for a year in advance. The model should recognize federal, state, and local revenues, payroll and accounts payable expenditures should also be included. Both revenue and expenditure patterns should be predicted using historical information. Any future receipt or expenditure anomalies should be entered into the model.

ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT

Region 7's Annual Financial Report is not prepared in a manner to receive a certificate of excellence award.

RESC 7's annual financial report is prepared by the RESC's auditors. This report includes the auditor's opinion letter and all of the necessary financial statements, footnote disclosures and other disclosures, to comply with current governmental accounting principles as promulgated by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) as well as reports required by the federal government relating to the Single Audit Act which mandates an independent financial and compliance audit of federal financial assistance programs. This report provides a picture of the overall financial position of the Center, but it lacks additional information that could be used to more effectively communicate how the financial

Exhibit 7-4
Sample Cash Flow Model

	July	August	September	October
Beginning Balance	$0	$1,446,250	$1,748,750	$577,750
County Receipts	2,493,750	75,000	75,000	75,000
State Receipts	262,500	1,387,500	0	1,387,500
Federal Receipts	150,000	150,000	170,000	170,000
Total Receipts	2,906,250	3,058,750	1,993,750	2,210,250
Payroll (Gross)	1,050,000	1,050,000	1,100,000	1,100,000
Payables	410,000	260,000	316,000	366,000
Total Expenditures	1,460,000	1,310,000	1,416,000	1,466,000
End Balance	**$1,446,250**	**$1,748,750**	**$577,750**	**$744,250**
	November	**December**	**January**	**February**
Beginning Balance	$744,250	$960,750	($260,250)	$2,468,750
County Receipts	75,000	75,000	4,125,000	75,000
State Receipts	1,387,500	0	0	1,575,000
Federal Receipts	170,000	170,000	170,000	170,000
Total Receipts	2,376,750	1,205,750	4,034,750	4,288,750
Payroll (Gross)	1,100,000	1,100,000	1,100,000	1,100,000
Payables	316,000	366,000	466,000	416,000
Total Expenditures	1,416,000	1,466,000	1,566,000	1,516,000
End Balance	**$960,750**	**($260,250)**	**$2,468,750**	**$2,772,750**
	March	**April**	**May**	**June**
Beginning Balance	$2,772,750	$1,651,750	$580,750	$1,059,750
County Receipts	75,000	75,000	75,000	75,000
State Receipts	0	0	1,500,000	0
Federal Receipts	170,000	170,000	170,000	170,000
Total Receipts	3,017,750	1,896,750	2,325,750	1,304,750
Payroll (Gross)	1,100,000	1,100,000	1,100,000	1,100,000
Payables	266,000	216,000	166,000	216,000
Total Expenditures	1,366,000	1,316,000	1,266,000	$1,316,000
End Balance	**$1,651,750**	**$580,750**	**$1,059,750**	**($11,250)**

Source: MGT of America, 2004.

activity for the fiscal year has impacted each Center's programs and services.

The Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) and the Association of School Business Officials (ASBO) provide recommended standards for Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports (CAFR). A governmental entity that meets these standards will receive a "Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting." To receive this type of reporting recognition, a center must publish an easily readable and efficiently organized comprehensive annual financial report.

However, the financial reports are not consistent with the guidelines that would qualify for the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting Award.

The Annual Financial Report is the final event in the annual planning and budgeting process as the organization completes the cycle and lays the foundation for the next budget process.

The requirements for an easily readable and efficiently organized comprehensive annual report include:

- **Introductory Section** - This section includes a letter from the chief financial officer that summarizes the fiscal operations and the strategic plan of the district, an organization overview, and clearly indicates the

Comprehensive Annual Financial Report is a report of the management of the RESC and that the management of the RESC is responsible for its preparation.

- **Financial Section** – This section includes:
  - The Independent Auditor's Report;
  - Management's Discussion and Analysis;
  - Government-Wide Financial Statements;
  - Fund Financial Statements;
  - Summary of Significant Accounting Policies;
  - Notes to the General Purpose Financial Statements; and
  - Combining Individual Fund Information and Other Supplementary Information.

- **Statistical Section** – This section includes selected financial and demographic information generally presented on a multi-year basis.

The overall intent of the CAFR should be to provide financial reports that demonstrate both fiscal and operational accountability.

RESC 7 should prepare future Annual Financial Reports in a manner consistent with the guidelines that would qualify the report to earn the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting. Information regarding the preparation of a CAFR, to include copies of the checklist used to review the financial reports can be obtained from GFOA by emailing a request to *CAFRProgram@gfoa.org*. RESC 4 has received a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting from GFOA and copies of its report could provide a format to be used.

The certificate of achievement is less important than the preparation of a Comprehensive Annual Financial Report that will more effectively communicate the financial position of the Center and relate the financial results with the original budget document.

The fee to seek a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting is $850.

FINANCIAL INDICATORS

RESC 7 did not meet two of the "Financial Integrity Rating System Relevant Indicators" for 2003–04 and is not monitored closely.

A material weakness was disclosed in the annual financial report filed with the TEA (Texas Education Agency). In addition, the undesignated and unreserved general fund balance was not within the acceptable limits set by (TEA) Texas Education Agency. The RESC 7 Board and administration should monitor the fund balances more closely. If it appears that a fund balance will exceed the limitations, the Board, on advice from the administration and fiscal officer, should designate the fund balance to pay for additional needs consistent with the Center's mission.

RESC 7's Corrective Action Plan for these items was included in the annual financial report filed with TEA. In addition, the RESC 7 Board of Directors is provided a written status report at each meeting addressing continued implementation of corrective action.

RESC 7 should monitor all "Financial Integrity Rating System Relevant Indicators" for the remainder of the fiscal year. Monitoring the indicators on a regular basis will reduce the risk of noncompliance. The Corrective Action Plan provided to the board of directors should provide adequate oversight. After the end of the Corrective Action Plan timeline, the RESC fiscal officers should periodically inform the executive director and the Board about ongoing compliance past the plan end date.

TECHNOLOGY FUNDING

RESC 7 has no effective plan in place to upgrade technology if state funds are not reinstated. A major problem facing most

RESCs is the loss of state funds for technology. RESC 7 has completed a comprehensive technology plan that calls for the replacement of a wide variety of technology equipment on a cyclical basis. However, without a funding plan to support the technology plan, RESC 7 and many other RESCs will be unable to replace their equipment.

This funding plan to support the technology equipment replacement plan is especially important because many organizations depend on RESC 7 for technology services. Region 7 provides voice and data connectivity to 52 districts, one charter school, and one college through RESC7NET, and RESC-based regional network supported by RESC 7. RESC7NET also provides video connectivity to 33 school districts, two Head Start offices and five colleges. In addition, RESC 7 offers technical assistance to schools for technical planning and for integrating technology planning into all campus and district plans.

Like many RESCs, RESC 7's equipment is at or near the end of its depreciation cycle and some is approaching projected end of life cycle. The effect of aging equipment is first a loss of dependability. Loss of signal for both voice and video would be devastating to participating districts, teachers and students. In addition, old equipment may not allow the use of newer software packages needed for up-to-date instruction for teachers and students.

RESC 7 should develop an alternate funding plan to restore technology funds through local sources if legislative action is not taken to restore funding levels back to the pre-June, 2003 levels for Texas RESCs. The core of the operations of all the RESCs is based on dependable electronic transmission of data and educational information. The loss of technology funds in June of 2003 may cause many RESCs to eliminate or reduce other educational services, or to rely on possible grant money to maintain and upgrade equipment. If the Regions are not successful in this endeavor, the result may be unreliable service and or poor quality data, voice and video transmission.

FISCAL IMPACT

Recommendation		2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	5-Year (Costs) or Savings	One-Time (Costs) or Savings
7-8	Seek the certificate of achievement for excellence in financial reporting.	($830)	($830)	($830)	($830)	($830)	($4,150)	
	Total	**($830)**	**($830)**	**($830)**	**($830)**	**($830)**	**($4,150)**	**$0**

CHAPTER 8:

MT. PLEASANT

CHAPTER 8

MOUNT PLEASANT

Regional Education Service Center (RESC) 8 is an intermediate educational unit that provides training, technical assistance, administrative support, and an array of other services as determined by the Legislature, the Commissioner of Education, and the needs of local school districts and charter schools. Historically, RESC 8 exists to provide assistance to small and medium-sized school districts.

RESC 8 is located in Mt. Pleasant, Texas approximately 140 miles northeast of Dallas, a major metropolitan area. RESC 8 serves 48 school districts (see **Exhibit 8-1**) and no charter schools. The member districts are scattered over approximately 6,400 square miles and 11 counties. Over 50,000 students are served along with approximately 4,353 teachers and 363 administrators. The student population is approximately 65 percent White, 11 percent Hispanic, and 23 percent African American. Almost 52 percent of the students are from economically disadvantaged homes. However, the student attendance rate of over 96 percent exceeds the State rate. The annual dropout rate is less than one percent.

RESC 8, as per the Texas Legislature, has these clearly defined purposes:

- assist school districts in improving student performance in each region of the system;
- enable school districts to operate more efficiently and economically; and
- implement initiatives assigned by the Legislature or the Commissioner of Education.

RESC 8 has 75 staff members, of which 45 are certified. The region has no satellite offices. The center's executive director, although in the position only one year, has a good working knowledge of the center because he was a superintendent of a member district prior to employment at the center. Presently, each of the 48 member districts has participants scheduled for training in fiscal year 2005. In the last year, RESC 8 conducted approximately 1,020 workshops with over 20,000 participants.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- RESC 8 keeps a well-maintained facility in a cost-effective manner.
- RESC 8 offers a wide range of quality special education trainings and assistance to schools serving students with special needs.
- RESC 8 effectively collaborates with other service centers to exchange best practice information and coordinate conferences and trainings.
- RESC 8's inclusive model effectively integrates special education with regular education to assist all students in receiving their instruction in the least restrictive environment.
- In an effort to appropriately place students, RESC 8 is taking a lead role in identifying and providing districts with an innovative, researched-based program for helping educators learn new methods of recognizing, understanding, and working with students with different learning styles, strengths, and weaknesses.
- Region 8 developed a unique formative, online assessment program which provides educators, students, and parents with immediate feedback on whether students are learning the concepts being taught.

Exhibit 8-1
Region 8 Member Districts

	District Name	Enrollment
1	Atlanta	1,808
2	Avery	370
3	Avinger	172
4	Bloomberg	245
5	Chapel Hill	783
6	Chisum	837
7	Clarksville	1,015
8	Como-Pickton	734
9	Cooper	865
10	Cumby	354
11	Daingerfield-Lone Star	1,485
12	Dekalb	901
13	Detroit	476
14	Fannindel	227
15	Harts Bluff	408
16	Hooks	1,048
17	Hubbard	73
18	Hughs Springs	898
19	Jefferson	1,333
20	Leary	105
21	Liberty-Eylau	2,467
22	Linden-Kildare	855
23	Malta	115
24	Marietta	44
25	Maud	438
26	McLeod	480
27	Miller Grove	235
28	Mount Pleasant	4,474
29	Mount Vernon	1,388
30	New Boston	1,288
31	North Hopkins	355
32	North Lamar	3,027
33	Paris	3,551
34	Pewitt	840
35	Pittsburg	2,145
36	Pleasant Grove	1,830
37	Prairiland	979
38	Queen City	1,105
39	Red Lick	338
40	Redwater	1,046
41	Rivercrest	675
42	Roxton	233
43	Saltillo	236
44	Simms	542
45	Sulpher Bluff	234
46	Sulpher Springs	3,748
47	Texarkana	5,071
48	Winfield	137

Source: RESC 8 Business Office, 2004.

- RESC 8 effectively collaborates with Texas A&M University to offer an effective ESL/Bilingual certification program for teachers and others interested in obtaining graduate credit.
- RESC 8 assists and supports districts in implementing a Parental Involvement Program in a timely, meaningful manner.
- RESC 8 has designed and is implementing a systemic, research-based curriculum alignment process.
- RESC 8 collects detailed information on all activities and work performed by all staff members, and compiles it in the Balanced Scorecard document for its active use by the core group.
- RESC 8 maintains detailed personnel policies, procedures, and employee records.
- The RESC 8's Accounting Department implements a paperless accounting system with effective internal controls.
- RESC 8 provides a high quality, well-managed cooperative at no cost to participating members.
- RESC 8 has converted to a paperless system through the adoption of RSCCC 2000.
- RESC 8 uses an effective security system to closely monitor the building and the visitors to the building.
- RESC 8 actively seeks and wins technology grants to provide services to member districts.
- RESC 8's Curriculum and Instructional Technology Department provides a Certificate of Competency Program for participating administrators and teachers to ensure teachers and administrators have a quality method to evaluate technology literacy.
- RESC 8 technical services use RSCCC effectively to provide quality technical services.

FINDINGS

- The current policy manual for RESC 8 is outdated.
- RESC 8 does not seek options for school boards to contract with private vendors for any level-two school board training.
- RESC 8 board agendas and meeting packets, though complete, do not have a consent calendar.
- The RESC 8 Board of Directors does not conduct a self-evaluation.
- The RESC 8 Board of Directors does not have standing committees.
- RESC 8 has a number of areas where energy efficiency should be improved such as a lack of utility and energy saving devices.
- The RESC 8 does not have a facilities master plan that can be directly translated into immediate, mid-term and long-term projects.
- RESC 8 does not conduct utility management audits resulting in a lack of data to support decisions on energy management and other related potential cost-savings.
- RESC 8 strategies have not been successful in recruiting qualified minority applicants.
- RESC 8 uses building rental fees and usage fees to accumulate funds to pay for facility costs. However, there is no established fund for major future system replacement, building renovation, or replacement costs.
- RESC 8 does not have the same fiscal year as all of its member districts which results in some inefficiencies.
- RESC 8 is not making the best use of funds on its investments.
- RESC 8 has not developed and implemented an effective cash flow model.
- RESC 8's annual financial report is prepared by the RESC's auditors; however, it is not prepared in a format eligible to receive a certificate of achievement award.

- Small districts often lack the personnel and resources needed to efficiently perform all required business functions. RESC 8 assists some of the districts in the area of finance and bookkeeping. However, there are other districts that could potentially benefit from additional assistance in this area.
- RESC 8 needs to expand its practice of contracting specialist services.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 8-1: Subscribe to a policy update service to keep the RESC policy manual current.** Subscribing to a policy manual update service will enable the regional education service center board and administration to operate the center with the most current policies and administrative procedures. Typically, administrators and board members are trained and enroll in in-service activities that keep them current with legal and regulatory changes. However, the policies are not updated to keep pace with the changes.

- **Recommendation 8-2: Seek options for school boards to contract with private vendors for level-two training.** Although RESC 8 appears to be providing board training in an efficient and cost-effective manner, local boards should have the option of outsourcing for any or all training. Although requiring a change in legislation, preventing sole source contracting helps drive costs down and encourages creative approaches to providing training services.

- **Recommendation 8-3: Include a consent calendar on the board agenda.** The use of a consent calendar will allow the board to group routine items into one motion and proceed on to more important issues. Should any board member wish to discuss an item in more detail or act on it separately, the item can be removed from the consent calendar and added to the regular agenda. As a result of using a consent calendar, the board will be able to shorten the length of the meeting or spend more time on "mission critical" issues.

- **Recommendation 8-4: Provide for an annual self-evaluation of the board.** Providing feedback, both formally and informally, is one of the "basics" in any improvement process. Structured feedback in the form of an evaluation instrument can supplement honest ongoing dialogue and discussion.

- **Recommendation 8-5: Establish a standing committee structure.** Implementing this recommendation should result in a careful analysis of potential board committee activity designed to promote the work of RESC 8 and support important planning activity. The implementation of this recommendation can lay the groundwork for developing Board of Directors infrastructure to deal with issues related to the perception that important education stakeholders do not adequately understand the nature and purpose of the RESC organization and related programs and services provided the school districts of Texas (this perception was gained in the initial briefing of consultants and further confirmed in interviews with various RESC personnel). This is further supported by the fact that the Texas Legislature prohibits education-related personnel from lobbying for legislative support and funding. This recommendation is based upon the premise that current RESCs and their boards are not proactive in promoting RESC value nor are there established working relationships with local school district boards to identify effective means of educating the

publics. This recommendation may lead to the development of one or more of the following committees:

- strategic planning;
- cooperatives' development;
- finance;
- facilities; and/or
- external relations.

This recommendation should be implemented through the following steps:

- The executive director should review the recommendation with the Board of Directors;
- Once agreed upon, the Board of Directors should direct the Executive Director to prepare the necessary policy and procedures to guide the proposed committee(s) development and activity;
- Potential committee membership should be identified with attention to involvement of member school district representation;
- The executive director should identify a RESC liaison for each established committee; and
- The chair of the Board of Directors should appoint a three member committee assigned the task of implementing the recommendation—that is, preparing a plan for an RESC board external relations program.

The effective implementation of this recommendation can contribute to making stakeholders informed supporters of the important services and program work of RESC 8 and provide for policy-level board involvement.

- **Recommendation 8-6: Install energy and utility saving devices throughout the regional education service center.** By initiating an energy and utility improvement process, the annual operating costs for utilities for Regional Education Service Center will improve. Automated switches (including direct digital controls on HVAC equipment) and valves lower utility consumption.

- **Recommendation 8-7: Conduct a facilities analysis and incorporate results into a long-range facilities master plan.** The implementation of this recommendation should result in a useable long-range facilities use master plan. The plan should include specific recommendations that reflect the identification of deferred maintenance needs, documented cost estimates and a timeline to address these recommendations. Development of the plan should be coordinated with the Board of Directors. Once the plan has been completed, it should be reviewed and updated annually and approved by the Board of Directors.

- **Recommendation 8-8: RESC 8 should conduct utility management audits.** The implementation of this recommendation should result in conserving energy with resulting savings in expenditures. Utility audits for the service center and guidance to school districts on use of utility audits should produce much needed increased efficiency and economies for Region 8**.** Typically organizations can secure assistance with utility management audits from a variety of sources. The RESC should contact the local public utilities service provider for assistance. If the public utilities provider does not offer this service then the RESC should turn to the private sector providers such as Honeywell Corporation of Johnston Controls Corporation. These type firms usually offer the audit at no cost to the organization with optional retrofitting services paid for through identified savings as they occur.

- **Recommendation 8-9: Intensify efforts to recruit qualified minority applicants for job openings.** By intensifying the recruitment of qualified minority populations for job openings at the center, the staff make-up will more accurately reflect the ethnicity of the community it serves. Because there are language differences in the community, this should result in better communications that will reduce misunderstandings and provide an environment where minority students have the best possible opportunities to succeed. This should result in a more diverse staff with better communications and an improved professional image within the community.

- **Recommendation 8-10: Transfer rental fees, and a portion of the usage fees, charged to the programs into a sinking fund each year to replace and repair major building components over the life of the building.** The establishment and use of a sinking fund will enable RESC 8 to provide a funding resource for future major building renovations, additions, or major component replacement. The space rental fees are probably among the best revenue sources for this sinking fund.

- **Recommendation 8-11: Ensure that RESC 8's fiscal year is consistent with its member school districts.** Having the regional education service center and their member districts with the same fiscal year will simplify the timing of fiscal reporting and make comparative analyses easier. Because of legislative and TEA functions, a September 1 – August 31 fiscal year would probably be easier to implement and maintain than a July 1 – June 30 fiscal year.

- **Recommendation 8-12: Invest excess cash in a higher paying investment account.** By investing excess cash in a different investment vehicle, the Regional Education Service Center will increase their earnings on investment. Probably the best investment vehicle for local governments is the state investment pool. This pool invests excess cash from many local governments and is able to improve the economies of scale for investing.

- **Recommendation 8-13: Create a simple cash flow model using existing electronic spreadsheet software.** A cash flow model will enable RESC 8 to predict its cash requirements for a year in advance. The model should recognize federal, state, and local revenues. Payroll and accounts payable expenditures should also be included. Both revenue and expenditure patterns can be predicted using historical information. Any future receipt or expenditure anomalies should be entered into the model.

- **Recommendation 8-14: Prepare future Annual Financial Reports in a manner consistent with the guidelines that would qualify the report to earn the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting.** Information regarding the preparation of a CAFR, to include copies of the checklist used to review the financial reports can be obtained from GFOA by emailing a request to CAFRProgram@gfoa.org. RESC 4 has received a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting from GFOA and copies of its report could provide a format to be used. The achievement of the certificate is less important than the preparation of a comprehensive annual financial report that will more effectively communicate the financial

position of the Center and relate the financial results with the original budget document.

- **Recommendation 8-15: Conduct a feasibility study to determine if a finance cooperative organization pattern for small districts would be beneficial**. Personnel from within the Finance division can conduct a study to determine which districts have difficulties handling financial and business affairs because of the lack of or a shortage of qualified personnel on staff. Once this determination has been made, the districts identified can be invited to an information sharing meeting. A task force can be established to determine if a finance cooperative could effectively be developed and which finance services can be offered. This study can include reviewing the option of utilizing a large district(s) capacity to provide a group of small school districts with some or all fiscal services. This can result in small districts outsourcing identified services to the larger district and reducing costs and increasing efficiencies.

- **Recommendation 8-16: Continue the practice of contracting specialists.** The salary and benefit package that would be necessary to attract specialists to region 8 would significantly exceed the current costs incurred through contracting.

DETAILED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

WELL-MAINTAINED FACILITY

RESC 8 keeps a highly clear and well-maintained facility in a cost-effective manner.

The facility use and management functions for RESC 8 are administered by the executive director. A total of 1.75 FTE custodial-maintenance employees are assigned to the executive director who assist him in the day-to-day maintenance tasks. The executive director oversees the planning, design, and construction of new facilities when needed. The maintenance employees provide ongoing light maintenance services and oversee contracted services. RESC 8 uses a number of contracted services for facilities maintenance, including:

- contracted landscaping and spraying services,
- contracted HVAC repair services,
- contracted plumbing repair services, and
- contracted electrical repair services.

The existing facility complex has approximately 42,496 square feet. It is comprised of two main buildings connected by a covered walkway. The main building is the administrative complex and the other is a staff development, or training complex. The administrative building has several enclosed private offices, but most of the work spaces in the building are large, flexible spaces containing modular office partitions. The employees in the building are physically located in spaces that allow them to work as teams. They are typically located near other related work teams that operate under the supervision of their common administrator (e.g. the finance personnel work in one section of the building while the instructional personnel work in a separate section of the building). Support service spaces are commonly located centrally to both the main building and the staff development complex (e.g., the print shop is located in the middle of the building with central access by all departments. Some departments needing a certain degree of privacy and security (technology and data processing) are located in their own area.

The second main building has a number of training rooms of various sizes. Some of the rooms are divided by operable acoustical panel walls that can be opened to provide large group spaces. All office areas, support spaces, and training rooms have up-to-date technology and electrical infrastructure.

RESC 8 has 1.75 FTE day custodians that provide cleaning and grounds services during the day when the center is occupied. In addition, the custodians provide light maintenance services during normal working hours. Electrical, plumbing, heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) services are contracted out. Historically, contracting out for maintenance services has kept operating costs down in governmental organizations.

The building is very clean and the grounds are mowed and trimmed. All bushes and shrubs are pruned and in good shape. All lighting, HVAC systems, and plumbing systems are in excellent shape. The custodians are considered a part of the staff and are very knowledgeable about the building operations. Based on visits to many educational support service buildings across the United States, the Region 8 facility was among the cleanest and best-maintained.

Accomplishment: RESC 8 keeps a well-maintained facility in a cost-effective manner.

SPECIAL EDUCATION TRAINING

RESC 8 provides quality technical assistance and support for students, parents, teachers and schools who serve students identified through special education as severe/profound, deaf, blind, medically fragile, and autistic. RESC 8 staff spend, on average, three days per week on-site, in classrooms providing help and guidance in many areas including, but not limited to, physical environment in the classroom, student learning environment, lesson plans, activities and routines, student participation, collaboration with other school personnel, and documentation.

An annual survey of parents who have children with special needs is conducted by the service center to determine useful and appropriate teacher and parent trainings. Trainings are offered in behavior management, communication systems for children who are non-verbal or verbal, IEP meetings and processes of special education law, sensory integration, mobility, assessment, vocational education and transition issues, health issues/seizures, feeding and positioning/lifting and transferring, alternative therapies, Parents as Partners with the school, and assistive technology.

Another successful program is called, TRIP – Training, Retaining, and Informing Professionals. It is a unique program developed and implemented by the service center in collaboration with Texas A & M University. The program is designed to train and retrain staff that work with students who have been identified Severe and Profoundly Handicapped. The purpose of the program is to reduce the high turnover of teachers who work in this field of functional special education. Over 40 teachers have enrolled in the program since its inception three years ago.

Accomplishment: RESC 8 offers a wide range of quality special education trainings and assistance to parents of and schools serving students with special needs.

COLLABORATION WITH OTHER RESCs

RESC 8 effectively collaborates with other service centers to exchange best practice information and coordinate conferences and trainings.

Under the Texas Behavior Support Initiative (2001), Region 8 Regional Education Service Center provides the following assistance to school districts at no cost:

- a minimum of two (2) days of team training to build skills in using campus data to develop and implement a systemwide behavior/discipline management plan with substitutes and/or stipends provided;
- a minimum of one (1) day of additional training for district implementation specialists on mentoring and data collection with substitutes and/or stipends provided;
- a minimum of two (2) days of on-site campus technical assistance;

- supply materials and resources to support implementation; and
- make available telephone/email technical assistance during the implementation process.

RESC 8 employs two people to assist schools with behavior management and autism. Consultants visit schools, on average, four (4) days per week. Last year, 115 visits were made to schools between August 22, 2003 and May 4, 2004. Behavior consultants collaborate with other center staff to coordinate basic behavior principles of teaching strategies and classroom routines with behavior management techniques.

In addition, the service center collaborates with other service centers in planning for conferences and trainings. Information pertaining to best practices is exchanged on a regular and on-going basis. Coordination with other service centers has resulted in the implementation of legislative mandates in a timely, cost-efficient manner for local school districts.

Technical assistance for schools and districts that serve children with autism is also provided. During 2003–04, 118 students were identified with autism. The service center helps districts meet timelines for evaluations, writing assessments based upon IEP goals, and helping district staff become more proficient in the screening and evaluation of children with autism disorders. Workshops and trainings are offered to campus autism assessment teams based upon an annual needs assessment data.

Each year, the staff completes an action plan that includes action/activities, resources, implementation dates, and person responsible to determine whether they have met their expected outcomes.

Accomplishment: RESC 8 effectively collaborates with other service centers to exchange best practice information and coordinate conferences and trainings.

INTEGRATION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND REGULAR EDUCATION

RESC 8's inclusive model effectively integrates special education with regular education and is used as a foundation for helping all students receive their instruction in the least restrictive environment.

RESC 8 has developed a Web diagram/model to demonstrate how a team approach is used to meet the federal and state mandate requiring that all students, regardless of their handicap or disability, be afforded access to the general curriculum.

Service center consultants work with districts that have exceeded the statewide average of children being served in self-contained settings (Texas 125 percent report). The service center received a $170,000 grant to help teachers improve upon their teaching strategies to meet the needs of these students in regular education classrooms. Districts are also given help with curriculum alignment, concept based teaching, and the development of content units containing modifications and accommodations to meet this requirement.

Workshops and trainings are integrated across the content areas to ensure special education teachers have knowledge of the general education curriculum, and to ensure general education teachers and administrators have knowledge of the unique needs of special education children. Workshops and trainings are also coordinated with ESL/Bilingual, Gifted and Talented, Low Incidence, Behavior Management, and Multi-Cultural programs. An electronic Listserv enables special education and regular education teachers to remain informed on legislative updates and trainings offered to school districts.

Accomplishment: RESC 8's inclusive model effectively integrates special education with regular education to assist all students in receiving their instruction in the least restrictive environment.

TEACHING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

RESC 8 provides professional development and trainings for teachers and assist them to implement interventions designed to address diverse learners before they are referred to special programs. By having such a strong prevention model, the region is reducing the chance of misplacing students with learning disabilities.

The service center helps schools analyze data to make appropriate educational decisions for students who have unique learning needs. Data are used to guide appropriate referral processes. Nationally renowned experts are provided by the service center to help educators plan for and deliver acceptable educational programs for multi-cultural needs students.

Another professional development program and service delivery program offered to schools is called Schools Attuned. Schools Attuned helps educators acquire the knowledge and skills to meet the diverse learning needs of students in kindergarten through twelfth grade. Teachers receive thirty five (35) hours of training followed by ten (10) hours of follow-up, and ongoing online learning support. The project, in part, was funded from a $170,000 grant through the Brown Foundation. Six hundred and forty (640) educators will be trained during the summer of 2004. Partnerships with several colleges and universities have been formed for those who want college credit for the trainings. RESC 8 has exchanged information and ideas about Schools Attuned with other regional services centers throughout the state.

Accomplishment: In an effort to appropriately place students, RESC 8 is taking a lead role in identifying and providing districts with an innovative, researched-based program for helping educators learn new methods of recognizing, understanding, and working with students with different learning styles, strengths, and weaknesses.

ONLINE STUDENT ASSESSMENT

RESC 8 has developed an online, criterion-referenced, formative assessment of knowledge and skills program for use by teachers and students which gives specific feedback on student performance. The program, referred to as FAKSONLINE, is designed to help teachers determine those instructional areas in which students are not proficient. FAKSONLINE measures student proficiency of the tested TEKS at the Student Expectation Level.

Assessments may be customized by the teacher to measure TEKS and Student Expectation Levels. In addition, the program provides campus and district administrators with formative data for curriculum planning and evaluation. Educators can immediately adjust their content and/or strategies based upon the data given. Parents are able to access the results of their child's reports online.

Accomplishment: Region 8 developed a unique formative, online assessment program which provides educators, students, and parents with immediate feedback on whether students are learning the concepts being taught.

BILINGUAL COOPERATIVE

RESC 8 coordinates an effective ESL/Bilingual cooperative that serves all 48 school districts in the region. Services provided through the cooperative by the center include: A Language Proficiency Assessment Committee, Language Proficiency Assessment Manual, an Oral Language Proficiency Test, and an Observation Protocol training program.

Staff development sessions are held throughout the year for regular education and ESL/Bilingual personnel. They focus on instructional strategies, program content/design, certification assistance and training for the ESL TExES and TOPT preparation, and parental involvement. All professional development is based upon scholarly research and data from test scores, observations, and needs assessments.

RESC 8 collaborates with Texas A&M University to provide graduate coursework in Bilingual/Bicultural Education with the purpose of attaining the urgently needed certified bilingual teachers in the region.

Funding sources for the Bilingual/ESL program include:

- Bilingual/ESL Cooperative - $48,710
- Title III Shared Service Arrangement 28 member districts - $ 52,440
- Title III ELA state money for compliance assistance - $25,000
- Special collaborative with TEA - $50,000

Accomplishment: RESC 8 effectively collaborates with Texas A&M University to offer an effective ESL/Bilingual certification program for teachers and others interested in obtaining graduate credit.

PARENT PARTNERSHIPS

RESC 8 facilitates an effective Regional Network for parents and school districts to assist districts in developing partnerships in which parents, students, and the schools share the responsibility for increased student achievement, provide annual workshops on helping schools and parents meet the requirements in the law, review effective and ineffective strategies for communicating with families, address barriers to family involvement and assist participants in identifying strategies to overcome these barriers, provide strategies for families to use in support of their children's learning at school, and create and find effective family involvement programs that meet individual district needs.

To help districts increase parental involvement, the service center hosted a Parental Involvement Conference this year that offered parents and others a variety of workshops in areas such as brain development, financial aid, strategies to help students succeed in math, reading, legal issues regarding *No Child Left Behind*, sexual harassment, positive discipline, and numerous other topics. Many of the workshops were offered in Spanish as well as English.

The service center uses a strategic plan to guide activities for parental involvement. The plan includes; activities, planned results, performance measures, timelines, and person(s) responsible. Most staff in the center are responsible for one or more activities.

Parent surveys and needs assessments are conducted to determine the type of assistance most needed from the center. In addition, a Parent Involvement Program Evaluation is conducted for district and campus planning.

Accomplishment: RESC 8 supports districts in implementing a Parental Involvement Program in a timely, meaningful manner.

CURRICULUM ALIGNMENT

RESC 8 designed and is implementing a systemic, research-based curriculum alignment process. The service center, in partnership with the National Educational Resources, Inc. and Dr. H. Lynn Erickson, provides districts with the Curriculum Developer, an electronic system to develop, implement, and assess the local curriculum and its alignment to state and local standards. In addition, the service center has designed a systemic, research-based model in which the curriculum alignment process is developed and implemented. All of the different programs and services provided by the service center are incorporated within the model. Teaching units are developed across grade level and content areas and are designed to meet the federal requirements for *No Child Left Behind*, and the state accountability requirements (TAKS).

Accomplishment: RESC 8 has designed and is implementing a systemic, research-based curriculum alignment process.

BALANCED SCORECARD

RESC 8 collects detailed information on all activities and work performed by all staff members, and compiles it in the Balanced

Scorecard document for its active participation in the core group.

All RESC 8 employees maintain a detailed log of their activities, phone calls, emails, and contacts. These are documented in 15-minute intervals. The service center uses a Quarterly Balanced Scorecard Report to determine if the goals and objectives in the strategic plan are being met. The Balanced Scorecard shows, by month, the number of individuals who received training, the number of contact hours of training delivered, the number of consulting contacts, the number of hours of consulting delivered, the numbers of students served, the number of parents served, the percent of PID errors, the number of Web site hits, the ratio of contacts/contact hours per FTE, the number of hours employees of the service center spent in trainings, and the percentage of workshops utilizing instructional technology.

RESC 8 participates in the Education Service Centers of Texas Core Group. The purpose of the group is to provide a structure for the education service center staff to network and focus on common issues related to curriculum, instruction, assessment and accountability. Regular meetings are conducted every month. Face to face meetings are scheduled every other month and videoconferencing sessions are scheduled in the alternate months.

Accomplishment: Region 8 collects detailed information on all activities and work performed by all staff members, and compiles it in the Balanced Scorecard document for its active use by the core group.

PERSONNEL POLICIES

RESC 8 maintains detailed personnel policies, procedures, and employee records.

RESC 8 posts all job openings on bulletin boards, the service center's Web site, the Texas Workforce Commission, and TAMU-Texarkana and Commerce until the position is filled.

RESC 8 has written job descriptions for each position. Interview questions are developed based upon the skills and knowledge required to fill the position. Interviews with prospective employees are conducted by committees made up of people who work in the particular area of expertise for the position being filled.

Also, the center conducts new employee orientation for all new staff. An Employee Handbook containing in-house forms and procedures is reviewed and given to each new employee. All employees are required to sign an Employee Agreement form. The agreement stipulates the terms of employment, compensation, duties, performance, duration of position, termination procedures, and resignation procedures.

Annual, written staff appraisals are conducted on all service center employees. Performance appraisals are based upon the following elements: 1) written job descriptions, 2) direct observation of the staff member's performance by his/her supervisor(s) and departmental director, 3) a goal/objective oriented system of performance, and 4) appraisal conference(s) between the staff member and departmental director.

The results of staff appraisals are used in making decisions about staff promotions, transfers, and dismissals, and in planning appropriate staff development activities. The executive director periodically advises the board of the status of the staff appraisal system.

The service center uses four salary schedules: 1) administrative, 2) consultants, field service agents and coordinators, 3) support staff, and 4) maintenance. Salaries are administered in accordance with the salary schedule approved by the Board of Directors upon the recommendation of the executive director. Placement on a pay grade and step is contingent upon the position, education, and experience. Detailed records pertaining to leave requests, comp hours, overtime hours, jury duty, non-paid leave requests, and personal days are maintained by the business office.

RESC 8 promotes collaboration and a "team" oriented approach to completing tasks and delivering programs and services.

Accomplishment: RESC 8 maintains detailed personnel policies, procedures, and employee records.

PAPERLESS ACCOUNTING SYSTEM

The RESC 8's Accounting Department implements a paperless accounting system with effective internal controls.

RESC 8 has implemented a series of internal controls in its accounting system. Part of the internal controls includes a conscientious effort to create a "paperless" system. There are both policies and procedures for a number of accounting functions. The staff who receives cash does not deposit cash and accounts receivable (A/R) staff is different from staff assigned to accounts payable (A/P). The staff responsible for bank reconcilement is never the staff depositing cash. Purchasing staff uses an automated system requiring two signatures. Users with proper security clearance levels may access financial data corresponding with their level of responsibility. Specific staff is responsible for automated system backups. Daily backups are placed in a fireproof vault. Cross-training is required of staff assigned to A/R, A/P, and payroll (P/R). Timesheets for all non-exempt employees have to have signature approval by their respective supervisors. It is unusual to have so much of the accounting system operating in a paperless fashion. Many systems across the United States claim to be paperless, when in fact, a great deal of their operation is not.

Accomplishment: Region 8's Accounting Department implements a paperless accounting system with effective internal controls.

PURCHASING COOPERATIVE

RESC 8 provides a high quality, well managed cooperative at no cost to participating members.

The Texas Purchasing System (TIPS) is sponsored by the Region 8 Education Service Center and is located in Mt. Pleasant, Texas. TIPS is available for use by all public and private schools, colleges, universities, cities, counties, and other governmental entities in the State of Texas. Vendors in TIPS have been competitively awarded contracts to provide the best pricing, terms and conditions available to similar customers. Vendors and participating entities both benefit from this practice. If a vendor is successful competing for a TIPS contract, the vendor can avoid the time and expense of going through a competitive process for each individual entity. The participating entity also avoids the time and expense of going through the competitive process. The purpose of TIPS is to:

- provide school districts and other governmental entities opportunities for greater efficiency and economy in acquiring goods and services;
- take advantage of purchasing procedures to insure the most competitive contracts;
- provide competitive price solicitation and bulk purchasing;
- provide quick and efficient delivery of goods and services;
- equalize purchasing power for small entities;
- maintain credibility and confidence in business procedures; and
- assist entities in maintaining the essential controls for budget and accounting purposes.

TIPS does not charge any membership fees for participating entities. The total cost of the TIPS program is funded through a fee paid by the participating vendors that is based on actual sales.

The TIPS Cooperative is a best practice model that other districts outside Region 8 should consider joining or other centers should emulate.

Accomplishment: RESC 8 provides a high quality, well-managed cooperative at no cost to participating members.

ELECTRONIC REQUISITION SYSTEM

In July 2003, Region 8 was the first service center to use the capability of the RSCCC 2000 to convert to a totally paperless Requisition/Purchase Order system. This has afforded the center the ability to have real time financial information literally at the director's and consultant's fingertips, and at the same time, reduce cost and eliminate bottlenecks created by purchase orders being misplaced.

Financial Services has contracted with data processing for training and technical services related to the RSCCC 2000 conversion. The result has been a smooth and efficient transition to the new operating system. The RSCCC 2000 is excellent software, but as is always the case, software is no better than the knowledge and training of the people using it.

Region 8's recognition of the potential increases in operating efficiencies afforded to them by the adoption of the updated RSCCC 2000 led them to contract with data processing within the center. The result was a rapid and seamless transition resulting in reduced work loads and improved communications within the center and improved services to the districts.

Having a Texas specific software package that is constantly upgraded to provide both student data and business applications for local and state reporting in an efficient and timely manner is a reality not realized in many states.

Accomplishment: RESC 8 has converted to a paperless system through the adoption of RSCCC 2000.

RESC SECURITY SYSTEM

RESC 8 has the ability to monitor hallways, entrances and exits to the building, offices of administrators, shipping area, and the business office. They have installed a security camera system including both Web cameras and those that interface with the client server. There are 20 security cameras installed. Several staff members are able, while sitting at their desks, to view the camera shots. In addition, the cameras are connected to a videotaping system. These tapes may be reviewed later, if needed. The two outside doors, where deliveries are made, have doorbells. Delivery personnel ring the bell, and staff meet them to accept deliveries.

The main consultant office area of RESC 8 was, a year ago, closed to "through" traffic. The doors to the common hallways were closed with signs saying that the area is only open to RESC 8 employees. While school staff occasionally do need to work with staff in their offices, closing these doors cut out 90 percent of traffic through these areas.

There is a personnel desk are at each of the outside doors, except for the north entrance to the new conference center. However, the receptionists in the new building run the client interface all the time, so they can monitor visitors. These staff are able to direct visitors to the appropriate areas, thus keeping to a minimum, visitors in inappropriate areas of the building. All entrances to the building have monitors that announce where meetings are located, with maps posted as to their location. This keeps visitors from wandering into inappropriate spaces.

The business office is locked if no personnel are present, and there are very limited keys to the "vault" where the cash is kept.

RESC 9 contracts with Advance Alarm System for an electronic monitoring service. A code is required to enter the building after it is locked for the night. An alarm sounds in the building, and the security company receives an alarm message if anyone enters the building that does not enter the code. The local police department responds to a call from the security company.

The majority of Texas RESCs are in use on a 24-7 basis, and as a result security is a significant issue. Region 8's security system

is low visibility with state-of-the art equipment and represents a best practice system for other regions to emulate.

Accomplishment: RESC 8 uses an effective security system to closely monitor the building and the visitors to the building.

TECHNOLOGY GRANTS

RESC 8 actively seeks and wins technology grants to provide services to member districts.

RESC 8 Curriculum and Instructional Technology Department is typically involved in providing the following services to participating districts:

- evaluation of district plans for e-Rate and Title II-D;
- provision of a software preview plan;
- provision of assistance in grant writing;
- provision for collaborative communities;
- discounted subscription services;
- technical assistance; and
- comprehensive district evaluations for assistance in technology planning.

RESC 8 is a member of the Northeast Texas Regional Education Telecommunications Network (NTRETN). The purpose of this consortium is to help plan, coordinate, and facilitate the cooperative development and operation of a regional integrated telecommunications network. This network is designed to connect schools with each other and with universities, and other organizations and agencies who work with school-aged youngsters.

In June of 2003, state funding for technology was eliminated for the RESC 8 Curriculum and Instructional Technology Department. The loss to the center was $240,000.

The telecommunications department provides services, security, and hardware to the center and districts. Current services that are being provided are:

- Internet services to 46 school districts;
- Internet email services to all staff at each school district;
- domain name services (DNS);
- security services;
- filtering services;
- video services; and
- support and consultation service.

To offset the impact of the loss of state funding, Region 8 successfully wrote a competitive Target grant to provide additional online professional development, administrative training, stipends for training and the purchase of hardware and software. By the end of this two and half year grant, teachers and administrators will be able to demonstrate technology literacy and the ability to integrate technology to improve student achievement in the core content areas.

E-Rate technology grants are a major source of improving a district's hardware. RESC 8 not only evaluates and recommends plans, but also works in concert with district administrators and teams of teachers by providing sample plans, access to surveys, and literature to assist in the planning process. E-rate is a federal grant based on the percentage of students receiving free and reduced meals at school. The money can be used by the school districts for purchasing new hardware or improving existing hardware.

Grant writing is usually accomplished as an above and beyond activity that takes place in after-hours. The MIS staff is commended for their extra effort to replace lost state funding to maintain quality service to districts, teachers, and students.

Accomplishment: RESC 8 actively seeks and wins technology grants to provide services to member districts.

TECHNOLOGY LITERACY CERTIFICATION

RESC 8 Curriculum and Instructional Technology Department provides a Certificate of Competency Program for participating

administrators and teachers to ensure teachers and administrators have a quality method to evaluate technology literacy.

RESC 8 Curriculum and Instructional Technology Department provides members with a "Certificate of Competency" Program. The program provides administrators and teachers with a method to evaluate technology literacy and the effectiveness of the teacher's technology integration skills. Teachers submit a portfolio containing 14 artifacts and a local administrative evaluation. This is also a collaborative project whereby teachers work in concert to create online products.

The state of Texas prides itself on having an educational system that bases decisions on data. The Certificate of Competency Program represents a best practice that should be emulated by other Texas RESCs.

Accomplishment: RESC 8's Curriculum and Instructional Technology Department provides a Certificate of Competency Program for participating administrators and teachers to ensure teachers and administrators have a quality method to evaluate technology literacy.

QUALITY TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

RESC 8 Technical Services use RSCCC effectively to provide quality technical services.

RSCCC is a Texas-based product and is by far one of the most widely used school administrative software packages in the state. It offers a comprehensive range of powerful business and student administrative applications written specifically for Texas educational agencies. RSCCC complies with all state and federal guidelines and reporting standards including the PEIMS database. Currently, there are over 700 school districts that are clients of RSCCC. With this software package, school districts have a total in-house solution. Regional Education Service District 8 Technical Services RSCCC application is designed as a client-server application and runs on Windows 2000 or 2003 Server. The current database engine is version seven of SYBASE's SQL Anywhere. Client workstations supported include both Windows 2000 Professional and Windows XP Professional editions.

In addition to RSCCC, the RESC is also offering Excelsior Pinnacle Gradebook. This product has a direct interface with RSCCC applications.

The basic system components include:

- automatic downloading and maintenance of class rosters;
- electronic grade book system that is platform-independent and allows off campus use;
- administrators can view, summarize and evaluate student's assessments;
- teachers can align assignments to the TEKS;
- parents can access student performance information; and
- a Palm gradebook gives teachers ready access to their grades.

RSCCC is a Texas specific software package for business and instruction. It has been developed over a 30 year period by the RESC's. It is constantly being modified to meet educational needs and as a cooperative product, and is reasonably priced. Some regions have adopted software packages provided by private sector suppliers. In most cases, these products need modification in order to meet the needs of the districts. In addition, these products often do not have accompanying technical support and are more costly than RSCCC.

Accomplishment: RESC 8 Technical Services use RSCCC effectively to provide quality technical services.

DETAILED FINDINGS

POLICY MANUAL

The current policy manual for RESC 8 is outdated. A number of policies were updated

in 2000, but almost none have been updated since. Interviews of administrators by MGT personnel confirmed that the policy manual needed to be updated, but the administration also indicated concerns about the time necessary to complete the task and the legal expertise necessary to properly complete an update. Several outsourced policy manual update services are available for the center to use.

The lack of an updated policy manual can result in a situation which occasionally results in personnel operating under one set of written policies, while others operate under another set of expectations. Keeping the policy manual current will minimize confusion and perhaps unwanted litigation due to outdated policies.

The goal of quality governmental organizations with policy manuals is to have the manual be updated in a timely and accurate manner. Further, the manual, by virtue of its being accurate and current, will be an ongoing resource to the governing board, administrators, staff, and general public. Its ongoing use will enable the organization to be more effective and efficient in its operations and policy deliberations.

RESC 8 should subscribe to a policy update service to keep the RESC policy manual current. Subscribing to a policy manual update service will enable the regional education service center board and administration to operate the center with the most current policies and administrative procedures. Typically, administrators and board members are trained and enroll in in-service activities that keep them current with legal and regulatory changes. However, the policies are not updated to keep pace with the changes.

The cost of this recommendation will be approximately $6,000 the first year which includes updating the entire manual. After this first year, the approximate cost for TASB to provide updates is approximately $800 per year.

BOARD TRAINING

RESC 8 does not seek options for school boards to contract with private vendors for any level-two school board training.

There are three levels of school board training. The first level is for legislative and legal issues. This training usually takes place as an "update workshop." The second level of school board training is for team building. This level is mandated by the legislature and can only be conducted by the regional education service centers or pre-qualified vendors. It cannot be outsourced to anyone else. The third level of training can be on any other topic. This training is commonly referred to as "customized" training.

Since the second level of board training requires that regional education service centers provide the training, outsourcing is not possible. This requirement reduces competition and creates an ongoing "sole source" bidding environment.

Having training provided by multiple qualified vendors will increase the diversity of the training materials and the examples used in training, while maintaining the quality that local boards have come to expect. Competition among vendors also helps to contain costs associated with training.

RESC 8 should seek options for school boards to contract with private vendors for level-two training. Although RESC 8 appears to be providing board training in an efficient and cost-effective manner, local boards should have the option of outsourcing for any or all training. Although requiring a change in legislation, preventing sole source contracting helps drive costs down and encourages creative approaches to providing training services.

BOARD MEETING AGENDA

RESC 8 board agendas and meeting packets, though complete, do not have a consent calendar.

Many districts include a consent calendar item on the board meeting agenda to include items such as the payment of bills, the approval of the sale of surplus items, approval of travel expenses, the acceptance of gifts, etc. The use of a consent calendar allows the board to group routine items into one motion and proceed on to more important issues. Using a

consent calendar sends a message about the board's desire to focus on policy issues, set priorities, and the focus of its use of time.

The use of consent calendars by governmental boards has proven to streamline the board meetings by clearly separating the routine from those issues that require additional policy discussion and study. The practices that streamline government also create an image with the public that their government is effective and efficient. This positive image of government increases public support for that government.

Exhibit 8-2 provides an example of a board agenda with a consent calendar.

RESC 8 should include a consent calendar on the board agenda. The use of a consent calendar will allow the board to group routine items into one motion and proceed on to more important issues. Should any board member wish to discuss an item in more detail or act on it separately, the item can be removed from the consent calendar and added to the regular agenda. As a result of using a consent calendar, the board will be able to shorten the length of the meeting or spend more time on "mission critical" issues.

BOARD SELF-EVALUATION

The RESC 8 board does not conduct a self-evaluation.

The Board of Directors for RESC 8 is comprised of seven members; board training takes place each year. The Board of Directors evaluates the executive director annually. The board does not evaluate itself although some board members reported participation in "informal" feedback communications.

Exhibit 8-2
Sample Board Agenda

Board Agenda
Date

1. Call to Order
   - 1.1 Call Meeting to Order (President)
   - 1.2 Flag Salute
   - 1.3 Roll Call (Minutes Clerk of the Board)
2. Consent Calendar
   (Motion requires: Motion required for the approval of the "Consent Calendar" as printed or as amended. Board members may, however, call for a vote on each of the items listed on the "Consent Calendar."
   - 2.1 Agenda with Commentary
   - 2.2 Minutes
   - 2.3 Gifts
   - 2.4 Payables
   - 2.5 Surplus resolution
3. Presentations/Recognitions
   - 3.1 Presentation of the Employee of the Month Awards
4. Public Comment
   - 4.1 Comments from the Public
5. Superintendent's Report
   - 5.1 Schedule of Upcoming Dates
   - 5.2 Enrollment Update
   - 5.3 Holiday Shutdown for Energy Management
6. Discussion Topics
   - 6.1 Report from the District Energy Manager
7. Questions form Board Members
8. Action Items – List Attached (Motion Required)
9. Adjourn

Source: MGT of America, 2004.

Governing boards in any organization can improve their performance through a formal self-evaluation in addition to an informal feedback process. In addition, by conducting an annual evaluation, the board models for their organizations, the importance of the evaluation process. As a result, both the board and the organization develop a culture of participation in improvement cycles. Better organizations are improved performance are the end result. **Exhibit 8-3** is one example of a self assessment instrument used by some boards.

RESC 8 should provide for an annual self-evaluation of the board. Providing feedback, both formally and informally, is one of the "basics" in any improvement process. Structured feedback in the form of an evaluation instrument can supplement honest ongoing dialogue and discussion.

BOARD STANDING COMMITTEE

The RESC 8 Board of Directors do not have standing committees, while such committees are often a means for developing appropriate board involvement in agency or organizational policy and planning development, promoting the services or value of an organization, and other activities.

Exhibit 8-3
Sample Board Self Assessment Instrument

Meeting Evaluation

DIRECTIONS: By evaluating our past meeting performance, we can discover ways to make future meetings shorter and more productive. Check each item "Adequate" or "Needs Improvement". If you check "Needs Improvement, include suggestions for improvement.

Adequate	Needs Improvement	
_____	_____	Our meeting was businesslike, results-oriented and we functioned like a team.
_____	_____	Our discussion was cordial and well balanced (not dominated by just a few members).
_____	_____	We confined our discussion to agenda items only.
_____	_____	Our agenda included positive issues as well as problems.
_____	_____	We discussed policy issues rather than day-to-day management issues.
_____	_____	We followed parliamentary rules and consulted legal or professional counsel when needed.
_____	_____	The president or chairperson controlled and guided the meeting.
_____	_____	We dealt successfully with controversial items and attempted to develop solutions acceptable to all members.
_____	_____	Everyone contributed to the meeting.
_____	_____	All members were prepared to discuss material that was sent to them in advance.
_____	_____	Reports were clear, well prepared and provided adequate information for decision making.
_____	_____	Printed materials given to us were easy to understand and use.
_____	_____	Our meeting room was comfortable and conducive to discussion and decision making.
_____	_____	All members were in attendance and on-time - - and the meeting began and concluded on time.
_____	_____	For committees and ad hoc groups: There was adequate reason for us to meet.

My best suggestions for improving our next meeting is...

Source: MGT of America, 2004.

The Board of Directors meets every other month for regularly scheduled meetings and other meetings are called as the need arises. MGT consultants do not believe that the board needs to meet more often; however, greater board involvement in planning activity, services development, and essential RESC promotion activity among the region's districts and other stakeholders may well require more individual board member involvement and could result in producing a means by which board members can actively affect the publics

and others' understanding of RESC services and products.

Many effective organizations involve the Board of Directors in carefully crafted committee work or ad hoc committee activity to contribute to overall effectiveness and as an effective tool for overcoming external barriers to succeed in many areas of concern. One of the areas of concern voiced by the executive director and other RESC personnel relates to strengthening relationships with external audiences (an area addressed by RESC 2, Corpus Christi, with the establishment of a marketing position with key responsibility for marketing conferencing services and facility use and promoting the services and products among non-service customers).

RESC 8 should establish a standing committee structure. Implementing this recommendation should result in a careful analysis of potential board committee activity designed to promote the work of RESC 8 and support important planning activity. The implementation of this recommendation can lay the groundwork for developing Board of Directors infrastructure to deal with issues related to the perception that important education stakeholders do not adequately understand the nature and purpose of the RESC organization and related programs and services provided the school districts of Texas (this perception was gained in the initial briefing of consultants and further confirmed in interviews with various RESC personnel). This is further supported by the fact that the Texas Legislature prohibits education-related personnel from lobbying for legislative support and funding. This recommendation is based upon the premise that current RESCs and their boards are not proactive in promoting RESC value nor are there established working relationships with local school district boards to identify effective means of educating the publics.

This recommendation may lead to the development of one or more of the following committees:

- strategic planning;
- cooperatives' development;
- finance;
- facilities; and/or
- external relations.

This recommendation should be implemented through the following steps:

- The executive director should review the recommendation with the Board of Directors.
- Once agreed upon, the Board of Directors should direct the Executive Director to prepare the necessary policy and procedures to guide the proposed committee(s) development and activity.
- Potential committee membership should be identified with attention to involvement of member school district representation;
- The executive director should identify a RESC liaison for each established committee.
- The chair of the board of directors should appoint a three member committee assigned the task of implementing the recommendation—that is, preparing a plan for an RESC board external relations program.

The effective implementation of this recommendation can contribute to making stakeholders informed supporters of the important services and program work of RESC 8 and provide for policy-level board involvement.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

RESC 8 has a number of areas where energy efficiency should be improved such as a lack of utility and energy saving devices. There were numerous light fixtures with older T-12 lights using magnetic ballasts. Many light switches in the building have a sign asking users to "please turn out the lights." However, MGT personnel found numerous rooms that were unoccupied for extended periods of time with the lights switched on.

Sinks do not have motion activated water faucets. Urinals and toilets lack motion activated flush valves. Motion activated water faucets and flush valves have been shown to

save water. Vending machines can be a significant user of electricity. The vending machines in the center lack motion activated electrical switches.

Lower utility consumption will reduce costs and give the appearance of a frugal government agency. Such actions should improve the public's perception of the service center and government as a whole.

RESC 8 should install energy and utility saving devices throughout the regional education service center. By initiating an energy and utility improvement process, the annual operating costs for utilities for Regional Education Service Center will improve. Automated switches (including direct digital controls on HVAC equipment) and valves lower utility consumption.

Most resource conservation managers would estimate that the installation of utility saving equipment described above would save at least 20¢ per square foot. However, the installation of energy savings equipment typically requires a three year payback. Therefore, the savings to RESC 8 with 42,496 square feet is estimated to be $8,499 per year (42,496 times $.20). Because the implementation of this plan will take approximately six months, only half of the saving will be realized in fiscal year 2008, but the full savings will be realized in fiscal year 2009.

FACILITIES MASTER PLAN

The RESC 8 does not have a facilities master plan that can be directly translated into immediate, mid-term and long-term projects. The lack of this master plan creates a series of difficulties including not having addressed long-term parking needs and raising questions regarding long-term retrofitting of facilities to meet the rapidly changing demands of modern technology.

A number of planning processes and documents can be used to build and maintain facilities that meet the changing needs of a region. A facilities master plan is the result of these planning efforts and becomes the organization's policy statement for allocating resources and developing alternatives for facility improvement. Facility master plans become increasingly important as a district's enrollment changes and facilities age. Even for a small organization like RESC 8, a facilities master plan can be used to plan appropriately.

The center does not have a dedicated facilities planning function, but rather uses a business officer to develop scenarios for consideration with growth.

The lack of a facilities master plan hinders planning for growth. A facilities master plan is based on verified existing data, a complete understanding of both facilities conditions and the future implications of needs for the educational service center. An effective master plan includes an accurate inventory of each room, current internal room utilization, current external room utilization and assessments of all repairs, and renovations necessary for long-term use.

Many larger sized organizations hire professionals to develop all (or parts) of the facilities master plan. RESC 8 has existing staff that can create a simple facilities master plan.

RESC 8 should **c**onduct a facilities analysis and incorporate results into a long-range facilities master plan. The implementation of this recommendation should result in a useable long-range facilities use master plan. The plan should include specific recommendations that reflect the identification of deferred maintenance needs, documented cost estimates and a timeline to address these recommendations. Development of the plan should be coordinated with the Board of Directors. Once the plan has been completed, it should be reviewed and updated annually and approved by the Board of Directors.

UTILITY MANAGEMENT AUDITS

RESC 8 does not conduct utility management audits resulting in a lack of data to support decisions on energy management and other related potential cost-savings.

Utility management firms are often hired once per year to obtain all telephone, gas, electricity, water, long distance, and Internet

records. They audit these records to identify potential savings. The records are also compared to records obtained from provider utility companies. Discrepancies in records often result in returned savings to the RESC. Typically, the utility management firms keep a percentage of identified savings as a fee for the services.

By not conducting these audits, the center may be missing opportunities for conserving expenditures that may be better used in delivering educational services to client.

RESC 8 should conduct utility management audits. The implementation of this recommendation should result in conserving energy with resulting with savings in expenditures. Utility audits for the service center and guidance to school districts on use of utility audits should produce much needed increased efficiency and economies for Region 8.

Typically organizations can secure assistance with utility management audits from a variety of sources. The RESC should contact the local public utilities service provider for assistance. If the public utilities providers does not offer this service then the RESC should turn to the private sector provides such as Honeywell Corporation of Johnston Controls Corporation. These types of firms usually offer the audit at no cost to the organization with optional retrofitting services paid for through identified savings as they occur.

MINORITY RECRUITMENT

RESC 8 strategies have not been successful in recruiting qualified minority applicants.

The service center has very few minority employees in a region that is heavily populated by minority populations. The service center has tried several methods of recruiting qualified minority candidates for job openings, but reports minimal success.

Exhibit 8-4 details the service center's Federal EEOC Report, as shown, for professional staff, there are:

- 0 percent Native Americans;
- 0 percent Asian or Pacific Islander;
- 7.69 percent Black; and
- 93.13 percent White employees.

Posting employment openings with agencies and newspapers outside of Region 8 should increase the number of qualified applicants allowing the region to more closely match the ethnicity profile of the area. The result should be a strengthened image of the center as you are seen as being responsive to the values and cultural sensitivities of the community.

Recruiting and hiring a greater number of people from different cultures, backgrounds, and races has the potential of bringing a different set of solutions and more ways of solving problems common to school districts throughout the region. A more diverse staff can create energy and increase the probability that decisions regarding programs and services will more adequately meet the needs of the center's clients. In addition, a diverse work force can generate unique, fresh, and innovative ideas and suggestions. Employees from diverse backgrounds can share new knowledge and information about the needs of different groups. This diversity will enhance the center's ability to respond to schools and districts in a creative manner.

RESC 8 should intensify efforts to recruit qualified minority applicants for job openings. By intensifying the recruitment of qualified minority populations for job openings at the center, the staff make-up will more accurately reflect the ethnicity of the community it serves. Because there are language differences in the community, this should result in better communications that will reduce misunderstandings and provide an environment where minority students have the best possible opportunities to succeed. This should result in a more diverse staff with better communications and an improved professional image within the community.

This recommendation will require a greater recruitment effort. Additional advertising in a wider geographic area will be necessary. In addition, some additional time will need to be spent cultivating new contacts and sources of referral. The fiscal impact of such an

expanded search effort is estimated at $2,000 per year.

ESTABLISH SINKING FUND

RESC 8 uses building rental fees and usage fees to accumulate funds to pay for facility costs. However, there is no established fund for major future system replacement, building renovation, or replacement costs. This is a best practice used by most businesses that sublet space. When the funds are placed in a sinking fund it allows earnings on investments rather than payment of interest on borrowed money. This practice allows earnings on investments rather than payment of interest on borrowed money.

Exhibit 8-4
Employment Statistics in Region 8
2003-04

Professional Staff		
Native American	Male	0
	Female	0
	Total	**0%**
Asian or Pacific Islander	Male	0
	Female	0
	Total	**0%**
Black	Male	0
	Female	3
	Total	**7.69%**
Hispanic	Male	0
	Female	0
	Total	**0%**
White	Male	8
	Female	32
	Total	**93.13%**
Support Staff		
Native American	Male	0
	Female	0
	Total	**0%**
Asian or Pacific Islander	Male	0
	Female	0
	Total	**0%**
Black	Male	0
	Female	4
	Total	**12.5%**
Hispanic	Male	1
	Female	1
	Total	**6.25%**
White	Male	0
	Female	26
	Total	**81.25%**
Combined Staff		
Native American	Male	0
	Female	0
	Total	**0%**
Asian or Pacific Islander	Male	0
	Female	0
	Total	**0%**
Black	Male	0
	Female	7
	Total	**9.68%**
Hispanic	Male	1
	Female	1
	Total	**2.82%**
White	Male	7
	Female	55
	Total	**87.32%**

Source: RESC 8 Business Office, 2004.

RESC 8 should transfer rental fees, and a portion of the usage fees, charged to the programs into a sinking fund each year to replace and repair major building components over the life of the building. The establishment and use of a sinking fund will enable RESC 8 to provide a funding resource for future major building renovations, additions, or major component replacement. The space rental fees are probably among the best revenue sources for this sinking fund.

COMMON FISCAL YEAR

RESC 8 does not have the same fiscal year as all of its member districts which results in some inefficiencies.

Presently the fiscal year for RESC 8 is from September 1 to August 30. However, not all 48 member school districts use the same fiscal year. It is possible to have different fiscal years among different regional service centers and between the member school districts in the region.

When RESC 8 and its member districts have a common fiscal year, there is no "overlap" between the fiscal accounting by fiscal year. Accruals of both expenses and revenue are simplified to a common 60-day period that is the same for all entities. Because of the legislative and TEA finance and funding timelines, a September 1 – August 31 fiscal year would be more efficient to implement and maintain than a July 1 – June 30 fiscal year.

RESC 8 should ensure that RESC 8's fiscal year is consistent with its member school districts. Having the regional education service center and their member districts with the same fiscal year will simplify the timing of fiscal reporting and make comparative analyses easier. Because of legislative and TEA functions, a September 1 – August 31 fiscal year would probably be easier to implement and maintain than a July 1 – June 30 fiscal year.

INVESTMENT FUNDS

RESC 8 is not making the best use of funds on its investments.

RESC 8 uses its local bank for investments. Because the local bank has given them a good rate on a facility expansion project, RESC 8 feels some obligation to invest with the local bank. Presently the local bank is paying 1.11 percent on the cash in the account. The state investment pool is paying a higher interest rate. (It is very common for state investment pools to pay more than local banks. In fact, in some states, local banks also invest in the state investment pools.) As a result, RESC 8 is losing earnings on investments (The present rate is approximately .6 percent per year higher than the local banks) on their average balance. Although the principal amount available for investment changes on a monthly basis, a conservative estimate for Region 8 is $200,000.

Investing in a higher paying investment program will increase revenues for the center, making more money available for the critical missions of the RESC. This practice creates an image with the public that their government is effective and efficient. This positive image of government increases public support for that government.

RESC 8 should invest excess cash in a higher paying investment account. By investing excess cash in a different investment vehicle, the Regional Education Service Center will increase their earnings on investment. Probably the best investment vehicle for local governments is the state investment pool. This pool invests excess cash from many local governments and is able to improve the economies of scale for investing.

The fiscal impact of transferring a $200,000 balance to a state investment pool is estimated at $2,000 ($200,000 X .6 percent). Because interest earnings are so low during the present economic times, the spread between local banks and the state investment pool is smaller than usual. As the federal government raises the interest rates, the spread can be expected to improve, thereby improving the earnings on investment for RESC 8 even further. It is also assumed that this recommendation will not be implemented until the middle of the 2004-05

year and that investment earnings that year will be half of the other years.

CASH FLOW MODEL

RESC 8 has not developed and implemented an effective cash flow model.

RESC 8 has enjoyed a healthy fund balance for many years. The fund balance allows the RESC to cover any cash demands required by annual operations. Most funds are expenditure driven, thus requiring the expenditure of cash before TEA will reimburse the RESC. Upon demand, RESC financial personnel can calculate how close the cash demands come to exhausting the cash balance. However, an ongoing cash flow model is not maintained.

Exhibit 8-5 is an example of a simple cash flow model that could be adapted for RESC 8 use.

Exhibit 8-5
Sample Cash Flow Model

	July	August	September	October
Beginning Balance	$0	$1,446,250	$1,748,750	$577,750
County Receipts	2,493,750	75,000	75,000	75,000
State Receipts	262,500	1,387,500	0	1,387,500
Federal Receipts	150,000	150,000	170,000	170,000
Total Receipts	2,906,250	3,058,750	1,993,750	2,210,250
Payroll (Gross)	1,050,000	1,050,000	1,100,000	1,100,000
Payables	410,000	260,000	316,000	366,000
Total Expenditures	1,460,000	1,310,000	1,416,000	1,466,000
End Balance	**$1,446,250**	**$1,748,750**	**$577,750**	**$744,250**
	November	**December**	**January**	**February**
Beginning Balance	744,250	960,750	(260,250)	2,468,750
County Receipts	75,000	75,000	4,125,000	75,000
State Receipts	1,387,500	0	0	1,575,000
Federal Receipts	170,000	170,000	170,000	170,000
Total Receipts	2,376,750	1,205,750	4,034,750	4,288,750
Payroll (Gross)	1,100,000	1,100,000	1,100,000	1,100,000
Payables	316,000	366,000	466,000	416,000
Total Expenditures	1,416,000	1,466,000	1,566,000	1,516,000
End Balance	**$960,750**	**($260,250)**	**$2,468,750**	**$2,772,750**
	March	**April**	**May**	**June**
Beginning Balance	2,772,750	1,651,750	580,750	1,059,750
County Receipts	75,000	75,000	75,000	75,000
State Receipts	0	0	1,500,000	0
Federal Receipts	170,000	170,000	170,000	170,000
Total Receipts	3,017,750	1,896,750	2,325,750	1,304,750
Payroll (Gross)	1,100,000	1,100,000	1,100,000	1,100,000
Payables	266,000	216,000	166,000	216,000
Total Expenditures	1,366,000	1,316,000	1,266,000	1,316,000
End Balance	**$1,651,750**	**$580,750**	**$1,059,750**	**($11,250)**

Source: MGT of America, 2004.

RESC 8 should create a simple cash flow model using existing electronic spreadsheet software. A cash flow model will enable RESC 8 to predict its cash requirements for a year in advance. The model should recognize federal, state, and local revenues. Payroll and accounts payable expenditures should also be included. Both revenue and expenditure patterns can be predicted using historical information. Any future receipt or expenditure anomalies should be entered into the model.

ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORTS

RESC 8's annual financial report is prepared by the RESC's auditors but is not a comprehensive annual report. This report includes the auditor's opinion letter and all of the necessary financial statements, footnote disclosures and other disclosures, to comply with current governmental accounting principles as promulgated by the Governmental Accounting Stands Board (GASB) as well as reports required by the federal government relating to the Single Audit Act which mandates an independent financial and compliance audit of federal financial assistance programs. This report provides a picture of the overall financial position of the Center, but it lacks additional information that could be used to more effectively communicate how the financial activity for the fiscal year has impacted each Center's programs and services.

The Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) and the Association of School Business Officials (ASBO) provide recommended standards for Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports (CAFR). A governmental entity that meets these standards will receive a "Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting." To receive this type of reporting recognition, a Center must publish an easily readable and efficiently organized comprehensive annual financial report.

The Annual Financial Report is the final event in the annual planning and budgeting process as the organization completes the cycle and lays the foundation for the next budget process.

The requirements for an easily readable and efficiently organized comprehensive annual report include:

- **Introductory Section** - This section includes a letter from the chief financial officer that summarizes the fiscal operations and the strategic plan of the district, an organization overview, and clearly indicates the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report is a report of the management of the RESC and that the management of the RESC is responsible for its preparation.

- **Financial Section** – This section includes:
  - The Independent Auditors' Report;
  - Management's Discussion and Analysis;
  - Government-Wide Financial Statements;
  - Fund Financial Statements;
  - Summary of Significant Accounting Policies;
  - Notes to the General Purpose Financial Statements; and
  - Combining Individual Fund Information and Other Supplementary Information.

- **Statistical Section** – This section includes selected financial and demographic information generally presented on a multi-year basis.

The overall intent of the CAFR should be to provide financial reports that demonstrate both fiscal and operational accountability.

RESC 8 should prepare future Annual Financial Reports in a manner consistent with the guidelines that would qualify the report to earn the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting. Information regarding the preparation of a CAFR, to include copies of the checklist used to review the financial reports can be obtained from GFOA by emailing a request to CAFRProgram@gfoa.org. RESC 4 has received a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting from GFOA and copies of its report could provide a format to be used.

The achievement of the certificate is less important than the preparation of a Comprehensive Annual Financial Report that

will more effectively communicate the financial position of the center and relate the financial results with the original budget document.

The fee to seek a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting is $830.

FINANCIAL COOPERATIVE

Small districts often lack the personnel and resources needed to efficiently perform all required business functions. RESC 8 assists some of the districts in the area of finance and bookkeeping. However, there are other districts that could potentially benefit from additional assistance in this area.

Very small school districts in Texas typically do not have the resources to establish sophisticated and comprehensive business services divisions. RESCs and larger school districts have business services divisions that could easily coop services to smaller districts.

The RESCs and cooperatives (or like organizations in other states) frequently organize payroll services, accounts payable services, purchasing, asset management, and other necessary business related services for small school districts. Such a service could assist many of the small districts in RESC 8.

RESC 8 should conduct a feasibility study to determine if a finance cooperative organization pattern for small districts would be beneficial. Personnel from within the Finance division can conduct a study to determine which districts have difficulties handling financial and business affairs because of the lack of or a shortage of qualified personnel on staff. Once this determination has been made, the districts identified can be invited to an information sharing meeting. A task force can be established to determine if a finance cooperative could effectively be developed and which finance services can be offered.

This study can include reviewing the option of utilizing a large district(s) capacity to provide a group of small school districts with some or all fiscal services. This can result in small districts outsourcing identified services to the larger district and reducing costs and increasing efficiencies.

The financial impact of this recommendation can be minimal. Expenses can be limited to meals and travel, with each agency paying for their own expenses. There is a potential savings in personnel cost by the districts if some or all of their financial responsibilities were taken over by a finance cooperative. Additionally, personnel could be reassigned resulting in an increase in the availability of district personnel to meet other needs.

CONTRACTING SPECIALIST SERVICES

RESC 8 should heighten its practice of contracting specialist services.

Currently, there are three main categories of contracted services:

- ECI Therapist - PT, OT, Speech Therapy . The current process is that the department sends letters to people and agencies such as hospitals and therapy companies in the region for quotes; they bid for a one year duration. It is possible, however, that the duration of the child's service could be for as long as 3 years if the family chooses to keep the same therapist, regardless of the bid winner, as per state policy.
- Maintenance - these services include, janitorial, plumbing electrical, Xerox, etc.
- Workshop Presenters - according to topic and needs assessment, consultants in that field are contacted; their daily rate is negotiated, and after approval by the director, the contract is mailed to the consultant.

Currently, the State ECI Office is recommending that centers put specialists back on staff for economic reasons. RESC 8 found that it is difficult for them to attract applicants because of non-competitive

salaries. Interviews with consultants revealed that maintaining a private practice and contracting services is more lucrative for them.

Even though these contracts may extend for as long as two or three years, they are still far less costly then full time employment and will result in savings in salary, health benefits, and retirement costs. The practice of doing a comparative analysis of costs of "in house" versus contracted services is indicative of an organization that is forward thinking, analytical, and cost-conscious.

RESC 8 should continue the practice of contracting specialists. The salary and benefit package that would be necessary to attract specialists to Region 8 would significantly exceed the current costs incurred through contracting.

FISCAL IMPACT

Recommendation		2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	5-Year (Costs) or Savings	One-Time (Costs) or Savings
8-1	Subscribe to a board policy manual update service.	($6,000)	($800)	($800)	($800)	($800)	($9,200)	
8-6	Install energy and utility savings devices.	$0	$0	$0	$4,250	$8,499	$12,749	
8-9	Intensify efforts to recruit qualified minority applicants for job openings.	($2,000)	($2,000)	($2,000)	($2,000)	($2,000)	($10,000)	
8-10	Invest excess cash in a higher interest earning account.	$600	$1,200	$1,200	$1,200	$1,200	$5,400	
8-14	Seek the certificate of achievement for excellence in financial reporting.	($830)	($830)	($830)	($830)	($830)	($4,150)	
	Total	**($8,230)**	**($2,430)**	**($2,430)**	**$1,820**	**$6,069**	**($5,201)**	**$0**

CHAPTER 9:

WICHITA FALLS

CHAPTER 9

WICHITA FALLS

Regional Education Service Center (RESC) 9 is located in Wichita Falls, Texas approximately 140 miles northwest of Dallas, Texas. The center is located in the North Central section of the Region. RESC 9 serves one charter school and 39 school districts that are scattered over approximately 10,474 square miles and 12 counties. Nearly 40,125 students are served on 122 campuses. Minorities represent 9.1 percent of the total educational workforce in the region, but 21.6 percent of Region 9 are represented by minorities. Many of the students are from economically disadvantaged homes. However, the student completion rate was higher than the 2002–03 rate and the annual dropout rate is decreasing and was less than 2.5 percent for the 2003–04 school year.

Regional Education Service Center 9 is an intermediate educational unit that provides training, technical assistance, administrative support, and an array of other services as determined by the Legislature, the Commissioner of Education, and the needs of local school districts and charter schools.

RESC 9 has 68 staff members, 27 of whom are certified. The region has a satellite office in Del Rio, approximately 150 miles southwest of San Angelo. The center's executive director has been employed at the center for eight years. From May 1, 2003 to April 30, 2004, RESC 9 held 1,090 workshops and served over 21,500 participants.

RESC 9, as per the Texas Legislature, has the following defined purposes:

- assist school districts in improving student performance in each region of the system;
- enable school districts to operate more efficiently and economically; and
- implement initiatives assigned by the Legislature or the Commissioner of Education.

Region 9 provides services to the Wackenhut prison in Jacksboro for the personnel services cooperative and the James B. Allred Prison in Wichita Falls for professional development and personnel services. The Texas Youth Commission subscribes to Bilingual/ESL and personnel services.

Exhibit 9-1 shows the names of the 39 districts and one charter campus served by Region 9.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- RESC 9 provides effective board training services to the school districts within its service area and collaborates with all other RESCs to develop legislative updates that are consistent statewide.
- RESC 9 effectively outsources all maintenance areas, which minimizes its liability exposure.
- RESC 9 established and manages the G/T Cooperative, and collaborates with all RESCs in order to respond to district boards' needs and to provide a service no longer offered by TEA regarding the education of gifted and talented students.
- RESC 9 consistently helps member school districts comply with all components of Title I and *No Child Left Behind* to ensure that all program and fiscal requirements are met.
- RESC 9 exhibits strong leadership throughout the state by serving as the lead agency for the statewide Parental Involvement Program.
- RESC 9 is committed to integrating Gifted and Talented services with all other areas of instructional programs, and promoting broad involvement and collaboration among all service center staff.

Exhibit 9-1
Region 9 Member Districts

	District Name	Enrollment
1	Archer City	538
2	Bellevue	192
3	Benjamin	87
4	Bowie	1,651
5	Bright Ideas Charter School	175
6	Bryson	274
7	Burkburnett	3,619
8	Byers	108
9	Chillicothe	217
10	City View	1,082
11	Crowell	299
12	Electra	623
13	Forestburg	150
14	Gold Burg	102
15	Graham	2,421
16	Harrold	129
17	Henrietta	1,039
18	Holliday	858
19	Iowa Park	1,820
20	Jacksboro	845
21	Knox City	286
22	Megargel	52
23	Midway	143
24	Montague	67
25	Munday	469
26	Newcastle	188
27	Nocona	855
28	Northside	183
29	Olney	737
30	Perrin-Whitt	346
31	Petrolia	521
32	Prairie Valley	135
33	Quanah	597
34	Saint Jo	321
35	Seymour	652
36	Throckmorton	199
37	Vernon	2,343
38	Wichita Falls	15,063
39	Windthorst	482
40	Woodson	121

Source: RESC 9 Administrative Office, 2004.

- RESC 9 has been active in responding to funding cuts by restructuring its program delivery operations in order to continue providing quality, data-based, and collaborative training and services to school districts.
- RESC 9 effectively collaborates with other agencies and regional education service centers to sponsor an annual conference that addresses the needs of students with visual impairments.
- RESC 9 organizes and schedules a wide variety of quality summer workshops based upon the needs and requests of districts in the region, that include nationally renowned speakers and experts from throughout the state.
- RESC 9 has been instrumental in developing a Web site of frequently asked questions about the state required assessment program that districts can access in an immediate and efficient manner.
- RESC 9 understands the value of serving as the fiscal agent for Head Start within the region, and is committed to ensuring that students who are enrolled in Head Start programs make a smooth transition into school.
- RESC 9 coordinates a variety of exceptional library, media, and technology services to enhance learning experiences for students, and to assist teachers in implementing new instructional strategies in the classroom.
- RESC 9 maintains a detailed, comprehensive management record of time and effort for all employees that corresponds with specific goals and objectives outlined in the center's strategic plan.
- RESC 9 has developed a detailed, comprehensive New Employee Orientation Packet that is accompanied by a checklist to ensure that all new employees receive consistent information regarding the operations and functions of the service center.
- RESC 9 follows appropriate hiring and evaluation procedures for all employees, and has established a positive, productive work environment that recognizes employees' skills, ideas, and energy as its most important resource.
- RESC 9 has implemented internal accounting controls that have strengthened the process and improved cash management.
- RESC 9 has cross-trained Business Office staff, thus developing expertise in areas other than their primary assignments, increasing staff flexibility, and maintaining effective and efficient customer service.
- RESC 9 successfully employs money management techniques in order to create the highest possible earnings from its funds.
- RESC 9 uses procedures that maximize cash balances, maintain reporting compliance, and monitor RESC finances.
- RESC 9 provides, at a minimum fee, essential accounting services to support small school districts that are unable to afford the hiring of staff with the level of expertise and experience required for these functions.
- RESC 9 offers a variety of child nutrition cooperatives, in addition to conducting extensive analysis on available food service vendors, enabling districts to provide breakfast and school lunch programs at a cost-effective, affordable rate.
- The RESC 9 Business Office uses procurements cards to simplify purchasing and reduce the work loads on staff.
- RESC 9 is ready to initiate a paperless purchase order system, which will shorten the process, simplify monitoring of an order's progress, and reduce costs.

- RESC 9 reduces risk to the center's assets, employees, and board members by maintaining complete insurance coverage obtained at competitive price.
- RESC 9 actively solicits outside reviews of its assets to further identify risk factors.
- RESC 9 consistently maintains adequate levels of cash for daily operations and in investing idle funds for generating additional revenue through interest bearing accounts.
- RESC 9 has implemented a state-of-the-art interactive video network.
- The RESC 9 Technology Department maintains state-of-the-art equipment in spite of significant losses of state funds.
- The RESC 9 Technology Department has a comprehensive Disaster Recovery Plan.
- The technology used in Region 9 maintains high levels of security and virus free transmissions.

FINDINGS

- RESC 9 maintains an updated *Administrative Procedures/Employee Handbook*. The handbook is available in hard copy, but it is not available online at the region's Web site.
- RESC 9 board minutes are typed and distributed in hard copy within one week of each meeting, but they are not posted online at the center's Web site**.**
- The board does not participate in an annual formal evaluation of itself, a practice common among boards. As a result, the board may miss opportunities to identify and incorporate improvements for its own functioning.
- RESC 9 Board of Directors does not have standing committees, while such committees are often a means for developing appropriate board involvement in agency or organizational policy and planning development, promoting the services or value of an organization, and other activities.
- RESC 9 does not have a facilities master plan that can be directly translated into immediate, mid-term and long-term projects.
- RESC 9 does not conduct utility management audits resulting in a lack of data to support decisions on energy management and other related potential cost-savings.
- The percentage of minority employees at RESC 9 (18%) does not compare to the regional minority percentage of 28 percent.
- The fiscal year for RESC 9 is from September 1 to August 31. Member school districts use another time period for their fiscal year.
- Annual financial audits are not developed in a manner consistent with the requirements for a certificate of excellence.
- Region 9 does not have a building safety committee, which can potentially heighten the awareness of workplace safety.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 9-1: Post the Administrative Procedures/ Employee Handbook on the Web site, making it more easily accessible and easier to update.** By having the handbook posted on the Web, the information will be more available to the general public and to employees who may have access only by a Web browser. Having open and available information on the RESC should build confidence in the organization and improve its trustworthy image.

- **Recommendation 9-2: Post board minutes on the Web site, a practice that would provide even greater access for the public regarding board decisions and the center's funding, programs, and services.** As a result of posting the minutes on the Web site, the RESC will be seen by its employees, its member districts, and the public it serves as being more open and responsive to stakeholders. This will improve the image of the RESC as a governmental organization.

- **Recommendation 9-3: Provide for an annual self-evaluation of the board.** Providing feedback, both formally and informally, is one of the "basics" in any improvement process. Structured feedback in the form of an evaluation instrument can supplement honest ongoing dialogue and discussion.

- **Recommendation 9-4: Establish a standing committee structure.** Implementing this recommendation should result in a careful analysis of potential board committee activity designed to promote the work of RESC 9 and support important planning activity. The implementation of this recommendation can lay the groundwork for developing a board of directors infrastructure to deal with issues related to the perception that important education stakeholders do not adequately understand the nature and purpose of the RESC organization and related programs and services provided to the school districts of Texas (this perception was gained in the initial briefing of consultants and further confirmed in interviews with various RESC personnel). This is further supported by the fact that the Texas Legislature prohibits education-related personnel from lobbying for legislative support and funding. This recommendation is based upon the premise that current RESCs and their boards are not proactive in promoting RESC value nor are there established working relationships with local school district boards to identify effective means of educating the public. This recommendation may lead to the development of one or more of the following committees:

  - strategic planning;
  - cooperatives' development;
  - finance;
  - facilities; and/or
  - external relations.

  This recommendation should be implemented through the following steps:

  - The executive director should review the recommendation with the Board of Directors;
  - Once agreed upon, the Board of Directors should direct the Executive Director to prepare the necessary policy and procedures to guide the proposed committee(s) development and activity;
  - Potential committee membership should be identified with attention to involvement of member school district representation;
  - The executive director should identify an RESC liaison for each established committee; and
  - The chair of the board of directors should appoint a three member committee assigned the task of implementing the recommendation—that is, preparing a plan for an RESC board external relations program.

  The effective implementation of this recommendation can contribute to making important stakeholders informed supporters of the important services and program work of RESC 9 and provide for policy-level board involvement.

- **Recommendation 9-5: Conduct a facilities analysis and incorporate results into a long-range facilities master plan.** The implementation of this recommendation should result in a useable long-range facilities use master plan. The plan should include specific recommendations that reflect the identification of deferred maintenance needs, documented cost estimates and a timeline to address these recommendations. Development of the plan should be coordinated with the Board of Directors. Once the plan has been completed, it should be reviewed and updated annually and approved by the Board of Directors.

- **Recommendation 9-6: Conduct utility management audits.** The implementation of this recommendation should result in conserving energy with resulting savings in expenditures. Utility audits for the service center and guidance to school districts on use of utility audits should produce much needed increased efficiency and economies for Region 9. Typically organizations can secure assistance with utility management audits from a variety of sources. The RESC should contact the local public utilities service provider for assistance. If the public utilities provider does not offer this service then the RESC should turn to the private sector providers such as Honeywell Corporation or Johnston Controls Corporation. These types of firms usually offer the audit at no cost to the organization with optional retrofitting services paid for through identified savings as they occur.

- **Recommendation 9-7: Intensify efforts to recruit qualified minority applicants for job openings.** By intensifying the recruitment of qualified minority populations for job openings at the Regional Education Service Center, the staff make-up will more accurately reflect the ethnic mix of the community it serves. Because there are language differences in the community, this should result in better communications that will reduce misunderstandings and provide an environment where minority students have the best possible opportunities to succeed. This should result in a more diverse staff with better communications and an improved professional image within the community.

- **Recommendation 9-8: Ensure that RESC 9 has the same fiscal year as its member districts.** Having the region on the same fiscal year as its member districts should simplify the timing of fiscal reporting and make comparative analysis easier. Because of legislative and TEA functions, a September 1 – August 31 fiscal year would probably be easier to implement and maintain than a July 1 – June 30 fiscal year.

- **Recommendation 9-9: Prepare future Annual Financial Reports in a manner consistent with the guidelines that would qualify the report to earn the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting.** Information regarding the preparation of a CAFR, to include copies of the checklist used to review the financial reports can be obtained from GFOA by e-mailing a request to CAFRProgram@gfoa.org. RESC 4 has received a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting from GFOA and copies of its report could provide a format to be used. The achievement of the Certificate is less important than the preparation of a Comprehensive Annual Financial Report that will more effectively communicate the financial position of Region 9 and relate the financial results with the original budget document.

- **Recommendation 9-10: Form a building safety committee to assist the executive director on an ongoing basis to identify additional safety and security issues in and around the facility.** As a result of having a building safety committee, several changes can be expected for RESC 9. The first change will be a heightened awareness of safety in the workplace. Expertise in safety issues grows as the team works together. For the long run, safety committees can be expected to be a vital component of a lower loss "experience rating" which will ultimately lower premiums for insurance.

DETAILED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

SCHOOL BOARD TRAINING

RESC 9 offers three levels of effective school board training. This training is required for experienced school board members and also required for those board members serving their first year on a local school board.

The three levels of training include:

- **Level I** training is an update of the Texas Education Code, with three hours required for new members during their first year, and two hours required annually for experienced board members. The Level I update is developed collaboratively by all 20 RESCs. Following each legislative session, they meet to develop a common update available to all Texas school districts. This update is placed on a compact disk.
- **Level II** is a required three-hours training held each year, which consists of team building for both experienced and new members. This training is customized by RESC 9 staff to meet the unique needs of each district contracting for services.
- **Level III** is continuing education, with 10 hours required during the first year of new members' tenures, and five hours required annually for experienced members. Much of this requirement can be satisfied by attendance at sessions offered at the Fall Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) meeting.

Charter schools' boards are required to have 12 hours of training by June 1 of each year. As a result of these comprehensive trainings, all school board members in RESC 9 are prepared and informed, as required by the Texas Education Code, to knowledgeably serve their school districts.

Accomplishment: RESC 9 provides effective board training services to the school districts within its service area and collaborates with all other RESCs to develop legislative updates that are consistent statewide.

MAINTENANCE SERVICES

RESC 9's effectively outsources its maintenance services while decreasing its liability exposure.

RESC 9's facility has 48,918 square feet. The building is organized by functional area to support teamwork, create appropriate adjacencies, and place administrators with their associated staff members. A large addition was recently built that houses presentation/meeting rooms and technology training facilities. Additional technology training space is needed. The facility use and management functions for the Region 9 Education Service Center are administered by the deputy director. RESC has two custodial employees on staff to handle the day-to-day cleaning tasks. The Deputy Director oversees, with the Executive Director, the planning, design, and construction or renovation of facilities, as needed.

RESC 9 outsources all maintenance areas other than the day-to-day cleaning responsibilities. RESC 9 outsources the following facilities maintenance services:

- grounds,
- HVAC repair,

- plumbing repair, and
- electrical.

As a result of outsourcing, RESC 9 eliminates the center's exposure to liability and the need to carry insurance to cover regular employees working in those specific areas.

Accomplishment: RESC 9 effectively outsources all maintenance areas, which minimizes its liability exposure.

DEBT AND FUND BALANCE

All RESC 9 facilities are debt free. The recent addition providing expanded presentation/workshop and technology training space was paid for in cash. This did not compromise the 20 percent of revenues in fund balance as required by state law. As a result, RESC 9 is debt free while complying with the state's 20 percent requirement.

Accomplishment: RESC 9 maintains debt free facilities and complies with the required 20 percent of revenues in their fund balance.

GIFTED AND TALENTED COOPERATIVE

RESC 9 Gifted and Talented (G/T) Cooperative has developed a comprehensive three-year plan for training school boards regarding their roles and responsibilities for G/T.

This activity at the RESC is important, as the state-level Gifted and Talented staff at TEA have been greatly reduced. All 20 RESCs are using this three-year plan to provide school board training on this topic. As a result, the school board members continue to be well-informed regarding their roles and responsibilities in regard to educating gifted and talented students.

Exhibit 9-2 outlines the three-year training RESC 9 offers the boards of the gifted and talented cooperative.

Accomplishment: RESC 9 manages the G/T Cooperative, and collaborates with all RESCs in order to respond to member district needs and to provide a service no longer offered by TEA regarding the education of gifted and talented students.

TECHNICAL SUPPORT

RESC 9 provides effective technical support and trainings in Title I and other related programs for thirty-five (35) school districts. This service represents the equivalent of a school district Federal Programs director. The RESC helps member school districts complete their annual applications for funds and conduct required program evaluations.

Center employees make on-site visits to meet with superintendents, principals, assistant principals, and/or business managers regarding monitoring and compliance issues. Most of the districts in Region 9 do not have a full time person to coordinate the Title I program. Therefore, the service center assists the district's designee in meeting all funding requirements. Service center staff help districts analyze data to modify and strengthen educational program delivery for students enrolled in the Title I program.

Professional development is offered to meet the requirements set forth in the federal *No Child Left Behind* mandate. For example, trainings for paraprofessionals to meet the standard of "highly qualified" in *No Child Left Behind* are offered by the service center.

Accomplishment: RESC 9 consistently helps member school districts comply with all components of Title I and *No Child Left Behind* to ensure that all program and fiscal requirements are met.

Exhibit 9-2
Three-Year Plan for Board of Trustees for Evaluation of Gifted and Talented Program

Year One

- Assign a Committee (person) responsible for the actual evaluation of the local Gifted and Talented Program.
- Receive training from your ESC GT Education Specialist on the Indicators for Review. (Checklist of 16 indicators.)
- Meet with the GT Coordinator or person responsible for GT in your district to review the indicators. If any of the indicators have a no then have the GT Coordinator present a corrective action plan.
- Trustee presents findings to the Board. (This could be done in conjunction with the annual program evaluation of GT that is presented to the Board of Trustees.

Year Two

- Receive additional training from your ESC GT Education Specialist.
- Review the indicators from last year with an emphasis on quality of program design. Look specifically at the number of students identified and served at the elementary and secondary level. What kinds of patterns or trends do you see? What is the design of the program at each of the campuses? Do the parents know what the students are doing in each of these programs? What is the time element? Is there a scope and sequence for the students in the gifted program? How do the teachers document what is done for the student? Is the GT program involved with the State Performance Standards at 4th, 8th and Exit Level?

Year Three

- Receive additional training from your ESC GT Education Specialist.
- Review the indicators but the emphasis this year would be curriculum alignment with depth and complexity.

Source: Wichita Falls Regional Education Service Center, 2004

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

RESC 9 is the designated site for the Statewide Parent Involvement Initiative. The responsibilities of the service center include leading and facilitating a 20 region network to ensure the coordination of an ongoing state-level needs assessment process, setting state priorities, development of a network plan and the materials, products and activities related to the achievement of the plan.

Under this arrangement with TEA, the service center serves as the first point of contact for the other 19 regional service center network members by responding to correspondence and telephone calls requesting information. The service center provides information and guidance when requested by the Texas Education Agency in regard to technical assistance documents, legislative requests, and DEC Reference Guide.

This past year, the service center provided overall guidance and support in the development, distribution, completion and return of a statewide Survey of Parents and Students Receiving Special Education Services (March, 2004).

Accomplishment: RESC 9 exhibits strong leadership throughout the state by serving as the lead agency for the statewide Parental Involvement Program.

GIFTED AND TALENTED EDUCATION

RESC 9 provides excellent technical assistance and training to meet the state mandated requirements for gifted and talented education. Each teacher must have 30 hours of training and a six-hour update every year to meet the state requirements. Employees in the service center ensure that their programs and

services help improve not only the performance of gifted and talented students, but of all students.

RESC 9 staff serve as district coordinators in smaller, rural districts. Support is given to districts in testing and identifying students eligible for Gifted and Talented programming. A special focus is on identifying minority students, including Hispanic, African American, and low socio-economic students.

Region employees are presently implementing Web-based classes to meet the state training and staff development mandates. The service center is collaborating with Regional Education Service Center 4 for student course work and Regional Education Service Center 13 to deliver the professional development.

Annual needs assessments are conducted to determine the type of training and workshops needed and desired by school districts. Examples of trainings and assistance given include Thinking Maps, Differentiated Instruction, and Program Evaluation. Service Center staff collaborate with each other to develop and deliver workshops and trainings. For example, the Gifted/Talented RESC staff member makes a presentation at the English as a Second Language (ESL) Academies.

Accomplishment: RESC 9 is committed to integrating Gifted and Talented services with all other areas of instructional programs, and promoting broad involvement and collaboration among all service center staff.

RESTRUCTURING PROGRAM DELIVERY

RESCenter 9 has recently undergone an organizational restructuring process. As a result, all special education services, Early Childhood Education Programs, and the Head Start Program have merged with the core subject areas (language arts, math, science, and social studies) providing for increased collaboration. Most employees are cross-trained to deliver services in a variety of areas. Staff work closely together in developing and delivering trainings and workshops. They also maintain close working relationships with the school districts. Training for teachers is provided by both the RESC 9 employees and by outside experts. Data from annual needs assessments and evaluations is used to determine the services and programs to be offered. One goal of the service center is to build the capacity of districts to implement and maintain best practices.

The service center has created a professional development calendar that lists the following information for every workshop: location, date, time, title, audience, RESC contact, and the maximum number of participants to be enrolled.

In the summer, as many as fourteen (14) workshops may be offered simultaneously. Some of the professional development offerings include: Summer Leadership Academy for Administrators, Bilingual/ESL Teacher Training Initiative (BETTI), A Framework for Understanding Poverty, Access to the General Curriculum, Behavior Conference (The Oppositional and Defiant Child, Children from Dysfunctional Families, When Kids Who Can, Won't) History Alive, Texoma Regional Mathematics and Science Conference, Tech Prep, Physics: Collecting and Analyzing Linear and Nonlinear Data, and What Every Beginning Teacher Needs. All professional development has a foundation in scientifically-based research.

Accomplishment: RESC 9 has been active in responding to funding cuts by restructuring its program delivery operations in order to continue providing quality, data-based, and collaborative training and services to school districts.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

RESC 9 offers an effective program for districts and schools serving visually impaired students. This program receives both federal and state funding. Ninety-seven (97) students are eligible for services. In Region 9, services begin at birth and go through age 21. Students are provided mobility training, Braille instruction, social/peer interaction behavior

skills, and recreation and leisure activities. To assist teachers in meeting the unique needs of visually impaired students, the service center facilitates four formal trainings each year. These trainings are coordinated with the Texas Commission for the Blind. The service center also collaborates with several universities to offer a visually impaired alternative certification program for educators who seek and need this endorsement.

The service center participates and coordinates an annual "Tools for Success" Conference. Students with visual impairments, families of students with visual impairments, teachers of students with visual impairments, orientation and mobility specialists, and related service providers attend this conference. The service center collaborates with the Texas Commission for the Blind and the Education Service Centers in Regions 9, 14, 16, 17, and 18.

Accomplishment: RESC 9 effectively collaborates with other agencies and regional education service centers to sponsor an annual conference that addresses the needs of students with visual impairments.

SUMMER WORKSHOPS

RESC 9 provides quality technical assistance to help schools and campuses meet the educational standards set forth by the TEKS and TAKS for social studies and language arts. Technical assistance includes, but is not limited to, sponsoring the History Alive Program, developing a resource manual for teachers, curriculum alignment, and demonstration classes. Teachers are also given guidance on how to use their textbook in addition to a variety of other materials to meet the TEKS objectives.

Service center staff collaborate with each other in trainings and workshops. For example, the social studies and language arts employee works with the gifted and talented program employee when conducting workshops. Summer workshop scheduling begins in January. Workshops and trainings are based upon the results of needs assessments given to each school in the region. A combination of nationally renowned speakers, RESC 9 employees, other regional education service center employees, and educators from the region deliver the trainings.

Accomplishment: RESC 9 organizes and schedules a wide variety of quality summer workshops based upon the needs and requests of districts in the region, that include nationally renowned speakers and experts from throughout the state.

STATE ASSESSMENT ASSISTANCE

RESC 9 staff attend statewide meetings several times per year to receive updates and changes made on the state assessment program and they have found effective mediums for communicating important assessment information. The staff then relates this information to districts throughout Region 9. The service center is presently developing a Web site that addresses the most frequently asked questions about assessment.

A record of questions asked via phone calls, e-mail, and onsite visits have been compiled. Service center staff are always available to assist schools and districts analyze their data and draw comparisons within the region and state. The service center helps schools and districts adjust their curriculum and/or teaching strategies based upon the data compiled.

Accomplishment: RESC 9 has been instrumental in developing a Web site of frequently asked questions about the state-required assessment program that districts can access in an immediate and efficient manner.

HEAD START PROGRAMS

RESC 9 serves as an effective and efficient fiscal agent for Head Start Programs in four counties. Fifty-three (53) teachers and fifty-three (53) aides work in fifty-six (56) classrooms. All programs are housed in schools. Schools serve 666 students although funding is only received for 560. An additional 146 students are on a waiting list.

The goal of all Head Start Programs in the region is to improve student performance.

This goal is achieved by focusing on enhancing children's growth and development, strengthening families as the primary nurturers of their children, providing children with educational, health, and nutritional services, linking children and their families to needed community services, ensuring that well-managed programs exist, and involving parents in decision-making.

Technical assistance is provided to teachers on developing yearly plans, coordinating family services, increasing parental involvement, and helping parents develop comprehensive health and nutritional plans. On-site visits are made once a month to each Head Start program.

The service center also helps facilitate a Policy Council made up of community and parent representatives from each of the nine sites. The role of the Policy Council is to provide a forum for parents to express ideas and opinions about the Head Start Program. Meetings are held six (6) times per year. The Policy Council is involved in grant application processes, program planning, personnel decisions, and the self-assessment processes. The Policy Council reviews Child Outcome and other data at least two times per year. Trainings are prepared for the Policy Council that focus on program governance, roles and responsibilities of the Policy Council, performance standards of Head Start, and parliamentary procedures. RE SC 9's Board of Directors works closely with the Policy Council in approving Head Start decisions.

Accomplishment: RESC 9 understands the value of serving as the fiscal agent for Head Start within the region, and is committed to ensuring that students who are enrolled in Head Start programs make a smooth transition into school.

LEARNING RESOURCES COOPERATIVES

RESC 9 offers a Learning Resources Cooperative to provide library services to districts that are unable to meet library certification standards. A traveling certified librarian regularly makes on-site visits to assist library aides with all aspects of library operations. Members of the Cooperative receive several data bases including FAKSONFILE.

In addition, the service center offers video streaming (MINDS) and access to the Internet via Net 9. A Listserv developed by the center helps connect all library personnel in the region. The Service Center distributes several surveys and evaluations to determine how services provided by the Learning Resources Cooperative can be improved. The May 2004 survey results indicate a high degree of satisfaction with the services provided to districts.

RESC 9 houses a graphics lab and learning resource center for member school districts. In addition to providing numerous teaching supplies, the lab is also available to laminate materials and create a variety of resource materials upon request. A Technology Advisory Committee advises employees on services and programs that are both needed and desired by school districts. The Advisory Committee receives updates about new materials and programs.

Each year a Technology and Media Conference is hosted for educators throughout the region. Participants can choose from a wide variety of workshop offerings. Teachers can receive Gifted and Talented professional development credit by attending the sessions in the Advanced Academics/GT strand of the conference.

Accomplishment: RESC 9 coordinates a variety of exceptional library, media, and technology services to enhance learning experiences for students, and to assist teachers in implementing new instructional strategies in the classroom.

EMPLOYER PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

RESC 9 evaluates its performance through the use of performance indicators established for each of the state's education service center goals, regional service center goals, and for each program and service offered in RESC 9. A listing of all programs, goals, and performance indicators is detailed in the Service Center's Strategic Plan. A mid-year evaluation is conducted in February, and an end-of-year evaluation is conducted in August. Multiple performance indicators have been established to evaluate each department and program offered by the Service Center. Both mid-year and end-of-year evaluations are conducted.

Effective Program Management Plans are completed for every department. Program Management Plans detail the allocation of time and effort for each employee, each program, and each department at the service center. All time and effort notations are linked to specific goals/objectives from the Strategic Plan and to funding sources. Program Management Plans are used to: 1) identify the organization's goals and performance indicators; 2) identify the program's goals and performance indicators; 3) identify the nature of work at the service center (described as functions); and 4) identify the specific activities to be performed.

Accomplishment: RESC 9 maintains a detailed, comprehensive management record of time and effort for all employees that corresponds with specific goals and objectives outlined in the center's strategic plan.

PERSONNEL POLICIES

RESC 9's's personnel policy and procedures are current and up-to-date. Revisions are made when changes in laws or regulations occur.

RESC 9 provides employees an opportunity to indicate their interest in open positions and advance within the organization according to their skills and experience. Job openings are posted on the bulletin board in the main hallway of the service center, and on the Education Service Center Web site at *www.esc9.net*. Each job posting notice includes the dates of the posting period, job title, department, location, grade level, job summary, essential duties, and qualifications (required skills and abilities).

To ensure that individuals who join the Education Service Center are well qualified and have a strong potential to be productive and successful, it is the policy of the Education Service Center to check the employment references of all individuals who are offered a position.

Each new employee receives a New Employee Orientation Packet. Among other items, this packet contains:

- a resource guide that addresses all personnel policies and who the service center contact is to answer questions about them, and other contacts for materials and building, travel, staff development, and procedures;
- a brochure containing the service center's role and function;
- a directory of services;
- administrative procedures/employee handbook;
- code of ethics and standard practices;
- a current calendar;
- an organizational chart;
- a personnel roster;
- a staff telephone list;
- a personnel address roster;
- a sample itinerary;
- a current list of center-wide forms;
- a travel memo;
- maps of the region;
- an administrative directory;
- a superintendent phone list; and
- a frequently called telephone list.

When new employees are hired, Region 9 uses a Personnel Entrance Checklist to ensure that all required documents are on file within the first 45 days of employment. In addition, the service center completes a New Employee Orientation Checklist to ensure that all aspects

of service center operations are explained. Designated individuals within the service center are required to sign the areas they are responsible for covering with the new employee. New employees are required to sign an Employee Acknowledgment Form indicating they have received a copy of the Service Center's Employee Handbook and that they have agreed to read the handbook and abide by the standards, policies, and procedures defined or referenced in that document.

Accomplishment: RESC 9 has developed a detailed, comprehensive New Employee Orientation Packet that is accompanied by a checklist to ensure that all new employees receive consistent information regarding the operations and functions of the service center.

JOB DESCRIPTION

Up-to-date job descriptions for each position in RESC 9 have been developed. Interview questions are developed based upon the skills and knowledge required to fill the position. All employees are required to sign an Employee Agreement form and the agreement stipulates the terms of employment, compensation, duties, performance, term of position, termination procedures, and resignation procedures.

Supervisors conduct annual, written Performance Evaluations on all employees. In addition, the service center requires all employees to complete an annual self-evaluation. These self evaluations are used by the employees and their supervisors to outline staff development activities they will participate in during the next year.

Region 9 recognizes the benefit of developmental experiences and encourages employees to talk with their supervisors about their career plans. Supervisors are encouraged to support an employee's efforts to gain experience and to advance within the organization. An applicant's supervisor may be contacted to verify performance, skills, and attendance. Any staffing limitations or other circumstances that might affect a prospective transfer may also be discussed.

Detailed records pertaining to leave requests, comp hours, overtime hours, jury duty, non-paid leave requests, and personal days are maintained in the business office. Salaries correspond to pay structures that have been approved by the board and recommended by the executive director.

The executive director assigns positions to pay ranges that define the minimum and maximum base pay for each position. Jobs are classified for pay purposes on the basis of qualifications and duties as defined by the service center and market surveys of competitive pay rates. The executive director periodically reviews pay structures and makes adjustments upon approval of the board.

Accomplishment: RESC 9 follows appropriate hiring and evaluation procedures for all employees, and has established a positive, productive work environment that recognizes employees' skills, ideas, and energy as its most important resource.

CASH MANAGEMENT CONTROLS

RESC 9 has sound internal controls resulting in improved cash management.

RESC 9 fiscal operations control the collection, disbursement, and accounting for federal, state, and local funds. RESC 9 has detailed policies and procedures, as well as internal controls to efficiently process the center's day-to-day business transactions and provide complete and timely information to the administration and Board of Directors to facilitate decision making. All basic financial responsibilities for RESC 9, with the exception of internal auditing and budget management, occur within the Business Office. The Business Office is organized by staff function and services provided include:

- finance;
- budgeting;
- financial reporting;
- accounts payable;

- accounts receivable;
- travel;
- payroll;
- inventory;
- finance planning;
- application/amendment processing; and
- finance assistance to school districts, as needed.

The Business Office uses the Regional Service Center Computer Cooperative (RSCCC) financial system developed by RESC 20 in San Antonio. (The RSCCC system also has a student administrative system.) This system is utilized by most of the school systems in the state and is designed to meet specific requirements mandated by the state.

The Business Office has developed and implemented procedures for daily cash collection, deposit and revenue recording, resulting in stronger internal controls and cash management. For example, the Accounts Payable clerk is not allowed to handle petty cash, as that individual reconciles the petty cash account. This results in efficient and effective internal accounting controls, which is an important practice for business offices.

Accomplishment: RESC 9 has implemented internal accounting controls that have strengthened the process and improved cash management.

CROSS-TRAINING OF STAFF

The Business Office has initiated regular cross-training of staff. The finance position, general accountant and business office assistant all cross-train in one another's areas of responsibility. In addition, they cross-train with the inventory and accounts receivable positions. Due to confidentiality issues, the Business Office staff is not cross-trained with payroll. The Business Manager handles payroll issues and is responsible for payroll when routine staff is unavailable. As a result of cross-training, there is increased scheduling flexibility and uninterrupted service to staff and school districts.

Accomplishment: RESC 9 has cross-trained Business Office staff, thus developing expertise in areas other than their primary assignments, increasing staff flexibility, and maintaining effective and efficient customer service.

MONEY MANAGEMENT

Money management techniques result in the assurance that the RESC realizes maximum earnings from its available funds.

The majority of RESC 9 funds are in the Lone Star Investment Pool, an Enhanced Corporate Account (long term holding), and in Liquidity Plus. They have a money market account in their local depository, as well as a payment fund for all accounts payable transactions, which is interest bearing. They use an overnight sweep account for all but a set minimum that remains in the account.

Accomplishment: RESC 9 employs money management techniques in order to create the highest possible earnings from its funds.

CASH BALANCE

RESC 9 balance maximizes cash.

As the majority of the RESC's funds are received as cost reimbursements, there is no single point in time when funds are received. Therefore, the Business Office has developed procedures for the regular draw down of funds on a cost reimbursement basis in order to allow for consistent cash flow, maximum cash balances maintenance and compliance with grant and contract fiscal and reporting requirements. Unlike school districts, there are no major funding cycles. As a result of these procedures, RESC 9 maintains compliance with grantors and contracts and monitors finances while optimizing cash balances.

Accomplishment: RESC 9 uses procedures that maximize cash balances, maintain reporting compliance, and monitor RESC finances.

ACCOUNTING SERVICES

RESC 9 provides full accounting services for six of its member districts.

For an annual fee of $11,000 per district, RESC staff fully provides the following services:

- payroll;
- accounts payable;
- payroll accounting reports for the IRS;
- financial reports for their board;
- funding requests;
- TEA reports; and
- assistance developing and amending budgets.

As a result of these services, these small school districts are able to meet all accounting and reporting obligations.

Accomplishment: RESC 9 provides, at a minimum fee, essential accounting services to support small school districts that are unable to afford the hiring of staff with the level of expertise and experience required for these functions.

FOOD SERVICE COOPERATIVES

RESC 9 effectively coordinates a variety of child nutrition cooperatives for districts in the region. The Food Servicing Cooperative is a combined effort between Regions 9 and 14. Sixty-nine (69) districts participate in the cooperative. This cooperative enables all of the districts, regardless of size, to receive optimum pricing on all grocery and paper items.

The Commodity Processing Cooperative is also a combined effort between Regions 9 and 14. Sixty-two (62) districts participate in this cooperative. The Commodity Processing Cooperative enables schools to process raw commodity products into finished products with considerable cost savings.

Through the Commodity Processing Cooperative, schools receive their processed foods on a regular delivery date. This program, referred to as "Just in Time Deliveries" alleviates the problem of on-site storage of commodities.

The Menu Planning Cooperative serves twenty-eight (28) school districts in Region 9. RESC 9 provides menus to the member districts that meet all dietary guidelines and assists school kitchens use their USDA commodities in an efficient manner. The Equipment Procurement Cooperative assists districts with assessing and purchasing equipment. When districts are faced with a surplus of equipment that would satisfy other district's needs, RESC 9 acts as a non paid broker to transfer needed items.

In addition to offering districts the opportunity to join the cooperatives described above, the service center sends a yearly milk bid to approved vendors for providing milk service to thirty-four (34) school districts. This program enables districts in a remote geographic location to receive milk at a reasonable cost.

Efficiency reviews are conducted on Child Nutrition Programs when requested. Reviews focus on the percent of free and reduced lunches being served, breakfast and lunch preparation, purchasing practices, labor schedules, salary schedules, and inventory levels. Detailed accounting records of Daily Food Production and nutritional values for each school served by the service center.

RESC 9 offers a variety of training opportunities for school district personnel. Trainings include, but are not limited to, food production for "Nu-Menus," sanitation, and safety training. Many of the trainings are held via interactive video, or districts are clustered geographically and provided training in an effort to reduce costs.

Accomplishment: RESC 9 offers a variety of child nutrition cooperatives, in addition to conducting extensive analysis on available food service vendors enabling districts to

provide breakfast and school lunch programs at a cost-effective, affordable rate.

PROCUREMENT CARDS

RESC 9 is effectively using procurement cards.

The use of procurement cards is becoming more widespread in governmental use. The theory behind use of the cards is to allow employees to be more responsive in their duties by giving them the ability to purchase equipment and materials needed in a timely manner, while reducing the burden of purchasing and accounts payable staff in processing purchase orders.

The use of a procurement card reduces the number of purchase requisitions that must be processed every year. This action would also reduce staff time associated with reviewing and approving purchase orders less than a preapproved amount (e.g. $300 or $500 or $1,000).

Goods and services not to exceed the "per transaction amount" may be purchased and paid for using the procurement card. Monthly limits can be placed on users as well. Each card ties to a separate account, which is reconciled monthly at the department level by designated personnel. Itemized receipts are attached to a monthly log and audited periodically.

Accomplishment: The RESC 9 Business Office uses procurement cards to simplify purchasing and reduce the work loads on staff.

PAPERLESS PURCHASE ORDERS

In October 2004, the Business Office will go to a paperless purchase order system using the upgraded RSCCC. This system will provide immediate access to information regarding the status of purchase orders and expedite the processing time. As a result, the processing time will be abbreviated and individuals will be able to track the progress of orders from their computers, thus saving on paper, copying, filing, and staff costs.

Accomplishment: RESC 9 is ready to initiate a paperless purchase order system, which will shorten the process, simplify monitoring of an order's progress, and reduce costs.

RISK MANAGEMENT

RESC 9 has protected itself against loss by insuring itself and its employees in several important ways.

Adequate levels of property and casualty insurance are provided by a multi-regional insurance cooperative. Currently, because of decreasing claims, rates are decreasing. Workman's Comprehensive and Unemployment Insurance is provided by a self-funded insurance pool generated by regional centers and school districts. Region 9 has had no claims in recent years. Health insurance for employees is provided by Blue Cross/Blue Shield.

Accomplishment: RESC 9 reduces risk to the center's assets, employees, and board members by maintaining adequate insurance coverage obtained at competitive price.

EXTERNAL REVIEW OF RISKS

RESC 9 uses outside reviews to identify risk management.

RESC 9, in addition to reducing risk through insurance, has also acted in an active manner to identify, analyze, and reduce risks by responding to risk information provided by representatives from insurance carriers and by participating on an annual basis in an inspection of their facility to identify possible hazards.

Accomplishment: RESC 9 actively solicits outside reviews of its assets to further identify risk factors.

INTEREST-BEARING ACCOUNTS

Region 9 invests idle funds for generating additional revenue through interest-bearing accounts.

It is important that regional centers maintain adequate cash balances for day-to-day

operations. It is equally important that funds are not allowed to remain idle, and should be maximized by investing in interest bearing pools, CD's, and sweep accounts.

RESC 9 is maintaining adequate levels of cash for daily operations. The types of accounts currently being utilized by the center are:

- Lone Star Investment pool;
- money market account;
- interest-bearing payment fund;
- payroll account; and
- workers compensation account.

The center is currently working with banks to establish a sweep account.

Accomplishment: RESC 9 maintains adequate levels of cash for daily operations and in investing idle funds for generating additional revenue through interest bearing accounts.

INTERACTIVE VIDEO NETWORK

In spite of the loss of state funds, Region 9 has maintained excellent instructional programs including a state-of-the-art interactive video network.

This was made possible by successfully competing for a number of grants. Major financial gains have resulted from e-Rate, Target, and TIE grants. Two Federal TIE grants have made it possible to establish a high quality two way interactive video network. The result is that currently 300 students are receiving interschool classes and college credit class, and the program is expanding each semester.

Accomplishment: RESC 9 has implemented a state-of-the-art interactive video network.

STATE-OF-THE-ART TECHNOLOGY

Region 9 recognizes the importance of technology as an educational tool for innovative teaching and learning by using state-of-the-art technology.

It is necessary to encourage an environment in which students, teachers, administrators, center staff and community can utilize technology as a tool for finding information, learning, and communicating with others. The core of any technology program is the hardware, pipes, and wires. The centers and school districts must be able to purchase state-of-the-art hardware and other needed equipment to allow the employees, teachers and students to make use of the newest educational technologies and to ensure that the systems are secure. This process has been complicated by the loss of state funding in June of 2003. Depreciation schedules on hardware are usually less than five years. Dependability of equipment becomes questionable in a short time. Most regions will need to rely heavily on grants to maintain and replace existing equipment or face reducing services and reliability.

The center's Technology Department has established itself as a "leading edge" program. It was one of the first regions to have a Cisco system. The department is currently offering districts: Internet, compressed video, voice over IP, and email. All 39 districts, the charter campus, and two private schools are under contract for these services.

Accomplishment: The RESC 9 Technology Department maintains state-of-the-art equipment in spite of significant losses of state funds.

DISASTER RECOVERY PLAN

RESC 9 has developed a comprehensive Disaster Recovery Plan.

RESC 9 Technology Department has recognized their operational dependency on computer systems, including the Local Area Network (LAN), Data Base Servers, Internet, Intranet and email and the potential loss of operational control in the event of a disaster. The intent of Region 9's Disaster Plan is to provide a written and tested plan directing the computer system recovery process in the event of a "worst case scenario" such as the total loss of the facility or supporting infrastructure.

Accomplishment: RESC 9 Technology Department has a comprehensive Disaster Recovery Plan.

TECHNOLOGY SECURITY

RESC 9 Technology Department has taken significant steps to ensure the security of its systems. A Sonic Wall 4060 Pro firewall appliance is in place for filtering Web content. The unit downloads and updated filter list each evening. In order to scan email for content and viruses, the technology department uses a Webshield e250 from McAfee. This is a Linux based server that blocks over 4,000 spam messages a day. Virus files are updated each day and are able to eliminate 95 percent of all viruses.

Accomplishment: The technology used in Region 9 maintains high levels of security and virus free transmissions.

DETAILED FINDINGS

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

RESC 9 maintains an updated *Administrative Procedures/Employee Handbook*. The handbook is available in hard copy, but it is not available online at the region's Web site.

Having the administrative procedures available on the RESC 9 Web site will enable individuals outside the organization to more easily access that information. Anytime that a governmental organization can be more open with information about its operations, the more it will be trusted and supported.

RESC 9 should post the Administrative Procedures/Employee Handbook on the Web site, making it more easily accessible and easier to update. By having the handbook posted on the Web, the information will be more available to the general public and to employees who may have access only by a Web browser. Having open and available information on the RESC should build confidence in the organization and improve its trustworthy image.

BOARD MINUTES

RESC 9 board minutes are typed and distributed in hard copy within one week of each meeting, but they are not posted online at the center's Web site**.**

Posting the minutes online is not mandated by the state and is entirely voluntary. As a result of not posting them electronically, they are less easily available to staff, RESC 9 school districts' personnel, and the public.

If board minutes are posted, the RESC 9 staff, member district personnel, and members of the public visiting the RESC Web site would have increased ease of accessibility to current information regarding topics addressed and decisions made pertaining to programs, services and funding. Through this greater transparency and improved accessibility, there is potential for the center to gain heightened awareness of, and support and demand for, its programs and services. The simple online posting of board minutes could assist in both information dissemination and marketing.

RESC 9 should post board minutes on the Web site, a practice that would provide even greater access for the public regarding board decisions and the center's funding, programs, and services. As a result of posting the minutes on the Web site, the RESC will be seen by its employees, its member districts, and the public it serves as being more open and responsive to stakeholders. This will improve the image of the RESC as a governmental organization.

BOARD SELF-EVALUATION

The board does not participate in an annual formal evaluation of itself, a practice common among boards. As a result, the board may miss opportunities to identify and incorporate improvements for its own functioning.

Governing boards in any organization can improve their performance through a formal self-evaluation in addition to an informal feedback process. In addition, by conducting an annual evaluation, the board models for their members' boards the importance of the evaluation process. **Exhibit 9-3** is one example of a self-assessment instrument used by some boards.

Exhibit 9-3
Sample Board Self-Assessment Instrument

Meeting Evaluation

DIRECTIONS: By evaluating our past meeting performance, we can discover ways to make future meetings shorter and more productive. Check each item "Adequate" or "Needs Improvement." If you check "Needs Improvement," include suggestions for improvement.

Adequate	Needs Improvement	
_____	_____	Our meeting was businesslike, results-oriented and we functioned like a team.
_____	_____	Our discussion was cordial and well balanced (not dominated by just a few members).
_____	_____	We confined our discussion to agenda items only.
_____	_____	Our agenda included positive issues as well as problems.
_____	_____	We discussed policy issues rather than day-to-day management issues.
_____	_____	We followed parliamentary rules and consulted legal or professional counsel when needed.
_____	_____	The president or chairperson controlled and guided the meeting.
_____	_____	We dealt successfully with controversial items and attempted to develop solutions acceptable to all members.
_____	_____	Everyone contributed to the meeting.
_____	_____	All members were prepared to discuss material that was sent to them in advance.
_____	_____	Reports were clear, well prepared and provided adequate information for decision making.
_____	_____	Printed materials given to us were easy to understand and use.
_____	_____	Our meeting room was comfortable and conducive to discussion and decision making.
_____	_____	All members were in attendance and on-time - - and the meeting began and concluded on time.
_____	_____	For committees and ad hoc groups: There was adequate reason for us to meet.

My best suggestions for improving our next meeting is...

Source: MGT of America, 2004.

RESC 9 should provide for an annual self-evaluation of the board. Providing feedback, both formally and informally, is one of the "basics" in any improvement process. Structured feedback in the form of an evaluation instrument can supplement honest ongoing dialogue and discussion.

BOARD STANDING COMMITTEES

The RESC 9 Board of Directors does not have standing committees, while such committees are often a means for developing appropriate board involvement in agency or organizational policy and planning development, promoting the services or value of an organization, and other activities.

The Board of Directors meets every other month for regularly scheduled meetings and other meetings are called as the need arises. MGT consultants do not believe that the board needs to meet more often; however, greater board involvement in planning activity, services development, and essential RESC

promotion activity among the region's districts and other stakeholders may well require more individual board member involvement and could result in producing a means by which board members can actively affect the public's and others' understanding of RESC services and products.

Many effective organizations involve the Board of Directors in carefully crafted committee work or ad hoc committee activity to contribute to overall effectiveness and as an effective tool for overcoming external barriers to success in many areas of concern. One of the areas of concern voiced by some RESC 9 personnel relates to strengthening relationships with external stakeholders.

RESC 9 should establish a standing committee structure. Implementing this recommendation should result in a careful analysis of potential board committee activity designed to promote the work of RESC 9 and support important planning activity.

The implementation of this recommendation can lay the groundwork for developing a Board of Directors infrastructure to deal with issues related to the perception that important education stakeholders do not adequately understand the nature and purpose of the RESC organization and related programs and services provided to the school districts of Texas (this perception was gained in the initial briefing of consultants and further confirmed in interviews with various RESC personnel). This is further supported by the fact that the Texas Legislature prohibits education-related personnel from lobbying for legislative support and funding. This recommendation is based upon the premise that current RESCs and their boards are not proactive in promoting RESC value nor are there established working relationships with local school district boards to identify effective means of educating the public.

This recommendation may lead to the development of one or more of the following committees:

- strategic planning;
- cooperatives' development;
- finance;
- facilities; and/or
- external relations.

This recommendation should be implemented through the following steps:

- The executive director should review the recommendation with the board of directors;
- Once agreed upon, the board of directors should direct the Executive Director to prepare the necessary policy and procedures to guide the proposed committee(s) development and activity;
- Potential committee membership should be identified with attention to involvement of member school district representation;
- The executive director should identify a RESC liaison for each established committee; and
- The chair of the board of directors should appoint a three member committee assigned the task of implementing the recommendation—that is, preparing a plan for an RESC board external relations program.

The effective implementation of this recommendation can contribute to making important stakeholders informed supporters of the important services and program work of RESC 9 and provide for policy-level board involvement.

FACILITIES MASTER PLAN

RESC 9 does not have a facilities master plan that can be directly translated into immediate, mid-term and long-term projects. The lack of this master plan creates a series of difficulties including not having addressed long-term parking needs and raising questions regarding long-term retrofitting of facilities to meet the rapidly changing demands of modern technology.

A number of planning processes and documents can be used to build and maintain facilities that meet the changing needs of a region. A facilities master plan is the result of these planning efforts and becomes the organization's policy statement for allocating resources and developing alternatives for facility improvement. Facility master plans become increasingly important as a district's enrollment changes and facilities age. Even for an organization like RESC 9, a facilities master plan can be used to plan appropriately.

The center does not have a dedicated facilities planning function, but rather uses a business officer to develop scenarios for consideration with growth.

The lack of a facilities master plan hinders planning for growth. A facilities master plan is based on verified existing data, a complete understanding of both facilities conditions and the future implications of needs for the educational service center. An effective master plan includes an accurate inventory of each room, current internal room utilization, current external room utilization and assessments of all repairs, and renovations necessary for long-tem use.

Many larger sized organizations hire professionals to develop all or parts of the facilities master plan. RESC 9 has existing staff that can create a simple facilities master plan.

RESC 9 should conduct a facilities analysis and incorporate results into a long-range facilities master plan. The implementation of this recommendation should result in a useable long-range facilities use master plan. The plan should include specific recommendations that reflect the identification of deferred maintenance needs, documented cost estimates and a timeline to address these recommendations. Development of the plan should be coordinated with the Board of Directors. Once the plan has been completed, it should be reviewed and updated annually and approved by the Board of Directors.

UTILITY MANAGEMENT AUDIT

RESC 9 does not conduct utility management audits resulting in a lack of data to support decisions on energy management and other related potential cost-savings.

Utility management firms are often hired once per year to obtain all telephone, gas, electricity, water, long distance, and Internet records. They audit these records to identify potential savings. The records are also compared to records obtained from provider utility companies. Discrepancies in records often result in returned savings to the RESC. Typically, the utility management firms keep a percentage of identified savings as a fee for the services.

By not conducting these audits, the center may be missing opportunities for conserving expenditures that may be better used in delivering educational services to client.

RESC 9 should conduct utility management audits. The implementation of this recommendation should result in conserving energy with resulting savings in expenditures. Utility audits for the service center and guidance to school districts on use of utility audits should produce much needed increased efficiency and economies for Region 9.

Typically organizations can secure assistance with utility management audits from a variety of sources. The RESC should contact the local public utilities service provider for assistance. If the public utilities provider does not offer this service then the RESC should turn to the private sector providers such as Honeywell Corporation or Johnston Controls Corporation. These types of firms usually offer the audit at no cost to the organization with optional retrofitting services paid for through identified savings as they occur.

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources. The results of the audits will vary, but often results in funds being returned to the service center through a reduction in utilities expenses.

MINORITY RECRUITMENT

The percentage of minority employees at RESC 9 (18%) does not compare to the regional minority percentage of 28 percent (see **Exhibit 9-4**). RESC 9 continues to recruit qualified minority candidates to increase the minority representation, but reports minimal success.

Exhibit 9-4
RESC 9 Employee Demographics

Ethnicity/Gender	Total Professional/ Support	Professional Staff	Support Staff
Male/Female	11/54	10/35	1/19
White	53	37	16
Hispanic	3	2	1
African American	7	4	3
Asian	0	0	0
Indian	2	2	0

Source: RESC 9, Administrative Offices, 2004.

Recruiting and hiring a greater number of people from different cultures, backgrounds, and ethnicity has the potential of bringing a different set of solutions and more ways of solving problems common to school districts throughout the region. A more diverse staff can create energy and increase the probability that decisions regarding programs and services will more adequately meet the needs of the center's clients. In addition, a diverse work force can generate unique and innovative ideas and suggestions. Employees from diverse backgrounds can share new knowledge and information about the needs of different groups. This diversity will enhance the center's ability to respond to schools and districts in a creative manner.

RESC 9 should intensify efforts to recruit qualified minority applicants for job openings. By intensifying the recruitment of qualified minority populations for job openings at the Regional Education Service Center, the staff make-up will more accurately reflect the ethnic mix of the community it serves. Because there are language differences in the community, this should result in better communications that will reduce misunderstandings and provide an environment where minority students have the best possible opportunities to succeed. This should result in a more diverse staff with better communications and an improved professional image within the community.

This recommendation will require a greater recruitment effort. Additional advertising in a wider geographic area will be necessary. In addition, some additional time will need to be spent cultivating new contacts and sources of referral. The fiscal impact of such an expanded search effort is estimated at $2,000 per year. The savings would be half for the first year due to the implementation date beginning in January 2005.

DIFFERENCE IN FISCAL YEARS

The fiscal year for RESC 9 is from September 1 to August 31. All member school districts use the same fiscal year. However, there is a choice as to when the fiscal year begins, and as a result it is possible to have different fiscal years among the RESCs.

When RESC 9 and its member districts have a common fiscal year, there is no overlap between fiscal accounting by fiscal year. Accruals of both expenses and revenues are simplified to a common 60-day period that is the same for all entities. Because of the legislative and TEA finance and funding timelines, a September 1 – August 31 fiscal year would be more efficient to implement and maintain than a July 1 – June 30 fiscal year.

RESC 9 should ensure that RESC 9 has the same fiscal year as its member districts. Having the region on the same fiscal year as its member districts should simplify the timing

of fiscal reporting and make comparative analysis easier. Because of legislative and TEA functions, a September 1 – August 31 fiscal year would probably be easier to implement and maintain than a July 1 – June 30 fiscal year.

ANNUAL FINANCIAL AUDIT

Annual financial audits are not developed in a manner consistent with the requirements for a certificate of excellence award.

RESC 9's annual financial report is prepared by the RESC's auditors. This report includes the auditor's opinion letter and all of the necessary financial statements, footnote disclosures and other disclosures, to comply with current governmental accounting principles as promulgated by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) as well as reports required by the federal government relating to the Single Audit Act,which mandates an independent financial and compliance audit of federal financial assistance programs. This report provides a picture of the overall financial position of the center, but it lacks additional information that could be used to more effectively communicate how the financial activity for the fiscal year has impacted Region 9's programs and services.

The Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) and the Association of School Business Officials (ASBO) provide recommended standards for Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports (CAFR). A governmental entity that meets these standards will receive a "Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting." To receive this type of reporting recognition, a Center must publish an easily readable and efficiently organized comprehensive annual financial report.

The Annual Financial Report is the final event in the annual planning and budgeting process as the organization completes the cycle and lays the foundation for the next budget process.

The requirements for an easily readable and efficiently organized comprehensive annual report include:

- **Introductory Section** - This section includes a letter from the chief financial officer that summarizes the fiscal operations and the strategic plan of the district, an organization overview, and clearly indicates that the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report is a report of the management of the RESC and that the management of the RESC is responsible for its preparation.

- **Financial Section** – This section includes:

  - The Independent Auditors' Report;
  - Management's Discussion and Analysis;
  - Government-Wide Financial Statements;
  - Fund Financial Statements;
  - Summary of Significant Accounting Policies;
  - Notes to the General Purpose Financial Statements; and
  - Combining and Individual Fund Information and Other Supplementary Information.

- **Statistical Section** – This section includes selected financial and demographic information generally presented on a multi-year basis.

The overall intent of the CAFR should be to provide financial reports that demonstrate both fiscal and operational accountability.

RESC 9 should prepare future Annual Financial Reports in a manner consistent with the guidelines that would qualify the report to earn the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting. Information regarding the preparation of a CAFR, to include copies of the checklist used to review the financial reports can be obtained from GFOA by e-mailing a request to

CAFRProgram@gfoa.org. RESC 4 has received a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting from GFOA and copies of its report could provide a format to be used.

The achievement of the Certificate is less important than the preparation of a Comprehensive Annual Financial Report that will more effectively communicate the financial position of Region 9 and relate the financial results with the original budget document.

The fee to seek a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting is $500.

SAFETY COMMITTEE

Region 9 does not have a building safety committee, which can potentially heighten the awareness of workplace safety.

The assessment of risk should involve all employees in an organization. Although this may not be practical in many instances, a safety committee that is broadly represented by all employee categories is possible. Through increased involvement of a broad cross section of employees in an organization, a greater number of risk factors can be identified.

Safety committees used in other organizations increase the awareness of safety issues in the workplace. Expertise in various safety areas is shared with other employees through the process, thus building a cadre of more experienced safety "experts." The heightened awareness and increased sophistication of the safety committee will create a safer working environment with lower loss rates. The lower loss rates, over time, will reduce the cost of insurance.

Safety committees are commonly used by effective organizations across the country. In addition to safety issues, there is often some overlap with emergency preparedness issues that help the organization in emergency and disaster response planning.

RESC 9 should form a building safety committee to assist the executive director in an ongoing basis to identify additional safety and security issues in and around the facility. As a result of having a building safety committee, several changes can be expected for RESC 9. The first change will be a heightened awareness of safety in the workplace. Expertise in safety issues grows as the team works together. For the long run, safety committees can be expected to be a vital component of a lower loss "experience rating" which will ultimately lower premiums for insurance.

FISCAL IMPACT

	Recommendation	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	5-Year (Costs) or Savings	One-Time (Costs) or Savings
9-7	Intensify efforts to recruit qualified minority applicants for job openings.	($1,000)	($2,000)	($2,000)	($2,000)	($2,000)	($9,000)	
9-9	Seek the certificate of achievement for excellence in financial reporting.	($830)	($830)	($830)	($830)	($830)	($4,150)	
	Total	**($1,830)**	**($2,830)**	**($2,830)**	**($2,830)**	**($2,830)**	**($13,150)**	**$0**

CHAPTER 10:

RICHARDSON

CHAPTER 10

RICHARDSON

Regional Education Service Center (RESC) 10 is one of the 20 statewide regional education service agencies that assist school districts and charter schools in improving student achievement. Located in Richardson, the service center provides services that impact over 618,135 students and 74,785 educators in 81 public school districts, 31 charter schools, and nine counties.

RESC 10 has two sites in Richardson, Texas, one located at Abrams and the other located at Spring Valley. The Abrams building contains 49,000 square feet on approximately 3.97 acres. The Spring Valley location is situated on approximately 4.07 acres and accommodates two buildings: the administration building contains 52,000 square feet; and the Conference and Technology Center contains 36,000 square feet.

The mission of RESC 10, in partnership with its client school districts and charter schools, is to:

- support Region 10 school district, campus and charter school initiatives for improving both excellence and equity in student achievement [TEC, 8.002(1)];
- enhance the efficiency, effectiveness and economy of educational programs across the region [TEC, 8.002(2)]; and
- encourage the fulfillment of statewide initiatives [TEC, 8.002(3)]; congruent with the individual missions of public school districts and charter schools in the region.

The following are some of the core values that RESC 10 believes are vital to accomplishing their mission:

- It is the responsibility of the public education system to provide a free, appropriate education of the highest quality to each individual.
- Ongoing communications, cooperation, and collaboration with client districts and charter schools produce the highest quality in educational support services.
- Excellence and equity in education are achievable and sustainable.
- High expectations yield high performance and achievement.
- Increasing student performance is the ultimate impetus for decisions that impact education.
- Education service centers impact learning.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- RESC 10 is committed to using advisory groups as a resource for receiving ideas, feedback, and information that impacts how they plan and deliver services.
- RESC 10 effectively plans, funds, constructs, and renovates buildings to provide safe, purposeful working and training environments that meet state and federal regulations.
- RESC 10 implements an effective energy management plan.
- RESC 10 provides a needs assessment, Web-based and CD technology, and professional development at no charge to its districts to assist in addressing student performance.
- RESC 10 provides effective professional development to small rural and large urban member districts that has had a positive effect on student achievement.
- RESC 10 provides discounted access to streaming video, broadcast programming, and electronic field trips to campuses through region-wide licenses.
- RESC 10 provides professional development to different size districts at comparable per participant rates.
- RESC 10 conducts annual market surveys to assist in developing a competitive salary schedule.

- Region 10 reclassified administrative cost to the Internal Service Fund to cover non-categorical expenditures.
- Region 10 effectively uses a software planning tool for compiling division budget reports for the board of directors to review and approve.
- Region 10 has successfully generated significant cost savings for school districts through effectively managing the Multi Region Child Nutrition Purchasing Co-op.
- Region 10 has effectively secured inter-local agreements from 100 percent of the school districts in its region for participation in the Purchasing Consortium.
- RESC 10 Business Office minimizes loss exposure by keeping its assets of cash and cash equivalents safe guarded with ongoing current investment strategies.
- RESC 10 Business Office has created a unique and effective risk management process that is handled at the division director level.
- Region 10 minimizes insurance claims while providing complete property, casualty, and liability insurance coverage for the organization and employees.
- RESC 10 provides a high standard of innovative services to member school districts to use the video conference system.
- The Division of Information Services established and maintains accurate and reliable technology systems, which meet the current demands of the school districts.

FINDINGS

- RESC 10's board approves the goals and objectives within the strategic plan, but does not approve any of the key performance indicators within the strategic plan.
- RESC 10's recently approved strategic plan and supporting action plans do not have a direct correlation to the performance plan used to measure individual staff performance.
- There was a breakdown in communication in the selection of a new executive director between TEA and RESC 10. This breakdown created confusion and had an impact on morale in the region.
- RESC 10's custodial job descriptions do not adequately reflect their performance requirements.
- Although Title III funds are available to districts to provide supplemental services for LEP students, there is no training program to teach district administrators, teachers, and other personnel to design and apply for granted funding for their districts.
- Over the last five years, RESC 10 has consistently tried to offer professional development that leads to higher education credit, but has met with mixed success. Although RESC 10 offers numerous professional development opportunities for teachers in a variety of delivery modes, these opportunities are not directly tied to identified needs of member districts for specific degree programs in higher education.
- There is no mentoring program offered by RESC 10 for teachers of LEP students.
- The RESC 10 Report of Performance Evaluation form is a standardized form and is not individualized for specific jobs or positions. This general form is used for all employees as a rating system for performance evaluations that are the foundation of determining salary changes and promotions.
- The Department of Human Resources stores, monitors, and oversees job descriptions and employee records. These personnel documents are an important part of the employment process and should be frequently monitored by personnel services staff.

- RESC 10 does not have a contact for human resource records at the Texas State Library and Archives Commission.
- RESC 10 does not have an employee handbook. There is no format for ensuring that all employees are aware of business policies, payroll procedures, and other operational information.
- The Texas Education Agency recommends that RESCs maintain no more than 20 percent of General Fund operating expenditures in unreserved, undesignated fund balance; Region 10's goal is below this threshold. .
- Region 10 does not prepare written financial narratives or trend analysis for board members to review prior to each board meeting. While board members are informed about the fund balance activity, the information does not include any supporting narratives.
- RESC 10 PEIMS Coordinator has multiple roles and responsibilities that are not specific to supporting quality PEIMS activities.
- RESC 10 manually handles the submission of requisition for goods or services and the approval of the requisitions.
- RESC 10 fixed asset records that are maintained on the asset tracking system are not adequately classified and the supporting descriptions are not clear.
- RESC 10 mainframe and the RSCCC products run on different platforms and vary in the specific functionality and data access offered.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 10-1: Involve the board in the initial planning phase of reviewing and approving high level goals, objectives, and key performance indicators that will be used to measure the success of each department within Region 10.** This level of board involvement in the form of a work session around planning and budgeting would be an effective forum for discussing all critical areas of the strategic plan, and providing the board with earlier indicators on how the success of Region 10 will be evaluated. In addition, by involving the board early in the strategic planning process, board members should be in a better position to add value to the scope of some of the more global organizational goals.

- **Recommendation 10-2: Develop performance plans with objective targets and indicators that have a correlation to the action plans created for supporting the goals and objectives approved in the strategic plan.** RESC 10 should review its planning and documentation process to ensure that all planning outcomes are clearly documented and that clear linkages exist between planning efforts and the TEA required Balanced Scorecard. The usefulness of the strategic plan as a planning document requires that it include such a clear statement of goals and objectives that are linked to action plans for achievement. A process should be in place to ensure consistency in the information and evaluation of results of all planning-related materials.

- **Recommendation 10-3: Clarify with TEA the meaning of the policies used for selecting an executive director.** Any changes to the policies should be decided and communicated before the selection process is commenced. The Screening Committee at Region 10 should have a least one member on the Committee that is not a former superintendent.

- **Recommendation 10-4: Rewrite the custodian job descriptions to reflect performance of actual tasks completed.** By implementing this recommendation, RESC 10 should

design a job description that is focused on the actual custodial needs of the center. Since salary changes and promotions are based upon performance evaluations, the updated job description should include tasks that custodians are presently completing.

- **Recommendation 10-5: Develop a training program to teach district administrators, teachers, and other personnel to design and apply for grant funding for their districts**. By implementing this recommendation, RESC 10 should provide a service for securing additional funds for individual classrooms, specific academic programs, and after school and other related student programs. RESC 10 should collaborate with institutions of higher education and other RESCs to design workshops to teach participants how to write and manage grants.

- **Recommendation 10-6: Continue to develop and plan to expand distance learning programs to other degree programs that are specifically matched to the needs of professionals, paraprofessionals, related service providers, and administrators in member districts.** By implementing this recommendation, RESC 10 should expand its reach to include programs for professional development of teachers and professionals that are aligned with the needs of students in particular programs in each district. The professional development activities (strategies) should be directly linked to the objectives and goals of the RESC. The processes in place for assessing the links between the professional development activities should be appropriate and varied according to the needs of the districts the RESC serves. Professional development programs and activities should be based on the best available research and practice in teaching, learning, and leadership. As well, the professional development programs should be part of a long-term strategic plan. For example, the professional development goals should be aligned with school/district goals.

- **Recommendation 10-7: Develop a mentoring program using the two bilingual education consultants to meet the ongoing needs of teachers and students in member districts.** RESC 10 should establish a mentoring program to provide technical assistance and guidance to teachers, administrators, and families of students with bilingual language needs.

- **Recommendation 10-8: Develop specific performance evaluation criteria that are relevant to specific positions.** RESC 10 employees should be evaluated based upon specific criteria that are objective and have a direct relationship to job descriptions and are correlated to the action plans that are developed to support the strategic plan. By using an evaluation form that is individualized and detailed, employees and supervisors should expect that performance-based salary changes and promotions are more reflective of the job descriptions and responsibilities that are unique to each division at Region 10. In order to individualize the form, division administrators should meet with department supervisors and program coordinators to determine the changes that should be made to the current general performance evaluation form.

- **Recommendation 10-9: Develop a retention and destruction schedule for human resources records and information at RESC 10.** By

implementing this recommendation, RESC 10 should meet state agency guidelines for submission of a complete record retention schedule to the state and local records management division of the Texas state library and archives commission. (For more information, it is suggested that RESC 10 Human Resource staff consult documents located at http://www.tsl.state.tx.us/slrm/recordspubs/index.html#rrs2**)**

- **Recommendation 10-10: Develop a contact for Human Resource records at the Texas State Library and Archives Commission.** RESC 10 should meet state agency guidelines for submission of a complete record retention schedule to the state and local records management division of the Texas state library and archives commission. For more information, RESC 10 human resource staff should consult documents located at http://www.tsl.state.tx.us/slrm/recordspubs/rrs2.

- **Recommendation 10-11: Develop an Employee Handbook and update the handbook annually with recorded revision dates.** An Employee Handbook should be designed, developed, and distributed to all employees. This handbook should provide general descriptions of policies affecting all employees. The Region's mission, goals, calendar, and policies should be part of this comprehensive handbook for employees. Serving as a convenient reference, the handbook should also include other pertinent information, such as a directory of schools and offices and a brief description of the specific RESC 10 programs provided to school districts. For internal consistency, information should be obtained from the recently revised Business/Financial Services Operational Procedures Manual. A brief form should be included in the handbook for an employee to sign indicting that the handbook was reviewed. The signed form should be kept in each employee's personnel file as a record that the employee is aware of policies and regulations in Region 10. The handbook should be placed on the RESC 10 Intranet/Web site making it more easily accessible, eliminating unnecessary duplication costs, and facilitating updates. Employees who are new to the RESC should be provided with a copy of the Employee Handbook at orientation.

- **Recommendation 10-12: Determine the appropriate use of funds necessary for financial planning and annual budgeting purposes.** This recommendation will assist RESC 10 with clearly defining the level of allocated state based funds to the specific scope of services listed above for school district support in the region. Although it was necessary for Region 10 to use the fund balance last year and it may also be necessary next year, due to large reductions in state funding, the center realizes that this cannot be a long-term strategy. School districts have been significantly impacted with reduced funding as well, but future fee increases may be inevitable. It may also be necessary to be more creative and entrepreneurial in thinking of new ways to generate revenue and form business partnerships.

- **Recommendation 10-13: Develop a written commentary and a trend analysis to the year-end final budget amendments that are presented to the board of directors.** The advantages to this recommendation is that it will foster cross functional communication between regional service centers, make it easier to service all school districts, minimize reliance on specific personnel within

regional service centers, and increase productivity and product support. The challenges the regional service centers will face are changes that will require more focus on resources for training and business process reengineering, require specialized IT capability with the RESCs, and top management commitment.

- **Recommendation 10-14: Evaluate the role of the RESC 10 PEIMS assigned coordinator to determine if the PEIMS coordinator role should be separated from other assigned duties.** The implementation of this recommendation should result in adequate and appropriate manpower allocation to the PEIMS program. Further, this action is justified when one considers that RESC 10 has the second largest student population of the 20 RESCs exceeded only by RESC 4.

- **Recommendation 10-15: Modify the existing requisition purchasing system or identify another automated purchasing requisition system (i.e. iTCCS, or a comparable system) that supports a purchasing process from the point of a requisition being submitted to a good or service being received.** Region 10's implementation of a complete requisition purchasing system to complement the features available in the request system will improve inefficiencies including the time it takes to process a requisition and the ability for approvers to receive automatic notification, and minimize the risk of a requisition being misplaced.

- **Recommendation 10-16: Update the asset descriptions and classification in the system.** External evaluation of physical inventories takes place at Region 10 now approximately every five years. Although during 2002 an outside expert vendor was engaged to conduct a complete inventory and evaluation of assets, this was done to prepare for the implementation of GASB 34 and the depreciation of assets requirements. Region 10 still needs to do random spot checks on inventory to determine and evaluate the accuracy of all assets recorded in the system.

- **Recommendation 10-17: Collaborate closely with RESC 20 to create one scalable product for release of next generation information technology products.** RESC 10 and RESC 20 both have separate mainframe solutions for member districts respectively. This creates an opportunity to closely evaluate both mainframe applications and determine the best practices. Region 10 and Region 20 can be both co-owners of the next generation of products released. Region 20 already is the single author of RSCCC, but Region 10 can provide input on how to integrate RSCCC in with the mainframe to create one scalable product.

DETAILED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

ADVISORY COMMITTEES

RESC 10's leadership (senior management and staff) makes a planned effort to involve a wide variety of school districts and charter school personnel in the evaluation of its programs and services through the use of advisory groups. In addition, these groups provide input in the assessment, revision, deletion, development and implementation of programs and services. Region 10 believes that the quality of services provided by in its three service delivery components: the Division of Administration, the Division of Instruction, and the Division of Information Services, derives from the use of advisory groups.

The advisory groups are structured to adequately reflect the decision-makers of the region and, therefore, the groups may thoughtfully explore discussion topics, needs, and areas of exploration and interests for the broader health of the entire region. These advisory groups serve as the primary source for directing service planning decisions.

The ongoing and continuous structured nature of Region 10's advisory groups allows for open exchange of ideas, thoughts, and opinions. Region 10's leadership believes that such authenticity of discussion leads to invaluable advice that is based on the core values and priorities of clients. In addition, Region 10's staff, including the executive team, places considerable merit upon such thoughtful and genuine counsel.

Recognizing the value of employing and administering advisory groups as the primary source for assessing customer needs and receiving feedback, Region 10 has implemented a variety of such groups (see **Exhibit 10-1**).

Accomplishment: RESC 10 is committed to using advisory groups as a resource for receiving ideas, feedback, and information that impacts how they plan and deliver services.

FACILITIES PLANNING

RESC 10 integrates facilities planning with all other aspects of institutional planning. Plant operations and maintenance staff are involved in design and construction activities. Similarly, construction management personnel should be knowledgeable about operations and maintaining an energy efficient facility. The assistant director of Business, Finance, and Operations Services oversees housing, custodial services, and facilities use and management under the Division of Administration.

A review of construction project files shows that during the past five years, RESC 10 completed a new 49,000 square foot office and training facility located at Abrams under a contract with Hunt Construction. RESC 10 secured a 12-year loan at a 4.78 percent annual percentage rate. As of 2003, RESC 10 had a debt of approximately $3,500,000. Under the same contract, extensive interior and exterior renovations were completed at the Spring Valley location. For example, all entrances and restrooms now meet the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) federal requirements for accessibility. Inspections of mechanical and electrical systems show that facilities are in excellent condition and the facility is structurally sound. Both locations are secured under a contract with Northern Computer, Inc. (WIN-PAK, RS-485 System) to monitor building security and lock/unlock all exit doors at programmed dates and times.

During on-site interviews, staff reflected that the addition of the new Abrams location has afforded more office space, storage space, and training locations for delivering services to districts. This addition eliminated the need for leased office and training space, mitigated the need to secure hotel meeting rooms, and eliminated the need for leased storage space.

Accomplishment: RESC 10 effectively plans, funds, constructs, and renovates buildings to provide safe, purposeful working and training environments that meet state and federal regulations.

ENERGY MANAGEMENT

RESC 10 has partnered with Excel Energy Technologies. Ltd., to reduce energy costs at both its locations. Between 1997 to 2002, RESC 10 saved an average of $11,780 per year or $58,900 for the five-year span.

Through this contract, an Energy Management System (EMS) provides:

- energy management and monitoring services;
- firmware and software upgrades to aid operating efficiency;
- twenty-four hour, seven-days-a-week monitoring of systems and alarm response; and
- energy logs to track energy savings.

Exhibit 10-1
Region 10 ESC Strategic Advisory Groups

	Advisory Group	Center-wide or Division	Staff Contact*	Program, Service or Function Advised	Timeline
1	Administrative Services Advisory Committee (ASAC)	Region 10 ESC Administration		Center-wide	Quarterly
2	Administrative Services Advisory Committee (ASAC)	Division of Administration		Division-wide	Quarterly
3	Advisory Council for Special Education (ACSE)	Division of Instruction		Special Education	Eight Meetings Annually
4	AEIS-It User Group	Division of Instruction		AEIS-It Software Applications and Development	Semi-annually
5	Autism Cohort Group	Division of Instruction		Autism Services	Minimum of 4 Times Annually
6	Autism Mentor Group	Division of Instruction		Autism Academies	Minimum of 3 Times Annually
7	Behavior Specialist Advisory Group	Division of Instruction		Behavioral Support Programs	4 Times Annually
8	Bilingual Leadership Council	Division of Instruction		Bilingual Education	Bi-Monthly
9	Bilingual/ESL Advisory	Division of Instruction		Title VII Activities Bilingual/ESL	3 Times Annually
10	Bimonthly Evaluation Group	Division of Instruction		Special Education	Bi-Monthly
11	Bimonthly Psychologist Group	Division of Instruction		Psychological Evaluations/SE	Bi-Monthly
12	Cooperative Advisory Committee (CAC)	Division of Instruction		Division-wide Legal: Titles II, IV & V	Quarterly
13	Cooperative Management Council (CMC)	Division of Information Services		Mini/Microcomputer Cooperative	Quarterly
14	Deaf Education Active Leadership (DEAL)	Division of Instruction		Deaf Education	Twice; annually
15	Early Head Start Advisory Committee	Division of Instruction		Early Head Start	Quarterly
16	Education Advisory Committee (EAC)	Division of Instruction		Head Start/Early Childhood	Three times annually
17	Family Services Advisory Committee	Division of Instruction		Head Start Family Services	Quarterly
18	Fine Arts Advisory Committee	Division of Instruction		Fine Arts	Minimum of 4 Times Annually
19	Gifted Education Advisory Committee (GEAC)	Division of Instruction		Gifted Education	Quarterly
20	Group of Assistance Technology Supporters (GOATS)	Division of Instruction		Adaptive and Assistive Technology Program	Bimonthly (5 times annually)
21	Head Start Policy Council	Division of Instruction		Head Start/Early Head Start Parents and Community Members	Monthly, except July
22	Head Start/Early Head Start Health Services Advisory	Division of Instruction		Health Services Program for Head Start/Early Head Start	Twice annually
23	Investment Advisory Committee (IAC)	Division of Administration		TERRP and 457 Cooperative	Quarterly
24	iTEKStar User Group	Division of Instruction		TEKStar Software and Online Development	Semi-annually
25	Low-Incidence Disability Advisory Group	Division of Instruction		Medically Fragile	2 Times Annually

Exhibit 10-1 (continued)
Region 10 ESC Strategic Advisory Groups

	Advisory Group	Center-wide or Division	Staff Contact*	Program, Service or Function Advised	Timeline
26	Mainframe Management Council (MMC)	Division of Information Services		Mainframe Computer Cooperative	Three Times Annually
27	McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Group	Division of Instruction		McKinney Homeless	Once each six-weeks
28	Parent Advisory Group	Division of Instruction		Parenting Programs	Quarterly
29	Preschool Evaluation Advisory Group	Division of Instruction		Assessment Professionals	3 Times Annually
30	Preschool Services Advisory Committee for PPCD	Division of Instruction		PPCD	3 Times Annually
31	Regional Consortium for Innovation (RCI) Board	Division of Instruction		RCI Governance	Three times annually
32	Regional Technology Advisory Committee (RTAC)	Division of Instruction		Instructional Technology	3 Times Annually
33	School Counselor Advisory Group	Division of Instruction		Counseling Services	Quarterly
34	Speech-Language Pathology Supervisors and Coordinators Advisory Group	Division of Instruction		Speech/Language Pathology	Bi-Monthly
35	TBI Focus Group	Division of Instruction		TBI Program	Semi-annually
36	TPC Advisory Board	Division of Instruction		Teacher Preparation and Alternative Certification	3 Times Annually
37	Transition/VAC Advisory Group	Division of Instruction		Transition/VAC	Monthly

Source: Region 10, 2004.
**MGT does not use specific names in the report; therefore, the names in this column have been removed.*

In addition to the aforementioned contract, RESC 10 integrated energy saving features into the planning and construction of the new facility. **Exhibit 10-2** lists a sample of these appropriations:

Accomplishment: RESC 10 implements an effective energy management plan.

WEB-BASED TECHNOLOGY

RESC 10 provides effective Web-based, CD technology, and professional development at no charge to its districts to assist in addressing student performance. RESC 10 conducts a needs assessment and evaluation process each year that includes district survey input, regional and district analyses of TAKS, AEIS, and formal AYP data, visits with each district, and advisory and user groups. In addition, the impact of the current financial condition of districts is factored into the design of new services. Additional considerations for service development include new legislative initiatives and federal programs.

Exhibit 10-3 illustrates RESC 10 data and its implications. **Exhibit 10-3** shows the 2004 TAKS scores for region 10 and statewide. As shown:

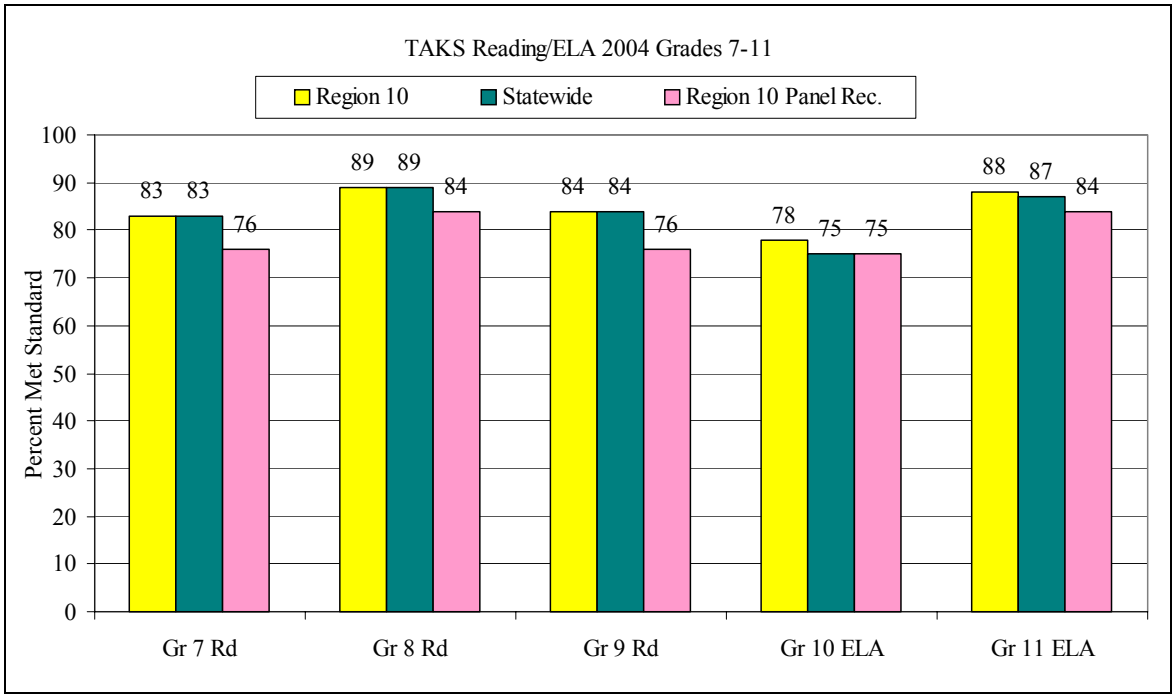
- RESC 10 is tied with the state in Grades 7, 8, and 9 in the 2004 TAKS Reading/ELA scores and above the state average in Grade 10 (above by three percentage points) and Grade 11 (above by one percentage point);
- RESC 10 is tied with the state average in the Grades 4 and 5 in the 2004 TAKS Reading scores and above the state average in Grade 6;

Exhibit 10-2
Sample of Energy Saving Features
RESC 10 Abrams Location

- In addition to the insulating value of the wall construction, R-19 insulation is provided at all exterior walls and roof.
- Vestibules are provided at all doors besides the main entry to provide a barrier to outside air infiltration.
- Vestibule area provided at the loading dock coiling door.
- Tinted and etched glass at all exterior areas cuts light transfer up to 40 percent
- Horizontal Louver Blinds at all office windows to cut light and heat transfer.
- All HVAC units are a minimum of 10 S.E.E.R.
- Motorized Dampers provided at all outside air intakes for all HVAC units to prevent the infiltration of unwanted outside air.
- All plumbing fixtures are low flow consumption.
- All heating is gas with no re-heat.
- All workspace lighting has dual level switching for energy conservation.
- All 2' x 4' lighting are electronically ballasted T8 fixtures.
- Building is equipped with an energy management system that schedules HVAC unit runtime based on occupation and provides a night/summer adjustable temperature setback.
- Canopy overhangs to shade entries.
- Light-colored ballasted roof to reflect radiant heat.

Source: RESC 10, Division of Administration, 2004.

Exhibit 10-3
RESC 10 TAKS Scores 2004



Source: RESC 10, Summary Data, 2004

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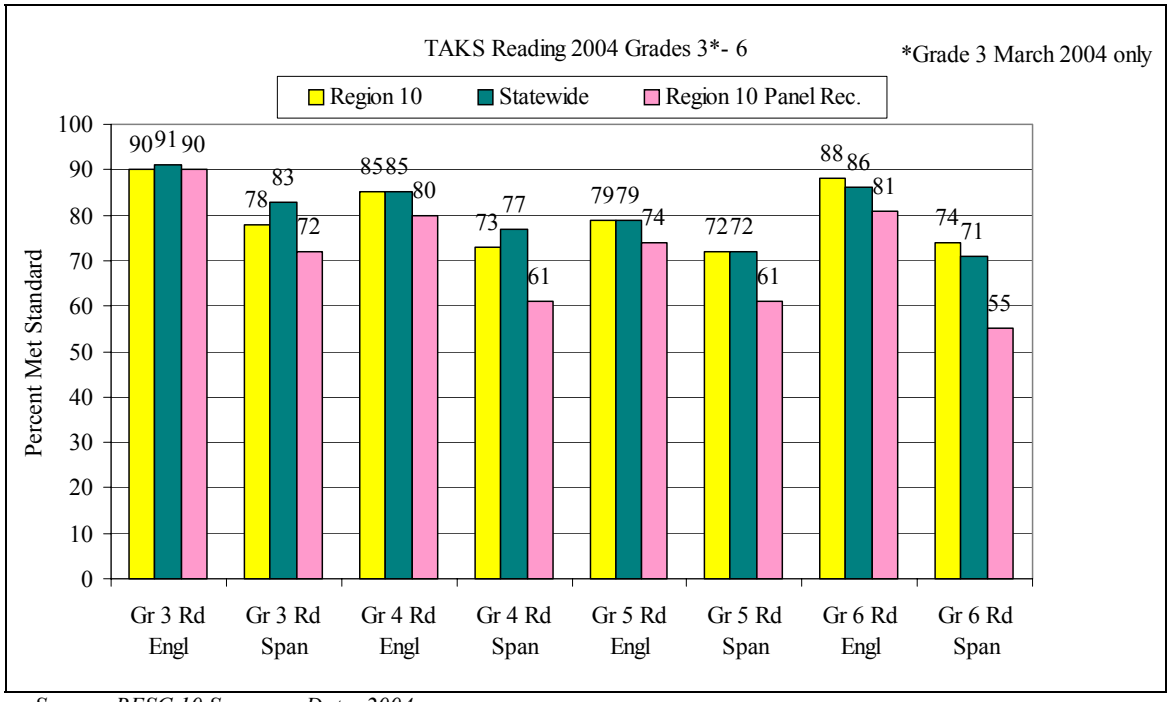
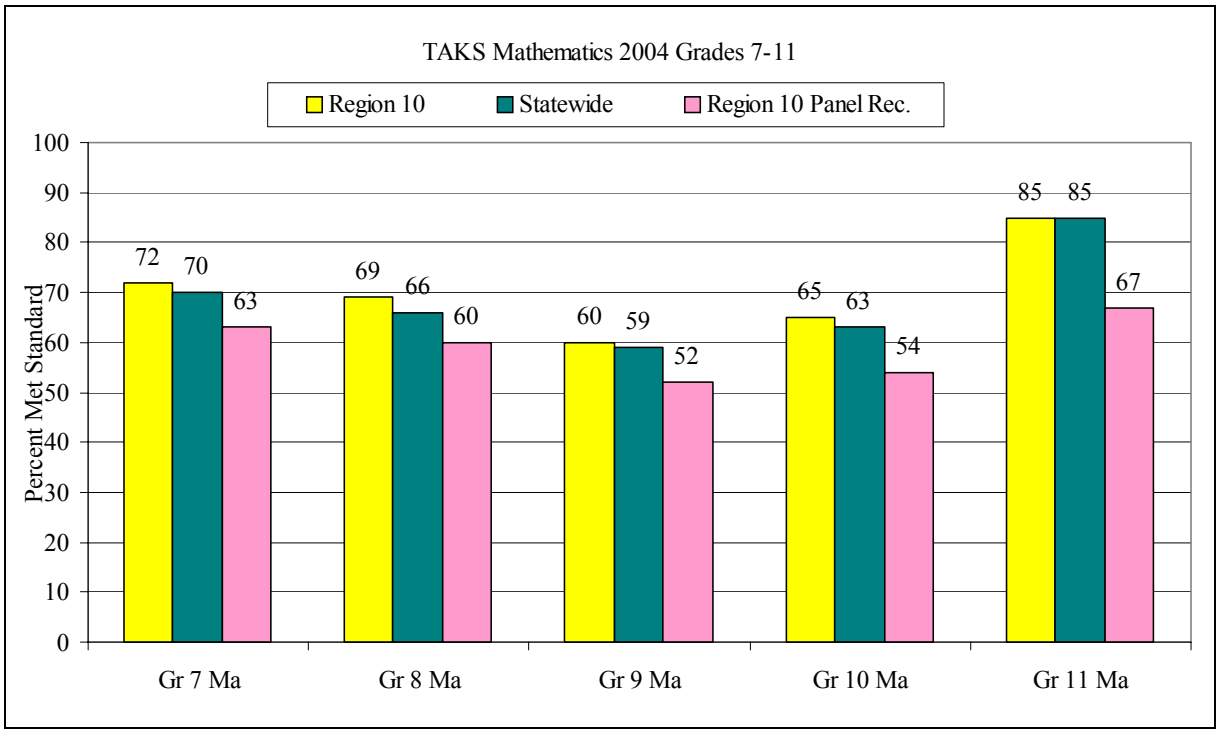
Exhibit 10-3 (Continued)
RESC 10 TAKS Scores 2004

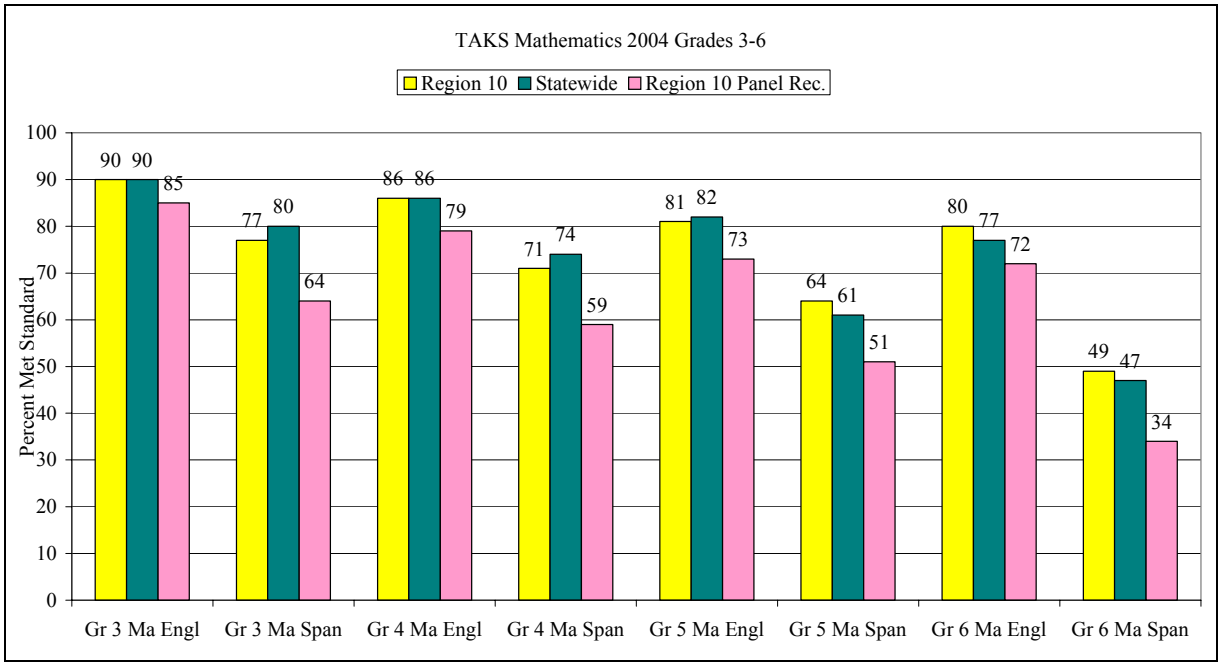


Source: RESC 10 Summary Data, 2004.



Source: RESC 10 Summary Data, 2004.

Exhibit 10-3 (Continued)
RESC 10 TAKS Scores 2004



Source: RESC 10, Summary Data, 2004.

- Region 10 scores above the state average in Grades 7, 8, 9, and 10 TAKS Mathematics and is tied with the state percentage in Grade 11; and
- Region 10 is tied with the state percentage in Grades 3 and 4 TAKS Mathematics and above the state average in Grades 5 and 6.

Two major products were developed by Region 10 for use in improving student performance. The WebCATT is a Web-assessed depository of TEKS-based assessment provided by Region 10. This product is available at no cost to Region 10 districts in that RESC 10 pays the hosting fees for the vendor providing hosting services. Other districts in Texas can receive the product through arrangements with their RESCs or Region 10.

In addition, Region 10 developed CD-ROM tutorials to assist high school teachers in working on low performance areas of TAKS in the four core areas. Re-teach lessons are included and consist of differentiated instruction, active learning, a specific lesson plan, vocabulary, and ways to assess improvement. This product is provided at no charge to districts in RESC 10. The product is comparable in quality to vendor-developed products for which districts would pay a fee.

RESC 10 also provides an array of professional development activities under many funding sources related to TAKS writing, accelerated reading instruction, mathematics instruction including TexTEAMS academies, social studies, and science instruction. These include, but are not limited to, TAKS Camps for new teachers, TAKS Communicators Cadres, institutes, online products and courses, and many titles specific to individual TAKS objectives (i.e. Developing Depth and Complexity in Writing) that are available at the campus level.

Accomplishment: RESC 10 provides a needs assessment, Web-based and CD technology, and professional development at no charge to its districts to assist in addressing student performance.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

RESC 10 has made a concerted effort to meet the training and professional development needs of all the districts within the region, including large urban districts. Four large urban districts are listed in **Exhibit 10-4** in descending order of number of participants receiving training related to student performance (excluding nutrition, bus driver training). The percentage of students passing from 2003 to 2004 (in most cases) shows improvement at an even more difficult standard; thus, improvement was greater than it appears at first glance.

The Division of Instruction plans to offer a wide range of professional development activities for the 2004–05 school year. Principals at each campus served by RESC 10 have received information about scheduling these activities. Many of these activities are also available at central sites within the region and are listed online in the RESC 10 Calendar of Events. A partial list of professional development activities in content areas and program services for the 2004–05 school year are shown in **Exhibit 10-5.**

A review of participant rates and expenditures revealed varying per participant costs for different size districts. For example,

- Urban Districts: 18,488 participants attended 623 professional development sessions for an average per participant cost of $12.36;
- Suburban Districts: 2,842 participants attended 232 professional development sessions for an average per participant cost of $14.79;
- Midsize Districts: 1,189 participants attended 107 professional development sessions for an average per participant cost of $12.82; and
- Small/Rural Districts: 681 participants attended 46 professional development sessions for an average per participant cost of $11.29.

Accomplishment: RESC 10 provides effective professional development to small rural and large urban member districts that has had a positive effect on student achievement.

VIDEO ACCESS

RESC 10 manages the Digital Media Resources project, which provides access to streaming video, broadcast programming, and electronic field trips to campuses within 63 participating districts by negotiating region-wide licenses that cost districts a fraction of what they would pay individually. At mid-year, more than 3,000 teachers had viewed more than 240,000 streamed video clips through a regional license with United Streaming, 16 districts had access to an additional 5,000 hours of broadcast programming via instructional television, and approximately 10,000 students from more than 200 campuses participated in the Jason Project and/or Colonial Williamsburg via electronic field trips.

Additionally, all high schools in the region have access online to the Gale library databases of more than 10,000 periodicals plus hundreds of literary and general reference resources, encyclopedia entries, maps, images, charts, graphs, audio, and video clips and primary source documents.

Accomplishment: RESC 10 provides discounted access to streaming video, broadcast programming, and electronic field trips to campuses through region-wide licenses. In addition, RESC 10 provides professional development to different size districts at comparable per participant rates.

Exhibit 10-4
RESC 10 Workshop Participants and
Changes in Student Performance for Large, Urban Member Districts
2003–04

District Name	Total Participants	Workshops	Met Standard 2003	Met Standard 2004
Reading				
Dallas ISD	15,465	567	70.7	74.2
Plano ISD	1,722	79	93.7	94.5
Mesquite ISD	1,114	108	83.9	85.8
Garland ISD	1,052	93	84.5	86.4
Writing				
Dallas ISD	15,465	567	73.3	84.1
Plano ISD	1,722	79	94.9	95.8
Mesquite ISD	1,114	108	86.1	93.2
Garland ISD	1,052	93	86.8	92.7
Social Studies				
Dallas ISD	15,465	567	85.9	85.2
Plano ISD	1,722	79	97.7	97.3
Mesquite ISD	1,114	108	91.5	92.2
Garland ISD	1,052	93	92.8	91.6
Math				
Dallas ISD	15,465	567	65.6	65
Plano ISD	1,722	79	92.7	91.6
Mesquite ISD	1,114	108	81	76.2
Garland ISD	1,052	93	80.2	77.7
Science				
Dallas ISD	15,465	567	57.2	59.3
Plano ISD	1,722	79	89.1	88.5
Mesquite ISD	1,114	108	71.9	69.7
Garland ISD	1,052	93	74.3	73.8

Source: RESC 10 Division of Curriculum and Instruction, 2004.

Exhibit 10-5
RESC 10 Sample of Projected Professional Development Activities
2004–05

LANGUAGE ARTS

Mini-Lessons for Writing Instruction to Align with TAKS
Text-Based Evidence and Questioning Strategies - Parts I and II - Grades 4 and up
Critical Thinking and Reading- The Perfect Twosome
Content Area Comprehension- TAKS Strategies and Your Textbook
Successful Approaches to TAKS Writing- all levels
Strategies for Increasing Comprehension for At-Risk Students
Innovative Strategies for Language Arts Across the Curriculum- secondary
Texas Primary Reading Inventory (TPRI)

MATHEMATICS

Elementary
Solving Problems Part I Grades K–6
Solving Problems Part II Grades K–6
Calculators in Problem Solving Grades K–6
Differentiated Instruction in Mathematics Grades K–6
Integrating Mathematics and Science Grades K–6
Building Mathematics Concepts Grades 5–6
Building Number Concepts Grades K–6
Building Geometry Concepts Grades K–6
Building Algebraic Reasoning Concepts Grades K–6
Building Measurement Concepts Grades K–6
Building Probability and Statistics Concepts Grades K–6
Math Strategies for Middle School ESL Learners Grades 6–8
Using the Graphing Calculator in the Middle School Classroom for Problem Solving
Active Hands-on Mathematics for Middle School Grades: Using Math Manipulatives
Incorporating Problem Solving in High School Mathematics
Using Calculators for Problem Solving in High School Mathematics
Beginning Geometry Sketchpad
Intermediate Geometry Sketchpad
How to Include 8th grade TEKS in High School Algebra and Geometry

SOCIAL STUDIES

Differentiated Social Studies for the At Risk Learner
Critical Thinking and Student Centered Learning in Social Studies
Using Text-based Evidence in Social Studies
Making Connections: Reading, Writing and Social Studies
Raising and Addressing Social Studies TAKS Issues – lessons learned from years one/two of TAKS

SCIENCE

Integrating math & science in Elementary
Integrating ELA strategies with science content Elem.
Integrating ELA strategies with science content in the middle school
Integrating ELA strategies with the science content in secondary schools
Inquiry Science Elementary
Inquiry Science Secondary
Science TAKS Review for elementary schools
Preparing for the middle school Science TAKS
Science TAKS Review for secondary schools
Strategies for TAKS data analysis to guide instructional intervention
Strategies for English language learners using science content

Exhibit 10-5 (continued)
RESC 10 Sample of Projected Professional Development Activities
2004-05

CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT

Planning and Teaching Rigorous and Relevant Curriculum
What's the Connection: TAKS, AYP, and the New State Accountability System
" I have given a test, now what? "

EFFECTIVE TEACHING PRACTICES

Introduction to Differentiated Instruction
Moving Forward in the Classroom
Teambuilding Strategies
Communication Skills
Classroom Leadership
Aligning Goals for Effectiveness
Time Management
Classroom Management
Stress and the Classroom Teacher
What Every New Teacher Needs to Know:
Mentoring Frameworks
Consensus Building
Lesson Design and Brain Research

TECHNOLOGY

MarcoPolo K-12 Internet Web Content
Palm Handheld Awareness Training
Link2Teachers - Teacher Web sites Made Easy
Web Quest
Internet Research Skills

BILINGUAL/ESL PROGRAMS

Setting Up Learning Stations For The ELL In The Content Area
Basics Of Second Language Acquisition To Accelerate Instruction For The English Language Learner
Newcomers: Developing Oral Language, Literacy, And Content Knowledge
Setting Up Your Classroom For Literacy Learning
Differentiated Instruction
Using Non-Fiction To Develop Content Based Instruction
English Development In The Bilingual Classroom
Reading Interventions For The Second Language Learner
Strategies To Teach The Gifted Second Language Learner
Making Accommodations And Modifications For The Second Language Learner
Vocabulary Building For The Struggling Readers In 4th-6th
Hot Skills For The ELL
Math Problem Solving And The ELL
Social Studies And The English Language Learner
Science And The English Language Leaner
Facets of Culture and the Implications for Instruction
Secondary ESL Literacy-How To Provide Reading Support For The Secondary Content Teacher
Secondary Writing (Developing Successful Secondary Writers)
Six Traits Of Writing For ESL
Reading, Writing And Vocabulary

Exhibit 10-5 (continued)
RESC 10 Sample of Projected Professional Development Activities
2004-05

SAFE AND DRUG-FREE SCHOOLS

Substance Abuse Prevention
Current Trends in Substance Abuse
Drug and Violence Education (DAVE)
Inhalant Abuse
Violence Prevention
Peer Mediation
Conflict Resolution
Diversity and Acceptance
Sexual Harassment Prevention
Bullying and Teasing
Stop the Hate
School Safety and Crisis Management
School Safety "Walk-Abouts"
School Safety Survey
Resiliency Skills Development
40 Developmental Assets
Student Leadership Training

ACADEMIC SUCCESS THROUGH HOME PARTNERSHIPS

Parent Workshops
Structuring a School-Friendly Home – Understanding how your Child Learns
Parents Are Teachers, Too! Reading, Writing, Math & Science for Elementary, Middle School, and High School
TAKS 101: Understanding TAKS and State Initiatives Elementary, Middle School, and High School
Beyond the Cap & Gown: Making Your Child's Academic Dreams a Reality
Teacher Workshops
TIPS (Teachers Involve Parents In Schoolwork) Interactive Homework
Home and School Connections to Enhance Student Performance

DIGITAL MEDIA RESOURCES

Digital Media Resources - An Introduction
Digital Media Resources - The Basics
Digital Media Resources - Advanced
Digital Media Resources Elementary Curriculum Integration
Digital Media Resources Secondary Curriculum Integration

Source: RESC 10, Calendar of Events, 2004.

MARKET SURVEYS

RESC 10 conducts effective annual market surveys resulting in the center having a competitive salary schedule.

The Human Resources (HR) Department consists of an assistant director of Human Resources and a one and a half secretary position. The assistant director of Human Resources at RESC 10 conducts salary market surveys annually by consulting two sources:

- the Salaries and Benefits in Texas Public Schools Administrative/Professional Report published annually by the Texas Association of School Boards; and
- the National Compensation Survey for Dallas/Ft. Worth published by the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The assistant director of Human Resources consults these documents to assist with developing a compensation schedule that is equitable for all employee groups. This process also helps to develop a classification system that defines different employee groups, qualifications, and related career ladders.

RESC 10 has a defined salary schedule for all employees. The assistant director for Human Resources makes salary increase recommendations to the executive director, who makes the final decision. Moreover, RESC 10 has policies governing the amount of increases that can be given to all staff according to the pay compensation system. Because of this defined schedule, administrators are bound by a set salary schedule and may not receive raises that result in large percentage increases or very small increases. This procedure creates equity among all employee groups and also assists the assistant director of Human Resources with planning and allocating administrative salary increases.

Accomplishment: RESC 10 conducts annual market surveys to assist in developing a competitive salary schedule.

NON-CATEGORICAL EXPENDITURES

For 2003–04, an accounting change was implemented in Region 10. Since the state base funding is at risk, the service center has adopted a different measure to institute overhead charges to cover administrative costs. Administrative costs are now accounted for in an internal service fund (fund 798). State and local programs are assessed an administrative cost fee at a rate equal to the federal indirect cost rate to partially fund these expenditures. The rate is applied to allowable expenditures according to the rules for federal indirect cost (i.e. flow through, food, stipends and capital outlay expenditures are excluded).

State program charges, per Standard Application System's Program Guidelines, cannot be charged more than the federal indirect cost rate so charges will be assessed to these programs at year-end based on actual expenditures. Local programs are not subject to external guidelines and are charged a fee based on budgeted expenditures using the federal indirect cost rate.

The federal indirect cost rate for 2003-2004, as determined according to TEA's predetermined formula, is 5.888 percent.

Administrative costs include the salaries of the Executive Director, Associate Director of Instructional Services, Associate Director of Administrative Services, Business Office, and Human Resources.

The benefit of reclassifying administrative costs is to allow a fair assessment of the appropriate costs to be allocated equitably among programs while maximizing the use of funds. Region 10 adopted the federal indirect cost rate approach to recoup some of the administrative cost on certain allowable expenditures. This forces the Region to reduce their administrative budget down to a fair and acceptable level of allocating costs. By isolating the expenditures in the internal service fund, Region 10 agrees they can accurately charge back all programs in a fair and equitable way.

Accomplishment: Region 10 reclassified administrative costs to the Internal Service Fund to cover non-categorical expenditures.

SOFTWARE PLANNING TOOL

Region 10 uses a financial software planning tool called BCNY (budget codes next year) to help provide ease of use for forecasting the annual budgets. Each year in the spring, Region 10's business office submits an automated job request to the information services department to create the BCNY files for the next year's annual budget. The BCNY file contains a list of general ledger account codes for revenue (57XX), expenditures (6XXX), transfers in (7XXX) and transfers out (8XXX). There is usually a period of a couple of months for the divisions to start entering the data that is due by mid-May. The business office informs the divisions of any code changes for the next year (i.e. new or revised fund codes or object codes).

The business office also provides a document of budget assumptions that the divisions must use to develop their budgets. Budget

assumptions include such items as employee benefits, space utilization fees, administrative overhead fees, telephone fees, networking fees, etc.

Using the budget assumptions and other cost factors, the divisions develop their budgets on a spreadsheet for every local, state, and federal project. They include the fund and organization budgeted revenue and appropriations for each object code. All state and federal project totals must match the respective NOGA (Notice of Grant Award).

On local funds, if the revenue and expenditures do not match, the difference is automatically entered into object code 3612 as a budgetary difference when the BCNY files roll to the general ledger.

Once the division is satisfied with the spreadsheet, it is then ready to be entered into BCNY on the mainframe. The following procedures detail the process of entering data in the mainframe:

- after entering the userid and password, select the finance option;
- select next year's budget and enter;
- enter the 3-digit org code for the project and enter;
- the next screen has four different options to choose from: A-to add, C-to change, I-to inquire and B-to browse. Since most of the account codes will already be in BCNY, C-to change will be used the most. A-to add would only be used if there was not a particular account code already in BCNY;
- select C-to change in the function field, and enter the fiscal year, project year, fund, function, object, sub object, organization code and program intent code;
- a screen will appear that allows staff to enter your budgeted revenue and appropriations from your spreadsheet into the system;
- enter the budgeted revenue or appropriation amount for each line. If a description is changed, for a particular line, it can be done now as well. If staff see a particular line that is not needed they enter a "d" in the column titled "DEL;"
- once complete, press enter to process;
- if staff need to add a line, they enter A-to add a line item. They will have to enter the entire account code, amount and description. Once done, press enter;
- to observe if everything has been keyed in correctly, staff can enter online to inquire about budgets.

Once all budgets have been keyed into BCNY, the divisions submit a copy of their spreadsheet for backup. The business office files this backup and uses it for any discrepancies on the BCNY file.

The BCNY file is used to fill out TEA's Standard Application System Performance Contract. The business office fills this out, along with additional assistance from the divisions on payroll positions and narratives to submit to TEA by their stated deadline, usually July 1.

Projects that start before September 1 of each year need to have a portion or the entire budget set up in the general ledger as a budget amendment in the current year. If a budget is set up in the current year general ledger, there is no need to set it up again in BCNY.

For example, Title II starts on July 1 each year with an ending date of June 30 of the following year. Because BCNY is only used to handle next year's budgets, a portion or all of Title II will need to be set up in the current year's general ledger's revenues and appropriations. If it is determined that some of the budget will be set up in the current year and the rest in the following year, then the amount to be set up the following year should go into BCNY.

The BCNY is incorporated into a series of reports that are presented to the board in August for their approval. Once approved, the

business office runs a job to move the information from BCNY into the general ledger. Once this has occurred, the divisions can start inputting any requests into the system.

Accomplishment: Region 10 effectively uses a software planning tool for compiling division budget reports for the board of directors to review and approve.

FOOD COOPERATIVE PROGRAM

Region 10 effectively manages a food cooperative program for school districts located in Region 10 and surrounding regions. The purchasing cooperative initiatives are an effective vehicle for RESC 10 to provide school districts a way to leverage their spending power.

In the summer of 1995, Regions 10, 11, 12 and 15 formed the Multi Region Child Nutrition Purchasing Co-Op for USDA commodity processing. In the summer of 1998, Regions 10, 11 and 12 added the option to purchase commercial food products for member districts when the General Services Commission, now called Texas Building and Procurement Commission, no longer provided this service to school districts.

Making these packaged services available to Region 10, 11, 12 and 15 school districts through the Division of Instruction allows significant cost savings to districts on items such as groceries, milk, ice cream, bread, snack cakes, small wares, cleaning/chemical supplies, chips/snacks and beverages. Annually, Region 10 hosts training sessions at the different regions on how to make menu adjustments that will maximize their cost savings and provide nutritional meals to students. Each year the Multi Region Child Nutrition Purchasing Co-Op has a food show for member districts to keep districts up to date on new products, services and processes related to the cooperatives. The food cooperative program managed by Region 10 has created an opportunity for school districts to leverage their spending power.

Before the end of 2005, Region 10 will be rolling out a Web-based ordering system for member districts. The Web-based ordering system will save districts time, as each campus will place its grocery order online and orders will be checked at the director's level. Currently, orders are turned in to the director and then placed by the director with the awarded vendor. This will also allow districts and Region 10 to track purchases. In addition, districts can verify pricing to ensure that they are receiving correct pricing and allow Multi Region Child Nutrition Purchasing Co-Op to report more accurate usage data for bids.

RESC 10 and other participating regions recognize savings on a wide range of products (reference **Exhibit 10-6**). For an example of the potential magnitude of savings, had a large school district in Region 10 been a member of the Multi Region Co-Op, they would have saved **$1,791,479.42** for the **2001–02** school year. Further, additional savings should be recognized through participating regions and districts not having to manage the bid solicitations, tabulating, awarding, and contract management process.

Accomplishment: Region 10 has successfully generated significant cost savings for school districts through effectively managing the Multi Region Child Nutrition Purchasing Co-op.

Exhibit 10-6
Region 10 Food Purchasing Co-op Program
Examples of Savings

Item Description	Co-op Case Bid Price	Independent District Case Price	Percent Difference
Charbroiled Hamburger Patty	$20.49	$24.86	17.5 %
Chicken Nugget	$12.43	14.36	13.4 %
4106 Pepperoni Pizza	$28.99	$34.60	16.2 %
6 Compartment Styro Tray	$19.26	$20.67	6.8 %

Source: Region 10, Business Office, 2004.

INTER-LOCAL AGREEMENTS

RESC 10 effectively uses inter-local agreements with school districts as a tool for increasing participation in cooperative initiatives. In 1998, RESC 10 executed inter-local agreements with two existing purchasing cooperatives for the purchase of goods and services through what is called Region 10's Purchasing Consortium. In order to make these cooperatives available to all Region 10 districts, inter-local agreements were executed with school districts and charter schools located in Region 10. Presently, the RESC 10 Purchasing Consortium has three separate purchasing cooperatives available for use by school districts: TCPN (The Cooperative Purchasing Network), administered by RESC 4; the "Buyboard", administered by the Texas Association of School Boards; and the TIPS (Texas Interlocal Purchasing System) administered by RESC 8.

Making Region 10's Purchasing Consortium available to school districts through the Division of Administration's has assisted with creating significant cost savings to districts on items such as computer hardware, software, HVAC supplies, office supplies, custodial supplies, job order contracts, school buses and other goods and services. Moreover, RESC 10 annually hosts training sessions on how to use the cooperatives and/or vendor fairs to keep districts up to date on new products, services and processes related to the cooperatives.

The Region 10 Purchasing Consortium has on file inter-local agreements from 100 percent of the school districts in their region. RESC 10 makes available meeting rooms and computer labs to conduct training sessions for school district administrators regarding purchasing procedures, Web site navigation, and vendor information.

A cost savings of about a 24 percent (average) has been achieved through Region 10's Purchasing Consortium. School bus purchases may yield only a one percent or two percent savings, but supply catalogs and other items like computer hardware and software may have a savings of up to 50 percent or more.

As a participant in Region 4 Cooperative Purchasing Network, Region 10 should request Region 4 to create and maintain an advisory council and be required to periodically provide reports that include savings.

Accomplishment: Region 10 has effectively secured inter-local agreements from 100 percent of the school districts in their region for participation in the Purchasing Consortium.

INVESTMENT STRATEGIES

RESC 10 has an effective risk management process in place. This involves minimizing the risk to assets by establishing the proper insurance level and safety programs. With an effective risk management process established, Region 10 Service Center minimizes exposure to losses.

According to board policy, Region 10 may invest in anything that is legal according to the Public Funds Investment Act. Region 10 invests its cash and cash equivalents in the Texpool, which an AAA rated pool

completely invested in government securities and depository bank funds. The investment strategy is based on safety, liquidity, and yield. The average cash and cash equivalents invested monthly is approximately $5 million to $6 million.

Since most of the cash for Region 10 is generated from grants and is requested on a reimbursement basis, the funds available for investment are small, usually corresponding to the approximate size of the fund balance. Yield is not a high priority given the small size of the investment portfolio and the current low market rate, which is approximately 1.2 percent. The board of directors has opted to emphasize safety, liquidity, and simplicity, which are reasons why the center uses Texpool investments.

As required by the Public Funds Investment Act, the board annually reviews the investment policy and strategies. The board is also provided with a signed investment report at each board meeting with all the information required by law. Investment officers in the business office receive ten hours of training every two years as also required by law.

Accomplishment: RESC 10 Business Office keeps their assets of cash and cash equivalents safeguarded with the current investment strategies.

RISK MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES

RESC 10 does not have a risk management area, but instead provides procedures to all divisions about the risk management process. The business department is responsible for obtaining adequate insurance for workers' compensation, property and casualty, unemployment insurance, and paying for premiums.

Each division director is responsible for making sure all supervisors record any work related injury. The supervisor must pay swift attention to the employee's injury, as well as filing an immediate report of the injury to the payroll office. The business department posts all the emergency locations that accept worker's compensation injury patients on the central information bulletin board located outside the executive director's office. This helps verify which medical doctors accept worker's compensation patients to avoid personal cost to employees.

The employer's first report of injury or illness must be filed immediately when the injury is known. Once this report is complete, it must be routed to the payroll office for further action. The payroll office advises the appropriate division director, assistant director of human resources and the CFO when the worker's compensation claim has been filed. From that point on, all inquiries related to the claim filed should be referred to the CFO.

Accomplishment: RESC 10 Business Office has maintained adequate safety programs and risk management workers' compensation procedures in place to support any injury or illness to employees.

INSURANCE

RESC 10 purchases property, casualty, and liability insurance through TASB's risk management pool through an Inter-local agreement. The risk management pool is a multi-regional insurance cooperative, and Region 13 is the fiscal agent for this cooperative.

The Business Department files claims for all losses. If the loss is due to criminal act, a copy of a police report must be provided to TASB along with estimates for the value of replacement items or repair costs.

In the past year, Region 10 filed two claims totaling $2,811, which was well below the $10,000 deductible per occurrence. The annual premiums for all insurance coverage are approximately $166,900 against total coverage of liability limits well over $30 million.

Accomplishment: Region 10 provides adequate property, casualty, and liability insurance coverage for the organization and employees.

VIDEOCONFERENCE SYSTEM

All school districts in the Region 10 service area now have at least one videoconference system connected to the EdNet Videoconference Network. During planning for the videoconference network in the past, district staff at many small districts had indicated that they could not dedicate a room for a videoconference system. This meant that 27 percent of the school districts would not benefit from the opportunity, efficiency and economy offered by the network. This led to a research and development project by Region 10 staff to build a wireless mobile videoconference system that would turn any classroom into an interactive videoconferencing room. The design was completed in 2000 and the systems were built and installed under bid by Verizon. Twenty-two (22) school districts now have equal access to the network and successfully use the wireless mobile videoconference system anywhere within their school. A few of these districts have the highest videoconference usage with as many as 300 events during a school year.

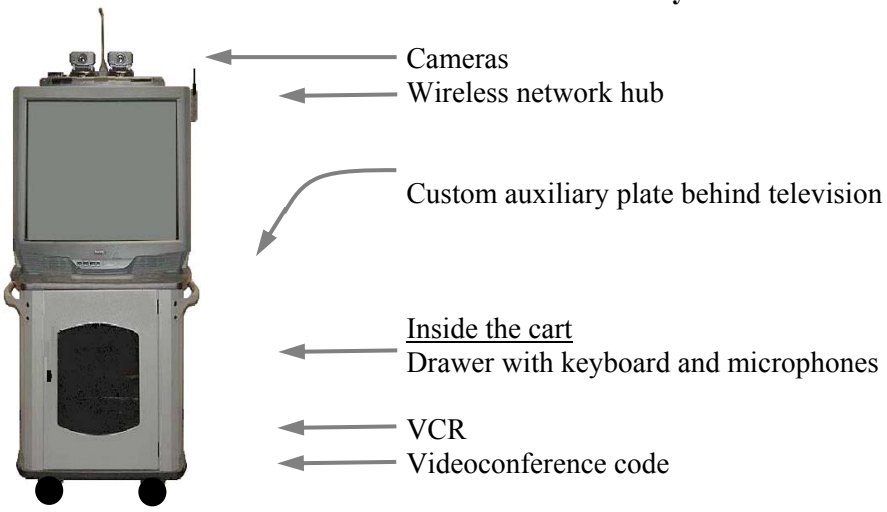
The wireless mobile videoconference system is most often used for participating in a videoconference, but may also be used as an instructional tool by a classroom teacher to play a videocassette or show objects or documents with the system's VCR and document camera, Microsoft® Office applications such as PowerPoint, Excel, Internet Explorer, and Word are loaded on the system and may be used by the teacher during science and math lessons.

The cart that houses all the equipment has a custom auxiliary plate on the back that allows a video projector and sound system to be connected. This arrangement allows a district to use the system in the auditorium, cafeteria or library for larger groups.

Exhibit 10-7 displays this set-up.

Accomplishment: RESC 10 provides a high standard of innovative services to member school districts to use the video conference system.

Exhibit 10-7
Wireless Mobile Videoconference System



Source: RESC 10, 2004.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The Division of Information Services maintains an efficient, effective, and accurate information management system to provide service to the school districts. The Information Management System uses state-of-the-art hardware and software under an Application Service Provider (ASP) design for serving 18 school districts. The system supports 900,000 transactions/day, 600 distributed printers and 10,000 active users.

The Computer Operations Center is monitored 24/7 utilizing three shifts of skilled operators. Operational and data security are ensured through daily backup on-site and off-site, a recovery operation center, an on-site automatic diesel electrical generator, and defined procedures.

A full range of application systems and support is available for user districts participating in the cooperative. The software is routinely localized to accommodate unique requirements of user districts. District users submit Programming Support Request (PSRs) to request programming services. A total of 500 PSRs have been completed in the past year.

Application systems and support include:

- business application;
- student accounting application; and
- district user support.

Skilled programmers and technical support personnel continually enhance the functionality of application systems. Some of the more significant enhancements in the past two years include:

- All application systems have been Web-enabled and accessible from the World Wide Web with appropriate security.

- A Data Extraction and Reporting system (UltraQuest) that provides data to district users in a more timely and efficient manner. The system provides on-demand and efficient access to local data for extraction and reporting. Training and ongoing support to district personnel have resulted in significant increased usage during the past year. A total of 1,300 district users currently use the product with an average of 6,000 requests per month. By December 1, 2004, district users will have the capability of accessing all business and student data.

- A Web Applicant System that allows candidates for employment to complete online employment applications that electronically integrate into the personnel system.

- A Benefit Enrollment System that provides district employees the ability to enroll in district benefits via the Internet.

- As an alternative to microfiche processing, a new service was initiated with CD ROM processing for end-of-month and end-of-year payroll and general ledger data. The process offers superior technology, ease of printing and viewing data.

- District users have the ability to create electronic forms, W2's, Employment Contracts, Service Record Labels, Salary and Benefit labels, and Letters, reduce printing and paper costs, and assist with archival and retrieval of historic information. The system offers more flexibility, faster development time for Programmers and district users and is more cost-effective for district users.

A major effort is now under way to evaluate a product that allows for the conversion of existing systems into Web applications. The evaluation is currently in a proof-of-concept state focusing on developing standards needed to improve the functionality and presentation logic of applications. The long-range goal for

the project will be for complete conversions of all mainframe systems and will include the integration of drop down lists and more windows-like presentations to district users.

Accomplishment: The Division of Information Services established and maintains accurate and reliable technology systems, which meet the current demands of the school districts.

DETAILED FINDINGS

BOARD PLANNING ACTIVITIES

RESC 10's board approves the goals and objectives within the strategic plan, but does not approve any of the key performance indicators within the strategic plan.

By the board not approving any of the key performance indicators, there is no opportunity for the board to evaluate the indicators that will be used for measuring successes and identifying challenges within the RESC 10. In addition, the board at RESC 10 is not involved in the strategic planning process. Many of the board members are not familiar with the key performance indicators within the adopted strategic plan. The board's increased involvement will improve their knowledge about the key performance measures that will be used to support the organization's defined mission and evaluate the performance of the executive director.

RESC 10 should involve the board in the initial planning phase of reviewing and approving high level goals, objectives, and key performance indicators that will be used to measure the success of each department within Region 10.

This level of board involvement in the form of a work session around planning and budgeting would be an effective forum for discussing all critical areas of the strategic plan, and providing the board with earlier indicators on how the success of Region 10 will be evaluated. In addition, by involving the board early in the strategic planning process, board members should be in a better position to add value to the scope of some of the more global organizational goals.

PERFORMANCE PLANS

RESC 10's recently approved strategic plan and supporting action plans do not have a direct correlation to the performance plan used to measure individual staff performance. In addition, in many of the performance plans evaluated there were no clearly defined targets or measurements. For example, the objectives and performance measures used by the Division of Administration and other departments under the Chief Financial Officer are not reflected in the strategic plan. Further, the departments that have not participated in the planning process do not have action plans to assist in focusing their team's activities. The Division of Administration and departments under the Chief Financial Officer should participate in the strategic plan process and create one comprehensive plan. It is vital for the role of these departments to be clearly understood by all team members throughout RESC 10, maintain action plans that are measurable, and have a correlation to embracing its role in supporting program and delivery of services to school districts. This type of cross-functional planning will strengthen morale, and improve employee performance through having defined targets and objective indicators that will be used for ensuring accountability.

RESC 10 should develop performance plans with objective targets and indicators that have a correlation to the action plans created for supporting the goals and objectives approved in the strategic plan.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR HIRING

There was a breakdown in communication in the selection of a new executive director between TEA and RESC 10. This breakdown created confusion and had an impact on morale in the region. Region 10's Board of Directors believes that they had followed the process outlined for selecting an executive director to the point of receiving confirmation from TEA that the Commissioner had approved the list of submitted candidates. The

board interviewed the list of approved candidates by TEA and extended an offer to a candidate who happened to be an existing employee at Region 10. The selection had been announced to employees at RESC 10. Shortly after the announcement was made, the selection made by the board at RESC 10 was overturned by the TEA Commissioner and a new process was established by the Commissioner that has led to starting the process over.

During the selection process for an executive director there is a Screening Committee established that was primarily made up of current superintendents to assist the Board and the Commissioner with managing the screening process. While leading RESC 10 requires a wide range of leadership skills, it appears a precedent has been established that tends to preclude individuals who are not former superintendents from participating on a Screening Committee. Diversity of professional backgrounds on the Screening Committee would add value to the process of selecting a leader to lead Region 10, which is made up of complex and diverse operations.

RESC 10 should clarify with TEA the meaning of the policies used for selecting an executive director. Any changes to the policies should be decided and communicated before the selection process is commenced. The Screening Committee at Region 10 should have a least one member on the Committee who is not a former superintendent.

MEASURABLE JOB DESCRIPTIONS

RESC 10's custodial job descriptions do not adequately reflect their performance requirements.

Eight custodians provide services to RESC 10 facilities. The custodians report to the director of maintenance supervisor under the assistant director of Business, Finance, and Operations Services. The Maintenance Supervisor also conducts the performance reviews of custodial personnel.

Exhibit 10-8 shows the formal job description provided to MGT by Human Resources for all custodians at Region 10. After reviewing job descriptions and conducting on-site interviews, MGT found that custodians at RESC 10 were performing many non-custodial duties not currently outlined in the job description. **Exhibit 10-8** lists particular non-custodial tasks performed by RESC 10 custodians that are not noted in the Human Resources job description for the position

These custodial efforts should be recognized and employee performance should be based upon the tasks they regularly are required to complete.

RESC 10 should rewrite the custodian job descriptions to reflect performance of actual tasks completed. By implementing this recommendation, RESC 10 should design a job description that is focused on the actual custodial needs of the center. Since salary changes and promotions are based upon performance evaluations, the updated job description should include tasks that custodians are presently completing.

GRANT FUNDING

Although Title III funds are available to districts to provide supplemental services for LEP students, there is no training program to teach district administrators, teachers, and other personnel to design and apply for granted funding for their districts. It is advisable that applicants have buy-in and internal understanding of the granted funding for which they are applying. A grant-writing training program for federal program funds would provide a foundation for establishing district understanding. In order to qualify, a district must have a minimum of 100 students ($10,000) unless the district applies within a shared service arrangement.

Exhibit 10-8
RESC 10 Job Description: Custodian

Primary Purpose: Conduct routine cleaning and maintenance of all buildings to ensure a high standard of cleanliness, safety, and efficiency of building and grounds operation. Maintain the security of all facilities. Provide for all meeting room furniture set-ups.

Cleaning:

- Perform building cleaning per the schedule established by the maintenance supervisor, including floors, wastebaskets, windows, furniture, equipment and restrooms. Perform repairs as assigned.
- Keep building and grounds, including sidewalks, driveways, parking lots, common areas, neat and clean. Inspect all work areas and clean as needed.
- Receive and complete work orders for maintenance of buildings or transport assistance. Report work order completion to Maintenance Supervisor.
- Comply with R10 procedures and local laws for the storage and disposal of trash
- Per work orders set-up furniture for all on-site R10 meetings.

Safety and Security:

- Maintain the security and safety standards of all building sites. Ensure that equipment is maintained in operating, and safe condition.
- Perform disaster duty when needed.

Maintenance and Repair:

- Plan with supervisor and carry-out a program of preventive maintenance of building and grounds to ensure the comfort, health, and safety of clients and staff.
- Per directions regulate heat, ventilation, and air conditioning systems to provide appropriate room temperatures and to ensure economical usage of fuel, water, and electricity.
- Make minor repairs as needed and report actions to supervisor and inform supervisor of needed major repairs.
- Move furniture and equipment within building as directed by supervisor.

Security and Safety:

- Assume responsibility for opening and closing building per security and access procedures and arrangement.
- Establish procedures with the supervisor for locking, checking, and safeguarding facilities.
- Inspect and repair machines and equipment for safety and efficiency.
- Operate tools and equipment according to established safety procedures.
- Follow established safety procedures and techniques to perform job duties.
- Correct unsafe conditions in work area and report and conditions that are not correctable to the supervisor immediately.

Duties Currently Performed by Custodians NOT included in HR Job Description:

- Remain available per directions to deliver packages to various departments and to assist with loading and unloading materials.
- Load and unload boxes for consultants.
- Load and unload automobiles for RESC 10 participants and employees.
- Raise and lower the U.S. and Texas flag each day.
- Pick up and deliver mail from the post office and to both buildings each day.
- Check with consultants conducting workshops to confirm number of participants and room set-up each day.
- Calculate total workshop participants.
- Set up room configurations for workshops each day.
- Meet with Housing Facilitator to verify workshop participants count to determine off-site parking needs.
- Post group numbers to alert RESC 10 employees of off-site parking when necessary.
- Drive off-site parking bus when necessary.
- Provide courier service for print shop deliveries.
- Courier service for off-site storage inventory.
- Tree pruning for RESC 10 sites.
- Coordinate maintenance and care for RESC 10 vehicles.
- Reserve and manage parking signs.
- General policing of grounds daily.

Source: RESC 10, Division of Administration, 2004.

RESC 10 has established a Title III cooperative, entitling 54 additional districts and charter schools to qualify for a total of $196,067 in additional monies for these districts/charters. Migrant funds are made available through an RESC 10 migrant cooperative in which 34 districts receive an additional $312,370 of supplemental funding. Nine more districts will be joining the cooperative next year. CATE funds are made available through the RESC 10 Carl Perkins Vocational Cooperative to provide an additional $123,781 to 19 districts that would not qualify otherwise. Each of these initiatives expects to provide for additional services for these select groups of students. Each grant that is awarded is required to comply with federal regulations for reporting results of the use of such funding and the measured differences in programs following the award.

RESC 10 should develop a training program to teach district administrators, teachers, and other personnel to design and apply for grant funding for their districts. By implementing this recommendation, RESC 10 should provide a service for securing additional funds for individual classrooms, specific academic programs, and after school and other related student programs. RESC 10 should collaborate with institutions of higher education and other RESCs to design workshops to teach participants how to write and manage grants.

DISTANCE LEARNING

Over the last five years, RESC 10 has consistently tried to offer professional development that leads to higher education credit, but has met with mixed success. Although RESC 10 offers numerous professional development opportunities for teachers in a variety of delivery modes, these opportunities are not directly tied to identified needs of member districts for specific degree programs in higher education. The Division of Instruction at RESC 10 provides teacher preparation and certification for professionals. The alternative certification program provides an opportunity for qualified candidates to obtain a teaching certificate for a cost equivalent at or below all other certification programs in Texas. Currently, 2,269 interns and candidates are enrolled in some phase of the RESC 10 program. The percentage of interns who successfully complete this program is 98 percent, a rate high among Texas programs.

RESC 10 administrators reported that over the last five years, the center has made several efforts to collaborate with the three universities in the area in order to provide graduate credit for training. A few examples of these efforts from the last five years and outcomes are addressed below:

- Graduate credit for an advanced ESL institute on curriculum development and assessment was previously offered through RESC 10. The institute was available for credit as an elective but teachers could take the institute for professional development credit only as well. There would be no fee for the institute under this arrangement; however, for those choosing to acquire university credit, Texas A&M charged $496.00. Only 10 participants chose credit the first year. The second year the course was offered by RESC 10 only with no credit due to the low number of participants, the increase in tuition, the lack of a university counterpart (he retired) and increased requirements by the university related to record keeping and control of the content and processes in the class.

- A master's level librarian's certification program was offered by video-conference with the RESC 10 library consultant as the presenter, although she brought in guest speakers. This course had successful participation the first year but participation greatly declined in year two and the program is now defunct. While initially a great need was perceived, districts did not support the program by requiring the master's

degree of their librarians in small communities.

- Region 10 previously offered a master reading teacher program at a greatly reduced fee from what the universities in the area were charging including university credit. After reviewing participant surveys, the program was deemed too expensive, indicating that the partnership with the universities would not attract participants to make the course. The fees were lowered and two rounds of master reading teachers were trained before the program was closed.

- Grants have been proposed by RESC 10 in the area of social studies to include universities including the University of North Texas, Texas A&M Commerce, and SMU for which the tuition would be paid for the participants, but as of yet, these grants have not been funded so the collaborations have not gone ahead.

Originally, the Teacher Preparation and Certification Program worked through Texas A & M to offer college credit. However, this cost the participants approximately $1,000 more due to tuition costs. RESC 10 collaborates with other centers to provide a master's degree preparation program over TETN.

RESC 10 should continue to develop and plan to expand distance learning programs to other degree programs that are specifically matched to the needs of professionals, paraprofessionals, related service providers, and administrators in member districts.

By implementing this recommendation, RESC 10 should expand its reach to include programs for professional development of teachers and professionals that are aligned with the needs of students in particular programs in each district. The professional development activities (strategies) should be directly linked to the objectives and goals of the RESC. The processes in place for assessing the links between the professional development activities should be appropriate and varied according to the needs of the districts the RESC serves. Professional development programs and activities should be based on the best available research and practice in teaching, learning, and leadership. As well, the professional development programs should be part of a long-term strategic plan. For example, the professional development goals should be aligned with school/district goals.

BILINGUAL EDUCATION

In an evaluation of national and state studies about student achievement in 1999, the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future found that the most significant factor affecting achievement is teacher quality. Based on their evaluation, the Commission recommended that teacher preparation and professional development be reinvented, including the creation and funding of mentoring programs for beginning teachers. Despite this recommendation, there is no mentoring program offered by RESC 10 for teachers of LEP students.

The Bilingual/ESL Cooperative was initiated to increase academic achievement of LEP students and to increase the number of teachers prepared to enable LEP students to meet state performance expectations. Fees calculated at $500 per campus provide districts an array of staff development and trainings from Bilingual/ESL Institutes to on-site customized technical assistance. ESL certification preparation courses have had the effect of certifying approximately 2,400 teachers. To address the low scores in Spanish, reading, and math, two bilingual education consultants were assigned to develop specific language and literacy trainings to address this issue. The trainings were presented in Spanish.

Teacher mentoring is a formalized relationship between a beginning teacher and a master teacher (mentor) who provides support and assesses teaching skills. Duties of the mentor may include advising about instructional

content and strategies, demonstrating classroom instruction, observing the beginning teacher's instruction, consulting about lesson plans and objectives, advising about school/district resources and student and parent relations, and informing the new teacher about the expectations of the school, the district, and the state.

RESC 10 should use the data-driven planning form shown in **Exhibit 10-9** and process to assist in designing a structured, mentoring program for instructional staffs that are new to the field of education. This provision will assist member districts to meet state regulations for beginning teachers.

RESC 10 should develop a mentoring program using the two bilingual education consultants to meet the ongoing needs of teachers and students in member districts. RESC 10 should establish a mentoring program to provide technical assistance and guidance to teachers, administrators, and families of students with bilingual language needs.

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

The RESC 10 Report of Performance Evaluation form is a standardized form and is not individualized for specific jobs or positions. This general form is used for all employees as a rating system for performance evaluations that are the foundation of determining salary changes and promotions.

Annual performance evaluations are conducted for all employees. The evaluations are used to provide employees with feedback about their performance throughout the year. Copies of all evaluation records are kept in employee files within the Human Resources Department. **Exhibit 10-10** shows the RESC 10 Report of Performance Evaluation. Administrators use this evaluation instrument whereby employees are ranked on different levels (unsatisfactory, below expectations, meets expectations, exceeds expectations, and not applicable) and on several indicators including overall performance in relation to the job description, strengths and weaknesses, and a plan for improvement. Employees are provided space for comments and concerns after receiving their evaluation from their supervisor. RESC 10 should develop specific performance evaluation criteria that are relevant to specific positions. RESC 10 employees should be evaluated based upon specific criteria that are objective and have a direct relationship to job descriptions and are correlated to the action plans that are developed to support the strategic plan. By using an evaluation form that is individualized and detailed, employees and supervisors should expect that performance-based salary changes and promotions are more reflective of the job descriptions and responsibilities that are unique to each division at Region 10. In order to individualize the form, division administrators should meet with department supervisors and program coordinators to determine the changes that should be made to the current general performance evaluation form.

HUMAN RESOURCES RECORDS

The Department of Human Resources stores, monitors, and oversees job descriptions and employee records. These personnel documents are an important part of the employment process and should be frequently monitored by personnel services staff. At the present, however, they are stored in filing cabinets within the office of the assistant director of Human Resources. RESC 10 retains records for "non-exempt" employees (i.e., non-salaried) for three years, and the records of non-exempt employees' earnings are kept for two years. There is currently no retention or destruction policy for executive, administrative, or professional salaried employees' records at Region 10. Also, there is no adopted retention and destruction schedule for all HR records and information.

Exhibit 10-9
2004–05 Data-Driven Planning Form

Consultant Name: _____ **Coordinator Approval:** _____ **Assistant Director Approval:** _____ **Date:** _____
FOCUS AREA: Title III Bilingual Education/ESL
Division Goal: 1, 2, 3, 4 (mark all that apply) **Purpose:** 1, 2, 3 (Mark all that apply)

Planning Committee Members	Data Sources	Data Findings	Expected Outcomes	Activities		Timeline	Resources Needed including expense, time and personnel	Evaluation Summative and Formative
(Names have been removed)	BE/ESL Needs assessment 2004–05 AEIS IT report for TAKS results Self Assessment BE/ESL Program Evaluation Database of teachers completing certification in ESL by district	Regional TAKS Data shows that Spanish scores lagged behind state results by 5 to 7 percent, Regional TAKS data shows that the Hispanic subgroup scores on the English administration of the test lagged behind state results by 3 to 4 percent Based on the district needs assessment the following areas were identified: (1) Newcomer training (2) Training mainstream elementary/secondary teachers on language acquisition and ESL strategies. (3) Request demonstration lessons for all levels, (4) Content teachers need strategies for teaching grade level content to LEP students. (5) Language and literacy training for all levels, (6) Technical Training (LPAC/TELPOP.) (7) Need to certify more teachers in the area of ESL Self-assessment and district needs assessment data showed that school climate and program collaboration areas were weak, The teacher certification program in ESL has made great progress, however the southern portion of the region is still in need of more certified teachers. as do the urban districts due to attrition	To close the gap between the statewide average TAKS results for reading and math by 2 percent across the board, To close the gap between the statewide average Spanish TAKS results for reading and writing by 2 percent across the board District needs assessment data will show an average increase from an average of .75 to 2 percent Certify 300-400 teachers in ESL area through examination	The following training will be provided to address the needs of the English Language Learner: Differentiated Instruction Using Non fiction to Develop Content Based Instruction English Development In the Bilingual Classroom Reading Interventions for The ELL (also available in Spanish) Strategies to teach the Gifted ELL (also available in Spanish) Vocabulary Building for the Struggling Reader in 4–6 HOT Skills for the ELL Math, Problem Solving and the ELL Social Studies and the ELL Science and the ELL Facets of Culture and the Implications for Instruction Secondary ESL Literacy Secondary Writing Six Traits of Writing for ESL Six Traits of Spanish Writing Reading Writing and Vocabulary	Cluster and Central Sites ESL Institute I & II Bilingual Education Institute I & II Advanced Curriculum Institute Advanced Assessment Institute Administrators Institute Title III and NCLB Guidelines Assessing Campus-Level Bilingual/ESL and Migrant Programs Oral Language Proficiency Test Training Using RPTE and OLPT to Guide Instruction LPAC Training ESL Certification	By request July 2004 through June 2005 Schedules at cluster and central sites from June 2004-2005	Professional readings for institutes $2,000 Blackboard training for staff $1,200 4 FTE staff @ $43, 000 to $63,000 Travel cost $6,000 Workshop supplies $3,000 Outside contractors @ $200 to $300 per day Printing $6,000	TAKS data, Number of certified teachers as reported to RESC 10 by program participants, Districts needs assessment instruments, district program evaluations, ICS participation data, workshop evaluation forms

Source: RESC 10, 2004.

Goals
1: *To improve student achievement for all students in the region, especially those in traditionally underserved populations.*
2: *To provide efficient & economical products & services that effectively impact achievement while meeting the diverse needs of our districts*
3: *To support local, state, federal initiatives that impact improvement of adequate yearly progress*
4: *To increase the number of highly qualified staff (professional & paraprofessional) especially in critical shortage areas*

Purposes
1: *Improvements in Student Achievement*
2: *Efficiency, Effectiveness and Economy*
3: *Support of State Initiatives*

Exhibit 10-10
Report of Performance Evaluation
RESC 10 Education Service Center
2003–04

Name of Employee: _____ **Position Title:** _____ **Department:** _____ **Position/Pay Grade:** _____

Longevity in Present Position: yrs _____ **mths** _____ **Date of Employment:** _____ **Report Performance from** _____ **to** _____

I. A BRIEF SUMMARY OF JOB DESCRIPTION—Summarize the major job functions for which the employee is responsible in this assignment. Do not limit your summary to the title of the employee's position. Describe the actual duties performed by the person being evaluated. _____

II. PERFORMANCE EVALUATION—Beside each description indicate the employee's level of performance in terms of individual job assignment. Feel free to insert descriptions unique to this particular job inn the blank spaces.

	Not Applicable	Unsatisfactory	Below Expectations	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations		Not Applicable	Unsatisfactory	Below Expectations	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
Tact						Skill in planning and laying out work					
Judgement						Skill in guiding and organizing					
Quality of Work						Handling of subordinates					
Attitude						Skill in developing employee morale					
Work Habits						Skill in preventing & handling employee problems					
Cooperation						Ability to work with peers					
Dependability						Personal dress & grooming					
Attendance						Knowledge of work					
Punctuality						Ability to work under pressure					
Initiative						Amount of supervision required					
Adaptability						Quantity of work					
Accuracy											

III. LEVEL OF OVERALL PERFORMANCE—Describe this employee's overall performance in relation to the job description. This might include statements regarding employee's strengths and weaknesses and a plan for employee improvement. (Use additional pages as necessary.) _____

IV. COMMENTS OF EMPLOYEE REGARDING EVALUATION—After you have completed your discussion with the employee, describe briefly the reaction and general attitude toward this evaluation by the employee. _____ Evaluator's Initials: __

V. COMMENTS OR CONCERNS OF EMPLOYEE REGARDING EVALUATION AND/OR SUPERVISION—Employee must complete this section by placing a (x) in the appropriate space. If employee indicates a concern or comment, he/she should record such in the space provided. Should additional space be needed attach additional page(s). Each additional page must be signed and dated by employee and evaluator.
Employee has comments or concerns _____ Employee has no comments or concerns_____Employee's Initials _____

Signature of Employee: _____ Date: _____ Signature of Reviewer: _____ Date: _____
Signature of Evaluator: _____ Date: _____ Signature of Executive Director: _____ Date: _____

Source: RESC 10, 2004.

The Texas State Records Retention Schedule (RRS) has adopted as an administrative rule of the Texas State Library and Archives Commission. This retention schedule indicates the minimum length of time listed records series must be retained by a state agency before destruction or archival preservation. The current schedule suggests that Human Resource records be destroyed five years following the termination or departure of an employee. The RRS does not take the place of an agency's retention schedule, but is to be used as a guide by the agency in creating and updating its schedule. Records listed on the RRS are those that are commonly found in most state agencies. The retention periods given in the RRS are required minimums. In addition to the common records listed in the RRS, each agency has unique record series that must be included in its retention schedule.

RESC 10 should develop a retention and destruction schedule for Human Resources records and information at RESC 10. By implementing this recommendation, RESC 10 should meet state agency guidelines for submission of a complete record retention schedule to the state and local records management division of the Texas state library and archives commission.

(For more information, it is suggested that that RESC 10 Human Resource staff consult documents located at http://www.tsl.state.tx.us/slrm/recordspubs/index.html#rrs2)

ARCHIVES CONTRACT

The Texas State Records Retention Schedule (RRS) is adopted as an administrative rule of the Texas State Library and Archives Commission. According to current guidelines, each state agency must submit a complete records retention schedule, entered on Form SLR 105, or an approved facsimile, to the State and Local Records Management Division of the Texas State Library and Archives Commission (Government Code, §441.185). At this time, the retention officer duty is unassigned and RESC 10 does not have a contact for HR records at the Texas State Library and Archives Commission.

RESC 10 should develop a contact for Human Resource records at the Texas State Library and Archives Commission. RESC 10 should meet state agency guidelines for submission of a complete record retention schedule to the state and local records management division of the Texas state library and archives commission. For more information, RESC 10 human resource staff should consult documents located at http://www.tsl.state.tx.us/slrm/recordspubs/rrs2.

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

RESC 10 does not have an employee handbook. There is no format for ensuring that all employees are aware of business policies, payroll procedures, and other operational information. RESC 10 has a Business/Financial Services Operational Procedures Manual that was revised recently in May 2004. This manual contains information regarding budget, finance, payroll, personal leave, purchasing, travel, risk management, and other business procedures.

Employee handbooks generally include:

- recognition of current policy changes or initiatives affecting employees;
- the calendar of training events (including a member district calendar);
- references to staff development policy and activities;
- a list of key contacts for particular employee needs;
- a description of the roles and responsibilities of various divisions and departments;
- the system wide student discipline policy; and
- safety issues.

Exhibit 10-11 shows a checklist of suggested topics that may be included in an effective employee handbook.

Exhibit 10-11
Employee Handbook Checklist

1. A statement of welcome and an explanation of the handbook's purposes.
2. A brief company history.
3. A description of products and services.
4. Organization charts.
5. A map showing the physical plant.
6. An explanation of authority or reporting procedures.
7. General information on customers and clients, facilities and services, and corporate activities in the community.
8. A corporate mission statement.
9. Corporate policy statements on equal employment opportunity, affirmative action, a drug-free workplace, business ethics, sexual harassment, and union representation.
10. Information on internal and external recruitment and selection, including job posting policies, promotion and transfer policies, separation and rehire policies, and opportunities for training, career counseling, and professional development.
11. Basic compensation and benefits information, including employment classifications, work hours, pay procedures and schedules, overtime pay, holidays, vacations, bereavement, jury and witness duty, sick leave, and other leaves of absence.
12. Summary descriptions of such fringe benefits as health and life insurance, tuition reimbursement, stock purchase, pensions, employee assistance programs, and work/life programs—for example, child or adult day-care services or adoption assistance.
13. Emergency information, including numbers to call in case of a fire, an accident on the job, or unforeseen disasters.
14. General rules of workplace conduct—for example, smoking, dress and grooming, or absenteeism and tardiness—and methods for addressing complaints and resolving disciplinary problems.
15. Brief explanations of procedures for purchasing equipment, arranging travel, or receiving expense reimbursements.
16. An acknowledgment receipt form.
17. An alphabetized topic index.

Source: American Association of School Personnel Administrators Web site (www.aaspa.org), 2003.

RESC 10 should develop an Employee Handbook and update the handbook annually with recorded revision dates. An Employee Handbook should be designed, developed, and distributed to all employees. This handbook should provide general descriptions of policies affecting all employees. The Region's mission, goals, calendar, and policies should be part of this comprehensive handbook for employees. Serving as a convenient reference, the handbook should also include other pertinent information, such as a directory of schools and offices and a brief description of the specific RESC 10 programs provided to school districts. For internal consistency, information should be obtained from the recently revised Business/Financial Services Operational Procedures Manual.

A brief form should be included in the handbook for an employee to sign indicating that the handbook was reviewed. The signed form should be kept in each employee's personnel file as a record that the employee is aware of policies and regulations in Region 10. The handbook should be placed on the RESC 10 Intranet/Web site making it more easily accessible, eliminating unnecessary

duplication costs, and facilitating updates. Employees who are new to the RESC should be provided with a copy of the Employee Handbook at orientation.

PLANNING AND BUDGETING

The Texas Education Agency recommends that RESCs maintain no more than 20 percent of general fund operating expenditures in unreserved, undesignated fund balance. Region 10's general fund balance policy states that their goal is to maintain 10-15 percent in unreserved, undesignated fund balance, therefore meeting the recommendation of TEA.

The projected use of fund balance for the 2003–04 fiscal year by division, is shown in **Exhibit 10-12.**

There are several reasons why Region 10 believes it is important to maintain an adequate and efficient fund balance. First of all, it would be used to meet unexpected occurrences. Last year, education service centers could not request any state or federal grant reimbursements from the state for over a month. Because this money was not able to be requested and remitted to the service centers, Region 10 had to rely on the fund balance to carry them through that time period.

Another reason is that when state or federal funds are reduced or eliminated, Region 10 may need the fund balance to assist in carrying out the services provided to school districts and charter schools. Region 10 experienced a large reduction in state funding in 2003–04 of $2.5 million. Most of the cash is received on a reimbursement basis. All state and federal funds are handled this way. A cash reserve is needed to make expenditures until reimbursements can be requested and received. Staffing reductions at TEA have added to the length of time required to process reimbursement requests.

Exhibit 10-12
Region 10 Projected Use of Fund Balance

Fund Balance Line Item Breakout	By Cost
Region 10 Fund Balance	$619,432
Division of Administration	121,103
Division of Information Services	(2,273)
Division of Instructional Services	177,668
Total Project Use of Fund Balance	**$915,930**

Source: Region 10, 2004.

A final reason would be to handle any unforeseen, unappropriated expenditures such as catastrophic (wind, hail, or fire) occurrences that may not be covered through insurance. Other expenditures may be used for repairs to the building or for wear and tear that would not be covered by insurance.

In addition to unreserved, undesignated fund balance, as described above, it is also prudent to set aside fund balance for periodic repairs and equipment replacement that is costly and may be too expensive to fund out of one fiscal year's revenue. Region 10 might need to designate funds to cover the cost of long-term obligations for a short period in case legislative or other uncontrollable factors necessitated a change in the way business is conducted.

For fiscal year end 2003, the RESC 10 Board approved reservations/designations for the following items:

- **Improvements for Mainframe Services** – as technology and ideas change, Region 10's mainframe equipment and services have to be updated or changed to meet demands/requests of its mainframe clients.

- **Technology Equipment** – computers, laptops, and or servers have to be

periodically updated or replaced as technology advances. Divisions need to have adequate technology equipment to meet the needs of the school districts and charter schools as well as TEA. It is necessary to periodically replace the sophisticated AV equipment in the Center's meeting rooms.

- **Microcomputer Enhancements** – Region 10 offers a microcomputer service for system users not on RESC 10's mainframe using RSCCC. Region 10 also has to periodically pay for upgrades/enhancements to the RSCCC system.

- **Employee Benefits** – RESC 10, on behalf of the employee, pays part of the cost of health insurance premiums for eligible employees as well as some other insurance benefits. Some of these costs can be paid from state and federal sources, but the general fund pays for the remaining costs. Region 10 also pays those employees who do not receive the $1,000 supplemental compensation provided by the state to certain employees. If an employee does not receive the full $1,000 a year from the state for supplemental compensation, Region 10 makes up that difference from fund balance so that all eligible employees receive the full $1,000.

- **Low Performing Schools** – in addition to the core service money that Region 10 receives from the state for low performing schools, they also designate some fund balance to use in assisting schools that are classified as low-performing by the State.

- **Long-Term Obligations** – RESC 10 contracts with Xerox Corporation to provide equipment and related services for their print shop and other copiers located throughout the building. The contract does not end until 2006 so Region 10 has designated some fund balance for future payments to Xerox to pay out this existing contract. Region 10 is also paying back a construction note to LaSalle Bank for the construction of the new building on Abrams Road. The note was for $3.5 million with annual principal and interest payments of $386,650 and is to be paid off in the year 2013.

- **Instructional Equipment – Visually Impaired** – the Visually Impaired Department must stay abreast on specialized equipment to meet the needs of those students who have been identified as visually impaired. Some of this equipment can be very expensive to acquire and to maintain.

- **Facility Safety Enhancements** – because safety has been of high importance the last couple of years, RESC 10 feels that it is necessary to closely monitor and update safety features.

Region 10 believes that state-based funding is at-risk and needs to maintain an adequate fund balance to provide the necessary support to school districts. If large reductions in state funding continues, RESC 10 will be at-risk for providing future support to the district at an efficient level.

RESC 10 should determine the appropriate use of funds necessary for financial planning and annual budgeting purposes. This recommendation will assist RESC 10 with clearly defining the level of allocated state-based funds to the specific scope of services listed above for school district support in the region. Although it was necessary for Region 10 to use the fund balance last year and it may also be necessary next year, due to large reductions in state funding, the center realizes that this cannot be a long-term strategy. School districts have been significantly impacted with reduced funding as well, but future fee increases may be inevitable. It may

also be necessary to be more creative and entrepreneurial in thinking of new ways to generate revenue and form business partnerships.

FINANCIAL TREND ANALYSIS

Region 10 does not prepare written financial narratives or trend analysis for board members to review prior to each board meeting. While board members are informed about the fund balance activity, the information does not include any supporting narratives. The process could prove beneficial to new board members who may not be informed of the fund balance activity history.

Each fiscal year end, Region 10's financial statements are audited by an independent audit firm on the reasonableness of those financial statements. Within those statements is an audited ending fund balance figure that shows the results of the year's operations along with detail on what is reserved and designated by the board. That ending fund balance will be the next year's beginning fund balance.

The fund balance stated in the audited financial statements is broken down internally by project showing the fund and organization. By showing fund balance on the general ledger by project, a division or department, Region 10 can take their beginning fund balance plus revenue-to-date minus expenditures-to-date to get their current fund balance. All of this information is available online on the mainframe system and on monthly financial reports. However, since revenue less expenditures varies widely depending on the time of year, fund balance at a point in time is not always very meaningful except as an indicator of how the year will end. Year end fund balance incorporates the impact of Region 10 operations for the year and is incorporated into the audited financial statements, which are used to communicate to external parties.

At every bi-monthly board meeting, a budget amendment is presented that shows projected year end fund balance along with reserved/designated fund balance. This report is received by the executive director and leadership council members (division heads) who attend the board meetings and participate in the board discussions.

At mid-year, all divisions are asked to review their operations and reforecast revenue and expenditures for all programs so that year end fund balance can be more accurately predicted. These re-forecasted numbers are incorporated into the next budget amendment, which in turn is used as a beginning point for the next year's budget.

RESC 10 has a general fund balance policy and a target range of 10-15 percent of general fund expenditures. Projected fund balance is always discussed with the board members when budget amendments are presented. However, this process may be improved by actually adding the written commentary to the year-end final budget amendments.

RESC 10 should develop a written commentary and a trend analysis to the year-end final budget amendments, which are presented to the board of directors. The advantages to this recommendation is that it will foster cross functional communication between regional service centers, make it easier to service all school districts, minimize reliance on specific personnel within regional service centers, and increase productivity and product support. The challenges the regional service centers will face are changes that will require more focus on resources for training and business process reengineering, require specialized IT capability with the RESCs, and top management commitment.

PEIMS COORDINATOR

The RESC 10 PEIMS Coordinator has multiple roles and responsibilities that are not specific to supporting quality PEIMS activities. As the PEIMS Coordinator, he is responsible for all PEIMS submittals and re-submittals. The PEIMS Coordinator is also responsible for the mainframe application programmers, which is 14 full-time employees, and serves as the database administrator. Region 10 has a PEIMS

facilitator to help the PEIMS Coordinator with the submittals and re-submittals to Texas Education Agency.

The PEIMS Coordinator works with each district to coordinate all PEIMS submittals and re-submittals to Texas Education Agency. This process occurs four times a year and starts about 60 days before submittals are due. The fourth submission is only for school districts that have year-round school sessions. The same process occurs for the four re-submittals per year. However, it is possible to have up to eight submittals per year because of district concern with data quality and making sure the data is accurate. The training sessions that are conducted are limited to school districts' PEIMS Coordinators because of space limitation. However, RESC 10 agrees that training is required.

Region 10 conducts up to three training sessions per year based on PEIMS requirements. Additional basic training is conducted for district personnel who are unfamiliar with PEIMS reporting. Usually there is at least one session but this is done on an as needed bases. Region 10 serves as a central resource for "ad hoc" district questions via email, phone, or fax to help the district with their concerns.

The PEIMS Coordinator role is not consistent across the RESCs. The Region 10 PEIMS coordinator has multiple roles and also has a PEIMS facilitator to assist in making sure the submittals reflect the accuracy required to complete the submittals. A review is warranted to determine if a PEIMS Coordinator and a PEIMS facilitator role is necessary at RESC 10 or if the two should be combined as one.

RESC 10 should evaluate the role of RESC 10 PEIMS assigned Coordinator to determine if the PEIMS Coordinator role should be separated from other assigned duties. The implementation of this recommendation should result in adequate and appropriate manpower allocation to the PEIMS program. Further, this action is justified when one considers that RESC 10 has the second largest student population of the 20 RESCs exceeded only by RESC 4.

PURCHASES AND REQUISITIONS

RESC 10 manually handles the submission of requisitions for goods or services and the approval of the requisitions. Employees wanting to purchase a good or service normally will interface directly with a coordinator or designated employee with budget authority within their department to manually fill out a requisition and solicit required approvals. Once the request is received by Region 10's Business Office the appropriate bidding requirement, that may include a request for proposal, a request for quote, and/or another appropriate process, will be managed to determine the selected supplier. To support the bidding process administered by Region 10's Business Office the Coordinator will use a generic template to define their needs versus a standard template for goods or services that may include professional services, nutrition, facilities, or technology. Standard templates would assist region coordinators with submitting better-defined specifications or scopes of work used for communicating specific need to the supplier or business community.

To support the next phase of managing the purchasing process, Region 10 has developed and uses an automated mainframe-supported purchasing system called Request. This system is also used by many school districts within Region 10. The Request system allows for a Region 10 department coordinator to enter a request for a purchase order to be issued once a supplier has been selected and electronically approved by the appropriate level of management. At this stage, the purchasing process is complete if Region 10's board is not required to take any action. The purchase for goods and services on a State or cooperative contract can be processed directly through Region 10's Request system without going through the manual requisition submission process. Once an order is delivered, it is sent to RESC 10's Business Office and then forwarded to the requesting

customer to officially receive the order electronically in the Request System. The Request system also allows for requests to be entered for warehouse stock, miscellaneous payments, and budget transfers.

RESC 10's Requisition purchasing requisition system does not allow for electronically submitting, approving, or tracking a requisition. In the last six months, Region 20's IT Department has rolled out a Web version in an updated business package (iTCCS) to support all purchasing activity from submitting a requisition, receiving approvals, automatic notification, tracking status, issuing a purchase order, to receiving good(s). Purchasing systems with the type of best in class functions referenced in the iTCCS business package should be incorporated into the Region 10's purchasing system and process. Recognizing that Region 10 currently uses a shared responsibility concept for managing purchasing activity versus having an employee(s) with purchasing as their sole responsibility, it is more critical to have systems, processes, and procedures well defined. Inconsistencies in these areas can contribute to inefficiencies. Region 10 should implement a complete requisition purchasing system to complement the features available in the Request System as soon as possible to improve inefficiencies, including the time it takes to process a requisition, the ability for approvers to receive automatic notification, and minimize the risk of a requisition being misplaced.

RESC 10 should modify the existing Requisition purchasing system or identify another automated purchasing requisition system (i.e. iTCCS, or a comparable system) that supports a purchasing process from the point of a requisition being submitted to a good or service being received.

Region 10's implementation of a complete requisition purchasing system to complement the features available in the Request System will improve inefficiencies, including the time it takes to process a requisition and the ability for approvers to receive automatic notification, and minimize the risk of a requisition being misplaced.

The fiscal impact for purchasing the recommended software is estimated to cost $80,000. If Region 10 decides not to fill the purchasing position, it would offset the cost over a two-year period.

FIXED ASSETS

RESC 10's fixed asset records that are maintained on the asset tracking system are not adequately classified and the supporting descriptions are not clear. For example, item number 2967 class 200 group 271 and lot 7 has a description of a computer tabletop stand. When item number 2967 was physically located, the asset associated with the item number is a Tanberg video conference desk top system. This asset allows video conference sessions to take place at a person's work station. The descriptions in the fixed asset system do not clearly identify the assets; therefore problems with assets classification exist.

RESC 10 capital assets and inventoried items are acquired through the normal purchasing procedures. Once the asset is delivered, the business department issues a tag for the capital assets. Tags are to be placed where they are visible and may not be removed. The business department then records the asset into the asset tracking system. The system should be updated with pertinent information describing the asset; however, not in all cases has this occurred properly.

If it is necessary to transfer the asset from one department to another, the business department must be notified in writing prior to the item being relocated. The notification should include the asset number, serial number if applicable, and current location of asset. Once this is complete, the approval of the move can take place.

RESC 10 should update the asset descriptions and classification in the system. External evaluation of physical inventories takes place at Region 10 now approximately every five

years. Although during 2002 an outside expert vendor was engaged to conduct a complete inventory and evaluation of assets, this was done to prepare for the implementation of GASB 34 and the depreciation of assets requirements. Region 10 still needs to do random spot checks on inventory to determine and evaluate the accuracy of all assets recorded in the system.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY PRODUCTS

RESC 10 mainframe and the RSCCC products run on different platforms and vary in the specific functionality and data access offered. Maintaining an efficient, effective, and economical information management system, including financial, personnel, and student data, is imperative for school operations. The Division of Information Services at Region 10 provides services for both the mainframe and RSCCC products. The mainframe is designed for larger school districts with a population of at least 35,000 students.

Region 10 has 18 school districts on the mainframe and provides three support teams to teach, train, and support the needs of the districts. **Exhibit 10-13** describes the student count trend over several years along with the application package each district uses.

The RSCCC is designed for small districts that are a part of a micro-cooperative, Region 10 has about 76 districts on both the business and student application including charter schools. **Exhibit 10-14** illustrates the districts and charter schools that are participating.

RESC 10 should collaborate closely with RESC 20 to create one scalable product for release of next generation information technology products. RESC 10 and RESC 20 both have separate mainframe solutions for member districts respectively. This creates an opportunity to closely evaluate both mainframe applications and determine the best practices. Region 10 and Region 20 can be both co-owners of the next generation of products released. Region 20 already is the single author of RSCCC, but Region 10 can provide input on how to integrate RSCCC in with the mainframe to create one scalable product.

Exhibit 10-13
Region 10 Mainframe Computer Users:
2001-2004

Student Count 2003–04	Student Count 2002–03	Student Count 2001–02	District Name	Business Package	Student Package
13,864	12,585	11,668	Allen ISD	X	
7,305	7,227	6,995	Carroll ISD	X	
25,638	25,548	25,002	Carrolton-FB ISD	X	
11,368	10,956	10,808	Duncanville ISD	X	X
2,277	2,184	2,157	Ferris ISD		X
13,411	11,145	9,292	Frisco ISD	X	X
22,132	21,582	20,977	Grand Prairie ISD	X	X
5,288	5,220	5,239	Greenville ISD	X	X
3,407	3,372	3,220	Kaufman IDS	X	
32,583	31,258	30,582	Killeen ISD	X	
4,754	4,318	4,147	Lancaster ISD	X	X
44,024	43,122	41,154	Lewisville ISD	X	X
21,060	19,162	16,884	Mansfield ISD		X
35,536	35,035	35,275	Richardson ISD		X
4,175	4,237	4,177	Terrell ISD	X	X
6,987	7,104	6,933	Weatherford ISD	X	X
3,078	2,906	3,025	Wilmer-Hutchins ISD	X	X
6,661	5,710	5,001	Wylie ISD	X	X

Source: Region 10, 2004.

Exhibit 10-14
RESC 10 Administrative Micro Cooperative Participation

District Name	Business Software Support	Student Software Support
Anna	X	X
Celina	X	X
Farmerville	X	X
Melissa	X	X
Princeton	X	X
Prosper	X	X
Blue Ridge	X	X
Community	X	X
Lovejoy	X	X
Sunnyvale	X	X
Avalon	X	X
Ennis	X	X
Ferris	X	
Italy	X	X
Midlothian	X	
Milford	X	X
Palmer	X	X
Maypearl	X	X
Bonham	X	X
Dodd City	X	X
Ector	X	X
Honey Grove	X	X
Leonard	X	X
Savoy	X	X
Trenton	X	X
Sam Rayburn	X	X
Bells	X	X
Collinsville	X	X
Howe	X	X
Tioga	X	X
Van Alstyne	X	X
Whitesboro	X	X
Whitewright	X	X
Pottsboro	X	X
S and S Consolidated	X	X
Gunter	X	X
Tom Bean	X	X
Caddo Mills	X	X
Celeste	X	X
Commerce	X	X
Lone Oak	X	X
Quinlan	X	X
Wolfe City	X	X
Campbell	X	X
Bland	X	X
Boles	X	X
Forney	X	X
Kaufman		X
Kemp	X	X
Scurry-Rosser	X	X
Paris	X	X
Royse City		X
Wills Point	X	X

Exhibit 10-14 (continued)
Region 10 Administrative Micro Cooperative Participation

District Name	Business Software Support	Student Software Support
Charter Schools		
North Hills Charter (K-12)		X
Life Charter School		X
Universal Academy	X	X
Children First Academy	X	X
Dallas County Juvenile Justice Charter	X	X
Faith Family Academy		X
A.W. Brown Fellowship		X
Focus Learning Academy	X	X
Dallas County JJAEP		X
Honors Academies (9)		
A+ Academy	X	X
Inspired Vision	X	X
Phoenix Elementary Charter	X	X

Source: Region 10, 2004.

FISCAL IMPACT

Recommendation		2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	5-Year (Costs) or Savings	One-Time (Costs) or Savings
10-15	Purchase software.							($80,000)
	Total	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**($80,000)**

CHAPTER 11:

FORT WORTH

CHAPTER 11

FORT WORTH

Located in Fort Worth, Regional Education Service Center (RESC) 11 provides services that impact over 450,000 students in 78 public schools districts, 23 charter schools, and 10 counties. Region 11 services an area equal to the state of New Jersey in size. School districts in this region range in size from Fort Worth Independent school district's large metropolitan schools to small rural districts with only one building housing a total of 80 students for Grades K-9.

The vision of RESC 11 is to "ensure that every student is a successful lifelong learner and a productive member of society by providing leadership, products and services to the region's campuses, districts, and charter schools."

To support Region 11's vision they have established and embraced core beliefs to support all interactions with internal and external stakeholders. The core beliefs include:

- Quality must be a prime factor in all services delivered by Region 11.
- All operations of Region 11 must be client-centered.
- All Region 11 services will be designed to meet the needs of the diverse populations served.
- Region 11 must support and promote innovative instruction and leadership.
- Region 11 supports continuous growth and improved performance of all personnel, programs, and services which impact student learning.
- Region 11 must be a leading source for educational knowledge, research and effective practices.
- The success of the organization rests in the power of Region 11 team to function as a whole toward common goals while acknowledging the contributions of the parts.
- The return on the investment of resources must be in the best interest of the districts and campuses served as well as that of Region 11.

At the direction of the board, the executive director and RESC 11 team has worked aggressively to improve and strengthen relations between the region, superintendents, and customers throughout the school districts.

The board has been concerned that the lack of a positive relationship and communication with superintendents was having an adverse impact on school districts maximizing the use of services offered by RESC. The executive director has made it a priority to renew and rebuild the relationships with superintendents through visiting each district to understand and define their expectations. The executive director is holding 20 cluster meetings a year throughout the various counties to renew a commitment to providing quality services and provide superintendents with an ongoing opportunity to provide feedback. In addition, Region 11 through the leadership of the executive director has established goals (see **Exhibit 11-1**) that will be used for measuring the success of providing quality services to school districts.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- RESC 11 effectively plans, funds, and constructs buildings to provide purposeful working and training environments.
- RESC 11 effectively uses of RESC 11 Telecommunication Network (RETN) to provide training and educational resources to the school districts within the service region.

Exhibit 11-1
2003-2004 Goals

Goals
1. Practice quality, center-wide planning, communication, and collaboration to increase Region 11's efficiency and effectiveness.
2. Provide quality programs and services through a variety of technologies and delivery sites.
3. Assist in improving student/campus/district/charter schools performance in all accountability systems.
4. Practice effective and efficient communication and collaboration between Region 11 and campuses/districts/charter schools.
5. Increase partnerships with external organizations to secure resources that support quality, cost-effective programs and services.
6. Maximize accessibility to Region 11 services for all campuses/districts/charter schools.
7. Maximize the capacity and flexibility of ESC internal systems to parallel internal and external demands.

Source: RESC 11, 2004.

- RESC 11's implementation of an online registration system for training sessions is a benefit to clients and internal staff.
- RESC 11 provides effective technical assistance, training, and other related supportive services for students with visual impairments.
- The leadership and staff of RESC 11 have taken steps to develop a positive work environment that supports employee satisfaction and dedication.
- RESC 11 uses a zero-based budget approach to manage project budgets and maximize the use of funds.
- Region 11 Business Center has developed a budget planning process that avoids duplication of services through an isolated planning approach.
- Region 11 Business Center provides business support services to the smaller school districts and minimizing their cost for these services by creating cost saving opportunities.
- Region 11 is committed to participating in Region 4 Purchasing Cooperative Network, which has created savings on the average of 23 percent or $451, 887 year to date.
- Region 11 Business Office is using a unique and effective risk management process that involves employees at the director level.
- Region 11 maintains an effective system when recording capital assets and inventoried items onto the RSCCC fixed asset tracking system.
- RESC 11 has established effective use of current technology to increase the efficiency and improve the efficiency of the entire professional development process.
- RESC 11 has established an effective partnership with Ucompass to provide the online "Educator" software services to the school districts.
- RESC 11 has reduced the email traffic entering the network by 70 to 80 during normal business hours.

FINDINGS

- Region 11's board approves the goals within the strategic plan, but does not approve any of the high-level objectives or key performance indicators within the strategic plan.
- Region 11's recently approved strategic plan and supporting action plans do not have a direct correlation to the performance plan process

created by Human Resources for measuring individual performance.

- The Region 11 deputy executive director of Administrative and Business Services is currently filled with a part-time employee. By only having a part-time employee in this position, it does not enhance and strengthen the level of leadership, advocacy, and management support required to improve each directly impacted operation.
- A review of data and interviews with staff show that current participation rates for in-house training at RESC 11 have been negatively affected by budget cuts at the school district level. As such, RESC 11 facilities staff report that there is room in the training schedule to allow for outside use of RESC meeting and training space.
- RESC 11 does not currently use the existing Web page or an online registration system for providing information about meeting space that could be contracted by outside clients.
- Region 11 does not have a standard method for offering post-training technical assistance to its training participants.
- A review of RESC 11 contracts for services found that, while a majority of school districts participate at some level in programs and services offered by the service center, not all school districts within the region take part in services provided by RESC 11.
- MGT consultants determined through a review of program documents and staff interviews that the pricing structure for instructional programs and services at RESC 11 have, for the most part, remained constant over the past two years.
- In interviews with Instructional Services and Administrative Services staff, MGT consultants identified an incongruence between the two training programs associated with Texas accountability standards, as well as other critical subject matter.
- While conducting on-site interviews with human resources staff as well as other RESC staff, MGT found that Region 11 had no formal instrument in place for measuring employee satisfaction.
- RESC 11 routinely loses quality employees to school districts within the region.
- The Region 11 Board of Directors lack training in how to evaluate senior personnel and managing personnel issues that require action by the board.
- The general uncertainty of state funding and school finance has made it more prudent to maintain an adequate General Operating Fund balance. Region 11 has not maintained an adequate fund balance.
- The definition of core services and the relationship between core services and state base funding is not clear for Region 11.
- Region 11 audited financial statements do not include a management letter which usually describe any recommendation identified by the external auditors.
- Region 11 participates in a total of five cooperative programs. The participation in too many programs could potentially minimize the ability to leverage spending power by directing purchasing activity through only one or two cooperatives.
- Region 11 manages its purchasing and approval process manually.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 11-1: Involve the board in the initial planning phase of reviewing and approving high level strategic goals, objectives, and key performance indicators that will be used to measure the success of each department within Region 11.** The implementation of this recommendation should result in full

involvement of the board in RESC 11 planning phases. In so doing, the board becomes not only more knowledgeable about important priorities of the RESC, but also can include board involvement and planning in any self-evaluation they may chose to develop. Additionally, implementing this recommendation provides the board with an opportunity to better understand the performance of RESC staff.

- **Recommendation 11-2: Develop a correlation between performance plans and action plans that have been developed to support the goals and objectives approved in the strategic plan.** This type of cross-functional strategic and action planning will begin to improve morale, breakdown organization barriers, and improve employee performance through having defined targets and objective indicators that will be used for ensuring accountability.

- **Recommendation 11-3: Fill the executive director of Administrative and Business Services with a full-time employee.** Filling the deputy executive director of Administration position with a full-time manager will provide the required support and leadership to employees throughout the division.

- **Recommendation 11-4: Expand efforts to attract commercial clients into available space.** While there is significant competition in the commercial meeting/office space market, RESC 11 has a unique opportunity to expand efforts to attract commercial clients into available space. RESC 11 should contact meeting planners or large organizations that provide training sessions in Fort Worth to focus these efforts. Administrators and staff should develop an assessment of current availability. A plan should be created to use the space more efficiently by marketing to local businesses and organizations for rental of the facility.

- **Recommendation 11-5: Create a Web–based system for advertising available meeting and conference space at RESC 11 facilities.** REC 11 should use a similar format to market its available space using a Web-based system for staff and outside clients to reserve meeting rooms and for district employees to register for presentations and videoconferences. On a monthly basis, invoices for facility usage should be prepared and distributed by the business office based upon usage records reflected in the Web-based system. A similar Web page will provide an opportunity for outside clients to learn about available space and may also attract meetings from existing clients of RESC 11.

- **Recommendation 11-6: Establish an electronic Listserv for training participants to provide access to technical assistance following workshops and professional development activities at RESC 11.** Region 11 currently has methods of responding to the follow-up needs of clients, but a consolidated and coordinated effort should result in more comprehensive assistance to clients. By implementing this recommendation, Region 11 should provide feedback and follow-up technical assistance using various technology-based systems.

- **Recommendation 11-7: Develop a formal marketing plan for RESC 11 and expand marketing efforts within the school districts and communities being served.** Clearly, there is a high level of satisfaction with the services provided by RESC

11. However, there is also a lack of knowledge of the existence of RESC 11 as well as many of the critical services it provides. As operating funds from the state have dwindled and the need for programs and services have increased, there is an additional burden on RESC 11 to market its services effectively. Implementing an effective marketing plan will increase needed revenue within the service center and expand the services provided to school districts. All of these actions should be performed with the ultimate goal in mind of improving student performance in the school districts and ensuring the ongoing viability and sustainability of RESC.

- **Recommendation 11-8: Adopt a costing model that factors in all costs of providing and maintaining quality programs and services.** The current fee structure of many RESC 11 programs and services do not factor in costs that are currently being absorbed by the programs. RESC 11 is commended for attempting to maintain a service mentality and keeping costs low for its school districts. However, the fiscal reality is that state funds have been cut and that some fees must be increased to sustain the programs and services of RESC 11. Each program leader should evaluate actual programmatic costs and make recommendations to the executive staff for developing a new fee schedule. This should follow a standardized methodology that will funnel all evaluations and recommendations to a central group of senior staff for analysis and implementation. This recommendation is critical to the ongoing sustainability of RESC 11 and its valuable services. Satisfaction survey results from the school districts of RESC 11 are very favorable and suggest that there will not be a decline in participation with moderate fee increases. Regardless of participation impact, RESC 11 must be able to support programs and services at an adequate level and must adopt new methods of pricing its services.

- **Recommendation 11-9: Integrate Instructional Services and Administrative Services Programs to ensure alignment and focus.** The implementation of this recommendation should strengthen the collaboration between these critical program areas and improve the quality of overall program implementation within Region 11 schools.

- **Recommendation 11-10: Develop and initiate an organizational climate survey to measure employee satisfaction.** While there is no evidence that the lack of a climate survey has negatively impacted Region 11, there is an inherent added value in acquiring a comprehensive knowledge of organizational climate. Region 11 should take every opportunity to strengthen its ability to recruit and retain high-caliber employees.

- **Recommendation 11-11: Initiate a benchmarking process to develop a more competitive salary schedule for RESC 11 and take action to equalize salaries with the local market.** It is not unlikely that some center staff will choose to leave for school districts in the region, and this strengthens those school systems, but employees who are dedicated to the center's mission should not be forced to make decisions based on large differences in pay.

- **Recommendation 11-12: Provide training in performance evaluation to the board of directors.** RESC 11 Human Resources staff are equipped to provide comprehensive training to

board members in all areas of performance evaluation, to include:

- goal setting;
- performance criteria development;
- outcome-based evaluation; and
- job performance measurement.

The implementation of this recommendation will ensure that board members are knowledgeable and proficient in conducting performance evaluations and will facilitate a more comprehensive and effective evaluation process of executive director.

- **Recommendation 11-13: Determine the appropriate fund balance for Region 11 to operate if state base fund allocations continue to decrease and Chapter 41 funds continue to diminish.** The determination of an appropriate fund balance is a critical factor for RESCs financial planning and budgeting process. Region 11 concern is that this might not be practical or politically possible if future state base funding is limited or significantly reduced again. Region 11 is at risk for handling any unforeseen, unappropropriated expenditures such as a catastrophic (i.e. equipment replacement) which might be too costly to fund out of one fiscal year's revenue.

- **Recommendation 11-14: Evaluate and redefine the core services and state base funding to determine the appropriate level for Region 10 to operate and provide quality service to the school districts without affecting cost.** It is vital for the appropriate level of funding be in place to support the core services that RESCs must provide the school districts. Consistent, high quality service is necessary to keep school districts as customers. Region 11 and other RESC will be faced with the alternative of raising fees charged to the school districts and/or become more dependent on external revenue sources.

- **Recommendation 11-15: Require external auditors to include the verbal recommendations in a written management letter or attach a summarized document outlining the recommendations to the audited financial statements.** Written documentation will provide an audit trail to identify if recommendations were completed and in a timely manner. This information will also assist the CFO with creating actions plans to drive any required corrective steps.

- **Recommendation 11-16: Ensure that there is no overlap in the use of existing cooperative programs for purchasing good and services.** Region 11's review of the use of existing cooperative programs will ensure that they are not participating in to many cooperative programs, that may create an overlap, dilute purchasing power and minimize the level of generated savings.

- **Recommendation 11-17: Use the automated requisition-purchasing module within RSCCC from the point of creating a requisition, obtaining approval, issuing a purchase order, to receiving orders.** The implementation of this recommendation should result in streamlining the activity of personnel involved in purchasing resulting in increased effectiveness and efficiency. This should ultimately result in increasing personnel productivity since it will provide them with more time for additional tasks

DETAILED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

FACILITIES PLANNING

A review of construction project files shows that during recent years, RESC 11 has completed additions and renovations to the existing facility that increased available training space, as well as space to house growing program areas. During on-site interviews, staff reflected that the addition has afforded more office space, storage space, and training locations for delivering services to districts. This addition eliminated the need for leased office and training space, the need to secure hotel meeting rooms, and the need for leased storage space.

A physical examination of the facility showed that it was designed to provide maximum flexibility in use. Training rooms are spacious and can be subdivided for additional flexibility. Additionally, training rooms are equipped to support technology-driven delivery systems. Consultant observations of training areas showed effective utilization of these spaces in a variety of training situations. The construction and renovation of facilities operated by RESC 11 have been paid for as each project is completed. As a result, there is no debt burden associated with these facilities.

Accomplishment: RESC 11 effectively plans, funds, and constructs buildings to provide purposeful working and training environments.

TELECOMMUNICATION NETWORK

RESC Eleven Telecommunication Network (RETN) is an effective program and infrastructure that includes interactive videoconferencing and other related services to the school districts within RESC 11. It was developed and established by RESC 11 staff along with K–12 public schools, colleges, and universities in RESC. Membership is available to all public school campuses and districts in RESC 11. Private school campuses and districts, nonprofit educational institutions, and non K–12 educational institutions may be associate members. Business partnership members are accepted by the board on a case-by-case basis.

The purpose of RETN is to serve the K–12 students and educators in RESC 11 with services such as:

- full two-way interactive videoconferencing;
- internet access for districts and campuses;
- email;
- IP addressing;
- T1 line leasing and monitoring;
- troubleshooting and technical assistance for video and Internet; and
- Internet filtering.

RESC 11 collaborates with three other RESCs (RESC 2, 11, 20) to provide student services to over 1,000 students. RESC Eleven Telecommunications Network videoconferencing events in student services for 2003–04 include:

- subject courses (55);
- dual credit courses from community colleges (40);
- high school to high school in high-need subject areas (15); and
- content enhancement programs (Virtual field trips).

RETN also provides high-quality educator services including:

- graduate degree courses;
- certification courses;
- diagnosticians certification; and
- staff development opportunities (226).

Interviews with staff show a high-level internal and external satisfaction with this program. RESC 11 staff view this program as central to capacity building and the future of service delivery in the region.

Accomplishment: RESC 11 effectively uses of RESC 11 Telecommunication Network (RETN) to provide training and educational

resources to the school districts within the service region.

ONLINE REGISTRATION

The 2003–04 school year was the first year that RESC 11 provided for online registration for training programs and services. The center has developed a comprehensive Web site that allows potential customers to search the extensive schedule of training workshops by:

- audience;
- date of workshop;
- professional development and appraisal system objectives;
- principal standards and skills codes;
- subject;
- title; and
- key word.

RESC staff indicated that the new system has simplified the paper intensive process of registering training participants manually and has reduced the time associated with registration to a minimum. Staff also stated that this system will improve participation rates by allowing those browsing the electronic catalog to register immediately once a training of interest is identified.

Accomplishment: RESC 11's implementation of an online registration system for training sessions is a benefit to clients and internal staff.

SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

The Special Education Component for Visually Impaired (VI) Services at RESC 11 is a function that was decentralized from TEA. The program is designed to provide technical assistance, training, and other related supportive services to regional programs serving identified students with visual impairments ages birth to 22. Region 11 currently initiates and coordinates activities with local districts, which result in a collaborative, comprehensive regional plan for services for the visually impaired.

Assistance is provided to school districts, parents, teachers, Alternative Certification Program interns, new teachers, teacher aides, Braille transcribers, orientation and mobility specialists, diagnosticians, supervisors, administrators, other personnel working with students with visual impairments.

Technical assistance and staff development services are available in the following categories:

- addressing Unique Educational Needs (AUEN) of the VI;
- disease and syndrome technical assistance;
- curriculum development and modification;
- program evaluation and improvement;
- age and individually appropriate instructional methodologies;
- selection and utilization of adaptive materials and technology;
- orientation and mobility technical assistance;
- alternative certification program curriculum;
- regional planning for services for the visually impaired;
- liaison between schools and other service agencies;
- educators of students with visual impairments;
- federal and state rules and regulations;
- ECI/VI MOU technical assistance;
- transition MOU/VI technical assistance;
- resources for educators of students with visual impairments; and
- Listserv and additional Web links pertaining to Blindness and Visual Impairment.

Staff development and training opportunities include:

- statewide training;
- on-site training;
- regional workshops;
- regional meetings;

- university extension programs; and
- alternative certification program.

Special equipment is made available to students through their school districts and educators of students with visual impairments on a long-term loan basis. These include items such as closed-circuit TV (CCTV), Braille production units, Braille electronic devices, adapted computers, low vision aids, textbooks, magnifying kits, and vision simulators. A specialist recommends or provides technical assistance in selecting appropriate equipment for student use. When it is determined that a student needs a device at home, the specialist coordinates efforts with other service agencies in locating funds and devices.

Accomplishment: RESC 11 provides effective technical assistance, training, and other related supportive services for students with visual impairments.

EMPLOYEE MORALE

Region 11 maintains a high-level of employee morale and an exceptionally positive work environment. Nearly all employees stated that they were pleased with their job situation and gained personal and professional fulfillment from their jobs. While many employees cited excessive work loads primarily due to recent staffing cuts, they indicated that the common goals of the center fueled their desire to go beyond normal work requirements. Region 11 employee survey responses from MGT's survey, show that 89 percent *strongly agreed* or *agreed* with the statement that "I am very satisfied with my job." This survey result was in light of a significant reduction in force (over forty positions) in 2003 that has increased the work loads to some of the existing staff.

Staff interviews revealed that the Human Resources Director has implemented processes to improve employee morale and support. Employees routinely take part in celebratory activities to build a sense of family and team spirit. Additionally, staff indicated that many of RESC 11 senior staff help to foster the positive atmosphere in the center.

Accomplishment: The leadership and staff of RESC 11 have taken steps to develop a positive work environment that supports employee satisfaction and dedication.

ZERO-BASED BUDGETING

Region 11 has adopted a zero-based budgeting approach to forecast and manage program costs. A zero-based budgeting approach is used by RESC 11 to develop proposed budgets with the staff submitting the projected costs based on direct input from the district on services needed. Dedicated fund sources with maximum restrictions are used only for specific program services as designated by the funding guidelines. All other fund sources are used to support allowable expenditures for identified program needs. In addition, these funds may be used to support center-wide operations as appropriate, while maximizing the use of funds.

This budget planning and management process provides greater flexibility in fund use, while ensuring that all required state and federal budgeting regulations are followed. Efficient and effective services can be delivered by allocating funds to support collaborative work across departments. This method of funding support allows for the development and delivery of services, as well as the deployment of staff across departments. Greater financial support of programs receiving limited allocations is achieved by accessing a broader source of funds.

Accomplishment: RESC 11 uses a zero-based budget approach to manage project budgets and maximize the use of funds.

BUDGET PLANNING

Region 11 Division of Instruction departments developed cross-departmental plans to ensure that all areas integrate the objectives of the division and avoid duplication of services through an isolated planning approach. The Division of Instruction at Education Service Center Region 11 includes approximately 100 professional and support staff members and operates a budget nearing $12 million. All departments within the division are targeting

instructional delivery for improving student performance. The four major program departments are:

(1) Academic Services:

Curriculum & Instruction: training and technical support for K-12 curriculum areas (English Language Arts/Reading/Writing, Math, Science, Social Studies, Fine Arts), including instructional needs of all student populations (general education, special education, gifted/talented, ESL/Bilingual).

Assessment & Accountability: training and technical support for K-12 state mandated assessments for all student populations, state accountability system and state and federal fund source compliance issues.

(2) School Improvement Support Services:

Systemic Support: district-wide support related to special populations such as administrative issues, career and technology education, counseling, behavior management and secondary special education issues (transition, graduation).

School/Student Support: student and campus concerns for K-12 special education, Title I, and migrant education; inclusion of students with disabilities in the regular classroom; specific needs of students with low incidence disabilities (vision, hearing, autistim and severe cognitive deficits); related services (speech/language pathology, assistive technology, counseling, psychological and assessment services, physical/occupational therapy, school health); parent involvement.

(3) Educational Technology:

Instructional Technology: technology support for curriculum and instruction and administrator productivity; integration of technology into curricular areas to improve student performance; technology planning and grant development; technology preview center; campus mentor training for campus-based technology integration support; use of technology infrastructure at the school level.

Library and Media Services: collection of curriculum-related, enrichment and staff development videos/multimedia CD-ROM/DVDs with duplication rights for schools; textbooks on tape; CD duplication; videostreaming support; librarian support services; partnerships for online curriculum and other resources to support instruction.

Telecommunications and Distance Learning: central hub, scheduling, support services to statewide and regional telecommunications network for face-to-face distance learning (state/regional meetings, staff development; high school dual credit and K-12 coursework, electronic field trips); Internet access for schools; E-Rate discount support; help desk for Internet and distance learning troubleshooting; Cisco Academies for high schools.

(4) Teacher Preparation Program:

Alternative Certification: alternative route to Texas teacher certification for college graduates meeting entry criteria; 200 hours of classroom and training activities, observation of master teachers, continual collaboration with ESC staff; year long employment as teacher of record; support for completion of certification examinations

Certification: support to alternative certification interns and regional schools regarding requirements for permits, certification, No Child Left Behind issues; process certificates for ESC Region XI interns

Texas Beginning Educator Support System (TxBESS): statewide support structure for induction and retention of beginning teachers; includes preparation, mentoring and formative assessment for new teachers.

Budget planning is accomplished with all four departments developing collaborative strategic plans within the goals of RESC 11. The needs of districts, campuses, and charter schools are evaluated to:

- determine the range of programs and services to be provided;
- develop new strategies for support to districts in improving student performance;
- examine the use of distance learning and other technological opportunities for more efficient service delivery; and
- continuous improvement of communications and resource support to districts, campuses and charter schools.

Projected Division of Instruction budgets are developed in the spring for the following fiscal year based on the proposed plans to meet identified needs, historical trends and state/federal mandated appropriations. The needs-assessment data are also collected throughout the fiscal year for the continuing development of services and products to meet the needs in the region.

The budget preparation and review process that Region 11 uses is outlined below in the following flowchart in **Exhibit 11-2.**

Accomplishment: Region 11 Business Center has developed a budget planning process that avoids duplication of services through an isolated planning approach.

BUSINESS SERVICES

The Business Support Services Department of RESC 11 provides cost-effective business services to small and charter schools. These services include payroll, finance, budget functions, consulting, and bank reconciliations. These services are provided on a permanent or temporary basis, depending upon the needs of the client.

Use of technology plays a major role in servicing the clients and provides a cost effective way to exchange data. Through the Internet, Region 11 is able to email financial, payroll, and budget reports to districts. Many of the districts have a direct link to the database where their information is maintained and are able to view their records in real time.

Economies of scale can be realized through the use of these services. Per the "Salaries and Benefits in Texas Public Schools 2003-2004" handbook published by TASB and TASA jointly, **Exhibit 11-3** shows the median salary information which was compiled:

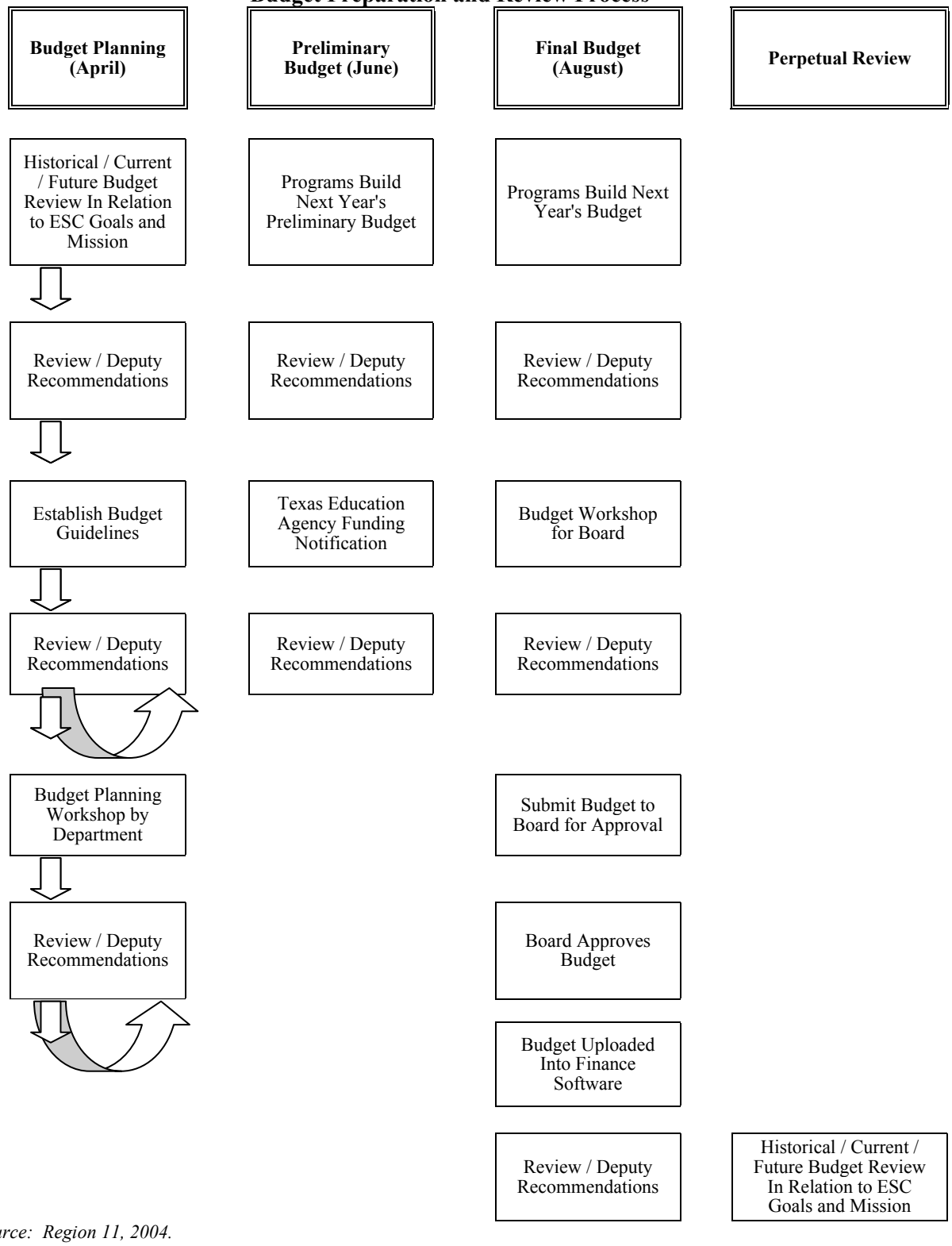
Based upon the contract fee schedule for the 2003–04 school year a public school with enrollment between 600-1199 would pay Region 11 $25,000 for a full service contract. If that district hired a business manager, they would pay an average salary from $41,977 to $53,273. If a CFO was hired, they would pay an average salary approximating $69,500. This equates to a cost savings to that school of anywhere from $16,977 to $44,500. This only takes into consideration the salary. Also, that person's benefits, training costs, computer software and hardware costs, need to be considered. Region 11 services might replace two positions; a bookkeeper and clerk, a clerk and a CFO. School saving opportunities exist with this type of service offered at a below the market rate.

Accomplishment: Region 11 Business Center provides business support services to the smaller school districts and maximizes their cost for these services by creating cost saving opportunities.

PURCHASING COOPERATIVE

Region 11's participation in purchasing cooperative programs has created an opportunity for school districts to leverage their spending power. Region 11 currently has

Exhibit 11-2
Region 11
Budget Preparation and Review Process



Source: Region 11, 2004.

Exhibit 11-3
Salaries and Benefits

ADA	Chief Financial Officer	Business Manager	Accounts Payable Clerk	Payroll Clerk	Central Office Bookkeeper
0-499	$61,000	$32,137	$23,107	$22,936	$26,503
500-999	71,924	41,977	23,498	23,472	29,413
1000-1599	69,500	53,273	25,540	26,954	29,864
1600-2999	80,000	60,582	25,950	26,357	26,855
3000-4999	85,698	66,542	26,074	26,834	28,869

Source: Region 11, 2004.

seventy percent of their school districts participating in Region 4's Purchasing Cooperative Network. Region 11 Purchasing's leadership in this network has assisted school districts with creating significant cost savings to districts on items such as computer hardware, software, HVAC supplies, office supplies, custodial supplies, job order contracts, school buses and others good and services. The data in **Exhibit 11-4** reflect the results of participation from school districts within Region 11 in Region 4 Purchasing Cooperative Network over the last three years. Region 11 will begin to use inter-local agreement, similar to Region 10, with school districts as a tool for increasing participation in cooperative initiatives.

Exhibit 11-4
Region IV Purchasing Cooperative Network Program
Three-Year Period

Period	Purchase Amount	Participation Fee (1%)	Estimated Savings (23%)
2001–02	$3,137,433	$31,374	$721,609
2002–03	$3,809,932	$38,099	$876,284
2003–04 (6/30)	$1,964,728	$19,647	$451,887

Source: Region 11, 2004.

As a participant in Region 4 Cooperative Purchasing Network, Region 11 should request Region 4 to create and maintain an advisory council and be required to periodically provide reports that include savings.

Accomplishment: Region 11 is committed to participating in Region 4 Purchasing Cooperative Network, which has created savings on the average of 23 percent or $451,887 for the year to date.

RISK MANAGEMENT AND SAFETY PROGRAMS

There are no formal risk management and safety programs at Region 11, but instead these processes are monitored by written procedures. The safety and risk management procedures cover a comprehensive safety program, weapons prohibited on RESC property, criminal trespassing, workers' compensation, property and casualty, and unemployment insurance.

Under the comprehensive safety program, RESC 11 must take reasonable precautions regarding the safety of the employees, visitors, and others whom business is conducted. Region 11 Business Center shall develop and promote a comprehensive program via the approval from the executive director.

Under the workers' compensation plan, each division director is responsible for making sure all work related injuries get recorded and

reported to the business center. The Business Department is responsible for obtaining adequate insurance for workers' compensation, property and casualty, unemployment insurance, and paying for premiums.

Accomplishment: Region 11 Business Office has adequate safety programs and risk management workers' compensation procedures in place to support any injury or illness to employees.

FIXED ASSET TRAINING

Capital assets and inventoried items are recorded immediately upon arrival to the warehouse area located on-site at Region 11. Assets are assigned an item number the facilities personnel. The facilities personnel send a report to the Business Office listing the assets that have been assigned item numbers. Once this is complete, the Business Department issues a tag for the capital assets. Tags are placed where they are visible and may not be removed. The business department then records the asset into the asset tracking system. The system should be updated with pertinent information describing the asset.

Region 11 have physical inventories twice a year to support updating the asset listing and dispose of any asset that requires disposal. Region 11 uses the fixed asset tracking system designed by Region 20.

Accomplishment: Region 11 maintains an effective system when recording capital assets and inventoried items onto the RSCCC fixed asset tracking system.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

RESC 11 has matured in its use of relational databases and has made great strides toward linking of these systems to manage professional development – from the planning stages to online evaluations and delivery of the participant certificates.

RESC employees use two systems to set up their workshops. One system is called MIS, the product of a consortium of RESCs, including Regions 7, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, and 18. The MIS system is used by RESC 11 for room reservations, course registrations, activity tracking (time and effort), and much of the data collection required for the Balanced Scorecard. After the consultant reserves the needed rooms in MIS, the PDFM (Professional Development Forms Manager) is used to create the paperwork needed to implement the course. It automates the creation of approval forms, contracts, and other supporting documents.

In September of 2003, RESC 11 went to online-only registrations to eliminate the need to hand enter the participant's information and the consequent opportunity for data entry errors.

When participants register for a workshop or cancel a previous registration, they are automatically sent a customized email confirming the activity.

The Web site allows participants to search the course catalog by a wide variety of parameters. They can view their current (future) registrations and cancel those registrations as needed. They can see a transcript of the training they have taken at the service center in the last decade. Participants can also download an Adobe Acrobat PDF version of the current course catalog. By providing this interface to our users the need for person-to-person support is significantly reduced.

In November of 2003, course evaluations were introduced via the Web. This evaluation contains the four questions agreed on by the twenty service centers for the Balanced Scorecard. Participants can request their certificates online only after they have filled out the online evaluation. This incentive has generated a response rate of 63 percent to the course evaluations.

Once attendance for a course is entered, an email is generated (customized for each attendee) containing a link to the evaluation for that course. Alternatively, participants can

get to the evaluation via their online transcript. Once they have submitted their evaluation (if the course has been designated as having certificates), the link on their transcripts changes from "Evaluation" to "Certificate." When they click on the Certificate link, they may choose having their certificate emailed to them, or viewing it on the screen immediately. The certificate is generated in an Adobe Acrobat PDF document so RESC has full control over its design.

Putting certificates and evaluations online has cut the related costs for printing, addressing, and mailing certificates as well as the costs of processing paper evaluations.

Accomplishment: RESC 11 has established effective use of current technology to increase the efficiency and improve the efficiency of the entire professional development process.

Ucompass PARTNERSHIP

Region 11 and Ucompass has established an effective partnership to provide support to school districts and other education service centers using the online software application called "Educator." Region 11 Education Service Center and Ucompass, Inc. have participated in a partnership agreement since 1999. This agreement permits Region 11 to use Ucompass software package called "Educator" and to sell licenses to school districts as well as other education service centers. Ucompass hosts all site licenses on their dedicated server for safety and security purposes.

During the past five years, Region 11 has been involved in state business initiatives that have assisted in funding this software. These funds no longer exist; however, Region 11 wishes continue utilizing and supporting the school districts with the software.

Region 11 has benefited immensely from utilizing the online Educator software internally for employee handbooks, teacher preparation training, vocational guidance and counseling training, Win School training, Tech Academy training, and other technology training. Region 11 currently provides Educator software and service to RESC 3, 5, and 6. Ucompass has direct contracts with RESC 19 and 20.

In order to reduce costs, Region 11 is seeking to create a consortium for all 20 RESCs. This consortium with Ucompass would allow each RESC to use and sell licenses to school districts in their regions at a much lesser cost than each RESC individually entering into such agreement with Ucompass. There would be no financial gain to Region 11, but rather the opportunity to continue utilizing and supporting the school districts with this software at a reduced cost.

Each center would be on the same system, but with individual domain names. One very important feature to the service centers is the "Content Exchange Network". This area is open to all instructors and course designers. The purpose of this feature is to enable learning objects and educational content to be shared across the boundaries of different educational institutions.

From a RESC perspective point, the process to bring a district onto the system is easy. Once a contract has been signed the district will choose their domain name. A simple login page will be developed by Region 11 with the district logo and color scheme.

Accomplishment: RESC 11 has established an effective partnership with Ucompass to provide the online "Educator" software services to the school districts.

EMAIL TRAFFIC

Region 11 has an effective process for minimizing email traffic. Region 11 provides dedicated email services for 34 school districts which yields approximately 4000 active accounts. Novell Groupwise and Novell Netmail are the two mail applications that are utilized to service the schools and the internal staff of Region 11. The Regional Service Center has incorporated two Lightspeed anti-spam/anti-virus appliances to clean and protect the incoming and outgoing mail. These two

servers reduce spam by approximately 72 to 84 percent. The servers allow Region 11 to analyze virus and traffic trends.

Filtering email traffic to Region 11 Telecommunciation Network (RETN) has reduced the participants email traffic entering the network during normal business hours. During off hours, holidays and summer time periods, the reduction to email traffic is up to 95 percent.

This process stops new virus traffic, sometimes before fixes are available from anti-virus software vendors. These Lightspeed servers stop all virus traffic to and from the Internet and from school district to school district. These implementations have improved the efficiency of the email system by reducing the amount of storage space needed on the email servers and by protecting the districts from most unwanted spam emails and viruses.

The benefit to this process is:

- district staff and administrators time spent in deleting SPAM mail is greatly reduced;
- reduction in districts emails system resources (network hardware and management support); and
- reduction of virus attacks from SPAM.

Accomplishment: RESC 11 has reduced the email traffic entering the network by 70 to 80 percent during normal business hours.

DETAILED FINDINGS

BOARD INVOLVEMENT IN PLANNING

Region 11's board approves the goals within the strategic plan, but does not approve any of the high-level objectives or key performance indicators within the strategic plan. By the board not approving any of the high-level objectives or key performance indicators, there is limited opportunity for the board to objectively evaluate indicators that will be used for measuring successes and identifying challenges within Region 11. While the board is knowledgeable about the region's strategic plan, they are not involved in the strategic planning process. The board's increased involvement will improve their knowledge about the objectives and key performance measures that will be used to support the organization's defined mission and evaluating the performance of the executive director.

This level of board involvement in the form of work session around budget planning would be an effective forum for discussing all critical high-level areas of the strategic plan, and providing the board with earlier indicators of how the success of Region 11 will be evaluated. In addition, by involving the board early in the strategic planning process, it will place board members in position to add value to the breath and scope of some of the more global organizational goals.

RESC 11 should involve the board in the initial planning phase of reviewing and approving high level strategic goals, objectives, and key performance indicators that will be used to measure the success of each department within Region 11.

COORDINATION OF PLANNING ACTIVITIES

Region 11's recently approved strategic plan and supporting action plans do not have a direct correlation to the performance plan process created by Human Resources for measuring individual performance. While certain managers are using action plans to evaluate some individual's progress, most of the performance plans evaluated clearly had no defined targets or measurements. For example, the objectives and performance measures used by Administrative and Business Services are not reflected in the strategic plan. Further, Region 11 departments under Administrative and Business Services that have not participated in the planning process do not have action plans to assist with driving their team's activities.

Most of Region 11 employees that had not participated in the strategic planning process did not have a clear sense of how their specific role impacted the goals and objectives in the strategic plan. There was a noticeable difference in the morale from Region 11 employees who participated in the process, understood the goals that impacted their responsibilities versus the employees who had not participated. Some of the adverse impact on some of Region 11's employees' morale is a result of not using any means for communicating outcomes and accomplishments of the key performance indicators in the strategic plan. This lack of communication has a direct impact on team building and morale. Several employees outside of the Instructional Service Division viewed the lack of communication as a hurdle to breaking down organizational barriers between the two major Region 11 divisions (Administrative and Business Services, and Instructional Services).

Selective departments under Administrative and Business Services have started the process of creating goals, strategies, and key performance indicators. It is vital for the role of this division to be clearly understood by all team members, have action plans that are measurable, and embrace the role of supporting program and delivery along with school districts. Region 11's Administrative and Business Services, and Instructional Services should participate in the strategic planning process and create one comprehensive plan. This type of cross-functional strategic planning will begin to improve morale, breakdown organization barriers, and improve employee performance through having defined targets and objective indicators that will be used for ensuring accountability.

RESC 11 should develop a correlation between performance plans and action plans that have been developed to support the goals and objectives approved in the strategic plan. This type of cross-functional strategic and action planning will begin to improve morale, breakdown organization barriers, and improve employee performance through having defined targets and objective indicators that will be used for ensuring accountability.

DEPUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR POSITION

Region 11 deputy executive director of Administrative and Business Services is currently filled with a part-time employee. By only having a part-time employee in this position, it does not enhance and strengthen the level of leadership, advocacy, and management support required to improve each directly impacted operation. Region 11 has started to take steps in filling this position with a full-time employee. There appears to be a commitment to filling this position with a candidate that is a former superintendent. While the position does require a candidate to have some working knowledge or understanding of how school districts operate, it is equally important for this candidate to have leadership, business, accounting, purchasing, information technology, and general administration skills. Because the diversity of skills required for successfully filling this position, Region 11 should ensure that the selection process should not be limited to former superintendents.

Filling the deputy executive director of Administration position with a full-time leader will provide the required support by employees through out the division. Because this department is critical to providing a range of administrative and business service internal and to school districts, it is important to identify a leader that has demonstrated the ability to efficiently direct operational support services and effectively delivering quality customer service.

RESC 11 should fill the executive director of Administrative and Business Services with a full-time employee. Filling the deputy executive director of Administration position with a full-time manager will provide the required support and leadership to employees throughout the division.

The full-time salary for the deputy executive director position is $100,000 plus six percent for benefits ($6,000) totals $106,000. To fill the part-time position, the cost to the region would total half of $106,000 which equals a cost of $53,000. This recommendation should be implemented in 2005-06.

EXTERNAL USE OF FACILITIES

A review of data and interviews with staff show that current participation rates for in-house training at RESC 11 have been negatively affected by budget cuts at the school district level. As such, RESC 11 facilities staff report that there is room in the training schedule to allow for outside use of RESC meeting and training space. Interviews with RESC 11 also staff indicate that there is a desire to expand into the commercial meeting space market to bring in additional revenue.

In an attempt to attract commercial clients, a brochure has been created detailing space availability and cost. RESC 11 staff indicate that there are many additional opportunities to expand the marketing of meeting space. Most competitors in this market carry a large amount of overhead related to debt on the property and must pass this cost onto the consumer. RESC 11; however, carries no debt on available space and can offer potential clients a cost savings.

RESC 11 should expand efforts to attract commercial clients into available space. While there is significant competition in the commercial meeting/office space market, RESC 11 has a unique opportunity to expand efforts to attract commercial clients into available space. RESC 11 should contact meeting planners or large organizations that provide training sessions in Fort Worth to focus these efforts. Administrators and staff should develop an assessment of current availability. A plan should be created to use the space more efficiently by marketing to local businesses and organizations for rental of the facility.

ONLINE MARKETING OF SPACE

RESC 11 does not currently use the existing Web page or an online registration system for providing information about meeting space that could be contracted by outside clients. Other RESCs have used this technique effectively to attract external groups into available meeting or training space. This technique has also provided additional revenue and exposure for the service centers. For example, RESC 10 has established a Web-based system for staff to reserve meeting rooms and for district employees to register for presentations and videoconferences. On a monthly basis, invoices for facility usage are prepared and distributed by the Business Office based upon usage records reflected in the *Facilities Scheduling System*. RESC 20 has developed a Web site to promote and market the use of its meeting space to outside organizations. The site includes information about individual meeting rooms, including:

- room location;
- room capacity/configuration;
- room charges; and
- photographs of the individual rooms.

The Web site also provides a link that allows interested parties to request room rental information. **Exhibit 11-5** shows the Web page format.

RESC 11 should create a Web–based system for advertising available meeting and conference space at RESC 11 facilities. REC 11 should use a similar format to market its available space using a Web-based system for staff and outside clients to reserve meeting rooms and for district employees to register for presentations and videoconferences. On a monthly basis, invoices for facility usage should be prepared and distributed by the business office based upon usage records reflected in the Web-based system. A similar Web page will provide an opportunity for outside clients to learn about available space and may also attract meetings from existing clients of RESC 11.

Exhibit 11-5
Sample Online Room Rental Request Form
2004

Room Rental Information Request

First Name: **Last Name:**

Title:

Company:

Address:

City: **State:** **Zip Code:**

Phone: **Fax:**

Special Details: (i.e. meeting date, time, number of people...)

This box will hold up to 100 characters of type.

Please send me more information (**mail/fax**) about meeting space availability.

Yes No

Please contact me by **phone** about meeting space availability.

Yes No

Source: RESC 20 ESC Web site, 2004.

This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources. Region 11 has ample technology resources to design and implement a Web site to market available meeting space.

POST-TRAINING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Region 11 does not have a standard method for offering post-training technical assistance to its training participants. After training, workshop participants provide feedback regarding the information they were presented. Participants provide feedback about the medium through which the workshop was designed (i.e., distance learning, PowerPoint presentation, handouts, interactive, technology-based), workshop content and additional information or technical assistance they would like to receive. In addition, some trainings have follow-up requirements that participants submit and/or discuss with staff consultants once they have implemented new strategies. Onsite interviews also revealed that participants are welcome to email workshop facilitators with questions and concerns following attendance.

While various methods of collecting feedback and providing additional assistance exist, Region 11 does not have an effective process in place to ensure that comprehensive follow-up assistance is provided. As a result, Region 11 has difficulty tracking which post-training questions have been answered or ensuring that all needs and requests have been addressed**.** Due to the extreme distance between many of the member districts serves by Region 11, several consultants indicated a willingness to provide feedback using various technology-based systems.

The challenge to effectively track and monitor the need for follow-up technical assistance makes it difficult to ensure that the content provided in training sessions is used appropriately and will provide positive impact on student achievement.

RESC 11 should establish an electronic Listserv for training participants to provide access to technical assistance following workshops and professional development activities at RESC 11. Region 11 currently has methods of responding to the follow-up needs of clients, but a consolidated and coordinated effort should result in more comprehensive assistance to clients. By implementing this recommendation, Region 11 should provide feedback and follow-up technical assistance using various technology-based systems.

MARKETING PLAN

A review of RESC 11 contracts for services found that, while a majority of school districts participate at some level in programs and services offered by the service center, not all school districts within the region take part in services provided by RESC 11. Interviews with center staff indicate that there is an overarching lack of knowledge within the school districts of what services may be offered by the center. In fact, many of the center staff shared that they did not know the scope of programs and services available to them when they worked as administrators in the independent school districts.

In its role as a non-profit service organization that is also an integral part of the Texas accountability structure, RESC 11 is in a unique position to offer quality educational services at a reduced cost to school districts within the region. If school districts choose not to use the services offered by RESC 11, they must either provide these services internally or contract with private vendors for these services. The non-profit nature of the organization allows RESC 11 to develop and deliver services with the customer as the focus, not profitability. In addition, RESC 11 is held accountable under state law for the performance of students and schools within its region. No private vendor is held to the same level of scrutiny to provide quality and positive impact.

Related to this issue is the concern that few members in the communities that RESC 11 serves have any knowledge of its existence or impact. As a result, stakeholders are not aware of the potential impact on performance that RESC 11 can offer to their school districts. This situation exacerbates the difficulty of marketing services and programs in the school districts and allows the potential for critical RESC 11 services to go unused.

In an effort to determine stakeholder satisfaction, 52 RESC 11 superintendents completed surveys regarding RESC 11 performance and related issues. Of this group:

- ninety-four (94) percent *strongly agreed* or *agreed* with the statement that "the services provided by our RESC are critical to the success of our district's programs and operations;" and
- ninety-six (96) percent *strongly agreed* or *agreed* with the statement that "many of the services offered by RESCs around the state are critical to the success of many districts."

These responses demonstrate that the school districts in RESC 11 have a positive view of the performance of the service center and rely on the services provided. In addition, 69 percent of RESC 11 superintendents *strongly agreed* or agreed with the statement that "RESC role in providing services to districts should be expanded."

RESC 11 regularly markets its programs and services to school districts within its regional area and, in some cases such as technology services, beyond. The service center uses its online catalog and Web page to supplement face-to-face marketing efforts that target school district clients. However, these efforts are not guided by a formal marketing plan that could document current practices and help to identify additional marketing opportunities.

As a result, a majority of service center staff indicated that comprehensive marketing was a deficiency of the organization and that RESC 11 would benefit from intensifying marketing efforts. An opportunity exists to coordinate and improve present marketing processes to promote ongoing growth and success in Region 11.

RESC 11 should develop a formal marketing plan for RESC 11 and expand marketing efforts within the school districts and communities being served. Clearly, there is a high level of satisfaction with the services provided by RESC 11. However, there is also a lack of knowledge of the existence of RESC 11 as well as many of the critical services it provides. As operating funds from the state have dwindled and the need for programs and services have increased, there is an additional burden on RESC 11 to market its services effectively. Implementing an effective marketing plan will increase needed revenue within the service center and expand the services provided to school districts. All of these actions should be performed with the ultimate goal in mind of improving student performance in the school districts and ensuring the ongoing viability and sustainability of RESC.

COSTS FOR PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

MGT consultants determined through a review of program documents and staff interviews that the pricing structure for instructional programs and services at RESC 11 have, for the most part, remained constant over the past two years. However, in that time period, RESC 11 lost much of its state funding that had previously supported those programs. Programmatic costs, such as travel and administration, are also often not factored into the fees of programs and services.

Center administrative staff as well as program staff indicated that RESC 11 was attempting to keep costs stable for the school districts in the region. For example, RETN fees have never been increased for subscribing school districts even though services continue to increase in scope and quality.

In addition to keeping fee-for-service costs constant in the face of budget cuts, there is a reluctance to charge for services that have traditionally been provided at no charge. As a result, many programs that used to be funded through state dollars are still being provided as if state funds still exist. Many of these programs have sustained severe cuts in both human and financial resources. Some of theses programs are federal funding programs that prevent fees from being assessed. The continued decrease in state base funding has created a level of pressure on the service provision system of Region 11 that threatens to degrade programmatic sustainability over time.

RESC 11 should adopt a costing model that factors in all costs of providing and maintaining quality programs and services. The current fee structure of many RESC 11 programs and services do not factor in costs that are currently being absorbed by the programs. RESC 11 is commended for attempting to maintain a service mentality and keeping costs low for its school districts. However, the fiscal reality is that state funds have been cut and that some fees must be increased to sustain the programs and services of RESC 11.

Each program leader should evaluate actual programmatic costs and make recommendations to the executive staff for developing a new fee schedule. This should follow a standardized methodology that will funnel all evaluations and recommendations to a central group of senior staff for analysis and implementation. This recommendation is critical to the ongoing sustainability of RESC 11 and its valuable services.

Satisfaction survey results from the school districts of RESC 11 are very favorable and suggest that there will not be a decline in participation with moderate fee increases. Regardless of participation impact, RESC 11 must be able to support programs and services

at an adequate level and must adopt new methods of pricing its services.

ALIGNMENT OF PROGRAMS

In interviews with Instructional Services and Administrative Services staff, MGT consultants identified an incongruence between the two training programs associated with Texas accountability standards, as well as other critical subject matter. Instructional staff expressed concerns with access to building-level administrators and the ability to ensure that these administrators were well-versed in instructional programs being delivered in RESC 11 classrooms.

The organizational structure of RESC 11 places the training of instructional staff under the Instructional Services Division and the training of administrators under Administrative and Business Services. Staff interviews indicated that this organizational separation creates a barrier to comprehensive accountability training and support between these two separate, but interrelated areas.

The discrepancies between instructional staff and administrative staff in complex topics such as the Texas accountability standards creates the potential for miscommunications and omissions. Instructional staff in RESC 11 schools must implement standards-based programs in the classroom and must be proficient in the philosophy backing these programs as well as the pedagogy used in delivering them. In best practice models, school administrators must know what is being implemented in classrooms to support and direct successful schools. As such, there should be integral alignment of these programs to ensure quality and success in Region 11.

RESC 11 should integrate Instructional Services and Administrative Services Programs to ensure alignment and focus. The implementation of this recommendation should strengthen the collaboration between these critical program areas and improve the quality of overall program implementation within Region 11 schools.

MEASURING EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION

While conducting on-site interviews with human resources staff as well as other RESC staff, MGT found that Region 11 had no formal instrument in place for measuring employee satisfaction. Typically, the measurement of this type of data is facilitated through the use of an employee climate survey. Climate surveys are usually conducted on an annual basis and are critical in identifying employee satisfaction information that may not have surfaced if face-to-face communication was the only available medium. The only recent measurement of employee satisfaction was MGT's survey.

Determining the satisfaction of organizational employees is critical to ongoing success, especially in times of financial difficulty and staffing cutbacks. While the overall working environment is very positive in Region 11, as demonstrated in survey results, there may be some areas of concern that are not brought to the attention of senior staff. Region 11 should implement this survey as another method of retaining quality employees.

RESC 11 should develop and initiate an organizational climate survey to measure employee satisfaction. While there is no evidence that the lack of a climate survey has negatively impacted Region 11, there is an inherent added value in acquiring a comprehensive knowledge of organizational climate. Region 11 should take every opportunity to strengthen its ability to recruit and retain high-caliber employees.

SALARY SCHEDULE

Senior staff report that the center routinely loses quality employees to school districts within the region. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the primary reason for employee leaving Region 11 is to accept jobs with higher salaries. Staff interviewed further suggested that the salary differentials are as much as $15,000 to $20,000 for similar positions between Region 11 and regional school districts.

While a certain amount of turnover is healthy for any organization, best practice human resources models take steps to protect organizational knowledge and service delivery capacity from unreasonable disparities in salary.

RESC 11 should initiate a benchmarking process to develop a more competitive salary schedule for RESC 11 and take action to equalize salaries with the local market. It is not unlikely that some center staff will choose to leave for school districts in the region, and this strengthens those school systems, but employees who are dedicated to the center's mission should not be forced to make decisions based on large differences in pay.

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION TRAINING

Region 11 Board of Directors lack training in how to evaluate senior personnel and managing personnel issues that require action by the board. These issues include responsibility over the hiring, termination, and performance evaluation of the executive director and other service center personnel. Board members are charged with periodically reviewing the job performance of the executive director to meet state compliance requirements as well as facilitating employment decisions regarding the executive director position. Board members also are responsible for personnel issues that turn into legal issues.

However, interviews with board members revealed that some may have never had any experience with or training in conducting performance evaluations during their professional careers. This circumstance raises doubts regarding the comprehensive nature of these performance evaluations, and the potential accuracy of such evaluations. While there have, to date, been no lawsuits resulting from this lack of training, Region 11 should insulate itself from the vulnerability and potential liability resulting from this situation.

RESC 11 should provide training in performance evaluation to the Board of Directors. RESC 11 Human Resources staff are equipped to provide comprehensive training to board members in all areas of performance evaluation, to include:

- goal setting;
- performance criteria development;
- outcome-based evaluation; and
- job performance measurement.

The implementation of this recommendation will ensure that board members are knowledgeable and proficient in conducting performance evaluations and will facilitate a more comprehensive and effective evaluation process of the executive director.

FUND BALANCE

The general uncertainty of state funding and school finance has made it more prudent to maintain an adequate general operating fund balance. Region 11 mission's is to "ensure that every student is a successful lifelong learner and a productive member of society by providing leadership, products and services to the region's campuses, districts, and charter schools." As Region 11 becomes more reliant on local revenue to operate, it is more important to maintain a sufficient general operating fund balance. Although investment rates have been relatively low over the last three years, which is evidenced by most Texas investment pools yielding approximately 1.00 percent, as the economy recovers and interest rates increase, maintaining an adequate fund balance will provide additional annual investment revenues within the general operating fund and assist in providing budgetary relief.

Both reserved/designated and unreserved/undesignated fund balance is a result of proper planning and surplus within Region 11 local general operating fund. State, federal, and local grant dollars remaining at the end of the year, if any, are deferred to the following year for those programs with an ending date which surpasses Region 11 fiscal year. All other state and federal unspent dollars, if any, are returned to the funding agency. Unspent state and federal dollars do

not go into fund balance. Currently, the majority of state (including state base funds which are recorded in the general fund) and federal funds are sent to Region 11 on a reimbursement basis.

In 1985, the State Board of Education established that the unreserved/undesignated fund balance for RESCs should not exceed 20 percent of total expenditures. Many school districts within Region 11 has maintained a much higher general operating fund balance as a percentage of expenditures for example, (Bluff Dale ISD – 85.46 percent; Northwest ISD – 39.04 percent; and Mansfield ISD – 28.74 percent) during these times of funding and school finance uncertainty.

Exhibit 11-6 shows Region 11 has consistently maintained a range of 14.63 – 19.46 percent unreserved/undesignated fund balance as a percentage of the total general operating expenditures over the past four years.

State and federal programs are financed with state and federal dollars on a reimbursement basis. Region 11 has to utilize local cash flow to finance state and federal programs until the reimbursement funds are received. **Exhibit 11-7** shows the current reserved/designated fund balance levels represent approximately 45 days of total expenditures which has been sufficient, along with current year cash flow, to operate local, state and federal programs.

Designations of funds require board action to earmark fund balance for bona fide purposes that will be fulfilled within a reasonable period of time. Region 11 has broken out the following designated fund balances approved by the board of directors for future use of financial resources with the general fund. This is illustrated in **Exhibits 11-8**, **11-9**, and **11-10**. The sum of these designated fund balances were previously identified in **Exhibit 11-7**.

Designated Fund Balance for technology products are primarily a result of Chapter 41 funds flowing through Region 11 to be used for on-going technology services. This fund balance will support services approximately three years into the future to the districts in Region 11.

Exhibit 11-6
Region 11 Unreserved/Undesignated General Fund Balance
Four–Year Period

Year 2003	Year 2002	Year 2001	Year 2000
$1,671,096	$1,825,512	$2,203,810	$2,379,572
(17.07%)	(14.63%)	(17.19%)	(19.46%)*

Source: Region 11, 2004.
**Percent of general fund expenditures.*

Exhibit 11-7
Region 11 Reserved/Designated General Fund Balance
Four-Year Period

Year 2003	Year 2002	Year 2001	Year 2000
$5,113,856	$4,119,730	$3,840,721	$3,090,911

Source: Region 11, 2004.

Exhibit 11-8
Region 11 Designated Fund Balance for Technology Products
Four-Year Period

Year 2003	Year 2002	Year 2001	Year 2000
$4,803,655	$3,708,003	$2,766,002	$1,787,330

Source: Region 11, 2004.

Exhibit 11-9
Region 11 Designated Fund Balance for Self Insurance
Four-Year Period

Year 2003	Year 2002	Year 2001	Year 2000
$0	$2,150	$2,150	$9,504

Source: Region 11, 2004.

Exhibit 11-10
Region 11 Designated Fund Balance for Sick Leave Retirement
Four-Year Period

Year 2003	Year 2002	Year 2001	Year 2000
$310,199	$409,577	$404,113	$552,993

Source: Region 11, 2004.

Ongoing planned expenditures for school districts determined by Chapter 41 committee (Region 11 superintendents) include the following:

- video streaming and district data storage;
- Internet access ;
- T1 lines and services charge;
- RETN membership fees;
- email services;
- student application support;
- business application support;
- technical support team; and
- network and technical support.

In 2003, the board approved $950,000 reserved fund balance in order to extend current regional technology services and implement disaster recovery plan, upgrades to hardware and software for the Regional Network Facility, along with upgrades to training labs and environmental control for Regional Network Facility.

Designated Fund Balance for sick leave retirement is used for future retirement of employees who have been grandfathered into the sick leave retirement bank as of 1996. Compensation of unused sick leave is paid during the month following retirement of the employee in accordance with Region 11 Local Policy DEB. As of 2003, approximately 35 employees remain eligible to participate in the Sick Leave Retirement Fund.

Region 11 also has a designated fund balance for construction and building related projects. These funds are designated in a separate government fund. Designated fund balance for construction and building projects are to be used for future construction and renovation needs of Region 11. The construction and building fund balance is a result of local surplus and cost containment measure in and during the planning and construction stages of the $1.2 million conference room addition added in 1991, the parking lot addition of $1.1 million which was completed in 1999, the 43,401 square feet addition for training, shipping, receiving and storage added in 1998-99, and the 2002 $1.6 million in renovations. Additional ongoing improvements were made to the building in 2003. (See **Exhibit 11-11).**

Exhibit 11-11
Region 11 Designated Fund Balance for Construction and Building Projects
Four-Year Period

Year 2003	Year 2002	Year 2001	Year 2000
$469,127	$614,075	$393,171	$1,186,738
$0	$0	$668,456 (GF)	$741,084 (GF)

Source: Region 11, 2004.

RESC 11 should determine the appropriate fund balance for Region 11 to operate if state base fund allocations continue to decrease and Chapter 41 funds continue to diminish. The determination of an appropriate fund balance is a critical factor for RESCs financial planning and budgeting process. Region 11 concern is that this might not be practical or politically possible if future state base funding is limited or significantly reduced again. Region 11 is at risk for handling any unforeseen, unappropropriated expenditures such as a catastrophic (i.e. equipment replacement) which might be too costly to fund out of one fiscal year's revenue.

CORE SERVICES

The definition of core services and the relationship between core services and state base funding is not clear for Region 11. In fact, MGT found in other regional education service centers the same concerns exist. Regional Education Service Centers (RESCs) have three major sources of revenue: federal, state, and local. RESCs receive both state and federal allocations through the Texas Education Agency (TEA). Local revenue sources include grants, fee-for-service from customers, districts, campuses, charter schools, and other outside projects initiated by the individual ESC.

Approximately 35 percent of Region 11's 2003-04 revenue is federally funded. For reporting purposes, Region 11 must document the relationship of student performance and compliance of schools served to the use of all federal funding sources. At the state level, 15 percent of the 2003-04 revenue is state funded. Region 11 is held to high standards for the accountability of state funding. The core services associated with the state base funding must show improvement of student performance and increase the efficiency and effectiveness in the school districts served. About 50 percent of Region 11 funding is from local sources. Region 11 provides ongoing accountability through regular reporting to schools served through multiple advisory committees, participation reports, information reporting, and regional data analysis.

The use of state base funds differs at each RESC according to the volume of core services and the related operational expenses required to operate the respective centers. A portion of the monies have been designated for the infrastructure to support the provisions of core services.

Within the past five-year period, RESC Region 11 has distributed those funds to support the infrastructure needed for the delivery of core services, as well as the direct delivery of those services. Over time, as other funds became available, infrastructure funding with state monies has been reduced, increasing the amount dedicated directly to the delivery of core services (i.e., utilizing increased internal service funds as a result of grants and other revenue sources).

RESCs are often challenged, like public schools, by unfunded mandates. For RESC 11, this may include training for districts, delivery of materials to all regional districts, or space and logistics for unscheduled regional meetings. All of these services may require staff time, internal service costs (room rental, printing), and rescheduling of revenue generating activities.

There are also some services RESCs are required to provide with no funding support. For example, each RESC is designated to provide space and a system for the display and public review of all new textbooks/curriculum systems up for state adoption each year. These must be made available and be kept for a number of years. Each year, the adoption materials expand from textbooks to software systems, to large curriculum kits with hands-on student materials. RESC 11 provides premium display space, staff, technology to run the curriculum systems, and storage for these materials. There is no funding provided to Region 11 for this service.

As a recent example, RESCs were just notified of a legal settlement between the state of Texas and a music publisher. Over $75 million worth of CDs will be delivered to RESCs for packaging and distribution to district fine arts and music programs in all Texas public schools. RESC 11 must develop a written agreement with each campus and a tracking system for long-term inventory of these materials. This will involve manpower for assembly, labeling, delivery, and inventory. Region 11 will participate in the project and there is no funding provided to Region 11 for this service.

RESC 11 should evaluate and redefine the core services and state base funding to determine the appropriate level for the region to operate and provide quality service to the school districts without affecting cost.

It is vital for the appropriate level of funding be in place to support the core services that RESCs must provide the school districts. Consistent, high quality service is necessary to keep school districts as customers. Region 11 and other RESC will be faced with the alternative of raising fees charged to the school districts and/or become more dependent on external revenue sources.

AUDIT MANAGEMENT LETTER

Region 11 audited financial statements do not include a management letter which usually describe any recommendation identified by the external auditors. A management letter is a formal, written document that conveys the auditor's findings and observations regarding particular aspects of the clients operations. These documents typically encompass issues such as the internal control environment, purchasing practices, accounting policies and procedures, and financial reporting practices.

The current recommendation process is verbal and does not provide an audit trail to determine if recommendations were completed.

RESC 11 should require external auditors to include the verbal recommendations in a written management letter or attach a summarized document outlining the recommendations to the audited financial statements. Written documentation will provide an audit trail to identify if recommendations were completed and in a timely manner. This information will also assist the CFO with creating actions plans to drive any required corrective steps.

OVERLAPPING OF PURCHASING SERVICES

Region 11 participates in a total of five cooperative programs. The participation in too many programs could potentially minimize the ability to leverage spending power by directing purchasing activity through only one or two cooperatives. **Exhibit 11-12** provides a list of the cooperative programs with which Region 11 is currently affiliated. Some of these cooperative programs have advisory councils that participate in the contract selection and management process. While the cooperative councils produce activity reports they do not produce savings reports that would demonstrate their full value to the school districts.

Exhibit 11-12
Purchasing Co-op Program

Cooperative Program	Commodity
Region X Food Cooperative	Food
Region IV Purchasing Cooperative Network	Commodities
Region II Cooperative Purchasing	Commodities
Region VIII Texas Inter-local Purchasing Sys,	Commodities
Multi-Region Purchasing Cooperative	Commodities

Source: Region 11, 2004.

In the event Region 11 is going to use more than two cooperative strategies for the same good or service, one of them should be identified as secondary source and should only be used in the event selective goods or services are not available through the primary cooperative program. This approach will ensure the purchasing is leveraging all of its spending power through concentrating spending activity.

RESC 11 should ensure that there is no overlap in the use of existing cooperative programs for purchasing goods and services. Region 11's review of the use of existing cooperative programs will ensure that they are not participating in too many cooperative programs, that may create an overlap, dilute purchasing power and minimize the level of generated savings.

PURCHASING REQUISITION MODULE

Region 11 manages its purchasing and approval process manually. Employees wanting to purchase a good or service normally interfaces directly with an administrative contact within their department to manually fill out a standard requisition form and submit it for required approvals. Once the requisition has manually received necessary approvals, the Purchasing Office enters the requisition into RSCCC (a business system produced by Region 20 that provides a requisition purchasing system). At this stage, the purchasing process is complete unless the board requires additional action. Once an order is delivered it is sent to Region 11's Central Receiving for the order to be entered in RSCCC and then forwarded to the requesting customer. Once the purchasing process is completed and a contract or purchase order is issued by Purchasing, the documents are maintained in two different locations with individuals having access outside of the Purchasing Department.

Board action is required for purchases over $25,000 before an award is processed. RESC 11 current purchasing procedures do not outline the process for acquiring good or services between $3000–$10,000. All purchasing thresholds should be clearly defined to minimize inconsistencies and risk.

Region 11 does not use the purchasing requisition system in RSCCC for electronically submitting a requisition, and receiving approvals, it is currently only used for entering purchasing orders and receiving orders.

Region 11's full utilization of a centralized filling location the requisition purchasing module within RSCCC will assist with ensuring that there is a measurable and repeatable processes in place for customers to use when submitting a request for a good or service. This module has several features including a customer requisition tracking system that can assist Region 11 with advancing current purchasing systems and practices. One of the challenges with the purchasing requisition module in RSCCC is that it does not allow for users to receive an automatic notification for approving requisitions awaiting action. Region 20 will be testing a software package to provide this feature in RSCCC by the end of 2004.

RESC 11 should use the automated requisition-purchasing module within RSCCC from the point of creating a requisition, obtaining approval, issuing a purchase order, to receiving orders.

FISCAL IMPACT

	Recommendation	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	5-Year (Costs) or Savings	One-Time (Costs) or Savings
11-3	Fill the executive director of Administrative and Business Services with a full-time position.	$0	($53,000)	($53,000)	($53,000)	($53,000)	($212,000)	
	Total	**$0**	**($53,000)**	**($53,000)**	**($53,000)**	**($53,000)**	**($212,000)**	**$0**

CHAPTER 12:

WACO

CHAPTER 12

WACO

The main office of Regional Education Service Center XII, located near IH 35 in Waco, offers more than 7,000 square feet of meeting space, with a maximum meeting space capacity of 700 people. Region 12 encompasses 11,318 square miles and includes Bell, Bosque, Coryell, Falls, Freestone, Hamilton, Hill, Lampasas, Limestone, Mills, McLennan and Navarro counties.

The service center serves:

- 78 independent school districts;
- 11 charter schools; and
- approximately 19,000 educators, administrators, and staff.

The center in Waco includes a multi-media center as well as three state-of-the art computer training labs. The RESC is currently staffed with 67 professional staff members and 56 support staff members, for a total of 123 staff members.

The Regional Education Service Center 12 Web site (www.esc12.net) states that the center provides professional training and technical assistance for the purpose of improving student performance for all students. The service center's vision is "to build the strongest team of schools in Texas. RESC 12 mission is to help educators work together effectively to develop the full potential of all students."

RESC 12 is committed to the *Continuous Improvement Model* for enhancing programs and services as defined in the following four strategic priorities:

- assist school districts in improving student performance;
- assist school districts in increasing effectiveness and economy of operations in a safe and orderly environment;
- assist school districts in the implementation of statewide and regional initiatives; and
- enhance quality communication as the key to positive climates and productive partnerships.

In 1967, Region 12 began as an instructional media center and was housed at Baylor University in Waco until 1973. As the need for programs and services increased, more space was needed and the RESC office moved to downtown Waco in 1973. Nearly 20 years later, the center built a new facility and opened its doors in March of 1994, where it currently resides.

A chronological history of the service center includes the following:

- **1967** –Region 12 is located in a building near Baylor University, and exists primarily for media purposes under the leadership of executive director, Mack W. Mullins.
- **1969** - Region 12 offers computer services.
- **1973** –Region 12 moves to a location in downtown Waco.
- **1984** –Region 12 offers PEIMS training and School board training. House Bill 72 directs accreditation curriculum, and training responsibilities for the centers.
- **1986** - State board of Education adopts the State Plan for Regional Education Service Centers defining the roles of the centers and their relationship to the agency.
- **1990** - Price Waterhouse study of agency recommends assigning "operational technical assistance" to the centers.
- **1992** –Region 12 assumes from TEA the decentralized functions of certification and child nutrition, and establishes a partnership with TEA for communicating with districts/campuses and in identifying systems to share "best practices."

Region 12 offers the first alternative teacher certification training cohort.

- **1994** –Region 12 moves to current location.
- **1995** –Region 12 expands the decentralized functions from TEA, and increases technical assistance in preparing districts for accreditation monitoring visits.
- **1997** – Region 12 established EdLINK 12 Telecommunication and the Distant Learning Network.
- **1998** –Region 12 develops a system of evaluation by using the results of the Client Satisfaction Survey. Region 12 hired the current executive director.
- **1999** - 76th Texas Legislature authorizes the Student Success Initiative, better known as the Texas Reading Initiative, which provided training for all kindergarten, first and second grade teachers. Also, Region 12 began the Master Reading Teacher Certification.
- **2000** – ESC Region 12 establishes satellite sites in Hillsboro, Corsicana, Copperas Cove and Goldthwaite to provide additional opportunities for participation in workshops and training events.
- **2001** - 77th Texas Legislature expands the Texas Reading Initiative to the third and fourth grades and authorizes the implementation of intensive training for math teachers beginning with grades five through eight. Region 12 served as the primary administrator and provider of this training. Region 12 embraces the Continuous Improvement Model for priority planning. Also Region 12 uses the Continuous Improvement Model for Priority Planning.
- **2002** - Region 12 provides extensive technical assistance to districts in financial planning. Region 12 serves as the primary administrator for National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and Marketing (DECA). Both positions were decentralized from TEA.

Exhibit 12-1 shows a sampling of survey results regarding the overall satisfaction of employees in RESC 12 as it relates to leadership and the quality of services produced in this region. As shown, 95 percent of the employees surveyed either agree or disagree that the RESC is highly responsive to the service needs of member districts, and 95 percent agree or strongly agree that they have the authority to adequately perform their job responsibilities. There is overall satisfaction with the expectations of high work standards as well as the efficiency and effectiveness of the RESC.

Exhibit 12-1
Selected Employee Survey Results For RESC 12

Survey Question	Survey Responses Agree/Disagree(?)
Our RESC is highly responsive to the service needs of member districts.	95/3
RESC officials enforce high work standards.	89/5
Most administrative practices in the RESC are highly effective and efficient.	86/8
I feel that I have the authority to adequately perform my job responsibilities.	95/5

Source MGT of America, 2004.

In addition, eighty-eight (88) percent of the superintendents who responded to the survey agree or strongly agree that the RESC 12 is highly responsive to the service needs of their district and 91 percent of the superintendents responded that they either agreed or strongly agreed that the RESC 12 provides quality services.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- RESC 12 offers excellent organization, management, and leadership training opportunities to member superintendents and school leaders.
- RESC 12's custodial and maintenance inventory practices uses a minimal amount of storage space and ensures that the center purchases only needed supplies and equipment.
- Region 12 uses digital controls to maintain internal temperatures and uses temperature setbacks, both of which reduce energy costs.
- RESC maintains a performance contract with its HVAC provider to extend the life of their system and minimize energy use.
- Region 12 staff appropriately address the few recommendations for improvement in many of its programs and service evaluations.
- RESC 12 actively serves the Windham School District staff and provides equal opportunity for the Windham staff members to participate in quality training as do other districts.
- Region 12 actively seeks, writes, and wins grants to assist its member districts in implementing quality educational programs.
- RESC 12 is commended for voluntarily using internal staff to save funds while delivering a quality teacher intern program.
- School Support Department staff have found an inexpensive, yet effective way to conduct regular program needs assessments with member districts.
- RESC 12 has developed a highly structured and strictly enforced hiring process that ensures a fair and consistent applicant review process.
- RESC 12 follows a structured process to ensure that all job descriptions are current and accurate.
- RESC 12 implements recommendations resulting from external audits on a consistent basis.
- The center provides an excellent financial report to the board of directors which presents year-to-date financial information with budget comparisons.
- The Region 12 budgeting process and reports reflect a clear and logical plan.
- The use of cost/benefit and feasibility studies by Region 12 has resulted in cost savings and additional revenue.
- RESC 12 ensures that all center employees know and understand the center's purchasing processes and thresholds by providing clear and concise instructions in the Employee Handbook and on the Web site.
- The use of the module provides an automation tool that results in greater efficiency and effectiveness of Business Office staff and allows the entity specific budget control on purchases.
- RESC 12 has taken positive steps to provide a safe and secure place to work and visit.
- RESC 12 uses interest-bearing accounts to increase revenue.
- RESC 12 has developed client-driven, online workshop registration and room reservation systems.
- RESC 12 uses its Web site to provide clients with prompt access to training manuals, informational handouts, and past email communications regarding PEIMS data submissions.
- RESC 12 has been proactive in assisting districts with accessing target grants. The service center's actions have led to five target grants that benefit students in more than 30 school districts.

FINDINGS

- RESC 12 has more staff than is needed for existing operations. While RESC 12 has eliminated 20 positions since the 2003 school year, a review of their current organizational structure, interviews, and an analysis

of job descriptions shows a further reduction in staff is warranted.

- The instrument the board uses to evaluate the RESC executive director is not comprehensive and needs to be revised. The current instrument lacks the detail of some other RESC executive director's evaluation instruments.
- While Region 12 has made excellent partnerships with school districts to house five satellite offices, there is evidence that one satellite (Hillsboro) does not warrant one full-time and one half-time RESC staff member.
- While the results of the Balanced Score Cards for Region 12 are positive, there is no formalized process for monitoring the score card results.
- Board members in Region 12 are not familiar with the strategic plan in RESC 12. MGT could not find evidence of the board involvement in developing the strategies plan, resulting board members not understand the region's plan.
- RESC 12's process for securing employee input for improving the services to clients and for improving internal RESC conditions is ineffective.
- Although the RESC 12 does cycle its climate control system and maintains a performance contract with its HVAC provider, it has not maximized its opportunity to reduce energy costs. The service center has not conducted an energy audit and does not use high efficiency lighting units throughout the center.
- RESC 12 uses a thorough needs assessment process to assist districts in using data to determine district needs; however, not all appropriate departments and divisions are writing effective strategic plans targeting these identified needs.
- While RESC 12 has above state average standardized scores in many areas, there is no formal plan to assist the lowest performing schools in its member districts. Preliminary test results show that many Waco ISD campus rankings may fall this year when the state announces its annual ratings.
- The training offered to special education teachers in RESC 12 should be improved. Further, there is a lack of collaboration between general education and special education departments at RESC 12.
- Region 12 does not provide potential applicants with comprehensive position information.
- Region 12 does not use a comprehensive Employee Exit Survey instrument.
- RESC 12 uses several annual salary adjustment tools; however these tools are not merit-based. Rather, they respond to the financial status of the service center, the labor market, and staff's length of service.
- Region 12 has not been successfully effective in seeking alternate revenue streams for curriculum and staff development.
- RESC 12 currently has no policy to manage the fund balance and no structured process to support the designation of unreserved fund balance. A policy is needed as well as long-term plans for capital improvements or other future capital needs such as those for technology.
- The inclusion of the Internal Service Funds in the center's financial statements provides inaccurate information on the estimated revenues and expenditures for Region 12.
- RESC 12 does not use an Internal Service Fund for vehicle replacement. Center components are currently charged $.28/mile for vehicle usage and the center replaces its vehicles every five to six years. The creation of an Internal Service Fund for the replacement of these vehicles, as well

as the maintenance and repair of all other center vehicles, will ensure that vehicles are replaced on a cycle commensurate with the condition of the vehicles.

- The financial software, RSCCC2K, used by the center does not yet have an accounts receivable module. The accounts receivable are processed on a separate system and then entered into the main financial system at the end of each month. This is a duplication of effort and thus an efficient use of time.
- RESC 12 does not have an appropriate internal control for accountability of cellular phone use.
- RESC 12 should improve its internal control for the check issuance process.
- The use of a gasoline procurement card is limited to only one vendor.
- Even though no Property/Casualty/Honesty/Liability losses have been incurred for the last five fiscal years, the premium for these coverages increased 35 percent from 2002–03 to 2003–04.
- The inventory process for the center's fixed assets is only partially automated.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 12-1: Eliminate the ESC Initiatives Deputy Director and a full-time field service agent position.** The implementation of this recommendation should result in a more streamlined and cost-effective organization pattern. The responsibilities assigned to field service agent positions should be carefully developed. The remaining field service agent positions should be assigned to geographically defined areas of the RESC. The actions preceding the elimination of the deputy position should include the reassignment of assigned responsibilities and duties among the other two deputy positions, the executive director, and other designated positions as is determined appropriate. All of these actions should be taken so as to fully implement the recommended actions by the beginning of the next fiscal year.

- **Recommendation 12-2: Revise the executive director's evaluation instrument to include more detailed criteria as shown in the Region 2 evaluation instrument.** The implementation of this recommendation should result in a comprehensive assessment of the executive director's performance and ensure that it is related to defined RESC goals. Key implementation steps should include a review of other RESC evaluation instruments as a means to identifying important evaluation instrument dimensions that could be incorporated into the process. This should be accomplished by the Board of Directors instructing the executive director to obtain copies from several other RESCs and then establishing a board work session to review, revise, and approve an evaluation instrument.

- **Recommendation 12-3: Close the Hillsboro Satellite Center, eliminate the full-time RESC staff position housed at the center, and transfer the part-time staff position to the main RESC facility.** The implementation of this recommendation should result in the reassignment of Hillsboro Satellite Center staff responsibilities. The field service agents should assume some of the full-time Hillsboro position responsibilities such as marketing and serving as a legislative liaison. Needed training should be coordinated with and offered at other training sites. Full implementation of this recommendation should result in releasing resources to be used to meet

other priority training and RESC needs.

- **Recommendation 12-4: Create a clearly communicated process for monitoring the individual results of the Balanced Score Cards.** The implementation of this recommendation should result in a carefully defined process for monitoring the factors contributing to score card reporting. This should provide the RESC staff with data that can be used to develop improvement plans that are targeting specific goals.

- **Recommendation 12-5: Involve the board in the development of the strategic plan and provide the board with regular updates on the region's strategic plan including the goals, activities, and timelines.** The Implementation of this recommendation should involve the executive director developing a systematic annual involvement of the board and present the board with the opportunity to become more accountable for its activity. This process could be added to an element of the board's annual self-evaluation.

- **Recommendation 12-6: Revise the employee suggestion program to include elements for improving both the center and services to clients, and eliminate the practice of permitting paid days off for suggestions.** Professional employees should be expected to provide improvement suggestions as part of their responsibilities—they should not be rewarded with time off. Also, employees should provide more useful suggestions that serve to help their clients.

- **Recommendation 12-7: Conduct an energy audit or enter into an energy performance contract to minimize energy costs.** RESC 12 should consider conducting an energy audit to identify strategies to minimize energy costs. Such audits are provided by the State Energy Conservation Office (SECO), as well as by local energy providers.

- **Recommendation 12-8: Ensure each RESC department and division has a specific, written plan to address the priority needs identified in the assessment and is based on a comprehensive analysis of data.** Some of the department's Continuous Improvement Plans need to be updated; some actions plans were not accomplished and the plan does not reflect this. For example, the Transition Fair was not implemented by the specified date, but no explanation of why it was not implemented is explained in the plan.

- **Recommendation 12-9: Create an RESC collaborative plan for addressing the needs of RESC 12 member low performing or declining ratings schools.** While many staff interviewed shared with consultants their plans to assist the lower performing schools, there is no written process in place to ensure all departments are coordinating their efforts. By implementing this recommendation, the RESC should have a more collaborative procedure for assisting schools.

- **Recommendation 12-10: Strengthen the special education training offered by RESC 12 and improve the collaboration between the Special and General Education Departments.** The implementation of this recommendation should further strengthen the special education training opportunities for member districts. Regular meetings with special education and general education RESC 12 staff should enhance program offerings.

- **Recommendation 12-11: Use job descriptions to develop more detailed and comprehensive vacancy announcements.** In addition to the information currently provided, RESC 12 should consider the following in vacancy announcements:

  - main duties and responsibilities and expected percentage of time allocated to each;
  - hours/schedule;
  - number of people to whom the position reports and supervisor(s)' title(s); and
  - other job-related information, such as responsibility for others, expected external or internal contact with others, and decision-making authority.

  This information is especially important for positions that require or prefer higher education degrees. Applicants of this caliber are likely to be discriminatory in their job search and would require additional information about a position in order to prepare an appropriate application. RESC 12 can obtain much of this information from their available job descriptions, which are updated annually as part of the staff evaluation process. However, following RESC 12's continuous improvement model, vacancy announcements should not simply be a copy of a position's job description. Each vacancy announcement should be developed based on program efficiency and effectiveness, not solely on past or current allocation of responsibilities.

- **Recommendation 12-12: Improve the employee exit survey to gather information relevant to the improvement of the organization's human resources, staff support, and professional development practices.** By revising its exit survey, RESC 12 can ensure it has adequate data to improve the organization and prevent costly employee turnover. To minimize the costs of administering the survey, RESC 12 should consider making this survey available online.

- **Recommendation 12-13: Redefine the COLA as a salary adjustment and eliminate the double longevity reward provided to current staff.** RESC 12 should use a more accurate term to define the salary adjustment currently called a COLA. One possible term to consider is salary adjustment. RESC 12 should review and revise its salary adjustment tools to eliminate superfluous incentives to existing staff. One way to eliminate the double longevity benefit is to discontinue the Annual Career Service Recognition Payments and maintain the Compensation Above Base Salary.

- **Recommendation 12-14: Seek alternative revenue sources and cost savings from other areas to ensure that the proper level of curriculum and staff development is provided to the school districts.** Alternative revenue sources, including grants not typically awarded, such as the $900,000 Target Grant for RESC 18's Mobile Technology Bus should be researched and obtained to provide additional funding to supplement center's recurring revenue. Additionally, through the center's

continuous improvement process, identifiable cost saving measures should be identified.

- **Recommendation 12-15: Establish a policy to be maintained by RESC 12 that addresses the level of unreserved fund balance and include criteria for the determination on designations of fund balance.** The establishment of a policy on the management of fund balance will provide long-term guidance for future financial decisions.

- **Recommendation 12-16: Show the total revenues and expenditures for RESC 18 financial statements without reporting Internal Service Funds.** This change in reporting will provide an accurate representation of the revenue and expenditures when presenting financial statements.

- **Recommendation 12-17: Create an Internal Service Fund for the replacement, maintenance, and repair of the center's vehicles and charge components $.35/mile for their use.** The creation of this fund will allow the center to schedule vehicle replacement as needed from year to year.

- **Recommendation 12-18: Urge RESC 20, the developer of RSCCC2K, to ensure that an accounts receivable function is quickly incorporated in the software package.**

- Once the accounts receivable module is developed in RSCCC2K, the center's financial system will be fully integrated and will eliminate duplication of effort.

- **Recommendation 12-19: Implement a policy for staff to purchase their own cellular phones and submit detailed invoices for reimbursement of business calls.** The implementation of this policy will provide a better internal control for the use of cellular phones and should result in cost savings for the center.

- **Recommendation 12-20: Require that the Financial Services Senior Director or the Accountant verify that each check being issued has approved payment authorization and prior documentation prior to check issuance.** The implementation of this policy will provide a reliable system of checks and balances so that check issuance mistakes and the potential for employee theft are minimized.

- **Recommendation 12-21: Add other vendors for fuel purchases.** The addition of vendors may result in lower charges to the center because of competition and will allow access to other fuel stations when the current vendor is not available.

- **Recommendation 12-22: Solicit other bids so that RESC 12 is being charged appropriate insurance premiums.** The lack of claim activity should result in lower premiums for the center.

- **Recommendation 12-23: Analyze the feasibility of purchasing a bar coding system for the automation of the RESC 12 fixed asset inventory process.** The automation of the entire inventory process will provide a more efficient and accurate way of identifying and tracking the center's fixed assets.

DETAILED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP

RESC 12 provides excellent organization, management and leadership training for Region 12 administrators and new Region 12

superintendents. A review of training records shows that the Region 12's Superintendents' Advisory Board has developed a Superintendents Only Institute which is designed for superintendents in their first three years of practice; however, it is open to any superintendent in the region. Topics for the institute include school finance, curriculum, technology, accountability, leadership and legal issues. The institute consisted of eight, three-hour sessions held once a month since April 2004. Several guest lectures provide up-to-date information to the attendees including the use of the state funding template and possible changes that may be added to the state financial district report cards.

Additionally, Region 12 hosts a Superintendents' Retreat at the end of each year, which features professional development opportunities as well as opportunities for networking and sharing best practices. This is a two-day retreat and is provided at no cost to the participants—it is funded by sponsors such as BLGY Architects, CAS – Claims Administrative Services, Inc., Claycomb Associates, Architects, Compass Learning, Education Technology Services, Educators Credit Union, Gerloff Company, Inc. Huckabee Architecture, Engineering & Construction, Indeco Sales, JR Education Associates, Mass Group Marketing School Programs, Michael W. Marrs, Inc., OPUS Three, Powell & Leon Attorneys at Law, Pro Financial Group, RBC Dain-Rauscher, Texas Association of School Administrators, Texas Association of School Boards, and Texas TERM. At the last retreat held on June 2–3, 2004, 30 of the 78 superintendents attended.

Region 12 also provides training to its regions by conducting a highly successful Administrators' Academy. This academy is designed to assist district administrators in meeting state rule (19TAC241.20) which became effective in September 2002. As part of the state's principal certification and renewal process, each principal or assistant principal employed for the first time as a campus administrator must participate in at least a one-year induction period. The feedback from participants is exceptionally positive. Below are excerpts from the academy's evaluations:

- "The topic I learned most about and found to be most useful was the finance session. I have never had a bad experience with any workshop or academy that Region 12 has had input.
- As for the ESCs, Region 12 has been and continues to be the friendliness school/ people oriented that I have dealt with during my 22 year career. Keep up the great job!
- This is my 5th year as an assistant principal. This academy has been a welcomed and valuable tool to stay informed and exposed to new and improved ideas in education.
- I liked every speaker and every item was relevant to the focus and intent of the academy; time was never wasted.
- On a scale of 1–10, this academy ranks a 10 +. In my wildest dreams, I never expected to be challenged and informed in such a short amount of time . Districts who take advantage of this academy are definitely focused on growing educational leaders.
- Keynote speakers from the Texas State Board of Education Departments, superintendents in the area, and directors of various departments were present and presented up-to-date information from a state perspective."

Accomplishment: RESC 12 offers excellent organization, management, and leadership training opportunities to member superintendents and school leaders.

CUSTODIAL AND MAINTENANCE SUPPLIES

ESC 12 maintains a small inventory of custodial and maintenance supplies that satisfy immediate needs and does not take up unnecessary warehouse space. The maintenance supervisor reviews the center's reservations and activities schedule each week to ensure supplies are adequate, and purchases needed supplies from a local vendor, which can promptly respond to requests on a just-in-time basis. This practice minimizes the amount of storage space dedicated to custodial and maintenance supplies, as well as the long-term costs of supplies.

Accomplishment: RESC 12's custodial and maintenance inventory practices uses a minimal amount of storage space and ensures that the center purchases only needed supplies and equipment.

CLIMATE CONTROL

RESC 12 business and maintenance staff use automated and digital climate controls to maintain their facility's temperature. These controls prevent staff from adjusting temperatures to their individual preferences, which can lead to excess energy use and costs. RESC 12 also uses automated controls to allow for temperature setbacks during hours when the center is not scheduled for occupation. Industry data indicates that this practice can reduce heating and cooling energy costs by 10 to 15 percent.

Accomplishment: Region 12 uses digital controls to maintain internal temperatures and for using temperature setbacks, both of which reduce energy costs.

MAINTENANCE CONTRACT

RESC 12 maintains maintenance contract with Danco HVAC/R Services to ensure the efficient operation of its Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) system. This service focuses on regularly scheduled maintenance to eliminate system inefficiencies, avoid equipment down-time, and extend the system's life. The maintenance contract includes a monitoring system that manages load to minimize energy costs without compromising occupant comfort. The RESC 12 reported that the center has experienced up to a 10 percent reduction in energy costs after implementing this contract.

Accomplishment: RESC maintains a performance contract with their HVAC provider to extend the life of their system and minimize energy use.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

Region 12 has conducted meaningful evaluations of is education programs and uses the results of these evaluations to effect program improvements.

MGT analyzed all of the RESC 12 program evaluations conducted in the past three years and found that overall the RESC has addressed any programmatic concerns in each of the evaluation's recommendations. Among the following program evaluations reviewed include:

- Gifted/Talented Students Program
- Consortiums of Teacher Preparation and Certification Program
- Eisenhower Funding
- Service Learning
- Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate Programs
- Title I Programs
- TPCP Programs
- Texas Comprehensive School Health Network
- Title VI Class Size Reduction
- Title V, Part A Reading/Language Arts/Social Studies/Math and Science
- Title IV Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities

Accomplishment: Region 12 staff address the recommendations for improvement in programs and service evaluations.

WINDHAM SCHOOL DISTRICT

Region 12 is actively serving the Windham School District by providing numerous programs for staff.

A review of staff development summary reports shows that Windham staff have participated in 13 different training sessions since October 18, 2003. Thirty-nine (39) Windham teachers and/or staff have participated in workshops such as TxBess and Advanced Braille. All of the trainings have been held at Region 12.

Accomplishment: RESC 12 actively serves the Windham School District staff and provides equal opportunity for the Windham staff members to participate in quality training as do other districts.

SECURING GRANTS

RESC 12 has been active in securing grants for its member school districts. RESC 12 has a full-time grant writer who has written and won grants in excess of $902,000 since September 2003.

The following grants were awarded:

- Texas High School Completion and Success Grant Program for $520,000;
- Limited English Proficiency Student Success Initiative for $282,000; and
- A Investment Capital Fund Grant for $100,000.

Other grants that were either written and lost/ or have not been awarded yet include:

- Improving Teaching and Learning/ Texas Title I Comprehensive School Reform Grant;
- Texas Reading First Grant;
- Improving Literacy Through School Libraries Grant; and
- Grant for Lorena ISD Performing Arts Center.

Also, the grant writer conducts evaluations of various grants for school districts. The writer currently is evaluating an Improving Teaching and Learning Grant for the Groesbeck ISD and charging $10,000 for the evaluation. The granter writer's goal is to have a trained grant writer in each district that she can assist in writing future grants. She has a comprehensive grant writing seminar planned for September 2004 to ensure all districts in Region 12 learn more about how to secure grant funds to support education program delivery.

Accomplishment: Region 12 actively seeks, writes, and wins grants to assist its member districts in implementing quality educational programs.

TEACHER INTERIM PROGRAM

RESC 12 saves funds by requiring any staff member who has a teacher certification to share in the supervision of teacher interns. The average cost for this service is $450 per intern at 192 interns (over the past 12 months) for a savings of $86,400. Even the executive director, deputy directors, as well as the directors and specialists participate in this initiative. This practice not only saves the RESC funds to reinvest in other programs, but it also assists them with having on-site contact with their clients and gives them an opportunity to further market their services.

Several other RESCs are contracting out for this type of service while RESC 12 is committed to completing this task in-house.

Accomplishment: RESC 12 uses internal staff to save funds while delivering a quality teacher intern program.

NEEDS ASSESSMENTS

Staff within the RESC 12 Special Education Department use a survey software called SurveyMonkey.com. Surveys have been distributed, analyzed, and data provided in an easy-to read and use format. The cost is estimated to be $60 to $70 for a three-month time period.

The following survey titles and results have been sent to member districts:

- Region 12 Speech Services;
- Autism and Low Incidence Disabilities;
- Comprehensive Regional Needs Assessment for Special Education;
- Pre-school Needs Assessment;
- Satisfaction Survey and Needs Assessment for Teachers of the Visually Impaired;
- Satisfaction Survey and Needs Assessment for Evaluation Personnel; and
- 2003–04 Transition Needs Assessment.

Accomplishment: The School Support Department staff have found an inexpensive, yet effective way to conduct regular program needs assessments with member districts.

HIRING PROCESS

RESC 12 employs a formal and highly structured applicant review process to ensure consistent and fair practices across its various components. This process is strictly overseen by Human Resources staff and includes the steps identified in **Exhibit 12-2**.

As indicated in **Exhibit 12-2**, RESC 12 requires that a team of at least four individuals from various components screen application packets *and* interview finalists. The service center follows this practice to ensure that applicants are appraised for the skills and knowledge they can offer throughout the organization, not just within the hiring component. Human Resources staff report that this practice is also used to ensure that new staff understand and are willing to work well with colleagues throughout the service center.

Exhibit 12-2
RESC 12 Applicant Review Process

- Human Resources staff develop a vacancy announcement and post it on the RESC 12 Web site, as well as in public information venues (i.e., newspapers). Announcements are also sent to all current staff.
- Applicants submit a resume, standard application form, and letter of interest.
- An applicant screening team, comprised of a minimum of four cross-functional staff from the service center, use a prepared applicant scoring matrix to rate applicants. This team includes no more than two staff from the hiring component.
- Human Resources staff review and tally applicant scores and identify the top four to five applicants who will be invited for interviews. RESC 12 grants interviews to all internal applicants, regardless of their matrix score.
- A cross-functional interview team interviews applicants and makes recommendations for a second round of interviews. The team uses a consistent set of prepared interview questions for all applicants.
- The executive director, human resources director, and the Deputy overseeing the hiring component conduct a second round of interviews.

Source: Interview with RESC 12 director of Human Resources, Staff Development, and Teacher Certification, June 2004.

Accomplishment: RESC 12 has developed a highly structured and strictly enforced hiring process that ensures a fair and consistent applicant review process. This process is designed to ensure that new staff can meet the requirements of the hiring component, as well as contribute to the overall benefit of the service center.

JOB DESCRIPTIONS

RESC 12 follows a structured process to ensure that all job descriptions are current and accurate. As part of the annual evaluation process, staff review their job descriptions with supervisors and make any needed changes. This practice ensures that staff and supervisors have a common understanding of staff responsibilities. It also provides the Service Center with accurate and prompt information for planning and hiring purposes

MGT reviewed 118 job descriptions for staff positions. Each of the descriptions included the following key elements:

- job title;
- supervisor;
- salary grade;
- division/component;
- position's primary purpose;
- required and desirable qualifications;
- major responsibilities and duties;
- specific responsibilities unique to that position, by category;
- supervisory responsibilities;
- equipment and software used; and
- working conditions (mental and physical demands and environmental factors).

A review of RESC 12's job descriptions showed that all had been revised as scheduled in 2003.

Accomplishment: RESC 12 uses a process that ensures job descriptions are updated as part of its annual staff review process.

EXTERNAL AUDITING

The center takes appropriate actions to address the findings and recommendations resulting from its annual external audit.

In the management letter for the FY 2002–03 audit, the following recommendations were presented:

- keep the keys to the signature plate in a secured area accessible only to those with proper authorization;
- set up automatic bank drafts for recurring payments;
- develop and use a detailed checklist of items to be returned by terminated employees;
- develop an IT disaster recovery plan;
- issue prenumbered receipts and keep copies of all voided receipts;
- amend the center's conflict of interest policy to include nepotism guidelines; and
- identify and write off all checks outstanding over one year.

Each of these recommendations has been implemented or in the process of being implemented by the center. The management letters reviewed for prior year audits also yielded recommendations that were implemented by the RESC.

Accomplishment: RESC 12 appropriately implements recommendations resulting from external audits on a consistent basis.

FINANCIAL REPORTING

The RESC 12 management provides comprehensive financial reports to its Board of Directors. Currently, the following financial reports are included in the board's agenda packets and presented at the board meetings:

- bills paid report;
- interest earnings report;
- board report, which provides month and year-to-date revenue and expenditure figures that are compared to budgeted figures; and
- cash flow report, which includes (for the previous month ending):
  - beginning cash balance;
  - revenues;
  - expenditures; and
  - ending cash balances.

Accomplishment: RESC 12 provides a financial report to the board of directors which presents year-to-date financial information with budget comparisons.

BUDGETING

The financial information used to develop the 2003–04 Official Budget provides an easy-to-follow audit trail regarding where resources are allocated. The process used to arrive at the ultimate budget amounts is well done, with clear directions to center staff, appropriate follow-up and adequate reporting to the Board of Directors.

The directions for developing the component budgets are explained in the Business Office Procedures Manual which is posted on the center's Web site.

The Budgeting Calendar of Events developed and circulated by the Business Office sets milestones for the budgeting process as follows:

- **April -** Revenue estimates for local budgets prepared by directors and sent to the senior director of financial services;
- **April** - Budget templates for upcoming year distributed to Directors (includes proposed assignment of personnel and fixed costs);
- **May** - Draft budgets returned to Senior Director of Financial Services;
- **June** - Preliminary budget presented to Board of Directors at June board meeting;
- **July** - Director meetings with appropriate Deputy Directors and the Senior Director of Financial Services to finalize budgets; and
- **August** – Final budget presented to Board of Directors for approval.

Accomplishment: The Region 12 budgeting process and reports reflect a clear and logical plan.

COST/BENEFIT STUDIES

RESC 12 conducts effective cost/benefit analyses to determine whether to outsource or reduce certain center functions. In FY 2002–03, the center closed its graphics lab after a study determined that the lab was losing money (approximately $15,000 in FY 2001–02).

In September 2003, a study was conducted to determine the feasibility of expanding the services of the RESC's Copy Center. The conclusion of the study was that expanding the center's services would result in additional net revenue of approximately $650,000.

Accomplishment: The use of cost/benefit and feasibility studies by Region 12 has resulted in cost savings and additional revenue.

BUSINESS POLICY MANUAL

The Business Policy Manual Handbook and the center's Web site contain clear directions on how to prepare and process purchasing documents. The process for routing, approving, and managing the purchase requisition process is clear, easily understood, and efficient.

The center uses a two-part purchase requisition ("work order") system for the approval process. The work order is converted to a four-part purchase order. One part (yellow copy) is filed in the Business Office for audit purposes, one (blue copy) is filed numerically in the Business Office, one (white copy) is sent to the originating office. The final part (pink copy) is filed in the Business Office, attached to an invoice and sent to the originating office to verify receipt of goods or services. The originating office returns the pink copy with the packing slip and the payment is rendered.

Accomplishment: RESC 12 ensures that all center employees know and understand the center's purchasing processes and thresholds by providing clear and concise instructions in the Employee Handbook and on the Web site.

REQUISITION MODULE

The use of the RSCCC2K software Requisition Module provides an automation tool that results in greater efficiency and effectiveness of Business Office staff and allows the entity specific budget control on purchases.

RESC 12 uses the requisition module to capture requisition requests and generate purchase orders for vendors. Each district of school office enters the requisition requests for their entity. The requisition is electronically forwarded to their Director for electronic approval. Once approved, the requisition is then forwarded to the Business Office to verify documentation and coding accuracy. Then the request is forwarded electronically to the Financial Services senior director for final approval and the generation of a purchase order.

The use of the Requisition Module ensures that each department has access only to their budget and have the appropriate funds budgeted before the requisition can be entered. Due to the volume of purchases (2,004 purchase orders issued with a total dollar amount of $3,930,119 for FY 2002–03), the control of the purchasing function is a critical component in the financial process of the Center.

Accomplishment: The use of the module provides an automation tool that results in greater efficiency and effectiveness of Business Office staff and allows the entity specific budget control on purchases.

RISK MANAGEMENT

RESC 12 has several good risk management initiatives that have been recently implemented. These initiatives include:

- recently changing the way employees gain entrance to the center – from a keypad with a code that had to be changed regularly to a security card that identifies the user as it uses a radio transmitter to signal the door to open;
- upgrading the fire alarm system throughout the building and purchasing additional newer fire extinguishers;
- installing time locks on the internal doors in between the two Center buildings so that they lock automatically at 4:30 every day;
- restriping the parking lot so that staff and visitors have a clearer view of the parking spaces;
- placing more lights in the back parking lot to increase visibility at night;
- removing the doorstops on the main conference room doors to more closely mirror the fire code;
- offering free defensive driving training to all RESC 12 staff;
- forming an Employees Assistance Program Continuous Improvement Team to investigate ways of helping employees with personal and professional needs;
- developing a consistent method for reporting employee or visitor accidents and injuries while on center premises; and
- revising the center's Crisis Management Procedures Manual which outlines appropriate steps to take in case of a crisis or emergency.

The center's risk management policies and procedures are included the RESC 12 board policy manual and the center's Web site.

Accomplishment: RESC 12 has taken positive steps to provide a safe and secure place to work and visit.

INVESTMENTS

RESC 12 investments are generating considerable revenue for the center. Currently, RESC 12 maintains two types of investments:

- TEXPOOL account – a state based investment pool account that complies with the Public Funds Investment Act; funds may be transferred in or out of

the pool at anytime, thus there are no term limits; and

- Educators Credit Union – RESC 12 deposits funds from its Copperas Cove satellite office into a savings account at the credit union, which provides $100,000 of FDIC insurance and $100,000 of credit union insurance; transfers from this account are made to TEXPOOL before the savings account investment balance exceeds $200,000.

In FY 2002–03, $70,148 in interest was earned from TEXPOOL and $91,494 from the Educators Credit Union. Additionally, the center's NOW checking account generated $18,984. As of April 30, 2004, the interest earned on the accounts was $54,190; and the cash balance was $1,000,034.

When the center issues its bid notice to banks, one of the selection criteria is the interest rates offered on time deposits, checking accounts and/or repurchase agreements.

Accomplishment: RESC 12 uses interest-bearing accounts to increase revenue.

ONLINE WORKSHOP REGISTRATION

RESC 12 has developed an effective online workshop registration and room reservation system.

RESC 12 contracted with a programmer to develop an online workshop registration and room reservation interface for its MIS system. The workshop registration component allows registrants to create individual accounts, register for workshops, and cancel reservations as needed. This component also allows past workshop registrants to review their training history and print certificates of completion to include in their professional development and continuing professional education portfolios. The online room reservation component allows staff to reserve rooms for workshop trainings, eliminating the need to complete paper request forms. These features minimize the amount of work that staff registrars must do, provide trainees with prompt access to registration confirmations and training documentation, and ensures that staff has responsive and accurate room availability information.

Accomplishment: RESC 12 has developed client-driven, online workshop registration and room reservation systems.

WEB SITE INFORMATION

RESC 12 uses its Web site to provide clients with prompt access to training manuals, informational handouts, and past email communications regarding PEIMS data submissions.

RESC 12 information management staff maintains extensive PEIMS and software support information online to ensure that clients have prompt access to technical guidance and assistance. This information includes training manuals, handouts, and for PEIMS, a log of recent email updates that offer targeted guidance.

Accomplishment: RESC 12 uses its Web site to provide clients with prompt access to training manuals, informational handouts, and past email communications regarding PEIMS data submissions.

TARGET GRANTS

RESC 12 has engaged in numerous collaborations to access TARGET grants for member school districts. This action has lead to five grants to benefit students in member districts.

In each of these collaborations, RESC 12 provided administrative, development, and program delivery support:

- ***Project Integrate 2003*** - The Service Center collaborated with Apple Computer, Baylor University, 16 school districts, and one alternative school system to provide training to teachers on the use of technology in the classroom. Project Integrate 2003

is a model designed to change teacher behaviors and develop practitioners who are fully integrating technology into their classroom teaching and learning. The three primary goals of the project are to: (1) improve student academic achievement; (2) ensure that every student is technology-literate; and (3) encourage effective integration of technology.

- ***Project Link*** –RESC 12 partnered with Temple ISD to develop a program to leverage existing community networks and technology initiatives to build a comprehensive curriculum management system. The goal of this project is to integrate technology into curriculum and instruction to improve student academic achievement. Seven other school districts and one private school are also participating in this program, which focuses on students in grades 3 to 8.

- RESC 12 partnered with Lometa ISD to developed a grant proposal to provide all students in grades K to 5 with laptop computers and related training and support. Four other school districts participate in this program, which is designed to address the particular academic and technological needs of students who are economically disadvantaged, highly mobile, or in special education programs.

- RESC 12 partnered with the Rapoport Academy to develop and implement a successful model of technology curriculum that aligns the school's academic curriculum and technology plan with TEKS. This program serves at-risk and economically disadvantaged students in Grades 5 through 9 and is designed to maintain their motivation and improve their academic achievement.

- RESC 12 partnered with Hillsboro ISD to develop and administer a program that acquired wireless laptops and hand-held technologies for both students and teachers, along with curriculum and assessment resources and professional development opportunities for teachers.

Accomplishment: RESC 12 has been proactive in assisting districts with accessing TARGET grants. The Service Center's actions have led to five TARGET grants that benefit students in more than 30 school districts.

DETAILED FINDINGS

STAFFING

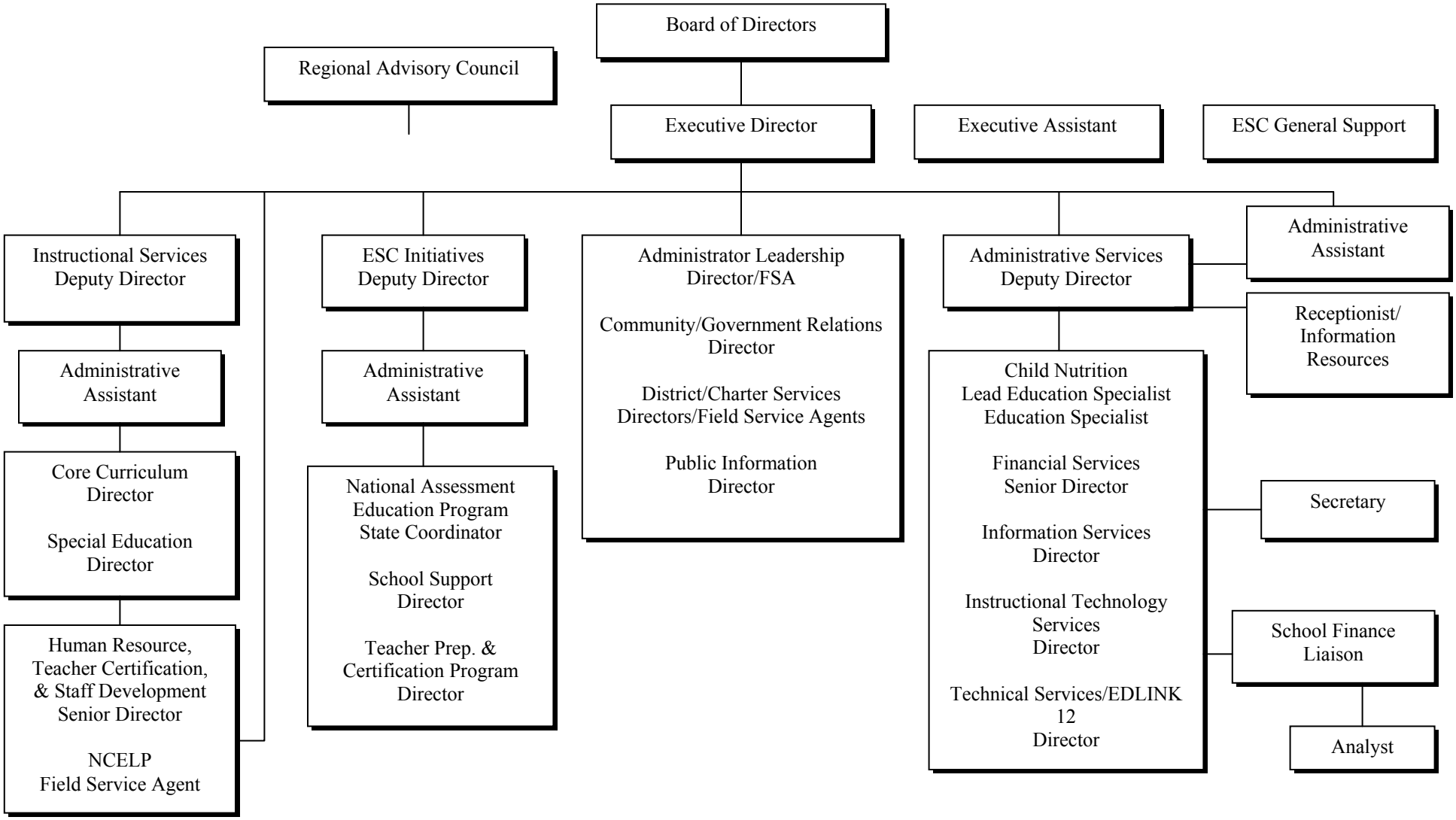
RESC 12 has more staff than is needed for existing operations. While RESC 12 has eliminated 20 positions since the 2003 school year, a review of their current organizational structure, interviews, and an analysis of job descriptions shows a further reduction in staff is warranted.

Exhibit 12-3 shows the current Functional Organization for RESC 12. As shown, there are three deputy directors (Instructional Services, Administrative Services, and Educational Education Center (ESC) Initiatives), and one director of administrator leadership/FSA reporting to the executive director. The internal structure of the RESC is organized around components: Administration, Core Curriculum, Human Resources, Information Services, Instructional Technology, School Support, Special Education.

Teacher Preparation and Certification, and Technical Services. Component staff members provide an array of programs and services to regional districts and charter schools.

Most RESCs visited throughout the state (particularly those that are of the same approximate size), do not have three deputy director positions; most have only two deputy directors (a deputy director who oversees Instructional Services and the other Administrative Services).

Exhibit 12-3
RESC 12
Functional Organization



Source: RESC 12, 2004.

A review of job descriptions, department initiatives, and the number of direct reports under each deputy director shows that the University Coordination and Special Initiatives deputy director's responsibilities include oversight of the strategic planning process, School Support and Planning, National Assessment Education Program, and the Teacher Preparation and Certification Program. The job description for this position includes additional responsibilities such as:

- seeking private and public partnerships;
- providing professional development for superintendents;
- assisting in determining internal and/or external resources for grant writing;
- researching, assisting, and supervising components with various federal and state initiatives.

These types of responsibilities generally fall under Instructional Services, executive director, State and Federal Programs and/or the Human Resource Divisions. Additionally, Region 12 has a full-time grant specialist. While the center has an excellent continuous quality/Baldrige–based, strategic planning model, this responsibility generally rests with the executive director and his/her leadership team. Also, special projects are often handled by Curriculum and Instruction Department staff.

Further, while not shown on this organizational chart, there are a total of three full-time, one half time, and one three-quarters' time field service agents (total of 4 ¼ FTE). Several similar sized RESCs have fewer field service agents (or none) because they have transferred those responsibilities to other internal staff.

Exhibit 12-4 shows the major responsibilities of the field service agents in Region 12, as well as where MGT found these same responsibilities could be fulfilled by existing positions.

RESC 12 should eliminate the ESC Initiatives Deputy Director's position and a full-time field service agent position. The implementation of this recommendation should result in a more streamlined and cost-effective organization pattern. The responsibilities assigned to field service agent positions should be carefully developed. The remaining field service agent positions should be assigned to geographically defined areas of the RESC.

The actions preceding the elimination of the deputy position should include the reassignment of assigned responsibilities and duties among the other two deputy positions, the executive director, and other designated positions as is determined appropriate.

All of these actions should be taken so as to fully implement the recommended actions by the beginning of the next fiscal year.

The salary of the ESC 12 Initiative Deputy Director is $95,000 per year plus benefits of $4,872 for a total estimated savings of $99,872. The salary of the field service agents is $74,500 per year plus benefits of $4,872 for a total estimated savings of $79,372 per position eliminated.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S EVALUATION

The instrument the board uses to evaluate the RESC executive director is not comprehensive and needs to be revised. The current instrument lacks the detail of some other RESC executive director's evaluation instruments. RESC 12's evaluation instrument does not require any documentation and has only 15 non-specific (non-ranking) statements, which the board member is instructed to "check if the executive director is meeting expectations." Two sample statements include:

- "Recommended to the board an annual budget for operation of the center; or
- Provide a plan for coordination with districts, universities, and other entities in region."

Exhibit 12-4
Major Responsibilities and Duties of Field Service Agents in RESC 12

Major Responsibilities	Could Be Conducted By
Conduct monthly visits with superintendents/central office staff	executive director and all field staff
Market RESC services to districts	Title I and all staff
Provide customer assistance as requested/needed	All staff
Furnish support/technical assistance to districts receiving accreditation or other on-site visits	curriculum and instruction staff
Provide training/facilitation in campus/district planning and decision making	curriculum and instruction staff
Serve as a contact for Sam Houston Satellite Center	curriculum and instruction staff
Provide assistance with Superintendent Forum/Roundtables	executive director or deputy director
Plan and facilitate Annual Legislative Breakfast	executive director or deputy director
Plan and facilitate Annual Superintendents, Retreat and Leadership Conference	executive director or deputy director
Plan/provide specialized workshops as requested by districts	curriculum and instruction staff
Participate in professional development by attending conferences/workshops, professional organizations, internal staff development/meetings; and serve on internal committees/teams	curriculum and instruction staff
Conduct observations of TCPC interns	curriculum and instruction staff
Support/Facilities Leadership for Learning: Principals' Roundtable	executive director or deputy director
Support/Facilitate Assistant Principals' Academy	executive director or deputy director
Attend/Support County Network Meetings	curriculum and instruction staff
Conduct training of School board Members	executive director or deputy director
Facilitate/provide School board Member Training	executive director or deputy director

Source: RESC 12, Job Descriptions and MGT's Research in other RESCs, 2004.

In contrast, Region 2 (Corpus Christi) has a much more thorough executive director evaluation instrument as shown in **Exhibit 12-5** . As shown, Region 2 evaluation instrument includes more detail in 10 specific criteria areas and has a weighted ranking system.

RESC 12 should revise the executive director's evaluation instrument to include more detailed criteria as shown in the Region 2 evaluation instrument. The implementation of this recommendation should result in a comprehensive assessment of the executive director's performance and ensure that it is related to defined RESC goals. Key implementation steps should include a review of other RESC evaluation instruments as a means to identifying important evaluation instrument dimensions that could be incorporated into the process. This should be accomplished by the board of directors instructing the executive director to obtain copies from several other RESCs and then establishing a board work session to review, revise, and approve an evaluation instrument.

HILLSBORO SATELLITE

While Region 12 has made excellent partnerships with school districts to house five satellite offices, there is evidence that one satellite (Hillsboro) does not warrant one full-time and one half-time RESC staff member.

Exhibit 12-5
Education Service Center, Region 2
Executive Director's Annual Performance Evaluation

Executive Director's Name _____

The Executive Director of Education Service Center (ESC), Region 2 will be evaluated annually on the following items. In order to provide additional information regarding the performance being rated, a list of examples of activities is located under each item. Examples of documentation evidence are provided. On the scale to the right of each item, circle one of the four numbers to indicate your assessment of the Executive Director's performance. Space is provided on the fourth page for additional comments and/or recommendations.

Improvement Needed	Fair	Good	Excellent
1	2	3	4

1. Works effectively with the ESC-2 Board of Directors:

- Keeps the board informed about ongoing operations of the ESC
- Provides periodic reports regarding ESC activities
- Provides annual evaluation of ESC by regional superintendents
- Provides reports (annual audit, budget/amendments, investments etc.) to board in a timely manner
- Supports the performance of the board in its role
- Reports to the board on activities and accomplishments of the Center at board meetings
- Responds to requests from board members in a professional and timely manner
- Provides monthly highlights of executive director's activities

(Documentation evidence: board meeting agendas; board briefs, e-mail, telephone, written communications, and ESC publications)

Improvement Needed	Fair	Good	Excellent
1	2	3	4

2. Performs all duties and functions as required by the ESC-2 Board of Directors:

- Responds to directions/suggestions/recommendations
- Keeps the board informed concerning areas where policy should be developed
- Brings policy proposals to the board for review and approval
- Provides the board with information about professional development opportunities

(Documentation evidence: board meeting agendas/ minutes, board policies, administrative procedures, e-mail and written communications)

Improvement Needed	Fair	Good	Excellent
1	2	3	4

3. Develops and implements procedures and practices for all facets of the ESC's operation:

- Develops, implements, and maintains an organizational design to facilitate the effective operation of the ESC
- Develops, implements, and maintains administrative structures, guidelines. and procedures to facilitate the effective and efficient operation of the ESC

(Documentation evidence: Strategic Plan (Vision 2005): Annual Regional Improvement Plan; and ESC 2 organizational chart)

Improvement Needed	Fair	Good	Excellent
1	2	3	4

4. Establishes priorities for the most efficient use of available resources:

- Operates programs/services based on the Vision 2005 Strategic Plan, the Regional Improvement Plan and resultant action plans (e.g., goals, activities, timelines etc.)
- Empowers center directors to establish goals for departmental functions
- Facilitates associate input into program practices and implementation

(Documentation evidence: Vision 2005 Strategic Plan; Regional Improvement Plan; Program Action Plans; Reporting and Planning (RAP) meeting agendas; general staff meeting agendas; Cabinet meeting minutes)

Exhibit 12-5 (continued)
Education Service Center, Region 2
Executive Director's Annual Performance Evaluation

5. Designs and implements systems for measuring the effectiveness of the ESC and for making improvements based on acquired information:

Improvement Needed	Fair	Good	Excellent
1	2	3	4

- Plans and conducts a region-wide evaluation/needs assessment
- Conducts an ongoing evaluation of ESC programs and services
- Utilizes regional advisory committees, stakeholder and contact groups
- Utilizes external surveys and audits (e.g., annual customer satisfaction survey, TEA desk audit, program audits,

(Documentation evidence: Annual regional survey; contact groups and advisory group meetings and stakeholder meetings; external reports from the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and other sources)

6. Administers Personnel Management System according to board policy, state/federal law, and other legal requirements:

Improvement Needed	Fair	Good	Excellent
1	2	3	4

- Maintains an active recruitment process ensuring equal opportunities for employment
- Makes staff assignments to fulfill program needs and appropriately serve ESC member schools
- Attracts, retains and terminates staff which ensures an efficient and effective ESC operation in meeting district needs
- Maintains personnel files according to board Policy

(Documentation evidence: Human Resources (HR) records, board agenda items/minutes; advertising in newspaper and ESC-2 HR Web site; internal and external written communications)

7. Manages the financial resources of the ESC to support its programmatic goals:

Improvement Needed	Fair	Good	Excellent
1	2	3	4

- Secures funding from federal, state, and local sources
- Develops an annual budget to allocate the available financial resources
- Utilizes fund balance to meet the most critical needs of the ESC
- Conducts budget reviews/analyses with appropriate staff to determine the needs for budget amendments
- Submits applications for funds in a timely manner
- Recommends to the board a compensation plan to maintain competitive salaries and benefits
- Maintains adequate documentation of financial records

(Documentation evidence: SAS Application to the TEA; competitive grants; annual budgets; contracted services, salary market analysis reports, investment reports, board agenda/minutes)

8. Works effectively with regional school districts:

Improvement Needed	Fair	Good	Excellent
1	2	3	4

- Keeps regional school districts informed about ESC programs and services
- Meets the instructional and non-instructional needs of the client districts/campuses
- Works with local district personnel in providing up-to-date information as appropriate

(Documentation evidence: ESC publications; e-mail and written communications; ESC 2 web site, regional advisory committees and contact groups, and regional meetings)

Exhibit 12-5 (continued)
Education Service Center, Region 2
Executive Director's Annual Performance Evaluation

9. Works effectively with regional and state agencies:

Improvement Needed	Fair	Good	Excellent
1	2	3	4

- Participates with Texas Education Agency staff to promote the general welfare of Region 2 schools and of the ESC
- Cooperates with other ESCs to promote the interests and functions of the ESC system
- Maintains and promotes effective relationships and partnerships with local universities, school districts, charter schools, private schools, and non-education entities

(Documentation evidence: Agendas/minutes of regional and statewide meetings; quarterly report of executive director activities; contracted services arrangements; annual self-assessment report; Regional Improvement Plan; Strategic Plan for the System of ESCs)

10. Provides effective leadership for the ESC and local districts

Improvement Needed	Fair	Good	Excellent
1	2	3	4

- Stays abreast of federal and state laws and policies affecting education
- Serves in an advisory capacity to local school districts
- Works with the Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) of Superintendents
- Serves as a liaison between personnel of the district, region, and state

(Documentation evidence: Record of professional development; attendance of state/regional meetings; agendas/minutes of RAC meetings; and onsite school district visits)

Overall Evaluation (Please circle one)

Improvement Needed Fair Good Excellent

Comments: _____

_____

_____

Recommendations: _____

_____

_____

Signature _____

Date _____

Source: Region 2 RESC, 2004.

Region 12 encompasses 11,318 square miles and includes Bell, Bosque, Coryell, Falls, Freestone, Hamilton, Hill, Lampasas, Limestone, Mills, McLennan and Navarro counties. Satellite site throughout the region allow efficiency and economy of operation for districts by minimizing traveling distances.

The five satellite offices are located in:

- Corsicana where various trainings are held;
- Copperas Cove where the Teacher Preparation Certification Program is held;
- Goldthwaite (one room located within a middle school) where various trainings are held;
- Hillsboro where Community, Government Relations, and grant writing activities take place;
- Teague (one wing of an elementary school) where distance learning takes place.

MGT reviewed the lease agreements with each satellite office and found all except one (Hillsboro) to be efficiently and effectively operating. For example, on March 23, 2000 Corsicana ISD approved the use of the district's Sam Houston facility for a satellite center for Region 12. In lieu of charging the service center for rental and expenses, Region 12 agreed to provide the district with $10,000 per year to help with salary and benefits for support personnel needed for the center and to allow district participation in the Service

Center's Enhanced Curriculum Co-op at no cost to the district. Another example of bartering services to house the satellites is in the Teague satellite (one room), RESC 12 uses the premises for meetings and distance learning trainings. RESC 12 provides the videoconferencing equipment and agrees to be responsible for the maintenance of property insurance coverage and liability insurance for the facility.

Region 12 does not pay for custodial services, furniture, or any other expenses. The satellite is primarily used as a special education coop, and for staff who oversee Taft grant funds that provide distance learning training. There is one full-time RESC staff and one half-time RESC staff located at the center. The half-time staff member manages the center, is primarily a legislative liaison and also does some RESC marketing. The full-time RESC staff member is funded one half through the Bridge and Taft grants which fund community services for students and one half by the region.

A review of activities and interviews with various RESC staff indicate that the activities hosted at this center do not warrant one full and one part-time staff member. For example, since September 4, 2003 through June 2004 only a total of 249 staff have been trained at the center at the time of MGT's visit. Subsequent to the June visit, a total of 458 staff had been trained at this satellite office. Many workshops were not close to being filled to capacity such as a workshop for reviewing campus plans had a capacity of 40 and only four employees attended or a district TAKS workshop had a capacity for 100 and only 17 participants attended. While staff indicate the satellite at Hillsboro is needed because of the long distances teachers must travel for training, the amount of usage of the satellite does not justify the cost. Other RESCs are addressing the distance issue by providing more online and teleconference training.

RESC 12 should close the Hillsboro Satellite Center, eliminate the full-time RESC staff position housed at the center, and transfer the part-time staff position to the main RESC facility. The implementation of this recommendation should result in the reassignment of Hillsboro Satellite Center staff responsibilities. The field service agents should assume some of the full-time Hillsboro position responsibilities such as marketing and serving as a legislative liaison. Needed training should be coordinated with and offered at other training sites. Full implementation of this recommendation should result in releasing resources to be used

to meet other priority training and RESC needs.

The full-time staff position's salary is $27,000 plus $4,872 in benefits which equals an annual savings of $31,872. The total cost of operating the satellite is $3,000 plus annual savings of $34,872. The eliminated position plus the building expenses should create a total annual savings of $35,500.

BALANCE SCORE CARDS

While the results of the Balanced Score Cards for Region 12 are positive, there is no formalized process for monitoring the score card results. Region 12 is an integral part of the development of the statewide Balance Score Card. The Balanced Score Card provides a set of data to hold the center accountable for demonstrating high standards.

The formalized process should be developed by RESC representatives and include the major data elements that are being developed in the benchmark year. As benchmark data elements are added, then benchmark data can be developed and incorporated into the process. This process should involve a careful evaluation of the Balanced Report Card results minimally each three years in order to establish longitudinal data that can be used to determine actual successes. This recommendation should be implemented in 2005–06.

Exhibit 12-6 shows an overview of the score card. As seen, the results are positive; however, when MGT asked what the process is for monitoring the score card individual results, no information could be provided.

RESC 12 should create a clearly communicated process for monitoring the individual results of the Balanced Score Cards. The implementation of this recommendation should result in a carefully defined process for monitoring the factors contributing to score card reporting. This should provide the RESC staff with data that can be used to develop improvement plans that are targeting specific goals.

BOARD INVOLVEMENT IN PLANNING

Board members in Region 12 are not familiar with the strategic plan in RESC 12. MGT could not find evidence of the board involvement in developing the strategies plan, resulting board members not understand the region's plan.

While the staff and administrators could clearly articulate the strategic plan for RESC 12, most of the board members could not. Each board member was interviewed and most could not specify any components of the region's strategic plan. Many responses were broad such as "the center's goal is to provide quality services to the rural school districts."

Accomplishing greater board involvement in strategic plan involvement will result in the board positioning itself to hold itself more accountable for important strategic initiatives. RESC 12 should involve the board in the development of the strategic plan and provide the board with regular updates on the region's strategic plan including the goals, activities, and timelines. The implementation of this recommendation should involve the executive director developing a systematic annual involvement of the board and present the board with the opportunity to become more accountable for its activity. This process could be added to an element of the board's annual self-evaluation.

EMPLOYEE FEEDBACK

RESC 12's process for securing employee input for improving the services to clients and for improving internal RESC conditions is ineffective. Few of the employee's comments are in the category of improved services to districts and schools.

Exhibit 12-6
Region 12 Education Service Center
Balanced Scorecard Data
(September 1, 2003 – May 31, 2004)

24,365 individuals trained BSC KPI #4
Definition: The total number of individuals trained which includes district participants and school board members

11.4% of ESC staff delivered training through the Distance Learning Network BSC KPI #30
Definition: The percent of professional staff delivering or facilitating learning opportunities through distance learning including ITV and Internet

13.3% of trainings utilized instructional technology BSC KPI #31
Definition: The percent of workshops in which participants actively use hardware or software that will impact teaching and learning

106,584 of contact hours delivering training BSC KPI #6
Definition: The total number of contact hours of training delivered by ESC staff

98% of participants "strongly agreed" or "agreed" that "knowledge and skills will be applied in current assignments". BSC KPI #8
(Note: Quarterly data, September 2003-February 2004)
Definition: The average training evaluation rating for all workshops

81 high school students enrolled through Distance Learning Network BSC KPI #5
(Note: Quarterly data, September 2003-February 2004)
Definition: The total number of students enrolled in classes through Regional Distance Learning Networks. Classes are for dual credit, high school credit only, and higher ed. level credit

14,269 students served directly BSC KPI #13
Definition: Students, infant to adult, served directly by the ESC service

1,047 parents served directly BSC KPI #14
Definition: The number of parents served directly by ESC service

19,861 technical assistance contacts made by 70 professional staff BSC KPI #11
Definition: The number of consulting assistance contacts on-site or in person, not including contacts made during workshops

10,130 hours of consultative assistance delivered by 70 professional staff BSC KPI #12
Definition: The sum of consultative assistance hours performed by consultants

.1% PID errors reported by districts and charters BSC KPI #15
Definition: The percent of Personal Identification (PID) errors by districts/charters

3,336 hours ESC staff attended professional development BSC KPI #29
Definition: The number of hours each full time employee attends professional development activities

4,764 hours ESC staff attended technology training BSC KPI #29
Definition: The number of hours each full time employee attends technology training

462,005 Web site hits BSC KIP #22
Definition: The number of ESC Web site hits

Source: Summary of Balanced Score Card for Region 12, 2004.

The RESC 12 has a forum for employees to provide improvement suggestions called Q-tips; however, most of the suggestions are related to the comfort of the RESC staff and not to improving the quality of services to districts. Staff providing tips are suppose to begin getting a paid day off if the tips are implemented.

The "Q-Tip" Program began in Spring 2004. Region 12 has implemented it as a part of its Internal Affairs Team (IAT) committee. It is a program goal to award employees with prizes for submitting Q-Tips to improve its services as well as its internal operations. At least one of those prizes will be a paid day off for the employee submitting the suggestion. The Q-Tip has already generated over 40 ideas.

Below are some of the example Q-tips:

- "Install an ATM machine in the RESC.
- I think we should not have a day off for ideas. If we begin to generate 100 ideas and use them no one would be here. I believe that we should make the day offs par of the prize drawings.
- I suggest we say the pledges to both flags at each staff meeting.
- The dress code needs to be reviewed. There is a huge difference in what men and women are required to wear."

Very few comments were related to improving services for schools and districts.

RESC 12 should revise the employee suggestion program to include elements for improving both the center and services to clients and eliminate the practice of permitting paid days off for suggestions. Professional employees should be expected to provide improvement suggestions as part of their responsibilities—they should not be rewarded with time off. Also, employees should provide more useful suggestions that serve to help their clients.

ENERGY AUDIT

Although the RESC 12 does cycle its climate control system and maintains a performance contract with its HVAC provider, it has not maximized its opportunity to reduce energy costs. The service center has not conducted an energy audit and does not use high efficiency lighting units throughout the center.

Energy audits and performance contracts can minimize a facility's energy use and costs by identifying and addressing system and human inefficiencies. An energy audit is the first step to assess how much energy a facility consumes and to evaluate what measures can be taken to make it more energy-efficient. An audit will identify problems that may, when corrected, save significant amounts of money over time. Through an energy audit, facility managers can pinpoint where a facility is losing energy via limitations in its insulation, heating and cooling systems, lighting fixtures, and equipment use and maintenance practices. To minimize energy costs without significant investment, a facility may rely on an energy performance contract. In such contracts, an energy services company identifies and implements cost saving projects for a facility. In turn, the facility manager uses actual energy cost savings to reimburse the energy services company and to pay off the loan that financed the energy conservation projects. Such contracts can last five to ten years, after which time all cost savings accrue directly to the facility manager.

RESC 12 should conduct an energy audit or enter into an energy performance contract to minimize energy costs. RESC 12 should consider conducting an energy audit to identify strategies to minimize energy costs. Such audits are provided by the State Energy Conservation Office (SECO), as well as by local energy providers.

The State Energy Conservation Office (SECO) provides energy audits at no cost. Therefore, this recommendation can be implemented with no additional resources. The retrofit costs and eventual savings that can result from an energy audit will depend on the types of

retrofits identified and implemented. It is generally expected that energy retrofits pay for themselves within eight to 10 years through energy savings and reduced maintenance costs.

DISTRICT NEEDS ASSESSMENT

RESC 12 uses a thorough needs assessment process to assist districts in using data to determine district needs; however, not all appropriate departments and divisions are writing effective strategic plans targeting these identified needs.

The region uses a Collaboration Day Needs Assessment Process by which the RESC assists districts in using data to determine district needs. The region uses four cross functional Priority Planning Teams and all departments should have written improvement plans around the center's four strategic priorities and individual program planning is addressed within these component plans. Not all departments are producing quality plans. Ideally this information is analyzed and then becomes one of the driving forces for the development of programs and services by the center. For the 2004–05 needs assessment, districts rated among their highest needs in:

- assistance with TEKS/TAKS (also identified as a top need in 2002–03);
- strategies, programs, information, and assistance in dealing with gaps in student groups/as-risk students (also identified as a top need in 2002–03) ; and
- assistance in student management issues.

MGT consultants found that not all curriculum and instructional departments/units have specific, written plans based on an analysis of hard data as to how to address these identified needs. Consultants did find some departments who did have a specific plan based on the needs assessment and an evaluation of various data—the Migrant Services Department and the Title I Department.

For migrant services, the region is required to provide staff development and technical assistance for migrant districts for effective instructional support service as addressed in the NCLB Title I, Part C. **Exhibit 12-7** shows data for the March 2004 preliminary 3rd grade reading scores. As shown, the groups of students these two departments assist (migrant and Title I) are higher than the state average.

Exhibit 12-7
Preliminary 3rd Grade Reading Data
March 2004

	State	Region 12
Met Standard	91	91
Commended Performance	35	33
Native American	94	93
Asian	96	97
African American	86	86
Hispanic	88	89
White	96	95
Economically Disadvantaged	87	88
Title I	**89**	**91**
Migrant	**82**	**86**
Limited English Proficient	82	84
Bilingual	83	78
ESL	81	81
Special Education	86	86
Gifted/Talented	100	100
At-Risk	83	84

Source: RESC 12 and TEA, 2004.

Exhibit 12-8 provides a snapshot of a small portion of the Migrant Services Departments' plan of action to address both identified needs of the districts, as well as data-driven needs.

Unlike the Migrant Services and Title I programs, several programs provided by the RESC do not have any data to show the effectiveness of the program. For example, there is no measure of success for the Region 12 Child Find Program. The program has documented numbers and data for federal reports, but does not conduct quality analysis of the data to make sound program changes. Also, several board members interviewed were unable to specify key components of the systemwide or departmental strategic plans.

RESC 12 should ensure each RESC department and division has a specific, written plan to address the priority needs identified in the assessment and is based on a comprehensive analysis of data. Some of the department's Continuous Improvement Plans need to be updated; some actions plans were not accomplished and the plan does not reflect this. For example, the Transition Fair was not implemented by the specified date, but no explanation of why it was not implemented is explained in the plan.

Exhibit 12-8
Migrant Shared Services Arrangement For District Plan Of Action

District/ESC Region 12
Goal(s): To ensure that migratory children through Region 12 have access to receive high quality, comprehensive instructional and support services that enable them to meet the same challenging state performance standards that all children are expected to meet.

Activities to Accomplish	Person(s) Position Responsible	Time Line Start/End	Means of Evaluation And Documenting Accomplishment
1. Review/discuss district NGS Priority for Service Report	Teacher, counselor, MSC, Migrant staff	Monthly	Progress report, TAKS assessments, teacher strategies/test, analyzing data
2. Coordination with PEIMS District/SSA MEP	District PEIMS contact recruiter, MSC, NGS data entry specialist	Weekly	Encoding migrant student data accurately on to NGS (district/ESC terminal site)
3. District programs providing services to Priority for Services' migrant students.	District contact, teachers	Weekly	NCLB, Title 1 Part C, Priority for Services assessment(s), district priority for services student(s) assessment follow-up
4. Monitor identified priority for services students academic progress	Teacher(s), MSC Counselor, migrant staff	Weekly	Progress report, teacher conference, make up assignment(s)
5. District priority for services selection criteria for identified student(s)	MSC/district contact NGS data entry specialist, ESC migrant staff	Sept.–May	District NGS Priority for Services report, district priority for services student(s)
6. Schedule home visits to update academic progress of student(s)	MSC, social services agencies contacts	Monthly	Follow-up progress report, parent/MSC via teacher/student homework review, MSC/parent/teacher compact
7. Provide Coordination of Services to priority for Services students and families	MSC, parents, students	Aug.–Aug.	Community social services/agencies referrals, appointment/follow-up, home visits
8. Provide update and orientation on priority for services criteria	District administrators, parents, MSC, NGS specialist	Aug.–Aug.	Agenda, training/meeting, parent attendance, follow-up meeting

Source: Migrant Services Department, RESC 12, 2004.

Each of the department's written plan should be an integral part of the RESC 12 systemwide plan to ensure all departments are aware of each other's efforts and are working collaboratively to improve student achievement for all students.

As a follow-up, the board should be consistently updated on the individual and systemwide improvement plans.

LOW-PERFORMING SCHOOLS

While RESC 12 has above state average standardized scores in many areas, there is no formal plan to assist the lowest performing schools in its member districts. Preliminary test results show that many Waco ISD campus rankings may fall this year when the state announces its annual ratings. After a one-year hiatus from ranking due to the state initiating the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills Test, the TEA will rate schools again in the Fall of 2004.

Many positive efforts are being accomplished by RESC 12. For example, the region has taken the lead in preparing Texas teachers in the areas of reading and math to meet the ever increasing demands of Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) and now the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS). One approach to addressing the area of TAKS has been the establishment of the TAKS Academies which have received positive feedback from the member districts.

However, data show districts and schools need more services and materials specifically targeted to TAKS and TEKS performance. Several staff members interviewed stated that there was a region plan for low performing schools; however, it is a verbal plan of action not concrete in writing that shows what specific steps the RESC will take to address the needs of a lower performing school or a school in which the campus ratings are declining.

One of the audit data requests was to provide reports showing the disagregation of test scores and other related data as well as procedures that discuss how the data are used by the RESC to assist low performing campuses and administrators in modifying programs and enhancing staff development; however, there were no procedures listed in the data file.

MGT's superintendent survey responses reflect the need to improve services in core subject areas. **Exhibit 12-9** shows that the support for regular and special education programs is lower for Region 12 than statewide averages.

Exhibit 12-9
Region 12 and Statewide Superintendent Survey Response

Statement	Region 12 (S +SA/D +SD)	State (S +SA/D +SD)
SUPPORT FOR REGULAR EDUCATION PROGRAMS 1. Reading and Language Arts	88/3%	92/2%
2. Mathematics	85/9	88/4
3. Social Studies	88/6	87/3
4. Science	85/6	87/5
SUPPORT FOR SPECIAL POPULATION PROGRAMS 5. Special Education	79/3	91/3
6. At-risk and compensatory education	79/9	89/4
7. Bilingual Education and ESL	79/9	85/6
8. Advanced academics (gifted and talented, AP)	82/9	85/6

Source: MGT Superintendent Survey, 2004.

RESC 12 should create an RESC collaborative plan for addressing the needs of RESC 12 member low performing or declining ratings schools. While many staff interviewed shared with consultants their plans to assist the lower performing schools, there is no written process

in place to ensure all departments are coordinating their efforts. By implementing this recommendation, the RESC should have a more collaborative procedure for assisting schools.

SPECIAL EDUCATION TRAINING

The training offered to special education teachers in RESC 12 should be improved. Further, there is a lack of collaboration between general education and special education departments at RESC 12.

The preliminary 3rd grade reading data for Special Education students are shown in **Exhibit 12-7**. As shown, Region 12's scores are tied with the state average. A review of some of the comments from special education training participants show that training needs to be enhanced.

Comments included:

- "Many questions on the content exam were not covered in training;
- Need more in-depth training for special needs groups;
- Pedagogy was horrible, taught at the pre-K level;
- Training on special needs group should be in pre-service; and
- Would like to learn strategies for using test scores to meet student needs."

Also, interviews indicate that the RESC does not provide a uniform pre-referral training for teachers to use as an appropriate intervention process.

A survey sent out by RESC 12 in the Spring 2004 shows that 68.4 percent of the respondents stated that they need more professional development in the evaluation of students with disabilities. Fifty-two (52) percent of the respondents stated they need more training on access to the general curriculum and inclusion.

Also, interviews and a review of documentation shows there is a need for stronger collaboration between the Special Education Department and the General Education Departments and specialists.

RESC 12 should strengthen the special education training offered by RESC 12 and improve the collaboration between the Special and General Education Departments. The implementation of this recommendation should further strengthen the special education training opportunities for member districts. Regular meetings with special education and general education RESC 12 staff should enhance program offerings.

JOB POSITION INFORMATION

Region 12 does not provide potential applicants with comprehensive position information.

Comprehensive vacancy announcements provide potential applicants with the information needed to assess whether a position may be an appropriate fit with their skills and interests. By using comprehensive vacancy announcements, an organization is more likely to receive applications from individuals who are interested in performing the types of work needed. This improves the quality of the applicant pool and saves staff from having to review applications and interview individuals whose skills and interests are not necessarily a good fit.

RESC 12 provided MGT with 27 recent vacancy announcements. Most of these announcements included the following information:

- job title;
- salary grade;
- general benefits information;
- education and experience requirements;
- additional desirable qualifications; and
- general summary of duties and expectations.

However, 11 (or 41 percent) of the announcements did not include any description of responsibilities. While this information may

be inferred from the position title for some positions (Secretary or Secretary/Brailist), most of these positions' duties were not easily inferred by the title or required skill set (i.e., Bilingual/ESL education specialist, deputy director for Education Service Center Initiatives, Education Specialist - Special Education, Instructional Technology Specialist, Video Network Specialist, etc.). Additionally, most of these positions require or indicate as "preferred" a Master's degree, indicating that the ideal candidate would have highly developed and refined skills. Yet, without general information about the position's duties, potential applicants would not be able to assess if the position matched their processional interests or would maximize or build upon their skill set.

RESC 12 should use job descriptions to develop more detailed and comprehensive vacancy announcements. In addition to the information currently provided, RESC 12 should consider includes the following in vacancy announcements:

- main duties and responsibilities and expected percentage of time allocated to each;
- hours/schedule;
- number of people to whom the position reports and supervisor(s)' title(s); and
- other job-related information, such as responsibility for others, expected external or internal contact with others, and decision-making authority.

This information is especially important for positions that require or prefer higher education degrees. Applicants of this caliber are likely to be discriminatory in their job search and would require additional information about a position in order to prepare an appropriate application.

RESC 12 can obtain much of this information from their available job descriptions, which are updated annually as part of the staff evaluation process. However, following RESC 12's continuous improvement model, vacancy announcements should not simply be a copy of a position's job description. Each vacancy announcement should be developed based on program efficiency and effectiveness, not solely on past or current allocation of responsibilities.

EMPLOYEE EXIT SURVEY

Region 12 does not use a comprehensive Employee Exit Survey instrument. The Employee Exit Survey needs to be revised.

An Employee Exit Survey allows an organization to determine why employees leave and, in turn, improve retention and satisfaction for active employees. In order to add value to an organization, an exit survey should at a minimum, address the following areas:

- reasons for leaving the organization;
- satisfaction with management practices and supervision;
- working conditions and work/life balance;
- compensation and benefits;
- organizational structure and management;
- job attributes; and
- training and development.

Currently, RESC 12 maintains an exit interview form to be completed by human resources staff with exiting employees. This form records the employee's name, position, department, dates of employment, forwarding address. and type of termination (resignation, retirement, dismissal, etc.). The form also allows users to indicate employees' general reasons for leaving the service center. However, the form does not address most of the areas identified in the bulleted list above, thus limiting the service center's opportunity for growth and improvement.

Exhibit 12-10 lists possible exit survey questions.

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Exhibit 12-10
Sample Exit Survey Questions

Multiple Choice Questions	
Reasons for leaving (check all that apply)	
• Higher Pay • Benefits • Better job opportunity • Commute • Conflict with other employees	• Conflict with managers • Family and personal reasons • Relocation/Move • Career Change • Company Instability • Other (describe)
Scaled Responses (e.g., Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree, Not Satisfied to Very Satisfied)	
Statements about one's job • Job was challenging • Skills were effectively used • Job orientation was effective • Work load was reasonable • Sufficient resources were available • Work environment was safe, comfortable and appropriately equipped	**Statements about the organization's management** • Gave fair and equal treatment Was available to discuss job related issues • Welcomed suggestions and encouraged feedback • Maintained consistent policies and practices • Provided recognition for achievements • Encouraged cooperation/collegiality • Provided development opportunities
Statements about one's department • Had good synergy • Had adequate equipment • Was adequately staffed • Was efficient	**Statements about one's supervisor** • Had knowledge of the job • Had knowledge of supervision • Was open to suggestions • Recognized employees' contributions
Statements about Compensation and Benefits • Medical insurance package • 403(b) savings plan • Retirement program • Paid time off • Job market competitiveness of salary	***Statements about opportunities for professional growth*** • Had adequate opportunity for continuing education • Had adequate on-the-job training and guidance • Had adequate mentoring

Source: MGT of America, Inc., 2004.

RESC 12 should improve the employee exit survey to gather information relevant to the improvement of the organization's human resources, staff support, and professional development practices. By revising its exit survey, RESC 12 can ensure it has adequate data to improve the organization and prevent costly employee turnover. To minimize the costs of administering the survey, RESC 12 should consider making this survey available online.

SALARY ADJUSTMENTS

RESC 12 uses several annual salary adjustment tools; these tools are not merit-based. Rather, they respond to the financial status of the service center, the labor market, and staff's length of service. Exhibit 12-11 identifies RESC 12's salary adjustment mechanisms and Exhibit 12-12 shows the equation used to calculate staff salaries.

RESC 12's salary adjustment tools raise two concerns. One concern is that the service center's COLA is not a true cost of living adjustment. Traditionally, COLAs are used to ensure that individuals can maintain their standard of living by adjusting their salary to changes in the cost of regional goods and services. RESC 12 uses their COLA as a means to provide a straightforward raise based on how competitive the labor market is and the financial status of the organization.

The other concern is that RESC 12 has two salary adjustment tools to reward staff for longevity: Annual Career Service Recognition Payments and Compensation Above Base Salary. When applied to existing staff, these tools provide double rewards for longevity-one for working with the service center and another for working in their specialized field. While it is admirable that RESC 12 has placed a concentrated focus on rewarding staff for their loyalty to the field and the service center, its efforts may be excessive.

Exhibit 12-11
RESC 12 Salary Adjustment Mechanisms

Adjustment Mechanism	Description
Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA)	The COLA is determined based on the Service Center's financial situation. The amount of the COLA may vary across staff type and in response to market trends.[a, b] RESC 12's COLA is applied as a flat salary increase for all staff within a particular salary scale.
Annual Career Service Recognition Payments	Annual Career Service Recognition Payments are designed to reward long-term employees. Starting at five years of service, staff receive a flat increase to their pay. The scale is as follows: **Years of Service** — **Annual Payment** 5 to 9 — $400 10 to 14 — $600 15 to 19 — $800 20 to 24 — $1,000 25 or more — $1,500
Compensation Above Base Salary	Compensation Above Base Salary is designed to reward new and existing staff for increasing years of experience. This compensation tool is a multiplier of 6.25 percent. It is applied to staff's base salary and doubles every eight years. To be eligible for this multiplier, staff must be employed at the Service Center or in a similar field for at least one year. In their second year of service with RESC 12 or relevant experience, staff receive a salary increase worth 6.25 percent of their base salary. In their 10th year of service, they receive an increase worth 12.5 percent (6.25%+ 6.25%) of their base salary.[c]

Sources: RESC 12 Employee Compensation Plan, 2003–04.
Interviews with RESC 12 Director of Human Resources, Staff Development, and Teacher Certification, June 2004 .

[a] *For example, in FY 2000–01, the Texas Legislature mandated a $3,000 salary increase for all teachers and librarians. To remain competitive, RESC 12 gave all it professional staff a $4,500 COLA that year, while other staff received more moderate adjustments ($1,200 and $2,400, depending on salary scale).*

[b] *In FY 2003–04, RESC 12 did not provide staff with a COLA.*

[c] *In FY 2003–04, RESC 12 suspended any new adjustments from Compensation Above Base Salary.*

Exhibit 12-12
Equation Used to Calculate Staff Salaries at RESC 12

Current Salary =	Salary in prior fiscal year + COLA + Career Service Recognition Payment Adjustment (if applicable) + Compensation Above Base Salary adjustment (if applicable)

Sources: RESC 12 Employee Compensation Plan, 2003–04. Interviews with RESC 12 Director of Human Resources, Staff Development, and Teacher Certification, June 2004 .

RESC 12 should redefine the COLA as a "salary adjustment" and eliminate the double longevity reward provided to current staff. RESC 12 should use a more accurate term to define the salary adjustment currently called a COLA. One possible term to consider is "salary adjustment."

RESC 12 should review and revise its salary adjustment tools to eliminate superfluous incentives to existing staff. One way to eliminate the double longevity benefit is to discontinue the Annual Career Service Recognition Payments and maintain the Compensation Above Base Salary.

The cost savings that would result if RESC 12 removed its longevity benefit. It assumes that all staff eligible for the payment would remain with the service center through FY 2008–09. The first year savings is estimated half the savings due to the implementation beginning of January.

RESC 12 Human Resources staff provided MGT with the number of staff that would be eligible for Career Service Recognition Payments between FYs 2004–05 and 2008–09. To calculate the annual cost of these payments, MGT multiplied the payment amount by the number of eligible staff. These calculations assume that all current staff would remain employed with the Service Center through 2008-09.

ALTERNATIVE REVENUES SOURCES

Region 12 has not been successfully effective in seeking alternate revenue streams for curriculum and staff development.

The recent decrease in state and local funding has impacted the delivery of services to the RESC 12's member districts as is evidenced by $1,641,94316(16.64 percent) decrease in expenditures for curriculum and instructional staff development. Curriculum and instructional staff development are critical components of the services offered to the center's member school districts. Efforts should be made to not sacrifice these services when revenue sources decrease.

Exhibit 12-13 depicts a three-year comparison of RESC 12 revenues, expenditures, and fund balance. The exhibit shows that revenues from FY 2000–01 to FY 2002–03 at the state and federal levels decreased (22.28% and 3.83%, respectively), while revenues from local and intermediate sources increased by 15.51 percent. The total decrease in funding of $817,176 (4.82%) does not justify the reduction of funds allocated to curriculum and instructional development. The fund balance increased significantly (64.78%), due primarily to the previous finding of a decrease in curriculum and instructional staff development. It should be noted that RESC 12 staff report that one factor affecting the fund balance is due to TEA canceling some projects such as the Summer Reading Academics, Academics 2000, and Institutional Technology.

RESC 12 should seek alternative revenue sources and cost savings from other areas to ensure that the proper level of curriculum and staff development is provided to the school districts. Alternative revenue sources, including grants not typically awarded, such as the $900,000 Target Grant for RESC 18's Mobile Technology Bus should be researched and obtained to provide additional funding to supplement center's recurring revenue.

Additionally, through the center's continuous improvement process, identifiable cost saving measures should be identified.

UNRESERVED FUND BALANCE

RESC 12 currently has no policy to manage the fund balance and no structured process to support the designation of unreserved fund balance. A policy is needed as well as long-term plans for capital improvements or other future capital needs such as those for technology.

RESC 12 should establish a policy to be maintained by RESC 12 that addresses the level of unreserved fund balance and include criteria for the determination on designations of fund balance. The establishment of a policy on the management of fund balance will provide long-term guidance for future financial decisions.

INTERNAL SERVICE FUNDS

The inclusion of the Internal Service Funds in the center's financial statements provides inaccurate information on the estimated revenues and expenditures for Region 12. Internal Service Funds are used as a tool to accurately distribute the total costs for certain central services to user departments or programs within a governmental entity.

Because the revenues of the internal service funds are generated by expenditures in the General or Special Revenue Funds, the inclusion of internal service funds revenues and expenditures for purposes of summarizing the overall financial position the center results in an overstatement of millions of dollars in revenues and expenditures in the amounts attributable to the internal service funds.

RESC 12 should show the total revenues and expenditures for RESC 18 financial statements without reporting Internal Service Funds. This change in reporting will provide an accurate representation of the revenue and expenditures when presenting financial statements.

Exhibit 12-13
Three-Year Comparison of Revenues, Expenditures, and Fund Balance

Revenues and Expenditures	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	Increase (Decrease) 2001–02 to 2002–03 Amount	Increase (Decrease) 2001–02 to 2002–03 Percentage
Revenues					
Local and Intermediate Sources	$5,438,077	$5,770,028	$6,664,824	$894,796	15.51%
State Program Revenues	3,844,266	6,956,669	5,406,483	(1,550,186)	(22.28%)
Federal Program Revenues	3,254,948	4,218,995	4,057,209	(161,786)	(3.83%)
Total Revenues	**$12,537,291**	**$16,945,692**	**$16,128,516**	**(817,176)**	**(4.82%)**
Expenditures					
Instruction		$252,325	$284,475	$$32,150	12.74%
Instructional Resources & Media Services		262,570	462,584	200,014	76.18%
Curriculum & Instructional Staff Development (1)	6,219,323	9,864,873	8,222,930	(1,641,943)	(16.64%)
General Administration	2,135,082	2,104,329	1,880,583	(223,746)	(10.63%)
Plant Maintenance & Operations			2,525	2,525	
Data Processing Services	865,404	1,185,769	1,341,371	155,602	13.12%
School District Administrative Support	2,874,511	2,848,624	2,837,467	(11,157)	(0.39%)
Debt Service - Principal on long-term debt	239,045	246,190	251,004	4,814	1.96%
Debt Service - Interest on long-term debt		89,911	80,232	(9,679)	(10.77%)
Facilities Acquisition and Construction	540,322	60,596	47,197	(13,399)	(22.11%)
Payments to Fiscal Agent/Member District of SSA	255,577	238,828	329,596	90,768	38.01%
Total Expenditures	**$13,129,264**	**$17,154,015**	**$15,739,964**	**($1,414,051)**	**(8.24%)**
Excess of Revenues Over Expenditures	(591,973)	(208,323)	388,552	596,875	
Other Financing Sources (Uses)					
Transfers In	$280,542	$25,792	$69,961	$44,169	171.25%
Total Other Financing Sources (Uses)	**$280,542**	**$25,792**	**$69,961**	**$44,169**	**171.25%**
Net Change in Fund Balance	**($311,431)**	**($182,531)**	**$458,513**	**$641,044**	
Beginning Fund Balance	1,201,788	890,357	707,826	(182,531)	**(20.50%)**
Ending Fund Balance	**$$890,357**	**$$707,826**	**$$1,166,339**	**$$458,513**	**$64.78%**

Source: 2000–01 to 2002–03 Annual Financial Reports.
(1) For FY 2000–01, this figure includes Instruction and Instructional Resources & Media Services expenditures.

VEHICLE REPLACEMENT

RESC 12 does not use an internal service fund for vehicle replacement. Center components are currently charged $.28/mile for vehicle usage and the center replaces its vehicles every five to six years. The creation of an internal service fund for the replacement of these vehicles, as well as the maintenance and repair of all other center vehicles, will ensure that vehicles are replaced on a cycle commensurate with the condition of the vehicles.

Additionally, the rate of $.28/mile is below what other RESCs charge for vehicle usage. RESC 18 charges $.35/mile to its components.

RESC 12 should create an Internal Service Fund for the replacement, maintenance, and repair of the Center's vehicles and charge components $.35/mile for their use. The creation of this fund will allow the Center to schedule vehicle replacement as needed from year to year.

ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE

The financial software, RSCCC2K, used by the center does not yet have an accounts receivable module. The accounts receivable are processed on a separate system and then entered into the main financial system at the end of each month. This is a duplication of effort and thus an efficient use of time.

The RSCCC2K program was developed in Region 20. It is a fully integrated financial services software package, which is used by the Business Offices of the Centers in the RSCCC Cooperative. The Accounts Receivable module, the only module that has not yet been completed, is scheduled to go live in April 2005.

RESC 12 should urge RESC 20, the developer of RSCCC2K, to ensure that an accounts receivable function is quickly incorporated in the software package. Once the accounts receivable module is developed in RSCCC2K, the Center's financial system will be fully integrated and will eliminate duplication of effort.

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources with fees currently paid for the software.

CELLULAR PHONE USE

RESC 12 does not have an appropriate internal control for accountability of cellular phone usage. The center currently has 53 cell phones issued to staff for business purposes only. When reviewing monthly invoices, staff is responsible for identifying and paying for personal calls. Currently, the process relies on the employee's recollection and honesty to identify such calls. This results in a potentially significant financial liability for the center.

RESC 12 should Implement a policy for staff to purchase their own cellular phones and submit detailed invoices for reimbursement of business calls. The implementation of this policy will provide a better internal control for the usage of cellular phones and should result in cost savings for the center.

CHECK ISSUANCE

RESC 12 should improve its internal control for the check issuance process.

Currently, the employee that performs the check issuance function (accounts payable) does not need authorization to mail checks after they have been printed. Once payment authorization is approved by the Financial Services senior director or the accountant, it is forwarded to the accounts payable section for check processing and issuance. It is possible that when the monthly reconciliation of the checking account takes place, a check could have been made to an entity which never submitted an invoice or provided services to the center. This lack of internal control creates a potential for errors to go unnoticed or employee theft to possibly occur.

RESC 12 should require that the Financial Services Senior Director or the Accountant verify each check being issued has approved payment authorization and prior documentation prior to check issuance. The implementation of this policy will provide a reliable system of checks and balances so that check issuance mistakes and the potential for employee theft are minimized.

FUEL PURCHASES

The use of a gasoline procurement card is limited to only one vendor.

RESC 12 has a procurement card procedure to allow center staff to make fuel purchases when they are in the field. A detailed procedure has been implemented for using the gasoline cards at a nearby Citgo gasoline station. While it was noted that this practice was encouraged by the region's auditor, no hard data was provided to verify this statement.

The use of the card is beneficial because it eliminates a need for employees to pay for purchases and submit invoices for reimbursement which are time consuming and detract from other functions that Business Office staff should be performing. However, other vendors need to be added to the fuel purchase list.

RESC 12 should add other vendors for fuel purchases. The addition of vendors may result in lower charges to the center because of competition and will allow access to other fuel stations when the current vendor is not available.

PROPERTY AND LIABILITY INSURANCE

Even though no Property/Casualty/Honesty/Liability losses have been incurred for the last five fiscal years, the premium for these coverages increased 35 percent from FY 2002–03 to FY 2003–04. Typically, organizations are rewarded with lower premiums for no claim activity and the potential for liability is minimal. This is not the case for RESC 12 and an inquiry should be made as to the reasons for such an increase in premium without corresponding claim activity.

RESC 12 should solicit other bids so that RESC 12 is being charged appropriate insurance premiums. The lack of claim activity should result in lower premiums for the center.

FIXED ASSETS

The inventory process for the center's fixed assets is only partially automated.

The center purchases large expense items each year which are considered fixed assets (i.e., computers), which are marked with a numbered tag that identifies each asset. This process is currently performed manually be the purchasing agent. The tag number and other information are then entered into a database and an inventory is conducted annually with following up on missing items. The inventory is performed by the purchasing agent and one additional employee and consists of checking off items on a database report as they are identified. This is a time consuming effort which is subject to human error. Bar coding systems provide an affordable alternative to the manual labeling, identification and inventory of fixed assets.

RESC 12 should analyze the feasibility of purchasing a bar coding system for the automation of the RESC 12 fixed asset inventory process. The automation of the entire inventory process will provide a more efficient and accurate way of identifying and tracking the center's fixed assets.

FISCAL IMPACT

	Recommendation	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	5-Year (Costs) or Savings	One-Time (Costs) or Savings
12-1	Eliminate RESC initiatives deputy director position and one field service agent position.	$0	$179,244	$179,244	$179,244	$179,244	$716,976	
12-3	Close Hillsboro Satellite Center and eliminate the full-time staff member.	$0	$34,872	$34,872	$34,872	$34,872	$139,488	
12-13	Eliminate the double longevity reward provided to current staff.	$0	$46,500	$55,900	$61,100	$69,800	$233,300	
	TOTAL	**$0**	**$260,616**	**$270,016**	**$275,216**	**$283,916**	**$1,089,764**	**$0**

CHAPTER 13:

AUSTIN

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AUSTIN

Regional Education Service Center XIII (RESC 13) provides services in sixteen counties to 59 school districts, 19 charter schools, and 32 private schools.

RESC 13 area is the second fastest growing region in the state. The RESC 13 area includes over 295,000 students. The students within RESC 13 are ethnically and economically diverse. The majority of RESC 13's students are White (52 percent). Approximately 35 percent of RESC 13 students are Hispanic and 10 percent are African-American. Approximately 37 percent of students in RESC 13 are classified as economically disadvantaged.

RESC 13 has played an important role in ensuring that ongoing support is provided statewide for programs that were formerly supported by TEA, but have been decentralized to RESCs and other educational entities. The RESC 13 currently supports ten statewide initiatives. It also partners with a number of RESCs to leverage resources.

RESC 13 recently expanded its facilities to include a new structure that provides meeting and workspace for trainings and other activities. The RESC 13 estimates that the new building has resulted in annual savings of $1 million in facility rentals and leased office space.

As one of the larger RESCs in the state, the changes in the state's funding formula resulted in a significant reduction in state funding. In 2003–04 RESC 13's total operating budget was $29.5 million, which is approximately $7.7 million less than it was in 2002–03. The RESC 13 quickly responded to the reduced funding by reorganizing, eliminating positions and some services, and working to generate new services and products that its clients would be interesting in supporting. RESC has a history of utilizing data and strategic goals to guide its organization. It has used its tools and experience to effectively address change.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- The RESC 13 planning process engages all staff; reflects consideration of data, agency resources, and district needs; and produces a high quality strategic plan.
- RESC 13 supports open, frequent, and productive communication with staff, board members, and area districts.
- RESC 13's implementation and use of a professional development management system has increased its ability to effectively serve schools, improved internal efficiency, and resulted in cost savings for the center.
- RESC 13's planning processes support the systematic review of the value, relevance, and cost-effectiveness of program services.
- Region 13 has an outstanding process for evaluating projects and managing project activities.
- The RESC 13 provides outstanding, innovative professional training and certification programs to prospective teachers and school leaders, and has effectively used technology to support all instructional support programs.
- RESC 13 has taken the lead on several statewide initiatives, and used partnerships with other RESCs to offer and support a range of services in its region and throughout the state.
- RESC 13 has used technology to support the delivery of cost-effective trainings, timely communication, and enhancements to the analytical capacity of school districts.
- Region 13 has developed a comprehensive performance evaluation and recognition program that include self-evaluations as a component of the performance assessment process, Acts of Excellence Cards, and an Employee Advisory Committee.

- Region 13 has weathered state funding reductions without significantly reducing its fund balances.
- Region 13 has developed a valuable financial tool that districts can use for self-evaluation.
- Region 13 offers quality services and products that are highly valued by its customers.
- Region 13 provides an affordable lease purchase program for school districts to obtain instructional computers.

FINDINGS

- Staff at all levels characterized RESC 13 as a "boundary-less organization." There is a strong sense of collegiality and support present throughout the center. However, there could be further improvements to the organizational structure of RESC 13 that would streamline operations and communication.
- The charter school representative role with respect to the RESC 13 board is not well defined. Furthermore, there does not appear to be established mechanisms in place by which the charter school representative is in contact with the constituents he serves.
- Region 13 has recently constructed a new facility that will reduce overhead costs and potentially generate rental income.
- The Facilities Department currently reports to the executive director, but could be more effectively aligned with the Administrative Services Division.
- The methods used to establish RESC 13 service costs vary depending on the program, in part because an organization-wide plan for setting fees does not exist.
- RESC 13's services for bilingual education do not appear to adequately meet the needs of the districts in the region.
- The Region 13 Web site provides access to posted job opportunities, but interested job seekers cannot submit applications online. For current employees, the Web site does not provide benefits information.
- The Human Resources Department currently reports directly to the executive director but could be more effectively aligned with the Administrative Services Division.
- Districts in Region 13 may avail themselves to several benefits by participating in the 2013 Multi-Regional Purchasing Cooperative.
- The Region 13 MIS functions are disagregated and dispersed across multiple areas in the organization. Moreover, the region lacks a comprehensive technology strategy and common vision.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 13-1: Modify the organizational structure to one where select staff and functions are transferred from Academic Services to Administrative Services.**
  Currently, there are six staff that support the development of distance learning, marketing, and communications in both the Academic Support Division support systems units. The functions carried out by these staff are more closely related to the functions within the Administrative Service Division. The current structure provides for communication and linkages between the division support system unit and overall Academic Support Division, but functionally would be better aligned with the Administrative Service Division especially considering the potential benefits and growth opportunities for online learning and technology support for course management. The services that the division support systems offer to the Academic Services Division are

important, but could be provided with possibly other services if part of Administrative Services. This move would consolidate staff responsible for online learning development, a growing service/support area within RESC 13, and move marketing and communication in the same division responsible for printing and field service outreach.

- **Recommendation 13-2: Provide opportunities for greater communication between the state-appointed charter representative and the charter schools the representative serves.** Creating greater communication between the charter school board member and the charter schools would serve two purposes. First, it would help ensure that the board member gains as broad a perspective as possible regarding the needs and issues of charter schools within the region. Second, it would ensure that charter schools are aware of the representation provided by the board member and give them the opportunity to voice any concerns they may have. Implementing this recommendation may also create a greater sense of community among the charter schools and, as these schools learn more about each other, lead to less reliance on RESC 13 for some services.

- **Recommendation 13-3: Continue efforts to lease the third floor of the new Region 13 facility.** Region 13 needs to complete the third floor of its facility and use this part of the center to lease to educational agencies and others in the Austin area.

- **Recommendation 13-4: Realign the Facilities Department under the Administrative Services Division.** This implementation of this recommendation should result in a more efficient and effective Facilities Department.

- **Recommendation 13-5: Perform an analysis of the various methods used to assess local fees.** This analysis should consider the appropriateness of the current fee levels and fee structure (membership, bundled services, and fee-for-service). The variation in approaches to establishing fees may lead to unintentional cross-program subsidization and/or an inaccurate assessment of the cost-effectiveness of product or service. Since it is important that RESC 13 offer its clients cost-effective services, it is crucial that a consistent method is in place for establishing fees for all services. As part of its development process for its next Plan for Improving Student Performance, RESC 13 should include discussion and analysis of its current fees. The RESC 13 management team should establish and document policies and procedures for setting all fees. Activity planning forms should incorporate internal staff time as an expenditure based on the costing methodology outlined in the policies and procedures. Each year the fee levels and structure should be reviewed as part of the planning process.

- **Recommendation 13-6: Review feedback and data from ESL academies to inform the development of future support and programs that will address ESL needs in the region.** Meeting the needs of ESL students is a critical learning objective for all schools within RESC 13. The RESC 13 receives high marks from superintendents for most of its other academic services, but there are indications that improvements in the support provided for ESL services is needed. The ESL Academies appear to be an immediate solution, but

RESC 13 should evaluate their effectiveness at the end of the summer based on participant feedback and during the school years based on student academic achievement. From this data and feedback RESC should develop a comprehensive multi-year plan to address the emerging regional needs for educating ESL students.

- **Recommendation 13-7: Expand the Region 13 Web site to include benefits information, an online job application form, and functionality for online submission of job applications.** The process should include electronic access and submission of all required forms, resumes, and applications via email or through the region's Web site. New employees should be given an information sheet that instructs them on how to use the Web site to obtain benefits information and how to review the employee handbook online. The site should also provide an email address or link to send questions to the HR Division.

- **Recommendation 13-8: Realign the Human Resources Department under the Administrative Services Division.** Human Resources functions are typically considered administrative services. Aligning the human resource functions of payroll, benefits administration, and personnel management with the other administrative functions of business management, finance, and accounting should facilitate more effective management of the region's administrative activities.

- **Recommendation 13-9: Region 13 should continue to make every effort to leverage the services of the Purchasing Cooperative and achieve savings related to volume discounts in addition to expanding the products offered through the cooperative agreement.** The implementation of this recommendation should result in a reduction of costs associated with bulk purchasing.

- **Recommendation 13-10: Integrate the Instructional Technology Programs, Data Services, PEIMS, and TETN departments into one division and develop a comprehensive, unified technology strategy.** All factions should work collectively to identify technology objectives for instructional staff networking, administrative, and PEIMS functions. A Chief Technology Officer should be appointed from existing staff to oversee the newly formed division. The new division should report directly to the executive director.

DETAILED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

STRATEGIC PLAN

RESC 13's reliance on and use of data, planning, and evaluation processes demonstrate that it is truly a data-driven organization. The practices RESC 13 has developed to utilize data support the requirements of *No Child Left Behind* and are used by RESC 13 to evaluate its program.

Each year RESC 13 develops a "Plan for Improving Student Performance." This document serves as the agency's strategic plan and operationalizes the legislative requirements stated in Texas Education Code Chapter 8 for RESCs. The 2003–04 version included the following four goals:

1. Assist school districts in improving student performance.
2. Assist school districts to operate efficiently and economically.
3. Assist school districts in the implementation of statewide initiatives as directed by the Commissioner of Education.
4. Improve capacity to serve clients.

To narrow the focus within each of these extremely broad goal areas, the plan identifies one or more specific performance objectives for each goal. For each performance objective, the plan then details specific strategies to meet each objective including a designation of responsible staff, audience, resource requirements, formative evaluation approach, and activities.

The Plan for Improving Student Performance reflects a clear vision for RESC 13 and serves as a useful and living document. The plan's value is a product of the annual process by which it is created. In January of each year, the RESC 13 leadership team holds a day-long meeting to review data in relation to the status of each performance objective and goal. This review includes an in-depth assessment of the progress or lack of progress that has been made. The team also examines new initiatives at the state and federal level that may impact school districts during the upcoming year. Following the review of student performance data and emerging state and federal priorities, the team answers the following questions:

- Do we need to change, add, or delete any of the performance objectives?
- Do we need to change, add, or delete any of the strategies utilized to accomplish the performance objectives?

Based on the answers to these questions, performance objectives and strategies are formulated for the upcoming year. In February, these preliminary objectives and strategies are further revised and updated by the larger group of RESC 13 staff, who participate in a 1.5 day meeting to review student performance data and other relevant information. Once the plan is finalized, the center staff use it to guide activities and the development of program budgets over the course of the year.

Accomplishment: The RESC 13 planning process engages all staff; reflects consideration of data, agency resources, and district needs; and produces a high quality strategic plan.

OPEN COMMUNICATION

Communication within RESC 13 is open and effective. The executive director holds weekly meetings with his management team (all deputy directors, directors, and senior coordinators). In addition, division meetings and other team meetings occur regularly.

Board members report feeling extremely well informed by the executive director and staff. The board members all agree that their role is to provide the executive director with policy direction and advice, and that the job of managing and directing staff is the responsibility of the executive director. The board packets are clear and provide board members with essential information. The materials are presented in a well-organized, bound publication. Meeting minutes are also orderly and succinct. The quality of the preparation by RESC 13 staff and level of knowledge of board members significantly contributes to productive and well-organized board meetings.

As part of its research for this project, MGT administered a survey to all Texas superintendents to gather their feedback regarding RESCs. As shown in **Exhibit 13-1**, 97 percent of Region 13 superintendents that responded to MGT's survey expressed some degree of agreement that *there are adequate channels of communication with [RESC 13],* which is slightly higher than the statewide response of 94 percent agreement with this statement. Other areas related to communication show a similar result, with all or nearly all RESC 13 respondents expressing positive opinions related to communication.

Exhibit 13-1
Superintendent Survey Responses Regarding Communication

Statement	% Agree/% Disagree[a]	
	Statewide	RESC 13
There are adequate channels of communication within the RESC in our region.	94/3	97/0
The RESC in our region is responsive to complaints.	90/3	97/0
The RESC in our region is responsive to requests for services.	94/2	100/0
The RESC in our region listens and tries to meet the needs of the school district.	95/2	100/0

Source: MGT Survey of School District Superintendents, 2004.
[a] The difference between the percent of respondents that "agreed or strongly agreed" and the percent of respondents that "disagreed or strongly disagreed" responded "neutral" or "don't

An important tool used by RESC 13 to gather feedback from the field is client satisfaction surveys, which are completed by superintendents, principals, and teachers. This survey requests feedback regarding satisfaction with RESC services by specific type of training, support, and other RESC assistance area. The responses from this survey are assessed and inform strategic planning development and other program planning and assessment efforts.

The RESC 13 has created many opportunities and avenues for communicating with region administrators and teachers. For example, RESC 13 has organized approximately 26 advisory groups. **Exhibit 13-2** provides a brief overview of current advisory groups.

The current advisory group structure provides many opportunities for school and district administrators as well as teachers to provide input to RESC 13. Most of the advisory groups are focused on a particular educational learning content area or special population. However, there are also role-based groups that provide a regionwide conduit for information sharing, professional networking, and support. For instance, on a monthly basis the region's superintendents meet as part of the RESC 13's Superintendent Advisory Committee meeting. The entire RESC 13 management team is in attendance. Meetings are held at the RESC 13 facility. The October meeting is a two day off-site retreat and the May meeting held as a joint meeting with the board of directors.

Communication with superintendents also includes superintendent cluster meetings facilitated by field service agents.

Accomplishment: RESC 13 supports open, frequent, and productive communication with staff, board members, and area districts.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

RESC 13 implemented the Course InSite® professional development management system developed by Austin-based Avatar Technology to support better and more efficient logistical management and evaluation of trainings. The Course InSite® system supports an online catalog, registration for trainings, financial transactions related to trainings, and the collection and reporting of training evaluation data. The system was introduced in RESC 13 in 2001. It currently supports over 28,000 user accounts.

As one of the earliest customers, RESC 13 was able to negotiate favorable terms with Avatar to provide the system with an unlimited licensed and installation at the center for a cost of $125,000 for initial implementation.

Exhibit 13-2
RESC 13 Advisory Groups

Advisory Group	Participants	Frequency of Meetings
Bilingual/ESL Cluster Team	Bilingual/ESL administrators and teachers	Quarterly
Business Managers/Capital Area TASBO	District business managers	Monthly
Carl Perkins Career and Technology Consortium	Consortium district members	Quarterly
Central Texas Purchasing Cooperative Product Committees	District purchasing representatives	As needed
Cohort Administrator Certification Program Advisory Council	Superintendents, principals, teachers, business and community leaders, university representatives	Quarterly
Counselor Network	District representatives	Three times per year
Curriculum Leadership Network	District curriculum administrators	Monthly
Distance Education Alliance	District representatives	Quarterly
Dyslexia Cluster Team	501 coordinators	Two times per year
Educator Certification Program Advisory Council	Personnel directors, principals, teachers	Quarterly
Evaluation Steering Committee	District evaluation lead—Educational Diagnosticians	Quarterly
Gifted/Talented Advisory Council	GATE administrators	Two times per year
Governing Board	Superintendent representatives from each county	Quarterly
Instructional Resources Users Advisory Committee	District representatives	Quarterly
Migrant Coop	District migrant program representatives	Monthly
Principal's Network	School principals	Four times per year
Regional Site-Based Decision Committee	Regional teachers and administrative professional group representatives	Quarterly
Science/Mathematics Advisory Council	District representatives	Annually
Special Education Leadership Network	District special education directors	Monthly
Special Projects Advisory Council	Representatives from districts and communities	Two times per year
STMRPC Data Processing Advisory Committee	Representatives from each data services district	Quarterly
Superintendent Leadership Development Consortium	RESC 1, 2, 13, XX, TASA consortium members, and SLDP assessment center directors	Annually
Superintendent Advisory Committee	Regional superintendents	Monthly
Title I Advisory Council	Title I administrators and teachers	Two times per year
Title III Advisory Council	Title III administrators and teachers	Two times per year
Visionaries in Technology and Learning	School district technology representatives	Quarterly

Source: Region 13 Advisory Group List (www.esc13.net/advisory.html), 2004.

RESC 13 staff report that they reviewed other systems and found comparable systems priced around $250,000. The initial system costs were funded from Chapter 41 funds. RESC 13 now allocates $6,400 per year for system modifications, which include updating the catalog of courses and refining system functions. As a result of having the system in place, RESC 13 has eliminated the printing of course catalogs, which results in a savings of at least $24,000 each year. The implementation of a professional development management system has improved efficiency and resulted in cost savings.

As shown in **Exhibit 13-3**, both superintendents and RESC employees are overall pleased with RESC 13 training and staff development. All responses are in the 80 to 90 percent category of being very satisfied or satisfied.

Accomplishment: RESC 13's implementation and use of a professional development management system has increased its ability to effectively serve schools, improved internal efficiency, and resulted in cost savings for the center.

Exhibit 13-3
RESC 13
MGT Survey Results
For RESC Employees and Member Superintendents

Statement	(%VS+S)/(%D+VD)*
RESC EMPLOYEES 1. Training and assistance for campus planning	91/0
2. PDAS training and support	91/0
3. Training and support for Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)	94/0
4. Training and support for aligning the curriculum and instruction with TEKS	94/0
5. Leadership training and development programs and services	97/0
6. Training and assistance to help improve student performance	97/0
7. Training and assistance in using new teaching methods and strategies	85/0
8. Training and assistance in the use of technology	88/0
9. Training and assistance in discipline management and conflict resolution	94/0
RESC TRAINING - SUPERINTENDENTS 1. Training and assistance for campus planning	87/3
2. PDAS training and support	83/0
3. Training and support for Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)	90/0
4. Training and support for aligning the curriculum and instruction with TEKS	83/0
5. Leadership training and development programs and services	93/0
6. Training and assistance to help improve student performance	90/7
7. Training and assistance in using new teaching methods and strategies	87/7
8. Training and assistance in the use of technology	87/3
9. Training and assistance in discipline management and conflict resolution	80/7

Source: MGT of America, Inc., 2004.

DATA-DRIVEN PLANNING SERVICES

RESC 13 has in place a goal-based, data-driven educational services planning process. Each year as part of its strategic planning process (see Section A), RESC 13 carefully reviews client satisfaction surveys, other sources of feedback from the field, student performance data, and fiscal data to assess the value of its service offerings and the emerging needs of districts and schools in the region. The RESC staff clearly document expectations and evaluation criteria as part of all programs. The cycle for planning ensures that programs are reviewed carefully and considered for suitability as part of the RESC's strategic focus.

Given that RESC 13 is among one of the state's larger RESCs, it experienced a reduction of approximately $7.7 million in revenue from 2002–03 to 2003–04. As a result of this reduction in funding, RESC 13 eliminated numerous programs and positions.

Reviewing the viability, need, and value of programs is a regular part of RESC 13's operating model. Hence, while the decisions of how to respond to the change in state funding were difficult, RESC 13 had in place a process for evaluating its programs and making sound decisions about which programs could be eliminated and have the least impact on supporting schools and districts. **Exhibit 13-4** provides examples of some of the programs RESC 13 has eliminated during the past three years, as well as the rationale behind such decisions.

Accomplishment: RESC 13's planning processes support the systematic review of the value, relevance, and cost-effectiveness of program services.

Exhibit 13-4
RESC 13 Sample of Discontinued Programs and Rationale for Discontinuance
2001–02 through 2003–04

Program	Rationale for Discontinuance
iTEKSTAR	Discontinued based on lack of client interest, lack of long term sustainability, and lack of product reliability.
Texas Beginning Educator Support System (TxBESS)	This program was grant-funded for four years, but as of 2003–04 the grant was no longer available. Program data show success; RESC *13* is exploring fee-for-service options.
Masters Online	Feedback from participants indicated that the program was too stressful, assignments were redundant, and workload was too heavy. Program was restructured by university partner.
Leadership Development Cooperative	Survey and dialogue with member districts identified new needs related to new statewide assessment system that may be better met with a different support structure. Staff were redirected to new initiative.
Stars at the Roughs	Met grant goals and objectives.
Vista Program—America Reads	Met grant goals and objectives.

Source: Adapted from Region 13 records of discontinued programs, 2004.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

RESC 13 has in place an excellent project management methodology that is illustrative of the center's commitment to being a data-driven, goal-oriented organization. For each project that is developed at RESC 13, the responsible staff person prepares a brief (one to two page) proposal for the project that includes the following information:

- project name;
- project description;
- description of need/purpose for launching;
- considerations in design;
- client input into design;
- anticipated results;
- evaluation process/procedures;
- program changes based on evaluation results (for on-going projects); and
- considerations
  - What data will be tracked?
  - What will/does the data display look like?

The project proposals are reviewed by deputy directors and the executive director to begin a dialogue about the viability of existing and potential projects. Having a consistent format for project descriptions ensures that ideas are well thought-out before they are elevated to the decision-making stage, incorporates project accountability measures at the onset, and supports sound on-going project management.

Once a project is approved, staff complete annual activity planning forms. These forms capture detailed information about the specific activities that will be completed as part of the project, with reference to the RESC 13 goal(s) that will be supported. **Exhibit 13-5** shows a sample of the information that is included on the activity planning form.

Exhibit 13-5
Sample Activity Planning Form

Division: *Academic Services or Administrative Services*
Coordinator: **Center:**
Team/Program:
Staff Responsible:
Goal: *References goals, performance objectives and strategies from "Plan for Improving Student Performance"*
Performance Objective:
Strategy:
Activity:
Describes event, training, seminar, or other activity with relevant dates
Formative Assessment:
Describes methods and data that will be used to inform project improvement and evaluation of success

Dates: **Primary Audience:** **Location:**

Account Summary

Revenue:
Registration Fees: **# of Participants:**
Other Revenue: **Estimated Revenue:**
Expenses (*itemized*)

Description	Type	Budget Code	Amount

Totals

Net Revenue	Federal Expenditures	State Expenditures	Local Expenditures	Total Expenditures

Modified by: **Date Modified:**

Source: Region 13 project binders, 2004.

The data for the activity planning forms are entered into a centralized Region 13 data system. This supports consistency and accessibility to information about all Region 13 projects. Staff also prepare project binders that include the Project Description Proposal, up-to-date activity forms, fiscal information, evaluations, and other pertinent project information. The project development and management processes are informative, thoughtful, and supportive of achieving strategic goals and objectives, and emphasize accountability.

Accomplishment: Region 13 has an outstanding process for evaluating projects and managing project activities.

CUSTOMER FEEDBACK

Region 13 member superintendents consistently provide positive feedback regarding services they receive from RESC 13. Superintendents responding to MGT's survey indicated high levels of satisfaction with all RESC services. Among the services that received especially high marks are school board trainings and certification programs. **Exhibit 13-6** provides a selection of superintendent responses to MGT's survey.

Exhibit 13-6
Superintendent Survey Responses Regarding Educational Services

Service Area	% Satisfied / % Dissatisfied[a]	
	Statewide	RESC 13
Regular Education		
Reading and Language Arts	92/2	90/0
Mathematics	88/4	87/3
Social Science	87/3	80/7
Science	87/5	87/8
Special Population Programs		
Special Education	91/3	90/0
Bilingual Education and ESL	85/6	73/10
Advanced Academics (gifted and talented, AP)	82/6	79/3
Training		
School Board Training	90/3	100/0
Professional Development Assessment	90/1	83/0
Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills	90/2	90/0
Training and assistance to help improve student performance	87/5	90/7
Teacher Certification	84/5	93/0
Professional/Para-Professional Certifications	86/3	93/0
Other Services		
Services and support for PEIMS	91/3	93/3
Online/Distance Learning classes	66/6	70/10
Onsite technical assistance	75/5	87/3
Best Practices Information	79/4	87/3
Organizational Links	79/3	87/0

Source: MGT Survey of School District Superintendents, 2004.
[a] The difference between the percent of respondents that "agreed or strongly agreed" and the percent of respondents that "disagreed or strongly disagreed" responded "neutral" or "don't know."

Based on the survey results, Region 13 superintendents are generally satisfied with the support offered by RESC 13 for regular education programs. However, there may be room for improvement in social science and science. This appears to follow a statewide trend, which may be evidence of the fact that there have been significant investments in time and resources to provide statewide support in the areas of reading and mathematics over the past several years and less focused attention to other subject areas. RESC 13's most recent client satisfaction surveys show that approximately 41 percent of responding superintendents consider the science support and services provided by RESC 13 to be among those they most value. Approximately 47 percent of superintendents identified social studies as an areas of service they most valued. These are both within the highest one-third of valued programs.

The RESC 13 received very high satisfaction ratings for the certification programs it supports for teachers and administrators. The Region 13 Educator Certification Program (ECP) provides an opportunity for prospective teachers to receive training while teaching in an intern capacity. The program is approximately 17 months in length, beginning each summer and ending at the end of the following summer. The ECP is fully supported by participant fees, which are about $5,000 per year. These fees cover all testing, certification, mentoring, training, and field supervision costs. The RESC 13's was one of five alternative certification programs visited by the United States Department of Education in

its review of model programs. In addition, materials produced for the mentor training that is part of the ECP are being used in other states and by the University of Texas, El Paso.

The RESC 13's administrator training program is known as the Cohort Administrator Certification Program (CACP). The CACP is a two-year, field-based program to support the selection, training, and certification of principals for Region 13 schools. Each year RESC 13 accepts 24 candidates who find placement as assistant principals or principals in Region 13 schools. The program provides 500 hours of training. Upon successful completion of the program, participants are eligible to receive their principal certificates if they pass required state tests and have master's degrees. The RESC 13 has partnered with the Texas State University, San Marcos to support candidates in completing their master's degrees while in the program.

The RESC 13 has also partnered with RESC 20 to offer the Texas Superintendents' Certification Institute (TCSI). The TSCI is a 15-month program that provides 600 hours of instruction to current school administrators who have exhibited an interest and potential to be a future superintendent. To ensure the program is accessible to participants, a significant portion of the course work is available online with one weekend a month of face-to-face instruction time.

Accomplishment: The RESC 13 provides outstanding, innovative professional training and certification programs to prospective teachers and school leaders and has effectively used technology to support all instructional support programs.

RESC PARTNERSHIPS

RESC 13 leverages partnerships with other RESCs to effectively meet statewide needs for training and technical assistance. The RESC 13's proximity to the state capital has resulted in it serving as an active provider of statewide services. Currently, RESC 13 supports 10 statewide initiatives, including:

- Instructional Leadership Development (ILD)
- From ILT to ILD: Moving Texas Forward
- Professional Development Appraisal System (PDAS)
- Administrator Appraisal
- School Improvement Resource Center
- Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR-UP)
- Performance Standards Project
- International Baccalaureate for Middle Schools
- Advanced Placement Program
- Troops to Teachers

RESC 13 role with respect to statewide initiatives is to provide product development and support to other RESCs and/or school districts. For instance, RESC 13 was responsible for developing ILD, PDAS, and certain Administrator Appraisal tools and providing training to other entities to support the tools. In the case of the School Improvement Resource Center, RESC 13 serves as an advisor to schools statewide that receive Title I, Part A School Improvement Program funds. The goal of the center is to support Title I campuses and districts who fail to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) under the federal accountability system. Although RESC 13 is the designated statewide lead for the resource center, it communicates with the RESCs in which the schools receiving center supports are located.

Involvement with these statewide initiatives has required RESC 13 to coordinate and work closely with other RESCs. In addition to interacting with other RESCs on statewide initiatives, RESC 13 has also formed numerous partnerships with other RESCs to support innovative products and services. Examples of several partnerships are described in **Exhibit 13-7**.

Exhibit 13-7
RESC 13 Sample of Programs Partnerships

Program	Partner RESCs
Assessment Analysis—AEIS-IT, SCAN-IT, SLUG-IT	RESC 10 leads 14 RESCs, including RESC 13, are members of the cooperative
McKinney Homeless Education	RESC 10 fiduciary responsibility; RESC 13 delivers services
Special Education—Deaf Education	RESCs 4, 10, 11, 13, and 20
Texas Superintendent Certification Institutes	RESC 20 and 13
Autism	RESC 2 statewide conference; RESC 13 parent participation
Learn and Service	RESC 14

Source: Created by MGT from Region 13 staff interviews, 2004.

Accomplishment: RESC 13 has taken the lead on several statewide initiatives, and used partnerships with other RESCs to offer and support a range of services in its region and throughout the state.

USE OF TECHNOLOGY OF TRAINING RESC 13 has used technology to deliver and support cost-effective training and services for schools and districts. In addition to a professional development management tool (see Section A for additional discussion), RESC 13 has developed many other uses for technology, such as the delivery of online courses. Using a program called E-Campus, RESC 13 currently supports almost 40 online workshop topics. Online courses offer many advantages, including convenience, as participants do not have to travel to attend the training and can participate at any time. Further advantages include the cost-effectiveness of this delivery method, and the fact that there are no constraints on how many people may participate. In contrast, in-person trainings are often limited by the size of available facilities.

The RESC 13 also uses technology as a communication tool. The online professional development management system that is used for all workshop and training registration collects contact information including e-mail addresses from all users. This allows trainers and staff from RESC 13 to follow-up with participants and send notices about subsequent trainings or services via e-mail to a targeted group. In addition, RESC 13 has set up several List-servs that are used to keep the field apprised of new rules and regulations from TEA or the federal government, research, services and training opportunities, and other information that may be of interest.

Additionally, RESC 13 has developed an Excel-based budget template that it makes available to all districts in its region, as well as other RESCs, to support the review of budgets for funding adequacy. The template includes clear instructions and multi-worksheets that users complete to assess the financial condition of their districts. The worksheet instructions identify potential errors and anomalies that may contribute to budget imbalances or other problems. The tool also generates graphs to illustrate budget changes over time.

Accomplishment: RESC 13 has used technology to support the delivery of cost-effective trainings, timely communication, and enhancements to the analytical capacity of school districts.

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION
Region 13 has implemented two programs to recognize outstanding performance and a process to maximize the value of employee evaluations. As a result, employees report a high level of satisfaction in working for the RESC.

The region has implemented two successful programs to recognize outstanding employee performance: Acts of Excellence Cards and

the Employee Advisory Committee. Acts of Excellence Cards acknowledges employees for outstanding services in the region's core values areas of:

- service;
- excellence;
- integrity;
- innovation;
- client-centered, and
- student-focused.

Cards are available in various locations in Region 13 buildings for use by clients, colleagues, peers, contractors, or anyone else who comes into contact with region staff. The region's core values are listed on the back of the card and the front of the card is blank for respondents to list the name of the region employee they want to recognize for outstanding service.

The employees are then recognized for Acts of Excellence at staff meetings that are held three times a year. The cards are placed in a display case near the staff lounge for viewing. During the MGT site visit, consultants counted more 50 Acts of Excellence Cards displayed in the staff lounge. Employees were recognized for such things as positive attitude, customer service, and dedication.

The Employee Advisory Committee was created in 1999 and is comprised of employees from all divisions. Three employees from each division/department are represented: one exempt, one non-exempt and one alternate (exempt or non-exempt). The committee provides employees with an opportunity to channel ideas, suggestions, and recommendations to management. Information on the committee is available on the Region's Web site. An employee may access the by-laws, calendar of events, award information, minutes of meetings and a list of officers for the committee.

Committee meetings are open to all employees, except for the executive session that meets to select the Employee of the Quarter (four awards for each exempt and non-exempt employees each year) and Employee of the Year (two awards selected from prior Employee of the Quarter winners). All employees can nominate other employees to receive these awards.

The Employee Advisory Committee has a small annual budget for monthly social events and an annual picnic for all employees. In addition, the committee holds periodic fundraisers to help with homeless education projects such as Thanksgiving Baskets and meals for families during December holidays. The largest fundraiser for these events is the annual employee bake sale held in November.

The region's employee performance assessment is a comprehensive process that addresses all areas of the employee's performance. The assessment includes self-evaluation, supervisor evaluation, and professional development plans.

By including a self-evaluation, the employee is empowered to provide input into their assessment. This facilitates an open discussion between the employee and supervisor and can result in a more objective representation of the employee's performance. The self-evaluation is a four-page document where employees evaluate themselves in all areas of their job descriptions. Any areas of discrepancy are discussed and resolved during the employee/supervisor evaluation meetings.

On the MGT survey of RESC employees conducted as part of this study, Region 13 employees indicated a high level of satisfaction with their jobs. Of the 22 questions MGT asked regarding work environment, Region 13 employees indicated an equal or higher level of satisfaction than statewide employees on 19 of the items. All Region 13 employees (100% of survey respondents) indicated that they are satisfied or very satisfied their jobs, that they plan to continue their careers at the RESC, and that their work is appreciated by supervisors.

When implemented appropriately, employee appreciation and evaluation programs are

valuable tools to improve performance and morale, encourage staff development, and facilitate open communication. Employees become empowered, recognize their contribution to the mission and goals of the organization, and are able to assess quality performance in themselves and their co-workers.

Accomplishment: Region 13 has developed a comprehensive performance evaluation and recognition program that includes self-evaluations as a component of the performance assessment process, Acts of Excellence Cards, and an Employee Advisory Committee.

RESPONSE TO BUDGET CUTS

The majority of the RESCs experienced a significant state budget cut in FY 2003–04. **Exhibit 13-8** shows the trend in state funding for the past three years. From 2002–03 to 2003–04, Region 13 lost 52 percent of its state base funding and 19 percent of its state grant funding.

Exhibit 13-9 details how the Region 13 is using its state base funds. As the exhibit shows, most of the state funds are directed toward curriculum development, NCLB, and PEIMS support.

Exhibit 13-8
Decline in Region 13 State Base and State Grant Funding

Funding Source	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04
State Base	$1,961,885	$1,985,070	$958,987
State Grant	$9,149,523	$7,544,275	$6,118,611

Source: Region 13 *Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports, 2001, 2002, 2003.*

Exhibit 13-9
Region 13 Use of State Funds

Use of Funds	Realized Revenue	Expenditures Incurred	% of State Funding
Accreditation and DEC support and Compliance issues (compliance in all federal and some State programs will be a continual requirement).	$122,000	$122,000	13%
Curriculum Development AEIS IT / TAKS Bilingual / ESL Dyslexia Fine Arts Language Arts Reading and Math Paraprofessional Science and Social Studies Teacher Leadership.	312,937	312,937	33%
School Board Training	10,000	10,000	1%
Information systems technology support (including PEIMS support)	143,550	143,550	15%
Instructional technology	100,500	100,500	10%
NCLB implementation and support of new standards	185,000	185,000	19%
Statewide initiatives –school finance specialist	85,000	85,000	9%
Total	**$958,987**	**$958,987**	**100%**

Source: Region 13 Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports, 2001, 2002, 2003.

Based upon MGT's survey results, Region 13 superintendents do not believe that the RESC was funded adequately. Nearly half, 45 percent, disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement "The RESC in our region is adequately funded." Only 17 percent agreed or strongly agreed with that statement. Further, 90 percent of Region 13 superintendents indicated that the RESC should continue to be funded by the state.

Unlike school districts or county Boards of Education, ESCs have no local taxing authority. In order to provide for a physical plant, plant operation, maintenance, renovation, self-insurance, and the like, ESCs must maintain fund balances. **Exhibit 13-10** shows Region 13's fund balances for the past three years. As the exhibit shows, despite significant reductions in state base and state grant funding, Region 13 has managed to maintain acceptable fund balances. From last year to this year, the region has only reduced its fund balances by 12 percent.

Accomplishment: Region 13 has weathered state funding reductions without significantly reducing its fund balances.

Exhibit 13-10
Trend in Region 13 Fund Balances

Fund Type	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04 Est.
General Fund	$1,682,389	$1,430,900	$1,266,277
Unreserved, Undesignated Fund	$1,682,389	$1,430,900	$1,266,277

Source: Region 13 *Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports, 2001, 2002, 2003.*

FINANCIAL TOOLS

Region 13 has developed a valuable tool, the Financial Integrity Rating System, for district usage. This in-house developed software can be used to assess financial strengths and weaknesses and to maintain financial solvency.

The Financial Integrity Rating System addressed critical data indicators for a variety of factors, including:

- fund balance information;
- tax collection forecast;
- total expenditures;
- total tax rate;
- total budgeted expenditures;
- administrative cost ratio;
- enrollment, teacher and staff totals;
- cash flow projections;
- estimate of cash disbursement;
- actual revenues;
- cash and investments; and
- investment earnings.

The indicators are weighted depending upon the size of the district.

Region 13 provides the Financial Integrity Rating System free of charge. Districts can use this system to proactively identify potential financial problems. Using it on a periodic basis allows districts to continuously monitor their financial position.

Accomplishment: Region 13 has developed a valuable financial tool that districts can use for self-evaluation.

SERVICE TO DISTRICTS

Region 13 offers both a breadth and depth of services and products to school districts.

RESC staff provides extensive consultation to the districts in its service area, much of it in-district. For example, over the past three years, Region 13 has provided more than 6,000 hours of free, in-district consultation and technical assistance to Austin ISD.

Some of the specific services provided by Region 13 to districts include:

- administrative preparation for TAKS;
- alternative certification programs;
- curriculum and instruction;
- information systems technology support;
- instructional technology;
- library and media services;
- principal certification;
- principal assessment center;
- partnership for behavior success;
- special education;
- staff development; and
- teacher certification.

Region 13 hosts periodic meetings with district superintendents to discuss the level of quality and satisfaction with RESC services. The region annually assesses customer satisfaction via written survey. The state sets standards that demonstrate satisfactory, commendable and outstanding progress for service centers. For an RESC to demonstrate outstanding progress, at least 75 percent of school districts in the region must report that they choose RESC programs and services over other vendors because the RESC offers a better value in terms of quality, price, or delivery mode. In 2001, 90 percent of districts in Region 13 agreed that the RESC provided products and services that enable districts to operate more efficiently and economically. In 2002, this figure rose to 94 percent.

On MGT's survey of superintendents, undertaken as part of this review, 62.8 percent of Region 13 superintendents indicated that their districts frequently utilize services provided by the RESC and that the services provided by the RESC are critical to the success of their programs and operations. In addition, 86.2 percent superintendents indicated that the Region is responsive to the service needs in their districts and that the region provides quality services.

Also on MGT's survey, Region 13 superintendents expressed some concern with having sufficient funds to purchase the RESC services they need. Only 40 percent of Region 13 superintendents agreed or strongly agreed that their districts have the funding to purchase the services they need from an RESC. Thirty-five percent of Region 13 superintendents indicated that they do not have sufficient funding to purchase the services they need.

Accomplishment: Region 13 offers quality services and products that are highly valued by its customers.

TECHNOLOGY LEASE PURCHASE PROGRAM

Region 13, through a lease purchase program, is assisting districts in obtaining affordable technology. Typically, school districts are responsible for purchasing their own hardware. However, Region 13 has purchased Dell computers for instructional use using Chapter 41 funds. Chapter 41, commonly known as the "Robin Hood" plan, is part of the Texas Education Code governing school funding that was enacted by the Texas Legislature to equalize wealth for educational spending. The provision is intended to "recapture" local tax dollars from "property rich" districts and redistribute the funds to "property poor" districts.

The computers are purchased centrally and leased back to districts at $100 per year for three years. This price includes a three-year on-site warranty provided by Dell. At the end of three years, the district owns the computer. Every district in Region 13 has had access to the computer lease program. To date, 54 districts and charter schools have participated in this program and over 2,500 computers have been purchased for instructional use. Depending on whether the districts purchase laptop or desktop computers, the administrative services director estimates the districts are saving approximately 65 to 75 percent per computer.

Accomplishment: Region 13 provides an affordable lease purchase program for school districts to obtain instructional computers.

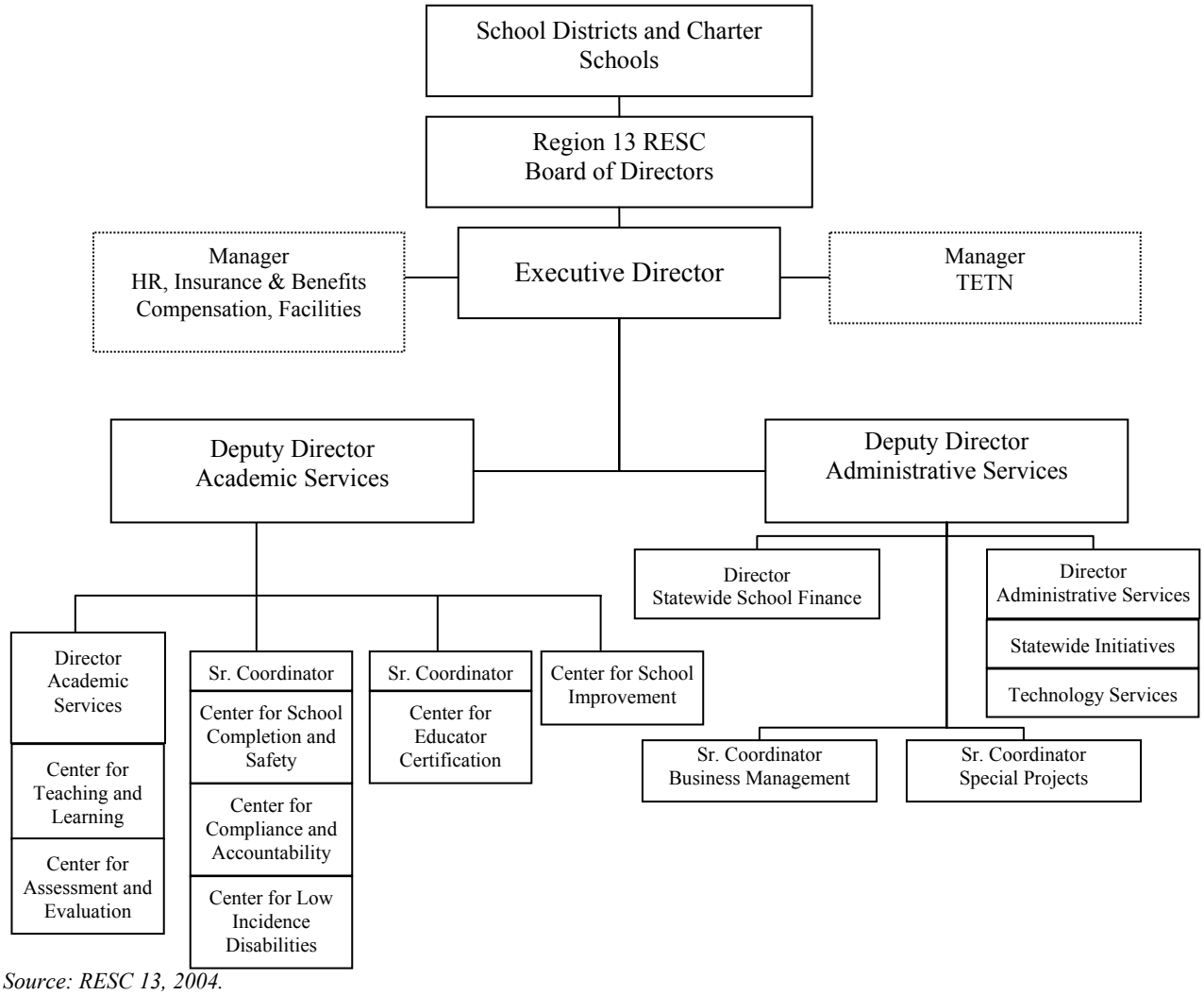
DETAILED FINDINGS

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Staff at all levels characterized RESC 13 as a "boundary-less organization." There is a strong sense of collegiality and support present throughout the center. Staff consider themselves to be part of a team and feel supported and involved in the decisionmaking and actions of the organization. There could be further improvements to the organizational structure of RESC 13 that would streamline operations and communication.

There are two main organizational divisions within RESC 13—Academic Services and Administrative Services. As shown in **Exhibit 13-11**, the Academic Services Division consists of seven centers that are focused on supporting student and district success. The Center for School Improvement is directly overseen by the deputy director of Academic Services and the Centers for Teaching and Learning and State Assessments and Evaluation are overseen by a director. All other centers are overseen by senior coordinators.

Exhibit 13-11
RESC 13 Organization
2003–04



Source: RESC 13, 2004.

In the Administrative Services Division, the deputy director oversees several administrator and board training programs. In this division there are two director-level staff, one overseeing statewide school finance and one overseeing administrative services. There are also two senior coordinators, one overseeing business management and the other special projects. The RESC 13's management team includes the executive director, deputy directors, directors, and senior coordinators.

In addition to the centers and units shown in **Exhibit 13-11**, there are also several smaller units that are found within the Academic Services and Administrative Services Divisions. The Administrative Services Division includes two field service agents that serve as liaisons between school districts, RESC 13, and TEA. The Academic Services division includes the Division support systems unit, staff development, marketing and communication, and online learning. There is overlap and teaming that occurs between the Academic Services Division support systems unit and the Technology Services Unit within Administrative Services in support of RESC 13's extensive online/distance learning program (see Section C for additional discussion).

RESC 13 should modify the organizational structure to one where select staff and functions are transferred from Academic Services to Administrative Services. Currently, there are six staff that support the development of distance learning, marketing, and communications in both the Academic Support Division support systems units. The functions carried out by these staff are more closely related to the functions within the Administrative Service Division. The current structure provides for communication and linkages between the division support system unit and overall Academic Support Division, but functionally would be better aligned with the Administrative Service Division especially considering the potential benefits and growth opportunities for online learning and technology support for course management.

The services that the division support systems offer to the Academic Services Division are important, but could be provided with possibly other services if part of Administrative Services. This move would consolidate staff responsible for online learning development, a growing service/support area within RESC 13, and move marketing and communication in the same division responsible for printing and field service outreach.

CHARTER SCHOOL INVOLVEMENT

The charter school representative role with respect to the RESC 13 board is not well defined. Furthermore, there does not appear to be established mechanisms in place by which the charter school representative is in contact with the constituents he serves. The charter school member is appointed by the state, but no mechanism is in place to assist this person to provide representation for all the charters schools in his region.

The charter school representative to the board of directors was first appointed two years ago by the Texas Commissioner of Education. The representative is a non-voting member of the board who serves for a one-year term that may be extended for up to three years by the commissioner. The commissioner has not clearly defined the role of the charter school member.

RESC 13 currently serves 19 charter schools. Charter schools may access RESC 13 services, but often lack the infrastructure of school districts so require more time from RESC 13 staff for individual assistance.

One of the primary functions of an RESC is to assist in the implementation of statewide mandates. The creation of charter school representative is a statewide mandate and the RESC could do more to foster a sense of community and to increase communications between the appointed representative and the charter schools. Doing so could provide the charter schools with better representation and the RESC with better guidance in serving the charter schools. Furthermore, it would be

beneficial for TEA to provide additional guidance as to appropriate role for the charter school member on the RESC board.

RESC 13 should provide opportunities for greater communication between the state-appointed charter representative and the charter schools the representative serves. Creating greater communication between the charter school board member and the charter schools would serve two purposes. First, it would help ensure that the board member gains as broad a perspective as possible regarding the needs and issues of charter schools within the region. Second, it would ensure that charter schools are aware of the representation provided by the board member and give them the opportunity to voice any concerns they may have. Implementing this recommendation may also create a greater sense of community among the charter schools and, as these schools learn more about each other, lead to less reliance on RESC 13 for some services.

FACILITIES LEASING

Region 13 has recently constructed a new facility that will reduce overhead costs and potentially generate rental income.

The region recently constructed a 74,000-square foot facility that includes office, storage, conference, and training space. It is a three-story building. The first floor is used as a conference and technology center where RESC 13 staff conduct trainings and activities. The second floor should be occupied by another 55 to 65 RESC staff this summer. The third floor remains a shell. The Region anticipates leasing the third floor to outside parties as it does not yet require that space for its own staff. To date, the third floor has not been leased, but Region staff believes it could generate $300,000 in annual rental income.

Exhibit 13-11 shows the monthly and annualized savings the region expects to get from moving out of older facilities into the new facility. RESC 13 has reduced the amount of rented storage space by approximately 3,000 square feet, leaving only 1,100 square feet of rental space.

In addition to the savings listed in **Exhibit 13-12**, Region will save a significant amount of funds that it previously spent on rented space for conferences in workshops. In 2001–02, the Region spent $989,000 on conference and hotel space; in 2002–03 it spent $757,500. As of May 2004, the region spent just $110,000 as a result of moving into the new facility in February 2004. The region believes it now has sufficient conference and training space in its own facility and will no longer routinely need to rent additional space.

Exhibit 13-11
Previous Region 13 Storage and Office Facilities and Associated Savings from Replacement

Location	Purpose	Square Footage	Monthly Savings	Annualized Savings
1606 Headway Circle – 2nd Floor	Offices	13,751	$22,894	$274,728
1606 Headway Circle – 2nd Floor	Storage	1,418	2,060	24,720
Watson & Taylor 6330 Harold Court, Units 62,485,487,490,491	Storage	1,400	540	6,480
Windsor Village	Storage	1,360	1,566	18,792
Total		**17,929**	**$27,060**	**$324,720**

Source: Region 13 Facilities Director, June 2004.

Region 13 is saving approximately $27,060 a month by eliminating the need for storage facilities and leasing of office space. The monthly savings realized by eliminating the need for renting conference and workshop facilities was determined by dividing the total savings for the period listed in **Exhibit 13-12** of $1,856,500 by 29, giving a monthly savings of approximately $64,017. Therefore, by combining these cost savings ($27,000 + $64,000), Region 13 is saving about $91,000 a month or $1,092,000 a year on rented facilities, of which $505,700 is redirected to pay an annual building note.

Exhibit 13-12
Previous Region 13 Conference and Workshop Facilities and Associated Savings from Replacement

Year	Annualized Savings	Monthly Savings
2001 – 2002	$989,000	$82,417
2003 – 2003	757,500	63,125
2003 – May 2004 (5 months)	110,000	22,000
Total	**$1,856,500**	**$176,834**

Source: Region 13 Facilities Director, June 2004.

During tours of the facilities, MGT found them to be generally well-maintained, with no major problems. The region's facilities are highly regarded by both RESC employees and district superintendents. On MGT's survey of superintendents, 83 percent rated the Region 13 facilities as exceptional, while only 69 percent of superintendents statewide rated theirs as exceptional. The 83 percent exceptional rating was the 5th highest rating for the 20 Regions. On MGT's survey of RESC staffs, 75 percent of the Region 13 staff rated their facilities as exceptional. Statewide, only 63 percent of RESC employees did the same. By building a new facility, Region 13 is saving approximately $1,092,000 a year.

RESC 12 should continue efforts to lease the third floor of the new Region 13 facility.

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources; however, the region estimates it will receive $300,000 per year once the third floor is leased to an outside party.

LOCATION OF FACILITIES DEPARTMENT

The Facilities Department currently reports to the executive director, but could be more effective aligned with the Administrative Services Division.

The Region 13 Facilities Department is operated by one part-time director of Facilities. The other half of this person's time is allocated to Human Resources. For facilities and human resource functions, the director reports directly to the executive director.

Facilities functions are typically considered administrative functions, along with such functions as business management, finance, accounting and human resources. Realigning facilities with the other administrative functions would support effective management of the region's administrative activities.

RESC 13 should realign the Facilities Department under the Administrative Services Division. The implementation of this recommendation should result in a more efficient and effective Facilities Department.

COSTS FOR SERVICE

The methods used to establish RESC 13 service costs vary depending on the program, in part because an organization-wide plan for setting fees does not exist. The services provided by RESC 13 are supported in one of three ways: fully by state or federal funds, partially by state and federal funds and some local funds, or completely by local funds. The methods RESC 13 uses to assess local fees include membership fees that entitle members to services in a particular area. Examples include technology services and PEIMS reporting. Alternatively, some services are offered as fee-for-service. In cases where RESC 13 collects fees from local districts there are multiple methods used to determine the fee level.

For instance, the prices for online learning were established based on consideration of what private firms charged for similar services, review of staff costs, and expected usage. The program outlined an 18-month cost-recovery horizon. The goal for this program has been to fully-fund its operations with local fees, including development costs for future courses. In some other instances, services such as internet access and email are bundled, the rationale being that this is the most cost-effective means to offer services. In the case of trainings and workshops, the costs for off-site and customized events are designed to recover staff costs (including travel time) and materials; onsite trainings are priced to recover staff costs, materials, and facility costs. Based on a review of Activity planning forms, the costs of RESC 13 staff time to prepare, support, and lead trainings is not included as an expense. Only in cases where an outside consultant is used to deliver training are the full trainers costs incorporated.

RECS 13 should perform an analysis of the various methods used to assess local fees. This analysis should consider the appropriateness of the current fee levels and fee structure (membership, bundled services, and fee-for-service). The variation in approaches to establishing fees may lead to unintentional cross-program subsidization and/or an inaccurate assessment of the cost-effectiveness of product or service. Since it is important that RESC 13 offer its clients cost-effective services, it is crucial that a consistent method is in place for establishing fees for all services. As part of its development process for its next Plan for Improving Student Performance, RESC 13 should include discussion and analysis of its current fees.

The RESC 13 management team should establish and document policies and procedures for setting all fees. Activity planning forms should incorporate internal staff time as an expenditure based on the costing methodology outlined in the policies and procedures. Each year the fee levels and structure should be reviewed as part of the planning process.

BILINGUAL EDUCATION

RESC 13's services for bilingual education do not appear to adequately meet the needs of the districts in the region. Seventy-three (73) percent of superintendents responding to MGT's survey reported that they are satisfied with RESC 13's bilingual education service offerings. Although, this is a high proportion of superintendents, it is far below the statewide response of 85 percent reporting satisfaction with bilingual services from their RESC.

Compared to other regions in the state, RESC 13 serves a relatively lower percent of bilingual and ESL students (9.5 percent compared to 13.5 percent statewide). However, the student population of Region 13 is growing, with a slight overall growth in the proportion of bilingual and ESL students expected. Bilingual education has not historically represented a significant need area, but with the revisions from TAAS to TAKS and federal NCLB requirements, supporting learning among students with limited English proficiency (LEP) is a critical learning priority for all schools.

Throughout the spring and summer of 2004, RESC 13 is conducting 30-hour workshops with ESL teachers and administrators at

school districts within the region. The ESL Academy focuses on educating school staff that work with English learners about the stages and process for second-language acquisition. The workshop also addresses current requirements for educating LEP students. At the time of the survey, only a few districts have undergone the intensive training provided by RESC 13. Based on RESC 13's most recent survey of superintendents, bilingual education services are rated as highly valuable. RESC 13's extra attention in this area appears to be well received by its area districts. It will be critical for RESC 13 to monitor the effectiveness of this training and assess how well the training has met the needs of school districts.

RESC 13 should review feedback and data from ESL Academies to inform the development of future support and programs that will address ESL needs in the region. Meeting the needs of ESL students is a critical learning objective for all schools within RESC 13. The RESC 13 receives high marks from superintendents for most of its other academic services, but there are indications that improvements in the support provided for ESL services is needed. The ESL Academies appear to be an immediate solutions, but RESC 13 should evaluate their effectiveness at the end of the summer based on participant feedback and during the school years based on student academic achievement. From this data and feedback RESC should develop a comprehensive multi-year plan to address the emerging regional needs for educating ESL students.

ONLINE APPLICATION

The Region 13 Web site provides access to posted job opportunities, but interested job seekers cannot submit applications online. For current employees, the Web site does not provide benefits information.

Job opportunities are posted on the Region's Web site at www.esc13.net. Interested applicants are instructed to submit by e-mail, fax or mail a letter of interest and resume. For all applications, region staff must enter applicant information such as name, address, telephone number, and date of application from paper into its computer system, creating an unnecessary rekeying of data.

For positions that require one, the job application should be posted on the Web site so it can be downloaded or completed by applicants online. In addition, developing a process to submit all required forms, resumes, and applications to HR via email or through the Region's Web site would save staff time and increase processing efficiency. The region should continue to provide a physical mailing address for applicants to use that do not have Internet or e-mail access, and to use the *American Statesman* Web site to post job opportunities to reach a broad range of candidates.

There is no link on the home page for employees to access information about benefits. The Human Resources Departments provides benefits information only in hard copy form. The same is true of the Region's Employee Handbook.

Providing benefits information and the employee handbook online would be more effective for most employees. For example, employees may receive a document on leave policies when they are first employed by the RESC, but not need it for several years and not be able to locate it when they do need it. Thus, a Web site, with its ability to provide information on demand at any time, is often a more effective option for employees. The Web site can provide information directly, as well as links to other sites that have information about their benefits, such as:

- doctors or pharmacies in their area;
- retirement eligibility, request for estimating retirement benefits, leave policies, Family Medical Leave Act Request Forms, worker's compensation procedures, grievance processes;
- new HR legislation;
- co-pay requirements;

- employee Assistance Plan (EAP) resources;
- employee handbook (region policies and procedures);
- W-4 forms, payroll information, change of address forms, direct deposit forms;
- wellness activities;
- calendar of events;
- dental insurance application;
- organization chart and phone list; and
- Beneficiary Designation Forms.

RESC 13 is currently updating its policies and procedures. Once the updated document is approved it will be posted to the RESC 13 Web site and some components will be distributed in hard copy with references to the Web site. A process is in place to send notifications of changes by email to all staff.

One RESC calculated that it saved $3,300 in annual printing costs by providing its employee handbook online. Region 13 could expect to save approximately $1,800 by not printing employee handbooks. The region could expect to save another portion of printing costs by providing extensive benefits information online.

RESC 13 should expand the Region 13 Web site to include benefits information, an online job application form, and functionality for online submission of job applications. The process should include electronic access and submission of all required forms, resumes, and applications via email or through the region's Web site. New employees should be given an information sheet that instructs them on how to use the Web site to obtain benefits information and how to review the employee handbook online. The site should also provide an email address or link to send questions to the HR Division.

MGT estimates that improving the benefits information and the job application functionality on the region's Web site will cost approximately $950. This includes a total of 13 hours of services: three hours for Web site design at $70 per hour; four hours of Web site content at $55 per hour; four hours of programming at $55 per hour; and, six hours of testing and implementation at $50 per hour.

MGT estimates that approximately 400 staff hours per year will be saved in not processing the current volume of job applications manually. Valued at $14.45 per hour, the region will save approximately $5,780 per year.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The Human Resources Department currently reports directly to the executive director but could be more effectively aligned with the Administrative Services Division.

All administrative functions other than human resources and facilities reside within the Administrative Services Division. Moving the manager of human resources and facilities into the Administrative Services Division would streamline the organizational and functional structure within RESC 13. The manager of human resources and facilities reports directly to the executive director. The current structure was established in part because at the time the manager position was created, RESC 13 was embarking on the building of a new facility. The executive director was very involved in this process, hence, the manager reported directly to him. Now that the new building has been completed the functions overseen by the manager of human resource and facilities should be moved into the Administrative Services Division. This move would allow for a consolidation of administrative and operational functions within the RESC. The major advantages would be closer alignment between human resources, facilities, business services, finance, and accounting.

The Region 13 Human Resources Department is staffed with 1.5 employees. The benefits specialist is full-time, and the Human Resources manager is allocated only half-time to HR; the other half of her time is allocated to Facilities. For HR and Facilities functions, the manager reports directly to the executive director.

RESC 13 should realign the Human Resources Department under the Administrative Services Division. Human Resources functions are typically considered administrative services. Aligning the human resource functions of payroll, benefits administration, and personnel management with the other administrative functions of business management, finance, and accounting should facilitate more effective management of the region's administrative activities.

PURCHASING COOPERATIVES

Districts in Region 13 may avail themselves to several benefits by participating in the 2013 Multi-Regional Purchasing Cooperative. This cooperative includes the school districts of Region 20 and Region 13. Price savings are obtained by being part of a larger purchasing volume. Districts without a purchasing agent get the benefit of the efforts of a purchasing professional. Bids are taken on instructional, athletic, paper, and janitorial supplies, cafeteria equipment and supplies, food, and bulk commodity processing. Region 20 handles the day-to-day administration of the program.

RESC 13 should continue to make every effort to leverage the services of the Purchasing Cooperative and achieve savings related to volume discounts in addition to expanding the products offered through the cooperative agreement.

The implementation of this recommendation should result in a reduction of costs associated with bulk purchasing.

MIS FUNCTIONS

The Region 13 MIS functions are disagregated and dispersed across multiple areas in the organization. Moreover, the region lacks a comprehensive technology strategy and common vision.

Currently, various areas fulfill MIS functions across the RESC. The three main MIS areas are:

- Academic Services, which provides instructional technology and online learning;
- Administrative Services, which provides data services, RESC 13 TETN LAN, WAN TXED, distance education, the technology preview center, and PEIMS; and,
- the TETN Project.

Although communication, planning, and coordination exist among the areas, a collaborative region-wide technology strategy and common vision are lacking. The potential for duplication of effort is high. There is also a risk of inefficiency in planning, purchasing, operations, service offerings, and allocation of resources.

Developing a comprehensive strategy that incorporates both administrative and instructional technology programs could improve service delivery and ensure a continued focus on efficiency and effectiveness. It could also collaboratively better meet the needs of the districts and the internal needs of the region.

RESC 13 should integrate the Instructional Technology Programs, Data Services, PEIMS, and TETN departments into one division and develop a comprehensive, unified technology strategy. All factions should work collectively to identify technology objectives for instructional from staff networking, administrative, and PEIMS functions. A Chief Technology Officer should be appointed from existing staff to oversee the newly formed division. The new division should report directly to the executive director.

FISCAL IMPACT

	Recommendation	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	5-Year (Costs) or Savings	One-Time (Costs) or Savings
13-7	Improve Web site and eliminate staff time spent on processing manual applications.	$0	$5,780	$5,780	$5,780	$5,780	$23,120	($950)
	Total	**$0**	**$5,780**	**$5,780**	**$5,780**	**$5,780**	**$23,120**	**($950)**

CHAPTER 14:

ABILENE

CHAPTER 14

ABILENE

Located in Abilene, Regional Education Service Center XIV (RESC 14) provides services that impact about 50,000 students in 43 school districts, one charter school, and 13 counties. Regional Education Service Center XIV provides targeted assistance and training services to assist schools and school districts within its regional area in improving student achievement. Services are delivered to 3,907 professional educators and 202 administrators who impact children on 161 campus sites.

During the spring of 2003, a total of 1,623 evaluations to school districts for feedback on programs and services provided by Region 14. A total of 998 were returned for analysis, which reflects a 62 percent return rate. An established Regional Advisory Committee approved the current evaluation and communication process used by Region 14 for soliciting feedback from customers. As result of this process Region 14 established three key goals that are vital for meeting customer needs and achieving the region's mission. The following is Region 14's mission and key goals:

- improve student performance to achieve exemplary status for every campus and district in the Region;
- enhance district effectiveness/efficiency; and
- enhance RESC effectiveness/efficiency.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Region 14 has effectively taking a leadership role in serving as the fiscal agent and state director for the Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate (AP/IB) Project.
- Region 14 provides a curriculum cooperative that has several options and can be customized by member districts.
- The leadership and staff of Region 14 have developed a positive work environment that supports employee satisfaction and dedication.
- Region 14 Business Center is recognized for establishing business support services to offer school districts which helps minimize their business operation cost.
- Region 14 effectively tracks time spent on programs using a MIS system.
- Region 14 effectively integrates the budget review process with the component directors and the CFO.
- Region 14 is recognized for 69 school districts participation (90%) in Region 9 Food Service Cooperative purchase program.
- Region 14 participates in Region 9's food service cooperative which has created savings for the school districts.
- The Technology Service Group has an exemplarily database back-up process to prevent loss of data should the database get corrupted.
- Region 14 has a successful pass rate of above 80 percent for teachers who took the Technology Applications Teacher Certification Examination.

FINDINGS

- Region 14's recently approved strategic plan and supporting action plans do not have a direct correlation to the performance plan process.
- The Region 14 Board of Directors does not participate in all the necessary training or development activities that would enhance their ability to lead.
- Region 14 currently has over $2 million in capital reserve for the construction of an additional building at its Abilene campus, but construction has been delayed
- In its role as a non-profit service organization it is also an integral part of the Texas accountability structure,

- The pricing structure for instructional programs and services at Region 14 has, for the most part, remained constant over the past two years.
- Region 14 does not have a standardized format for determining program effectiveness.
- Region 14 has satellite offices located in Comanche, Snyder, and Austin, Texas. The Austin, Texas Satellite is not serving the needs of Region 14.
- Region 14 does not have a standard method for offering post-training technical assistance to its training participants.
- The center routinely loses quality employees to school districts within the region.
- While conducting on-site interviews with Human Resources staff as well as other RESC staff, MGT found that Region 14 had no formal instrument in place for measuring employee satisfaction.
- Region 14 has developed an Individual Development Plan to facilitate professional development activities within the center; however, this plan is not sufficient to facilitate ongoing organizational improvement.
- The Region 14 Board of Directors lacks training in how to evaluate senior personnel and managing personnel issues that require action by the board.
- The current purchasing process managed by Region 14 is manually driven.
- Region 14 participates in several cooperative programs managed by Region 9 without an effective structure for creating cost savings or avoidance reports.
- The Texas Association of Public Schools (TAPS) is providing an appraisal of the plant and equipment. However, to date Region 14 has not participated.
- Region 14's fixed asset system could be more effective. All assets are not tagged; therefore, a complete reconciliation is not possible to validate the physical location of assets.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 14-1: Require employee performance to have a correlation to the action plans and conduct a formal annual evaluation of all employees.** Having management at appropriate levels involved in the performance planning and evaluation process will assist with ensuring employees have a clear understanding on expectations and, were applicable, accountability to the action plans. Considering the implementation of a 360-evaluation process will provide an opportunity for peer and key internal customers to provide feedback on an individual's performance.

- **Recommendation 14-2: Require board members to participate in annual training sessions that focus on governance, high-level strategic planning, conducting performance reviews, leadership, and building cooperative relationships.** The board's participation in training will assist with building and strengthening knowledge about governance, how to ensure the appropriate goals have been established, and clearer understanding of what are the most effective tools and methods for holding the executive director accountable.

- **Recommendation 14-3: Construct the new building using capital reserve funds regardless of the status of the new Head Start Program.** In order for the service center to remain a viable component of student performance in Region 14, it must be able to maintain the level of training and support necessary to effectively serve school districts. This cannot happen currently at Region 14.

There is presently a statewide increase in the demand for services performed by RESCs because of the decrease in staffing at the Texas Education Agency and the increase in accountability standards. Now, more than ever, Region 14 must be able to grow with the needs of its customers.

- **Recommendation 14-4: Develop a formal marketing plan for Region 14 and expand marketing efforts with the school districts and communities being served.** There is a lack of knowledge of the existence of Region 14 as well as the critical services it provides. As operating funds from the state have dwindled and the need for programs and services have increased, there is an additional burden on Region 14 to market its services effectively. Implementing an effective marketing plan will increase needed revenue within the service center and expand the services provided to school districts. All of these actions should be performed with the ultimate goal in mind of improving student performance in the school districts and ensuring the ongoing viability and sustainability of the service center.

- **Recommendation 14-5: Adopt a costing model that factors in all costs of providing and maintaining all programs and services.** The current fee structure of many Region 14 programs and services do not factor in costs that are currently being absorbed by the programs. Each program leader should evaluate actual programmatic costs and make recommendations to the executive staff for developing a new fee schedule. This should follow a standardized methodology that will funnel all evaluations and recommendations to a central group of senior staff for analysis and implementation. This recommendation is critical to the ongoing sustainability of Region 14 and its valuable services.

- **Recommendation 14-6: Implement a comprehensive process for evaluating program quality and effectiveness.** By implementing this recommendation, Region 14 should take the opportunity to tie all program evaluations to core RESC goals. This process is certainly time-intensive, but critical to the ongoing success of programmatic efforts within the region.

- **Recommendation 14-7: Close the satellite location and relocate the seven employees at the Region 14 Austin location to Abilene.** By implementing this recommendation, Region 14 should bring program services personnel for the Texas Center for Service-Learning (TxCSL) statewide initiative into existing Abilene facilities.

- **Recommendation 14-8: Establish an electronic Listserv for training participants to provide access to technical assistance following workshops and professional development activities at Region 14.** By implementing this recommendation, Region 14 should provide feedback and follow-up technical assistance using various technology-based systems.

- **Recommendation 14-9: Initiate a benchmarking process to develop a more competitive salary schedule for Region 14 and take action to equalize salaries with the local market.** While a certain amount of turnover is healthy for any organization, Region 14 must take steps to protect its organizational knowledge and service delivery capacity from unreasonable disparities in salary. It is not unlikely that some

center staff will choose to leave for school districts in the region, and this strengthens those school systems, but employees who are dedicated to the center's mission should not be forced to make decisions based on large differences in pay.

- **Recommendation 14-10: Develop and initiate an organizational climate survey to measure employee satisfaction.** Determining the satisfaction of organizational employees is critical to ongoing success, especially in times of financial difficulty and staffing cutbacks. While the overall working environment is very positive in Region 14, there may be some areas of concern that are not brought to the attention of senior staff. Region 11 should implement this survey as another method of retaining quality employees.

- **Recommendation 14-11: Develop and implement comprehensive professional development plan for Region 14 staff.** The current process for professional development in Region 14 is inadequate to promote improvement among center employees. There is currently little or no ability to assess job performance as it relates to individual employee goals. Further, there is no way to effectively structure professional development to centerwide goals.

- **Recommendation 14-12: Provide training in performance evaluation to the board of directors.** Human Resources is equipped to provide comprehensive training to board members in all areas of performance evaluation, that includes:

  - goal setting;
  - performance criteria development;
  - outcome-based evaluation; and
  - job performance measurement.

  The implementation of this recommendation will ensure that all board members are knowledgeable and proficient in conducting performance evaluations and will facilitate a more comprehensive and effective evaluation process for the executive director.

- **Recommendation 14-13: Use the requisition-purchasing module in RSCCC from the point of creating a requisition to receiving a good or service.** Because Region 14's Business Office currently uses RSCCC business package for other financial needs it would be more efficient and cost effective to activate the requisition-purchasing module in RSCCC versus implementing iTCCS or another purchasing system. After activating the requisition-purchasing module Region 14 should work with Region 20 ensure an automatic requisition notification function is developed in RSCCC.

- **Recommendation 14-14: Work with Region 9 to develop a total cost saving model that should be distributed to school districts quarterly.** Regions 9 and 14 are taking the lead in developing this type of information. These centers should continue to assist with enhancing the cooperative programs and ensuring customers recognize the economic advantage for participating.

- **Recommendation 14-15: Schedule an appraisal of the plant and equipment with TAPS immediately.** If the insurance levels are inadequate, then the insurance coverage needs to be reviewed. Ignoring the risk is an invitation to inevitable disaster. While this might appear to be a small risk, even small risks cannot be overlooked. Region 14 should minimize the risk to a potential exposure by taking the proper steps to

obtain complete insurance coverage for the plant and equipment new appraised values immediately.

- **Recommendation 14-16: Ensure that all fixed assets are properly tagged.** The implementation of this recommendation should minimize the possibility of lost or stolen equipment from the premises. Region 10 assets are located throughout the center; therefore, it is vital that all assets be properly tagged. The benefits of tagging assets are:
  - it helps identify the product quickly and easily;
  - it tracks serial numbers or model numbers; and
  - tagging saves money and time.

DETAILED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

EMPLOYEE MORALE

Region 14 maintains a high-level of stated employee morale and an exceptionally positive work environment. Nearly all employees volunteered that they were pleased with their job situation and gained personal and professional fulfillment from their jobs. While many employees cited excessive work loads primarily due to recent staffing cuts, they indicated that the common goals of the center fueled their desire to go beyond normal work requirements. Additionally, staff indicated that many of Region 14 senior staff help to foster the positive atmosphere in the center.

In an effort to determine stakeholder satisfaction, 35 employees in Region 14 completed surveys regarding RESC 14 performance and related issues. Of this group:

- ninety-seven (97) percent *strongly agreed* or *agreed* with the statement that "I am very satisfied with my job" as compared to 96 percent of RESC employees statewide;
- ninety-seven (97) percent *strongly agreed* or *agreed* with the statement that "I plan to continue my career at my RESC" as compared to 94 percent of RESC employees statewide; and
- ninety-seven (97) percent *strongly agreed* or *agreed* with the statement that "I feel that my work is appreciated by my supervisor(s)" as compared to 94 percent of RESC employees statewide.

These responses demonstrate that the employees in Region 14 have an exceptionally positive view of the work environment in the service center.

Accomplishment: The leadership and staff of Region 14 have developed a positive work environment that supports employee satisfaction and dedication.

BUSINESS SUPPORT SERVICES

Region 14 has established business support services to provide administrative support for school districts within the region.

This business support service will eliminate the need for some school districts to hire full-time staff to provide this service (i.e., accountant and business manager). Region 14 has several rural school districts that can benefit from these services. Some of the school districts are Gustine ISD, Sidney ISD, Moran ISD, Rising Star ISD, Highland ISD, Hermleigh ISD, Rochester ISD, Rotane ISD, and Trent ISD.

Starting in the 2004–05 school year, RESC 14 will provide the following business services for a fee of $10,000:

- accounting and financial reporting services that are in full compliance with the financial accounting resource guide. (This guide complies with accounting standards set by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board and the Financial Accounting Standards Board);
- disclose the financial condition of the district using financial cash flow and financial projection reports;

- oversee a data management system that facilitates accurate district PEIMS data requirements;
- prepare payroll documents, checks, W-2s, 1099s, and reporting to TRS, IRS, and benefit vendors;
- interface with federal programs administration;
- interface with operation of efficient and economical food service program that meets the requirements of federal regulation;
- maintain business procedure manuals that define the business operations; and
- assist in the preparation of budgets, and other financial planning through the use of templates.

If the district elects not to take the full-service business package at a cost of $10,000, the items shown in **Exhibit 14-1** are available for individual fees.

Accomplishment: Region 14 Business Center is recognized for establishing business support services to offer school districts to help minimize their business operation cost.

Exhibit 14-1
RESC 14 Business Services Available to School District

Type of Services	Cost to School District
Full Business Services	$10,000
Monthly Cash-Flow Report Preparation	$600/year
Six-Weeks School Finance Template Run	$400/year
Transportation Reporting	$350/year
Special Education Budget Preparation	three percent of allocation
FIRST Report Preparation	$100/year
Crisis Business Team-Emergency	Negotiable

Source: Region 14, 2004.

TIME TRACKING SYSTEM

Region 14 uses an excellent time tracking system to track employees' time spent on programs.

The time tracking system used is called the Management Information System. Employees enter their time by object within a program. All of their time is accounted for through this system. Region 14 is able to run numerous reports showing where employees worked and what they did for any time period.

After the end of every month, the director of Financial Services runs a report showing the time and percentages spent in each program that employees worked in during the month. These percentages are used to charge each program for the time each employee spent in the program. Each program gets charged for actual time worked in the program and there is no adjustments need later.

Region 14 pays employees evenly throughout the year. The Business Center also tracks the number of days each employee works in each month. The programs get charged for only the days worked and an accrual account is keep for the difference in what charge to the programs is and what is paid to employees. At the end of the year, the payroll internal service fund will have charged out all payroll costs through the year.

Accomplishment: Region 14 effectively tracks time spent on programs using a MIS system.

BUDGET REVIEW PROCESS

In March of every year, Region 14 sends financial information to the Texas Education Agency to get a restricted indirect cost rate

and building use rate. After these rates are received, the budget process begins.

The department directors (called component directors in Region 14) review contracted services that Region 14 offer the schools districts and determines if additional services need to be added, deleted, or modified. In May, the center begins to contact school districts to see what services that they might need for the upcoming school year. Planning estimates from TEA are received for federal and state programs. Budget workshops with the board begin in May or June, and a decision is made to determine the staffing levels needed for the upcoming year.

With the aid of historical cost and the help of the CFO, the component directors begin to put together line item budgets for their programs. The CFO and directors examine each program budget for reasonableness.

The CFO puts together all of the budgets from the different departments to come up with a center-wide budget. The budget is presented to the board of directors at the August board meeting. When approved, the budgets will be input into the accounting system for the September 1 start date.

If necessary, budget amendments are taken to the board throughout the year for approval.

Accomplishment: Region 14 effectively integrates the budget review process with the component directors and the CFO.

FOOD SERVICE PURCHASING

Through Region 14's leadership, membership in cooperative programs has steadily increased, including districts outside of the regions, and the service delivery options have evolved.

The Northwest Area of Texas bound by Regions 9 and 14 Education Service Centers (ESCs) is composed of approximately 77 Local Education Agencies (LEAs). The Average Daily Participations for a month range from 80 to 1,400 students. A regional entity's profile is one with limited resources and staff available for operation. Since 1995, Regions 9 and 14 RESCs have offered regional districts the opportunity to participate in a Food Service Cooperative.

The Regional Child Nutrition Specialists serve as coordinators for the cooperative. Two advisory boards comprised of six representatives and each perform the duties of decision making in regard to product selection, awards of contract, and handling of issues, etc. The organizational structure allows for two separate components: food purchasing and commodity processing. Membership is on a voluntary basis in either or both parts of the cooperative.

Currently, 69 districts (90%) are members of the Food Purchasing Component. Outlined in **Exhibit 14-2** is the number of participating districts from Region 14 in the food purchase program. Districts are responsible for placing, receiving and payment of orders to C.D. Hartnett in Fort Worth, Texas. C.D. Hartnett, a full line food service company, is the primary distributor selected by a Request for Proposal (RFP) from the Cooperative. In 2003–04, the Cooperative is in a second renewal option year. Purchasing parameters are established for dry, frozen, and refrigerated food products; chemicals; and some paper products. Districts are responsible for bidding dairy, bread, and some snack items.

Previously, all end product cases from the processor were required to be received by the district. These quantities were unmanageable creating a burden on small LEAs with limited storage facilities and restricted budgets.

Exhibit 14-2
Region 14 Food Purchasing Co-op Program Participation
By District

Region 14 Districts	2001–02 Purchase	2002–03 Purchase	2003–04 Purchase
Abilene	X	X	X
Albany	X	X	X
Anson	X	X	X
Aspermont	X	X	X
Baird	X	X	X
Breckenridge			
Clyde	X	X	X
Colorado	X	X	X
Comanche	X	X	X
Cross Plains	X	X	X
DeLeon	X	X	X
Eastland	X	X	X
Eula	X	X	
Gorman		X	X
Hamlin	X	X	X
Haskell	X		
Hawley	X	X	
Hermleigh	X	X	
Highland	X	X	X
Ira	X	X	X
Jim Ned	X	X	
Loaraine	X	X	
Lueders-Avoca	X	X	X
Merkel	X	X	X
Moran	X	X	X
PAint Creek	X	X	X
Roby	X	X	X
Rochester	X	X	X
Rule	X	X	X
Sidney	X	X	X
Stamford	X	X	X
Trent	X	X	X
Westbrook		X	
Wylie			

Source: Region 14, 2004.

Slowly through pilots, many manufacturers now grant a 'just in time' ordering/delivery system. 'Bank accounts' for the commodity items are created allowing for more flexibility in products offered and in the timeframe for delivery. Before, there were only two choices for chicken, but now has increased to ten. The product cases are shipped to the LEA as requested from C.D. Hartnett (who also delivers other groceries). As an added selection this year, nonfat dried milk is being converted to cheese and pizza. Virtually, a low investment results in a high cost end product. Less storage burden, better utilization of commodities, and ease in menu planning are benefits of the 'just in time' delivery method.

Accomplishment: Region 14 is recognized for 90 percent member district participation in the Region 9 food service cooperative purchase program.

FOOD SERVICE COOPERATIVE

In 2004, 62 districts (81 percent) participated in the food processing component cooperative program managed my Region 9. **Exhibit 14-3** shows the number of participating districts from Region 14. The function of this unit is to divert raw USDA commodity products (i.e., chicken) to a commercial processor (i.e., Tyson). The processor in turn manufactures a 'value-added' item that is shipped to C.D. Hartnett for delivery to the LEAs. Raw meats are transformed into client friendly products (i.e. 8-piece cut-up chicken to chicken nuggets). The consolidation of committed poundage allows for the diversion of raw products by truck loads (i.e. 36,000 pounds of chicken). This diversion results in items being purchased at a lower cost than retail/commercial pricing. Students have more choices, the district decreases workman's compensation claims, and foodservice handles less sanitation issues due to participation.

The smaller districts have access to better quality products and increased variety at pricing compared to the purchasing of a large metropolitan district. The streamlining of the order guide allows for the negotiation of competitive pricing. Manufacturers view a velocity report to document buying history. The Cooperative provides the LEAs a broad based network system with industry.

Regions 9 and 14 cooperative has implemented online strategies that allows customer access and efficiency. Personnel using a Web-based program are now all able to enter, transmit, and check grocery orders to C.D. Hartnett. Staffs have the freedom to place requisitions at their convenience. CORS, another Web-based system, allows LEA representatives to have the capability to monitor the usage of commodities diverted for processing. Both LEAs and industry partners appear to realize the advantage of the electronic, real-time accountability.

Region 14's participation and leadership in the food processing component cooperative program has also saved school districts from having to manage independent bidding processes. For example, if a business manager spent only 44 days (320 hours) the entire year dealing with purchasing issues, the staff cost based on an hourly rate of $13.25 would be $4,240. Multiply that times 69 participating school districts the savings equals a sum of $292,560. For publication, newspaper advertisements average $150; therefore, the 69 participating districts would save $10,350.

Accomplishment: Region 14 participates in Region 9's food service cooperative which has created savings for the school districts.

TECHNOLOGY BACK-UP PROCESS

Region 14 Network Services Group provides four levels of back-up processing support for the database. The database back-up processes includes a daily, weekly, and monthly process. These processes are completed by the Network Services LAN Administrator. The daily back-up consists of:

- daily back-up of live database to server;
- network manager back-up on personal pc;

Exhibit 14-3
Region 14 Food Processing Co-op Program
Participation By District

Region 14 Districts	2001–02 Processing	2002–03 Processing	2003–04 Process
Abilene	X	X	X
Albany	X	X	X
Anson	X	X	X
Aspermont	X	X	X
Baird	X	X	X
Breckenridge			
Clyde	X	X	X
Colorado			
Comanche	X	X	X
Cross Plains			
DeLeon	X	X	X
Eastland	X	X	X
Eula	X	X	
Gorman			
Hamlin	X	X	X
Haskell	X		
Hawley	X	X	
Hermleigh	X	X	
Highland			
Ira	X	X	X
Jim Ned	X	X	
Loaraine			
Lueders-Avoca	X	X	X
Merkel	X	X	X
Moran	X	X	X
Paint Creek			
Roby			
Rochester	X	X	X
Rule	X	X	X
Sidney	X		
Stamford	X	X	X
Trent	X	X	X
Westbrook			
Wylie			

Source: Region 14, 2004.

- DVD back-up on 4.7 gig in a fire proof vault; and
- jump drive carried off-site by network manager;

The weekly process consists of a tape drive back-up in a fire proof vault. The monthly process consists of a DVD back-up of all weekly information compiled and place in a fire proof vault.

The benefits to these processes ensure quality support to users.

Accomplishment: The Technology Service Group has an exemplarily database back-up process to prevent loss of data should the database get corrupted.

TEACHER CERTIFICATION

Region 14 technology staff works with all 43 districts in the region to assist in the

Technology Applications Teacher Certification (TATC) process.

This process allows teachers to teach high school technology application courses. RESC 14 technology staff encourages districts to utilize the Telecommunications Infrastructure Fund (TIF) grant funding and work closely with the districts throughout the certification and grant processes.

As a result of the efforts by Region 14 technology staff and district teachers, 17 of 21 teachers in Region 14 successfully completed the rigorous certification process. This means that at least 17 out of 43 districts now have certified teachers that can teach technology application courses at the high school level. This also means that rural, small districts have a much broader offering of technology courses for their high school students.

To date, 117 of 131 teachers statewide successfully completed the TATC certification process. Of the TATC certified teachers in the state, 14.5 percent were from Region 14.

The Technology Applications Teacher Certification (TATC) program prepares teachers to:

- complete the technology application high school (8-12) or all-level (EC-12) technology application TExET for certification; and
- design, implement, and teach 6 of the 8 technology application high school courses. The six courses include: desktop publishing, video technology, digital graphics/animation, multimedia, Web mastering, and independent study in technology applications.

This program is accredited by the State Board of Education Certification (SBEC).

Accomplishment: Region 14 has a successful pass rate of above 80 percent for teachers who took the Technology Applications Teacher Certification Examination.

DETAILED FINDINGS

STRATEGIC PLANNING

Region 14's recently approved strategic plan and supporting action plans do not have a direct correlation to the performance plan process.

Region 14 currently uses a self-evaluation (Region 14 refers to it as an individual development plan) process for conducting performance evaluations. The self-evaluation process is not the most effective way to hold employees accountable for performance. In some cases, the self-evaluation process was not completed or initiated at all, leaving team members unsure on how their day-to-day responsibilities impact the organization's overall and departmental goals. Having management at appropriate levels involved in the performance planning and evaluation process should assist employees in having a clear understanding on expectations and, where applicable, accountability to the action plans. Considering the implementation of a 360-evaluation process will provide an opportunity for peer and key internal customers to provide feedback on an individual's performance.

While each Region 14 department participated in a two day strategic planning process, every department is not reflected in the strategic plan and does not have an action plan. Action plans developed by selective departments are not created in a consistent format. For example, the plans created by the Head Start Program identify the method and required resources whereas the Center for Teaching and Learning does not identify this information. Certain departments did not have action plans at all and were unsure about the purpose of such a tool. This type of lack of involvement and cross-departmental participation has caused selective Region 14 employees not to maintain a level of shared knowledge about their own or other departmental strategic goals.

RESC 14 should require employee performance to have a correlation to the action plans and to conduct a formal annual

evaluation of all employees. Having management at appropriate levels involved in the performance planning and evaluation process will assist with ensuring employees have a clear understanding on expectations and, were applicable, accountability to the action plans. Considering the implementation of a 360-evaluation process will provide an opportunity for peer and key internal customers to provide feedback on an individual's performance.

BOARD MEMBER TRAINING

The Region 14 Board of Directors does not participate in all the necessary training or development activities that would enhance their ability to lead. Currently, selective board members attend conferences including AESA, TAESC, and TASB-TESA (see **Exhibit 14-4**). There is no plan for Region 14 board members to attend training on strategic planning, conducting performance evaluations, or board governance.

Training for board members is essential to providing the necessary knowledge and skills required for leading an RESC. Several Region 14 board members were not familiar with the region's key goals and objectives. In addition, most of Region 14 board members were not clear on the organization's high-level key performance indicators outlined in the strategic plan.

Exhibit 14--4
Region 14 Conference 2004 Participation
By Board Members

Board Member	AESA	TAESC	TASB/TASA
Dr. Gene Shelhamer	X	X	X
Dr. Herman Schaffer	X	X	
Ms. Jewell Harris			
Mr. Jim Rominger	X	X	X
Mrs. Pat Hamric	X	X	
Ms. Francine Allen-Noah	X	X	
Jerry Adams		X	

Source: Region 14, 2004.

The board's participation in additional training will assist with building their knowledge about governance, how to ensure the appropriate strategic goals have been established, and provide a clearer understanding on the most effective tools and methods for holding the executive director accountable. The current plan for holding Region 14's executive director accountable should be more objective and less subjective. By having a more objective plan, Region 14's board can transform from using the current tool, which allows the board to determine if the executive director's performance was commendable, meets all expectations, and or needs improvement. The performance measures established by Region 14's board for the executive director should be measurable with specific target or goals and be more tied to the region's strategic plan.

RESC 14 should require board members to participate in annual training sessions that focus on governance, high level strategic planning, conducting performance reviews, leadership, and building cooperative relationships. The board's participation in training will assist with building and strengthening knowledge about governance, how to ensure the appropriate goals have been established, and provide a clearer understanding of what are the most effective tools and method for holding the executive director accountable.

NEW CONSTRUCTION

Region 14 currently has over $2 million in capital reserve for the construction of an additional building at its Abilene campus, but construction has been delayed

The new building was originally designed, land reserved, and a groundbreaking date set when the budget cuts were announced from the state. In response to the uncertain financial future of the center, construction plans for the new facility were put on hold in 2003.

Region 14 has also submitted proposals to manage the Head Start Programs of three additional counties within Region 14. If these proposals are approved, the center will have to construct new facilities or rent space off of the campus. Region 14 staff indicated that the approval of the new Head Start Programs will serve as the catalyst for making decisions on constructing the new building at the Abilene campus. However, even without the new Head Start programs, staff interviews and a current training schedule review shows that the service center is already severely limited in its ability to adequately host existing training programs, much less expand services to the member school districts.

RESC 14 should construct the new building using capital reserve funds regardless of the status of the new Head Start programs. In order for the service center to remain a viable component of student performance in Region 14, it must be able to maintain the level of training and support necessary to effectively serve school districts. This cannot happen currently at Region 14. There is presently a statewide increase in the demand for services performed by RESCs because of the decrease in staffing at the Texas Education Agency and the increase in accountability standards. Now, more than ever, Region 14 must be able to grow with the needs of its customers.

MARKETING PLAN

In its role as a non-profit service organization and an integral part of the Texas accountability structure,

Region 14 is in a unique position to offer quality educational services at a reduced cost to school districts within the region; however, many school districts do not utilize all services available to them. Region 14 is held accountable under state law for the performance of students and schools within its region. If school districts choose not to use the services offered by Region 14, they must either provide these services internally or contract with private vendors or another RESC for these services. The non-profit nature of the organization allows Region 14 to develop and deliver services with the customer as the focus, not profitability. No private vendor is held to the same level of scrutiny to provide quality and positive impact.

A review of Region 14 contracts for services received as of the on-site visit revealed opportunities to attract new school districts and to expand the services contracted by existing school district clients. Interviews with center staff indicated that there is some lack of knowledge within the school districts of what services may be offered by the center. Related to this issue is the concern that few in the communities that Region 14 serves have any knowledge of its existence or impact. As a result, stakeholders are not aware of the potential impact on performance that Region 14 can offer to their school districts. This exacerbates the difficulty of marketing services and programs in the school districts and allows the potential for critical Region 14 services to go unused.

RESC 14 should develop a formal marketing plan for Region 14 and expand marketing efforts with the school districts and communities being served. There is a lack of knowledge of the existence of Region 14 as well as the critical services it provides. As operating funds from the state have dwindled and the need for programs and services have increased, there is an additional burden on Region 14 to market its services effectively. Implementing an effective marketing plan will increase needed revenue within the service center and expand the services provided to school districts. All of these actions should be

performed with the ultimate goal in mind of improving student performance in the school districts and ensuring the ongoing viability and sustainability of the service center.

COSTING MODEL

The pricing structure for instructional programs and services at Region 14 has, for the most part, remained constant over the past two years. However, in that time period Region 14 lost much of its state funding that had previously supported those programs. Programmatic costs, such as travel and administration are also often not factored into the fees of programs and services.

Center administrative staff as well as program staff indicated that Region 14 was attempting to keep costs stable for the school districts in the region. Region 14 is commended for attempting to maintain a service mentality and keeping costs low for its school districts. However, the fiscal reality is that state funds have been cut and that some fees must be increased to sustain the programs and services of Region 14. In addition to keeping fee-for-service costs constant in the face of budget cuts, there is a reluctance to charge for services that have traditionally been provided at no charge. As a result, many programs that used to be funded through state dollars are still being provided as if the state funds still existed. Many of these programs have sustained severe cuts in resources, both human and financial.

RESC 14 should adopt a costing model that factors in all costs of providing and maintaining all programs and services. The current fee structure of many Region 14 programs and services does not factor in costs that are currently being absorbed by the programs. Each program leader should evaluate actual programmatic costs and make recommendations to the executive staff for developing a new fee schedule. This should follow a standardized methodology that will funnel all evaluations and recommendations to a central group of senior staff for analysis and implementation. This recommendation is critical to the ongoing sustainability of Region 14 and its valuable services.

The costing model and new fee structure can be developed with existing resources. However, the implementation of the new fee structure will create higher revenue for Region 14 if participation rates remain constant. Regardless of participation impact, Region 14 must be able to support programs and services at an adequate level and must adopt new methods of pricing its services. Satisfaction survey results from the school districts of Region 14 are very favorable and suggest that there will not be a decline in participation with moderate fee increases.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

Region 14 does not have a standardized format for determining program effectiveness. Program managers within Region 14 have different methods of evaluating whether they are meeting stated objectives. Some programs assess their success by analyzing TAKS scores, others conduct client satisfaction surveys, and some track participation rates as their primary source of program quality information. The center also conducts an overall client satisfaction survey to solicit feedback from stakeholders regarding centerwide performance. While these measures are all appropriate as individual tools, the center does not have a formal data-driven, comprehensive system in place to ensure that all programs and services are continuously improving.

Analyses of data collected on program effectiveness also varies widely from program to program. Once again, all programs reviewed have evidence of some form of quality evaluation; however, there is no way to currently tie these varying methods together in a cohesive quality assurance model.

The absence of a formal programmatic evaluation process that incorporates all service areas in Region 14 creates the potential that programmatic decisions will be made without the needed supporting data. Best practice in program evaluation takes into account all

services and programs provided by an organization and develops a comprehensive evaluation process for all program and service areas. Without the data that is collected through this type of comprehensive evaluation process, organizations often make decisions based on perceptions that may not be accurate. Region 14 is currently vulnerable to this type of mistake.

RESC 14 should implement a comprehensive process for evaluating program quality and effectiveness. By implementing this recommendation, Region 14 should take the opportunity to tie all program evaluations to core RESC goals. This process is certainly time-intensive, but critical to the ongoing success of programmatic efforts within the region.

SATELLITE OFFICE

Region 14 has satellite offices located in Comanche, Snyder, and Austin, Texas. The Austin Satellite is not serving the needs of Region 14.

As shown in **Exhibit 14-5**, Region 14 satellite offices are as close as 80 miles one-way and as far as 253 miles one-way driving distance. Interviews with current satellite staff, administrators, and board members revealed a need for district accessibility to Region 14 program services personnel at two of these locations (Snyder and Comanche); however, the need for a separate Austin location is not as clear.

Exhibit 14-5
Estimated One-Way Mileage from RESC 14 to Satellite Offices
2004

Location	Purpose	Cost
Comanche, Texas **Opened: August, 1999** **Distance to Abilene = 82 miles**	To deliver staff development at a site closer to districts to reduce the travel cost of districts. The site houses one Region 14 technology employee and services the east area of the region.	Net cost is approximately $10,000 per year.
Snyder, Texas **Opened: July, 1999** **Distance to Abilene = 80 miles**	To deliver staff development at a site closer to districts to reduce the travel cost of districts. No staff members are housed at this site.	Net cost is approximately $10,000 per year.
Austin, Texas **Opened: October, 2001** **Distance from Abilene = 253 miles**	To house the decentralized function of Service Learning. The Austin location houses seven employees.	Costs for lease and utilities are approximately $21,156 per year.

Source: Region 14 ESC, 2004.

Region 14 Education Service Center is required to conduct periodic reviews of programs RESC administered through the Texas Center for Service-Learning (TxCSL), a statewide initiative of RESC 14 and the Texas Education Agency. The purpose of the program review is to help the district verify whether it is in compliance with appropriate state and federal rules and regulations and, if not, to assist the district in reaching compliance. When the University of Texas Dana Center declined to renew their contract with Region 14 for services, the region hired most of the Dana Center employees that worked on the project. Service learning is a statewide service, and since these employees with the service learning experience were already located in Austin, the decision was made to lease commercial space in Austin. Costs for lease and utilities for the Austin location are approximately $21,156 per year. The Austin location houses seven employees.

RESC 14 should close the satellite location and relocate the seven employees at the Region 14 Austin location to Abilene. By implementing this recommendation, Region 14 should bring program services personnel for the Texas Center for Service-Learning (TxCSL) statewide initiative into existing Abilene facilities.

As previously mentioned, the lease and utilities cost associated with housing the program in Austin is approximately $21,156. By implementing this recommendation, Region 14 could expect to recover at least this amount annually.

POST-TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Region 14 does not have a standard method for offering post-training technical assistance to its training participants.

After training, workshop participants provide feedback regarding the information they were presented. Participants provide feedback about the medium through which the workshop was designed (i.e., distance learning, PowerPoint presentation, handouts, interactive, technology-based, etc.), workshop content and additional information or technical assistance they would like to receive. However, onsite interviews revealed that participants are welcome to email workshop facilitators with questions and concerns following attendance. As a result, Region 14 has difficulty tracking which post-training questions have been answered or ensuring that all requests have been addressed**.** Due to the extreme distance between many of the member districts serves by Region 14, several consultants indicated a willingness to provide feedback using various technology-based systems.

The inability to effectively track and monitor the need for follow-up technical assistance makes it impossible to ensure that the content provided in training sessions is used appropriately and will provide positive impact on student achievement.

RESC 14 should establish an electronic Listserv for training participants to provide access to technical assistance following workshops and professional development activities at Region 14. By implementing this recommendation, Region 14 should provide feedback and follow-up technical assistance using various technology-based systems.

SALARY SCHEDULE

Senior staff report that the center routinely loses quality employees to school districts within the region.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that the primary reason for employee leaving Region 14 is to accept jobs with higher salaries. Staff interviewed further suggested that the salary differentials are as much as $15,000 to $20,000 for similar positions between Region 14 and regional school districts.

The executive director shared examples of dedicated staff members that would have stayed with Region 14 had salaries been closer to the local market value. While a certain amount of turnover is healthy for any organization, best practice human resources models take steps to protect organizational

knowledge and service delivery capacity from unreasonable disparities in salary.

RESC 14 should initiate a benchmarking process to develop a more competitive salary schedule for Region 14 and take action to equalize salaries with the local market. While a certain amount of turnover is healthy for any organization, Region 14 must take steps to protect its organizational knowledge and service delivery capacity from unreasonable disparities in salary. It is not unlikely that some center staff will choose to leave for school districts in the region, and this strengthens those school systems, but employees who are dedicated to the center's mission should not be forced to make decisions based on large differences in pay.

EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION INSTRUMENT

While conducting on-site interviews with human resources staff as well as other RESC staff, MGT found that Region 14 had no formal instrument in place for measuring employee satisfaction.

Typically, the measurement of these type of data is facilitated through the use of an employee climate survey. Climate surveys are usually conducted on an annual basis and are critical in identifying employee satisfaction information that may not have surfaced if face-to-face communication was the only available medium.

Determining the satisfaction of organizational employees is critical to ongoing success, especially in times of financial difficulty and staffing cutbacks. While the overall working environment is very positive in Region 14, as demonstrated in survey results, there may be some areas of concern that are not brought to the attention of senior staff. Region 14 should implement this survey as another method of retaining quality employees.

RESC 14 should develop and initiate an organizational climate survey to measure employee satisfaction. Determining the satisfaction of organizational employees is critical to ongoing success, especially in times of financial difficulty and staffing cutbacks. While the overall working environment is very positive in Region 14, there may be some areas of concern that are not brought to the attention of senior staff. Region 11 should implement this survey as another method of retaining quality employees.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Region 14 has developed an Individual Development Plan to facilitate professional development activities within the center; however, this plan is not sufficient to facilitate ongoing organizational improvement.

Exhibit 14-6 is a representation of the form used in Region 14.

As can be seen in the exhibit, seven questions regarding individual employee perceptions of professional development issues are asked at the beginning of each year to each employee of Region 14. The Individual Development Plans are then collected and kept in the Executive Director's office throughout the year. There are currently no follow-up activities and the information derived from this questionnaire is not used to develop professional development activities for individual employees.

Interviews with Region 14 staff and the executive director revealed an awareness that this process should be improved to promote effective professional development and continuous improvement within Region 14.

RESC 14 should develop and implement comprehensive professional development plan for Region 14 staff. The current process for professional development in Region 14 is inadequate to promote improvement among center employees. There is currently little or no ability to assess job performance as it relates to individual employee goals. Further, there is no way to effectively structure professional development to centerwide goals.

Exhibit 14-6
Region Individual Development Plan
2004

I.	Describe one or two accomplishments, achievements, or successful practices at Region 14 that gave you a feeling of pride and/or satisfaction.
II.	List your immediate and long range goals that will have a positive impact on your project and/or job responsibility.
III.	Based on your own perception, describe your greatest strengths.
IV.	Describe the areas in which you would like to improve.
V.	Select one or two targets for self-improvement that you can accomplish within the year. Describe why you selected the one(s) you did.
VI.	Outline the individual development activities you will engage in this year and the dates by which you will complete them.

Source: Region 14, ESC, 2004.

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION TRAINING

The Region 14 Board of Directors lack training in how to evaluate senior personnel and managing personnel issues that require action by the board. These issues include responsibility over the hiring, termination, and performance evaluation of the executive director and other service center personnel. Board members are charged with periodically reviewing the job performance of the executive director to meet state compliance requirements as well as facilitating employment decisions regarding the executive director position. Board members also are responsible for personnel issues that turn into legal issues.

However, interviews with board members revealed that some may have never had any experience with or training in performance evaluation in their professional careers, or otherwise. This circumstance raises doubts regarding the comprehensive nature of these performance evaluations, and the potential accuracy of such evaluations. While there have, to date, been no lawsuits resulting from this lack of training, Region 14 should insulate itself from the vulnerability and potential liability resulting from this situation.

RESC 14 should provide training in performance evaluation to the board of directors. Human Resources is equipped to provide comprehensive training to board members in all areas of performance evaluation, that include:

- goal setting;
- performance criteria development;
- outcome-based evaluation; and
- job performance measurement.

The implementation of this recommendation will ensure that all board members are knowledgeable and proficient in conducting performance evaluations and will facilitate a more comprehensive and effective evaluation process for the executive director.

MANUAL PURCHASING PROCESS

The current purchasing process managed by Region 14 is manually driven. Currently, divisions submitting request to the Business Office use different requisitions forms. The request may be submitted on a form or on a piece of paper. A standard template for submitting a requisition would assist customers with submitting adequate scope of work and improve consistency when requisitions are submitted.

Finding ways to fully utilize the requisition purchase module will assist with ensuring that there is a measurable and repeatable process in place. Region 14 should implement a complete requisition purchasing system as soon as possible to improve inefficiencies including the time it takes to process a requisition, the ability for approvers to receive automatic notification, and minimize the risk of a requisition being misplaced. In the last six months, Region 20's IT Department has rolled out a Web version in an updated business package (iTCCS) to support all purchasing activity from submitting a requisition, receiving approvals, automatic notification, tracking status, issuing a purchase order, to receiving good(s). Region 20 also offers the same requisition module in the RSCCC business package with one exception; the automatic requisition notification function is not currently available.

RESC 14 should utilize the requisition-purchasing module in RSCCC from the point of creating a requisition to receiving a good or service. Because Region 14's Business Office currently uses RSCCC business package for other financial needs it would be more efficient and cost effective to activate the requisition-purchasing module in RSCCC versus implementing iTCCS or another purchasing system. After activating the requisition-purchasing module Region 14 should work with Region 20 ensure an automatic requisition notification function is developed in RSCCC.

EFFICIENCY OF COOPERATIVES

Region 14 participates in several cooperative programs managed by Region 9 without an effective structure for creating cost savings or avoidance reports. While Region 14 has documented some of the value from the various cooperative programs through school districts (referenced earlier in **Exhibit 14-3**) being able to leverage their collective spending power, every district and region not having to manage a purchasing process, but there is not a clear process for tracking total cost savings to the school districts. Region 14's total cost savings should not only reflect the cost avoidance of school districts not having to manage a complete purchasing or bidding process but should also reflect the actual cost savings or avoidances on purchasing goods and services through a cooperative programs.

Regions 9 and 14 are taking the lead to develop this type of information and will continue to assist with growing the cooperative programs and ensuring customers recognize the economic advantage for participating. Region 14 should also use this information for marketing to school districts not currently participating in the cooperative program.

RESC 14 should work with Region 9 to develop a total cost saving model that should be distributed to school districts quarterly. Regions 9 and 14 are taking the lead in developing this type of information. These centers should continue to assist with enhancing the cooperative programs and ensuring customers recognize the economic advantage for participating.

PLANT AND EQUIPMENT APPRAISAL

The Texas Association of Public Schools (TAPS) is providing an appraisal of the plant and equipment. The plant and equipment is valued at historical cost. Region 14 is planning to complete an appraisal of their plant and equipment which is scheduled to take place prior to the end of the calendar

year. The expected results are to update the plant and equipment historical cost to the current replacement cost from the result of the appraisal values identified. This will help Region 14 determine if the levels of insurance are adequate and assist Region 14 and it's agent to make a proper determination of applicable insurance requirements.

RESC 14 should schedule an appraisal of the plant and equipment with TAPS immediately. If the insurance levels are inadequate, then the insurance coverage needs to be reviewed. Ignoring the risk is an invitation to inevitable disaster. While this might appear to be a small risk, even small risks cannot be overlooked. Region 14 should minimize the risk to a potential exposure by taking the proper steps to obtain complete insurance coverage for the plant and equipment new appraised values immediately.

FIXED ASSETS

Region 14 fixed asset system could be more effective. All assets are not tagged; therefore, a complete reconciliation is not possible to validate the physical location of assets. Lost or stolen equipment could occur if assets are not tagged.

Region 14 keeps a list of all fixed assets and inventory. The fixed asset threshold is $5,000. Any asset that is valued at $5,000 or more is capitalized on the system. Assets under $5,000 are expensed but still recorded on the fixed assets and inventory listing. Each department has an asset control form to fill out when additions or deletions are made during the year. The fixed asset clerk will enter these adjustments into fixed asset database.

During the summer before the close of the year, the fixed assets and inventory listing is printed out by area and compared it with what is actually in each area. Adjustments are made if needed.

RESC 14 should ensure that all fixed assets are properly tagged. The implementation of this recommendation should minimize the possibility of lost or stolen equipment from the premises. Region 10 assets are located throughout the center; therefore, it is vital that all assets be properly tagged. The benefits of tagging assets are:

- it helps identify the product quickly and easily;
- it tracks serial numbers or model numbers; and
- tagging saves money and time.

FISCAL IMPACT

	Recommendation	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	5-Year (Costs) or Savings	One-Time (Costs) or Savings
14-7	Close satellite location.	$0	$21,156	$21,156	$21,156	$21,156	$84,624	
	Total	**$0**	**$21,156**	**$21,156**	**$21,156**	**$21,156**	**$84,624**	**$0**

CHAPTER 15:

SAN ANGELO

CHAPTER 15

SAN ANGELO

Regional Education Service Center (RESC) 15 is an intermediate educational unit that provides training, technical assistance, administrative support, and an array of other services as determined by the Legislature, the Commissioner of Education, and the needs of local school districts and charter schools. Historically, Regional Education Service Centers exist to provide technical assistance to all school districts within the Center's boundaries.

RESC 15 is located in San Angelo, Texas approximately 200 miles northwest of Austin. RESC 15 serves one charter school and 43 school districts (see **Exhibit 15-1**) that are scattered over approximately 25,000 square miles and 18 counties. Nearly 49,290 students are served along with approximately 3,700 teachers and 285 administrators. The student population is approximately 50 percent Hispanic and 46 percent White. Over 56 percent of the students are from economically disadvantaged homes. However, the student attendance rate of 96 percent exceeds State rate. The annual dropout rate is one percent.

RESC 15, as per the Texas Legislature, has these three key purposes:

- assist school districts in improving student performance in each region of the system;
- enable school districts to operate more efficiently and economically; and
- implement initiatives assigned by the Legislature or the Commissioner of Education.

RESC 15 has 109 staff members, 66 of whom are certified. The region has an Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) satellite office in Del Rio, approximately 150 miles southwest of San Angelo. The center's executive director, although new to that position, has been employed at the Center for 33 years. Presently, each of the 43 member districts has participants scheduled for training in the summer of 2004. Currently there are 385 scheduled workshops with over 8,064 participants from June 1 – August 13, 2004. From May 1, 2003 to April 30, 2004, RESC 15 served over 23,828 participants.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- RESC 15 efficiently and effectively maintains its facility, resulting in a high satisfaction rate of employees.
- RESC 15 has a zero percent error rate on their PEIMS report resulting in accurate and up-to-date PEIMS reporting.
- Region Educational Service Center 15 uses a comprehensive and responsive approach in determining the services and programs to be delivered to school districts.
- RESC 15 uses a collaborative approach in helping both regular and special education teachers develop and implement school-wide behavior management plans.
- RESC 15 establishes a working environment that promotes the formation of interdisciplinary, cross-functional teams to deliver programs and services to schools.
- RESC 15 effectively uses teleconferencing to reduce the cost of Levels I, II, and III training.
- RESC 15 keeps the cost of state-mandated principal assessment affordable to the participants.

Exhibit 15-1
Region 15 Member Districts

	District Name	Enrollment
1	Ballinger	1,052
2	Bangs	1,053
3	Blanket	236
4	Brady	1,271
5	Bronte	499
6	Brookesmith	179
7	Brownwood	3,661
8	Cherokee	139
9	Christoval	365
10	Coleman	966
11	Comstock	160
12	Crockett County	791
13	Eagle Project *	116
14	Early	1,199
15	Eden	308
16	Grape Creek	1,086
17	Irion County	333
18	Junction	713
19	Lohn	101
20	Mason	569
21	May	282
22	Menard	432
23	Miles	464
24	Novice	98
25	Nueces Canyon	342
26	Olfen	71
27	Paint Rock	148
28	Panther Creek	207
29	Richland Springs	156
30	Robert Lee	295
31	Rochelle	180
32	Rocksprings	371
33	San Angelo	15,028
34	San Felipe	9,173
35	San Saba	768
36	Santa Anna	256
37	Schleicher County	621
38	Sonora	882
39	Sterling City	290
40	Veribest	261
41	Wall	902
42	Water Valley	301
43	Winters	753
44	Zephyr	138

Source: RESC 15 Administrative Office, 2004.
** Charter School*

- RESC 15 unifies physical education teachers, school nurses, school lunch personnel, and school health advisory councils to develop comprehensive, community-wide nutritional programs for students.
- RESC 15 offers a wide range of library, media, and technology services to assist all districts meet state requirements, and to ensure that rural districts have access to current research, literature, and electronic information devices.
- RESC 15 has an exemplary Early Childhood Intervention Program serving 11 counties within the region.
- RESC 15 takes active measures to help their member schools address problems before they escalate and cause student performance levels to decrease.
- RESC 15 minimizes costs by reviewing and updating its job descriptions and conducting its own wage and salary studies.
- RESC 15 Business Office has implemented a series of effective internal accounting controls.
- Regional Educational Service Center 15 provides real time financial information to staff and members that decreases manual requisitions and significantly reduces bottlenecks in the process.
- RESC 15 uses a process that ensures employee purchase requests/orders are directly tied to Texas State Learning outcomes.
- RESC 15 has put processes in place to reduce risk to the center's assets, employees and board members by maintaining adequate insurance coverage.
- RESC 15 solicits outside reviews of its facilities to further reduce risk.
- RESC 15 adopts software and data programs that are dynamic and all encompassing in meeting the needs of the center and participating school districts.

FINDINGS

- RESC 15's board agendas and meeting packets, though complete, do not have a consent calendar.
- The RESC 15 Board of Directors does not conduct a self-evaluation resulting in a missed opportunity for self-improvement.
- The RESC 15 Board of Directors does not have any standing committees, while such committees are often a means for developing appropriate board involvement in agency or organizational policy and planning development, promoting the services or value of an organization, and other activities.
- RESC 15 has a number of areas where energy efficiency can be improved.
- RESC 15 does not have a facilities master plan that can be directly translated into immediate, mid-term and long-term projects.
- RESC 15 does not conduct utility management audits resulting in a lack of data to support decisions on energy management and other related potential cost-savings.
- The field service agents perform important functions for member districts and these should be retained.
- RESC 15 does not aggressively seek opportunities for school boards to contract with private vendors to provide training.
- RESC 15 does not have an appropriate administrator designated as an alternate Human Resources contact to substitute for the executive director.
- RESC 15 has very few minority employees in a region that is heavily populated by minority populations.
- RESC 15 has not established an effective facilities rental fee structure to assist in accruing funds for future renovations.
- RESC 15 does not have the same fiscal year as all of its member districts, which results in some inefficiencies.

- Region 15 does not have a simple cash flow model to complement its existing accounting software.
- The RESC 15 Annual Financial Report is not developed in a format for a certificate of excellence award.
- Small districts often lack the personnel and resources needed to efficiently perform all required business functions. RESC 15 assists some of the districts in the area of finance and bookkeeping. However, there are other RESC 15 districts that could potentially benefit from additional assistance.
- RESC 15 is not taking effective measures to improve the safety and security of its facility.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 15-1: Include a consent calendar on the board agenda.** The use of a consent calendar will allow the board to group routine items into one motion and proceed on to more important issues. Should any board member wish to discuss an item in more detail or act on it separately, the item can be removed from the consent calendar and added to the regular agenda. As a result of using a consent calendar, the board will be able to shorten the length of the meeting or spend more time on "mission critical" issues.

- **Recommendation 15-2: Conduct an annual self-evaluation of the board.** Providing feedback, both formally and informally, is one of the "basics" in any improvement process. Structured feedback in the form of an evaluation instrument can supplement honest ongoing dialogue and discussion.

- **Recommendation 15-3: Establish a standing committee structure.** Implementing this recommendation should result in a careful analysis of potential board committee activity designed to promote the work of RESC 15 and support important planning activity. The implementation of this recommendation can lay the groundwork for developing a board of directors infrastructure to deal with issues related to the perception that important education stakeholders do not adequately understand the nature and purpose of the RESC organization and related programs and services provided to school districts of Texas (this perception was gained in the initial briefing of consultants and further confirmed in interviews with various RESC personnel). This is further supported by the fact that the Texas Legislature prohibits education-related personnel from lobbying for legislative support and funding. This recommendation is based upon the premise that current RESCs and their boards are not proactive in promoting RESC value nor are there established working relationships with local school district boards to identify effective means of educating the public. This recommendation may lead to the development of one or more of the following committees:

  - strategic planning;
  - cooperatives' development;
  - finance;
  - facilities; and/or
  - external relations.

  This recommendation should be implemented through the following steps:

  - The executive director should review the recommendation with the board of directors;
  - Once agreed upon, the board of directors should direct the Executive Director to prepare the necessary policy and procedures to guide the proposed committee(s) development and activity;

- Potential committee membership should be identified with attention to involvement of member school district representation;
- The executive director should identify an RESC liaison for each established committee; and
- The chair of the board of directors should appoint a three member committee assigned the task of implementing the recommendation—that is, preparing a plan for an RESC board external relations program.

The effective implementation of this recommendation can contribute to making important stakeholders informed supporters of the important services and program work of RESC 15 and provide for policy-level board involvement.

- **Recommendation 15-4: Install energy and utility saving devices throughout the regional education service center.** By initiating an energy and utility improvement process, the annual operating costs for utilities for regional education service center will improve. Automated switches (including direct digital controls on HVAC equipment) and valves lower utility consumption. Lower utility consumption will reduce costs and give the appearance of a frugal government agency. Such actions should improve the public's perception of the service center and government as a whole.

- **Recommendation 15-5: Conduct a facilities analysis and incorporate results into a long-range facilities master plan.** The implementation of this recommendation should result in a useable long-range facilities use master plan. The plan should include specific recommendations that reflect the identification of deferred maintenance needs, documented cost estimates and a timeline to address these recommendations. Development of the plan should be coordinated with the board of directors. Once the plan has been completed, it should be reviewed and updated annually and approved by the board of directors.

- **Recommendation 15-6: Maintain funding for the field service positions.** The recent downsizing of the Texas Education Agency makes it problematic for district administrators, especially those in remote and rural sections of the state, to obtain important information in a timely manner. Field service agents are able to respond quickly to questions and requests. Their extensive knowledge of state and federal regulations and their proximity to the districts expedites the transfer of needed information to ensure that districts meet compliance standards.

- **Recommendation 15-7: Seek options for school boards to contract with private vendors for level-two training.** Although RESC 15 appears to be providing board training in an efficient and cost-effective manner, local boards should have the option of outsourcing for any or all training. Although requiring a change in legislation, preventing sole source contracting helps drive costs down and encourages creative approaches to providing training services.

- **Recommendation 15-8: Identify an alternate human resources contact person for staff.** Through the identification of an alternate human resource contact, the staff has an optional contact for issues that may not be appropriate for discussion with the executive director. Through the alternate contact, the executive director can still be apprised of human resource policy and procedure issues

without staff being personally identifiable. The staff may rarely, if ever, use this option, but having it in place creates an atmosphere of respect and good communications within the organization.

- **Recommendation 15-9: Intensify efforts to recruit qualified minority applicants for job openings.** By intensifying the recruitment of qualified minority populations for job openings at the regional education service center, the staff make-up will more accurately reflect the ethnic mix of the community it serves. Because there are language differences in the community, this should result in better communications that will reduce misunderstandings and provide an environment where minority students have the best possible opportunities to succeed. This should result in a more diverse staff with better communications and an improved professional image within the community.

- **Recommendation 15-10: Establish a sinking fund and assess a fee for use of conference or meeting space by outside organizations.** Establishment of a rental fee structure will enable RESC 15 to accumulate funds to pay for future building renovation or replacement costs. This is a best practice used by most businesses that sublet space. When the funds are placed in a sinking fund, it allows earnings on investments rather than payment of interest on borrowed money. (Note: subsequent to the on-site visit, RESC 15 adopted a rental fee structure to be implemented on September 1, 2004.)

- **Recommendation 15-11: Ensure that Region 15 has the same fiscal year as its member districts.** By having RESC 15 and its member districts sharing the same fiscal year, it should simplify the timing of fiscal reporting and make comparative analysis easier. Because of legislative and TEA functions, a September 1 – August 31 fiscal year would probably be easier to implement and maintain than a July 1 – June 30 fiscal year.

- **Recommendation 15-12: Create a simple cash flow model using existing electronic spreadsheet software.** A cash flow model will enable RESC 15 to predict its cash requirements for a year in advance. The model should recognize federal, state, and local revenues; payroll and accounts payable expenditures should also be included. Both revenue and expenditure patterns should be predicted using historical information. Any future receipt or expenditure anomalies should be entered into the model.

- **Recommendation 15-13: Prepare future Annual Financial Reports in a manner consistent with the guidelines that would qualify the report to earn the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting.** Information regarding the preparation of a CAFR, to include copies of the checklist used to review the financial reports can be obtained from GFOA by emailing a request to *CAFRProgram@gfoa.org*. RESC 4 has received a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting from GFOA and copies of its report could provide a format to be used. The achievement of the Certificate is less important than the preparation of a Comprehensive Annual Financial Report that will more effectively communicate the financial position of the Center and relate the financial results with the original budget document.

- **Recommendation 15-14: Conduct a feasibility study to determine if a finance cooperative organization pattern for small districts would be beneficial**. Personnel from within the Finance division can conduct a study to determine which districts have difficulties handling financial and business affairs because of the lack of or a shortage of qualified personnel on staff. Once this determination has been made, the districts identified can be invited to an information sharing meeting. A task force can be established to determine if a finance cooperative could effectively be developed and which finance services can be offered. This study can include reviewing the option of utilizing a large district(s) capacity to provide a group of small school districts with some or all fiscal services. This can result in small districts outsourcing identified services to the larger district and reducing costs and increasing efficiencies.

- **Recommendation 15-15: Increase security through installation of web cameras in sensitive or high risk areas.** RESC 15 should consider increasing security measures in key areas of the facility. These measures might be as simple as installing inexpensive web cameras in sensitive areas with a monitor located in the receptionist's office. The immediate result would be an increased level of security and a decrease in the chance of theft.

DETAILED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

FACILITIES MAINTENANCE

RESC 15 has maintained its facility in an exemplary way as evidenced by the degree of satisfaction expressed by the RESC 15 employees.

The facility use and management functions for RESC 15 are administered by the executive director. One maintenance employee is assigned to the executive director and assists him in the day-to-day maintenance tasks. The executive director oversees the planning, design, and construction of new facilities when needed. The maintenance employee provides ongoing light maintenance services and oversees contracted services. RESC 15 uses a number of contracted services for facilities maintenance:

- contracted custodial services,
- contracted lawn care services,
- contracted HVAC repair services,
- contracted plumbing repair services, and
- contracted electrical repair services.

The existing facility complex has approximately 54,080 square feet. It is composed of two main buildings connected by a covered walkway. There are three other small buildings used for storage and a small workshop. One of the main buildings is the administrative complex and the other is a staff development, or training, complex. The administrative building has several enclosed private offices, but most of the work spaces in the building are large, flexible spaces containing modular office partitions. The employees in the building are physically located in spaces that allow them to work as teams. They are typically located near other related work teams that operate under the supervision of their common administrator (e.g. the finance personnel work in one section of the building while the instructional personnel work in a separate section of the building.). Support service spaces are commonly located centrally to the main employee work areas (e.g. the print shop is located in the middle of the building with central access by all departments. Some departments needing a certain degree of privacy and security (technology and data processing) are located in their own area. The facility has a large storage area with HVAC, electrical, and plumbing infrastructure. This space could be easily converted to additional office space in the future, if needed.

The second main building has a number of training rooms of various sizes. Some of the rooms are divided by operable acoustical panel walls that can be opened to provide large group spaces. All office areas, support spaces, and training rooms have up-to-date technology and electrical infrastructure.

The building is very clean. The grounds are mowed and trimmed. All bushes and shrubs are pruned and in good shape. All lighting, HVAC systems, and plumbing systems are in excellent shape. The day-time maintenance custodian is considered a part of the staff and is very knowledgeable about the building operations. Based on visits to many educational support service buildings across the United States, the Region 15 facility was among the cleanest and best-maintained seen.

MGT survey results show that 100 percent of the center employees agree or strongly agree that they have adequate facilities in which to conduct their work. Also 100 percent of the employees rate their facilities as exceptional.

Accomplishment: RESC 15 efficiently and effectively maintains its facility resulting in a high satisfaction rate of employees.

PEIMS DATA

RESC 15 does an exceptional job of complying with the procedures outlined by the Texas Education Association when compiling and submitting the required data for the state Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS).

The center has a zero percent error rate on their PEIMS report. The PEIMS report contains information about organizations, district finances, staff, and students in the state, region, district, and individual school campuses.

RESC 15's procedures for PEIMS reporting requirement includes:

- RESCs sends the data required by the *2004-2005 PEIMS Data Standards*, in the format specified in this section, to TEA by the specified due dates for each submission. The data will have been reviewed by the RESC using edit rules supplied by TEA, and all fatal errors will have been corrected. The RESC will assist the districts with their data submission to TEA's EDIT+ server in order to meet the above deadlines. ESCs are required to notify districts when the district data has been approved by the RESC and made available for further processing by TEA.

- To facilitate the accuracy and timely delivery of the data, the RESC explains the overall data collection requirement to school district personnel and will train them to adequately meet the data submission requirement. The instruction will cover:

  - overall data flow;
  - delivery schedule;
  - data element definitions;
  - data submission formats;
  - editing requirements;
  - correction cycle;
  - approval of the summary report and error listing; and
  - operation of the Web-based PEIMS EDIT+ system.

- The RESC plays a consulting role in assisting the school district in preparing the data submission and to ensure data quality and compliance with the schedules, the RESC will designate a contact person and alternate who will coordinate RESC assistance by:

  - answering questions about the data standards;
  - organizing the data submission schedule;
  - answering questions about the edit and summary reports;
  - organizing the error correction schedule; and

- initiating the final approval of the district's submission to TEA. (Source: TEA Web site)

An examination of the staffing, budget, and funding sources for compiling and reporting RESC 15 PEIMS report shows the following:

Staffing:	3.27 Full time Employees
Budget:	$75,502
Funding Sources:	PEIMS Support RESC State Support

Accomplishment: RESC 15 has a zero percent error rate on its PEIMS report resulting in accurate and up-to-date PEIMS reporting.

PROGRAM/SERVICE NEEDS ASSESSMENTS

Region Educational Service Center 15 uses a comprehensive and responsive approach in determining the services and programs to be delivered to school districts.

Programs and services offered and delivered to member school districts are determined by a number of data sources including:

- Chapter VIII of the Texas Code, which mandates the services to be provided;
- a yearly evaluation of services offered and delivered to member school districts;
- an analysis of test score data from the TAKS;
- an analysis of the region's demographic profile;
- a variety of needs assessments conducted on a yearly basis;
- workshop evaluations; and
- specific district, campus, and teacher requests.

Establishing multiple criteria upon which decisions about what programs and services are to be offered allows the center flexibility. It also ensures that the service center will be attentive to a varied range of school district needs.

Each month a core group of service center personnel meet to exchange information and ideas for improvement. This may be an appropriate forum for each center to share their processes and procedures for determining those programs and services to be delivered. To the extent needed, the service centers may want to consider developing a prototype for specifying the programs and services available to districts.

Accomplishment: Region Educational Service Center 15 uses a comprehensive and responsive approach in determining the services and programs to be delivered to school districts.

TEACHER COLLABORATION

RESC 15 uses a collaborative approach in helping both regular education teachers and special education teachers improve programs and services.

RESC 15 provides schools with technical assistance and training on the Statewide Behavior and Discipline Management Network. Based upon information obtained from AEIS Data, PEIMS Data, DEC Data, the State Auditor's Report, 425 report, Personal Needs Survey, and APR, the service center conducts trainings in behavior plan development, evaluation, and refinement. Trainings and workshops in behavior management strategies are also offered.

The service center also provides schools with support and training on a Classroom Behavior Initiative. Each participating campus has a behavior management team composed of the principal and four to ten teachers. All team members receive instruction from service center consultants in the areas of social, emotional and academic skills; bully prevention/intervention; severe behavior; and other areas of needs identified by the school campuses. Trainings are conducted by both

general education and special education consultants. School teams that receive this training then provide support to colleagues in their home districts.

Accomplishment: RESC 15 uses a collaborative approach in helping both regular and special education teachers develop and implement school-wide behavior management plans.

CROSS-FUNCTIONAL TEAMS

RESC 15 establishes a working environment that promotes the formation of interdisciplinary, cross-functional teams to deliver programs and services to schools.

RESC 15 offers technical assistance in the area of special education compliance to all school districts. If requested, the service center facilitates "pre referral" team meetings to ensure that special education is the appropriate program for potential student placement. The center also provides assistance to school districts in determining those students who may be eligible to take the SDAA (alternative test to the TAKS). Assistance is also provided in helping schools create an LDAA (locally developed tests given at the conclusion of a class).

Support to help ensure that districts meet the individual needs of special needs students is provided. Instructional strategies and materials are made available to all schools within the region. Special Education consultants work closely with general education consultants to deliver workshops and trainings. In addition, the service center works collaboratively with other agencies to ensure that the needs of all handicapped students are met.

Accomplishment: RESC 15 establishes a working environment that promotes the formation of interdisciplinary, cross-functional teams to deliver programs and services to schools.

TELECONFERENCE TRAINING

RESC 15 effectively uses teleconferencing to reduce the cost of Levels I, II, and III training.

RESC 15 provides three levels of school board training for school board members. Level I training is required by statute and includes an orientation to the Texas Code, state certification requirements, governance structures, student performance mandates, and student support systems.

Level II training focuses upon team building. The superintendent and at least four board members are required to attend this training on a yearly basis.

Level III training is customized to meet specific requests made by superintendents and/or board members. Examples of possible trainings include goal setting, managing change, and motivating individuals. Teleconferencing is often used to deliver all levels of training.

Accomplishment: RESC 15 effectively uses teleconferencing to reduce the cost of Levels I, II, and III training.

PRINCIPAL ASSESSMENT

RESC 15 keeps the cost of state-mandated principal assessment affordable to the participants.

RESC 15 offers a principal assessment for member school districts. The principal assessment is required every five years by the State Board for Educator Certification. The Tarleton Assessment for Principals is used for this process. Using data from their home campuses retrieved from AEIS and TAKS data, principals complete several online exercises prior to a face-to-face, three hour follow-up session at the service center. Based upon the assessment, principals are given a profile of their strengths and areas needing improvement. Results are used solely for professional growth purposes. The service center provides this service at cost to the participants.

Accomplishment: RESC 15 keeps the cost of state-mandated principal assessment affordable to the participants.

COLLABORATIVE MODEL FOR HEALTH SERVICES

RESC 15 uses a collaborative model to unify physical education teachers, school nurses, school lunch personnel, and school health advisory councils to improve nutritional programs for students.

RESC 15 provides technical assistance and support in child nutrition for school lunch personnel, administrators, support services (free and reduced lunch applications), physical education, and nurses. Other services include technical support to assist schools complete their required five year audit. Technology assistance and training in online reporting, assistance completing the Child Nutrition Program Information Management System, parent trainings, and community wellness programs are also offered by the service center. In addition the service center provides help and information for School Health Advisory Councils. Coordination with other service center staff occurs in the areas of technology.

RESC 15 also assists districts with several Child Nutrition initiatives, including the Coordinated Approach to Child Health and the School Meal Initiative. The latter is designed to evaluate and provide feedback to schools on the nutritional and calorie content of meals prepared in their school lunch programs.

Accomplishment: RESC 15 unifies physical education teachers, school nurses, school lunch personnel, and school health advisory councils to develop comprehensive, community-wide nutritional programs for students.

LIBRARY, MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

RESC 15 offers a wide range of library, media, and technology services to assist member districts in meeting state requirements, and to ensure that rural districts have access to current research, literature, and electronic information devices.

RESC 15 provides instructional technology training and library services to twenty-six districts. These districts do not employ certified librarians. The service center employs four consultants; three instructional technology experts, and one certified librarian.

A variety of trainings and workshops are provided throughout the year including training for library aides in technology. For example, many library resources for schools are now available online. Library aides are trained to help students and teachers access those resources. Financial resources are combined to provide online resources such as Encyclopedia Britannica, Facts on File, NovaNet, and numerous periodicals at reduced rates to member school districts. In addition the service center makes video streaming and digital curriculum available to districts who are a part of the media cooperative. Schools also have access to a searchable data base enabling them to locate video clips or entire videos. This service includes activities for teachers to use with their students that are matched with the state and national learning standards.

The service center also offers training for teachers in meeting the state technology requirements for high school technology application courses. Workshops are scheduled on Saturdays using video conferencing. The service center collaborates with the University of North Texas to offer college credit for those who complete this training.

Another service provided by the service center is support and assistance in helping schools manage and implement grant requirements. Three examples include the Target grant, the Technology Emersion Pilot Grant, and the Library Literacy Grant. When grants require that a percentage of the funds be allocated for staff development, the service center coordinates trainings and workshops to meet this requirement.

The center also works with three community colleges in the region to offer high school students a dual credit option. Under this

program students may receive both high school and college credit for certain classes.

Accomplishment: RESC 15 offers a wide range of library, media, and technology services to assist member districts meet state requirements, and to ensure that rural districts have access to current research, literature, and electronic information devices.

EARLY CHILDHOOD INTERVENTION PROGRAM

RESC 15 has an exemplary Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) Program.

RESC 15 acts as the fiscal agent for an Early Childhood Intervention program serving 11 counties. Thirty five (35) ECI staff provide a variety of educational programs and services for children from birth to three who are developmentally disabled. Three hundred (300) families receive assistance. Services include, but are not limited to, speech therapy, mobility training, developmental instruction, occupational therapy, nursing/medical services, and service coordination.

A satellite program in Del Rio, Texas is located 160 miles from the service center. The center in Del Rio employs seven (7) individuals. One hundred and five (105) families are served in a two county area. The staff is cross-trained so they can provide services in a variety of areas. Six staff members are bilingual.

Affiliation with the service center gives the ECI specialists access to special education directors, schools and other support agencies. Early Childhood Intervention specialists collaborate with other center staff to provide trainings and other programs including child find and public awareness activities. In addition, inclusion of the ECI program in the service center enables the staff to draw upon the expertise of other professionals who are able to provide assistance in technology and developmental pedagogy. Coordination with the West Texas Rehabilitation Center and the medical community demonstrates how the center interacts with outside agencies to coordinate and expand services.

Accomplishment: RESC 15 has an exemplary Early Childhood Intervention Program serving 11 counties within the region.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO LOW PERFORMING SCHOOLS

When schools are identified as low performing, RESC 15 provides excellent technical assistance for the site-based school improvement team. The service center facilitates a process that empowers the site-based team to develop and implement a school wide plan for improving student performance. The center also helps schools identify possible changes and modifications in school policies, curriculum, instruction, and parental involvement. Service center staff are present when the state conducts a monitoring audit. However, the service center is not an active participant in the audit.

Internally, the service center has established a School Improvement Team comprising staff from the core content areas, Federal Program areas, and Administrative Services. The School Improvement Team meets once a month to exchange ideas and coordinate services and workshops. One goal of RESC 15 is to work with closely their member schools so that problems can be addressed immediately and on an ongoing basis.

Accomplishment: RESC 15 takes active measures to help its member schools address problems before they escalate and cause student performance levels to decrease.

SALARY STUDIES

In an effort to reduce costs, RESC 15 has taken the responsibility of updating its job descriptions and conducting its own wage and salary study. These processes are often completed by outside vendors at significant cost to the RESC. By carefully managing its time and resources, RESC 15 is incorporating these functions into its ongoing Human Resource functions.

The center recently reviewed each of the job descriptions for the center and has updated them where appropriate. In addition, the center has undertaken the responsibility of conducting its own wage and salary study to gather information about where its employees rank compared to comparable positions in the labor market in an effort to ensure adequate employee compensation.

Accomplishment: RESC 15 reviews and updates its job descriptions and conducts its own wage and salary study.

INTERNAL ACCOUNTING CONTROLS

RESC 15 has implemented a series of effective internal controls in its accounting system with policies and procedures for many accounting functions.

Staff who receive cash do not deposit cash and accounts receivable (A/R) employees are different from accounts payable (A/P) staff. Purchasing has a tiered system of signatures for different levels of purchasing, but always requires at least two signatures. Staff is responsible for automated system backups. Nightly backups are kept off-site and weekly backups kept in a local bank. Cross-training is required of staff assigned to A/R, A/P, and payroll (P/R). Timesheets for all non-exempt employees must have signature approval by their respective supervisors. Often there will be some missing or recommendations in the audit report for additional controls. That was not the case in Region 15. It is somewhat unusual to find a finance department with so many excellent internal controls in place.

Accomplishment: The RESC 15 Business Office has implemented a series of effective internal accounting controls.

REAL TIME FINANCIAL DATA

Regional Educational Service Center 15 provides real time financial information to staff and members, which decreases manual requisitions and significantly reduces bottlenecks in the process.

Regional Educational Service Center 15 uses the RSCCC business software application. Center staff has received training and technical assistance just as a business office in a school district would. The current updated RSCCC software affords the business office the ability to have real time financial information available to directors and consultants at any time in the purchasing process. Requisitions and purchase orders are created and tracked electronically. Manual requisitions are minimal, and as a result, delays and bottlenecks have been eliminated, and the cost per individual purchase order has been significantly reduced.

Many regional centers have not recognized the improved efficiency and reduced workloads and costs associated with the updated RSCCC 2000.

Accomplishment: Regional Educational Service Center 15 provides real time financial information to staff and members that decreases manual requisitions and significantly reduces bottlenecks in the process.

FISCAL LINKAGE WITH OUTCOMES

Regional Educational Service Center 15 ensures that employees tie their requests for requisition/purchase orders directly to Texas state learning outcomes.

The supervisory staff of Regional Educational Service Center 15 encourages employees to tie requisition/purchase orders to state learning objectives as they relate to student instruction. The purpose is to create a constant reminder that all expenditures and efforts of the center should ultimately focus on the school district, teacher, and learner.

This practice is unique among the state's centers and ensures that employees focus expenditures on learner needs.

Accomplishment: RESC 15 ensures that employees tie their requests for requisition/

purchase orders directly to Texas state learning outcomes.

INSURANCE COVERAGE

Regional Educational Service Center 15 implements processes to reduce risk to the center's assets, employees, and board members by maintaining adequate insurance coverage.

Regional Educational Service Center 15, like most organizations, has risk factors associated with doing business. In addition, since the service center is also a public entity and supported by public funds, it is doubly important that the center's assets, employees, and board members are protected by adequate levels of insurance.

Three types of insurance are typically found in governmental organizations: (1) property insurance to protect the real property assets, (2) liability insurance to protect the organization from errors and omissions, and (3) health insurance to protect personnel from loss.

Regional Educational Service Center 15 has protected itself and its employees in several important ways. Adequate levels of property and casualty insurance are provided through a risk management pool. Workman's Comprehensive and Unemployment Insurance is provided by Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) cooperative and employee insurance is provided by (TRS) health and medical. Even though private companies may offer certain coverages, these coverages are often not specifically focused on government in Texas. The policy, through risk management pools such as the Texas Association of School Boards, provides better coverage that addresses the needs of governmental entities. The re-insurers of these risk management pools are from the private sector.

Health insurance is provided by TRS Active Care. Re-insurers bid the package and there are three levels of coverage. The regional education service center covers the basic package. The importance of adequate insurance is to reduce risk of law suits to the center and the elected boards who govern them, to provide needed health insurance to employees and protect employees from loss of income through injury or loss of their jobs.

Region 15's efforts send a clear message that the center is protecting tax payers dollars from possible law suits.

Accomplishment: RESC 15 has put processes in place to reduce risk to the center's assets, employees and board members by maintaining adequate insurance coverage.

OUTSIDE REVIEWS OF FACILITIES

RESC 15 solicits outside reviews of its facilities to further reduce risk.

Regional Educational Service Center 15 has reduced risk by acting in a active manner to identify, analyze, and reduce risks by responding to information provided by representatives from insurance carriers and participating in an annual inspection provided by TASB (Texas Association of School Boards).

Even though the staff of the center has taken action to identify safety issues, it is in the best interest of Region 15 to engage an independent organization that has access to national safety research and to benefit from an independent set of "eyes" to search for overlooked hazards.

The center voluntarily chooses to solicit an outside agency in order to take advantage of a larger research base and to take advantage of an independent inspector who evaluates facilities throughout the state.

Accomplishment: RESC 15 solicits outside reviews of its facilities to further reduce risk.

DYNAMIC SOFTWARE PROGRAMS

Regional Educational Service Center 15 adopts software and data programs that are dynamic and all encompassing in meeting the

needs of the center and participating school districts.

Regional Educational Service Center 15 has developed a Management Information System (MIS) to facilitate the gathering of data used to respond to requests for information from the legislature, Texas Education Association, regional schools, and internal staff. The information is used to determine needs, participants served, Balanced Score card data requests and evaluation of services.

The core of this program is built around the RSCCC, the iTCCS, and a complementing product referred to as the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS). This package has a broad capability focusing in two areas: Business applications for budget, check reconciliation, finance, fixed assets, human services and payroll. Student applications address attendance, discipline, reporting grades, health, scheduling, query module, special education management and student registration.

The addition of the MIS for data gathering and reporting represents a best practice procedure that all regions should adopt.

Accomplishment: Regional Educational Service Center 15 adopts software and data programs that are dynamic and all encompassing in meeting the needs of the center and participating school districts.

DETAILED FINDINGS

CONSENT CALENDAR

RESC 15's board agendas and meeting packets, though complete, do not have a consent calendar.

Many districts include a consent calendar item on the board meeting agenda to include actions such as the payment of bills, the approval of the sale of surplus items, approval of travel expenses, the acceptance of gifts, etc. The use of a consent calendar allows the board to group routine items into one motion and proceed on to more important issues. Using a consent calendar sends a message about the board's desire to focus on policy issues and set priorities.

Exhibit 15-2 is an example of a board agenda with a consent calendar.

RESC 15 should include a consent calendar on the board agenda. The use of a consent calendar will allow the board to group routine items into one motion and proceed on to more important issues. Should any board member wish to discuss an item in more detail or act on it separately, the item can be removed from the consent calendar and added to the regular agenda. As a result of using a consent calendar, the board will be able to shorten the length of the meeting or spend more time on "mission critical" issues.

Exhibit 15-2
Sample Board Agenda

Board Agenda
Date

1. Call to Order
   1.1 Call Meeting to Order (President)
   1.2 Flag Salute
   1.3 Roll Call (Minutes Clerk of the Board)

2. Consent Calendar
   (Motion requires: Motion required for the approval of the "Consent Calendar" as printed or as amended. Board members may, however, call for a vote on each of the items listed on the "Consent Calendar."
   2.1 Agenda with Commentary
   2.2 Minutes
   2.3 Gifts
   2.4 Payables
   2.5 Surplus resolution

3. Presentations/Recognitions
   3.1 Presentation of the Employee of the Month Awards

4. Public Comment
   4.1 Comments from the Public

5. Superintendent's Report
   5.1 Schedule of Upcoming Dates
   5.2 Enrollment Update
   5.3 Holiday Shutdown for Energy Management

6. Discussion Topics
   6.1 Report from the District Energy Manager

7. Questions form Board Members

8. Action Items – List Attached (Motion Required)

9. Adjourn

Source: MGT of America, 2004.

BOARD SELF-EVALUATION

RESC 15's Board of Directors does not conduct a self-evaluation resulting in a missed opportunity for self-improvement.

The board of directors for RESC 15 is composed of seven members; board training takes place each year. The board of directors annually evaluates the executive director. The board does not evaluate itself, although some board members reported participation in "informal" feedback communications.

Governing boards in any organization can improve their performance through a formal self-evaluation in addition to an informal feedback process. In addition, by conducting and annual evaluation, the board models for their organizations the importance of the evaluation process. As a result, both the board and the organization develop a culture of participation in improvement cycles. Better organizations and improved performance are the end result. **Exhibit 15-3** is one example of a self-assessment instrument used by some boards.

RESC 15 should conduct an annual self-evaluation of the board. Providing feedback, both formally and informally, is one of the "basics" in any improvement process. Structured feedback in the form of an evaluation instrument can supplement honest ongoing dialogue and discussion.

BOARD STANDING COMMITTEE

The RESC 15 Board of Directors does not have any standing committees, while such committees are often a means for developing appropriate board involvement in agency or organizational policy and planning development, promoting the services or value of an organization, and other activities.

The board of directors meets every other month for regularly scheduled meetings and other meetings are called as the need arises. MGT consultants do not believe that the board needs to meet more often; however, greater board involvement in planning activity, services development, and essential RESC promotion activity among the region's districts and other stakeholders may well require more individual board member involvement and could result in producing a means by which board members can actively affect the public's and others' understanding of RESC services and products.

Many effective organizations involve the board of directors in carefully crafted committee work or ad hoc committee activity to contribute to overall effectiveness and as an effective tool for overcoming external barriers to success in many areas of concern. One of the areas of concern voiced by the executive director and other RESC personnel relates to strengthening relationships with external audiences (an area addressed by RESC 2, Corpus Christi, with the establishment of a marketing position with key responsibility for marketing conferencing services and facility use and promoting the services and products among non-service customers).

RESC 15 should establish a standing committee structure. Implementing this recommendation should result in a careful analysis of potential board committee activity designed to promote the work of RESC 15 and support important planning activity.

The implementation of this recommendation can lay the groundwork for developing board of directors infrastructure to deal with issues related to the perception that important education stakeholders do not adequately understand the nature and purpose of the RESC organization and related programs and services provided to the school districts of Texas (this perception was gained in the initial briefing of consultants and further confirmed in interviews with various RESC personnel). This is further supported by the fact that the Texas Legislature prohibits education-related personnel from lobbying for legislative support and funding. This recommendation is based upon the premise that current RESCs and their boards are not proactive in promoting RESC value nor are there established working relationships with local school district boards to identify effective means of educating the public.

Exhibit 15-3
Sample Board Self -Assessment Instrument

Meeting Evaluation

DIRECTIONS: By evaluating our past meeting performance, we can discover ways to make future meetings shorter and more productive. Check each item "Adequate" or "Needs Improvement." If you check "Needs Improvement," include suggestions for improvement.

Adequate	Needs Improvement	
_____	_____	Our meeting was businesslike, results-oriented and we functioned like a team.
_____	_____	Our discussion was cordial and well balanced (not Dominated by just a few members).
_____	_____	We confined our discussion to agenda items only.
_____	_____	Our agenda included positive issues as well as problems.
_____	_____	We discussed policy issues rather than day-to-day management issues.
_____	_____	We followed parliamentary rules and consulted legal or professional counsel when needed.
_____	_____	The president or chairperson controlled and guided the meeting.
_____	_____	We dealt successfully with controversial items and attempted to develop solutions acceptable to all members.
_____	_____	Everyone contributed to the meeting.
_____	_____	All members were prepared to discuss material that was sent to them in advance.
_____	_____	Reports were clear, well prepared and provided adequate information for decision making.
_____	_____	Printed materials given to us were easy to understand and use.
_____	_____	Our meeting room was comfortable and conducive to discussion and decision making.
_____	_____	All members were in attendance and on-time - - and the meeting began and concluded on time.
_____	_____	For committees and ad hoc groups: There was adequate reason for us to meet.

My best suggestions for improving our next meeting is...

Source: MGT of America, 2004.

This recommendation may lead to the development of one or more of the following committees:

- strategic planning;
- cooperatives' development;
- finance;
- facilities; and/or
- external relations.

This recommendation should be implemented through the following steps:

- The executive director should review the recommendation with the board of directors;
- Once agreed upon, the board of directors should direct the Executive Director to prepare the necessary policy and procedures to guide the proposed committee(s) development and activity;
- Potential committee membership should be identified with attention to involvement of member school district representation;
- The executive director should identify an RESC liaison for each established committee; and
- The chair of the board of directors should appoint a three member committee assigned the task of implementing the recommendation—that is, preparing a plan for an RESC board external relations program.

The effective implementation of this recommendation can contribute to making important stakeholders informed supporters of the important services and program work of RESC 15 and provide for policy-level board involvement.

ENERGY MANAGEMENT

RESC 15 has a number of areas where energy efficiency can be improved.

There were numerous light fixtures with older T-12 lights using magnetic ballasts. Many light switches in the building have a sign asking users to "please turn out the lights." However, MGT personnel found numerous rooms that were unoccupied for extended periods of time with the lights switched on.

Sinks do not have motion activated water faucets. Urinals and toilets lack motion activated flush valves. Motion activated water faucets and flush valves have been shown to save water. Conservation of water during a time of drought in West Texas is especially important. Vending machines can be a significant user of electricity. The vending machines in the center lack motion activated electrical switches.

Facilities with energy efficient equipment and water saving fixtures can be expected to save as much as 35 percent-50 percent on utility bills over similar facilities without the equipment. A side effect of any energy efficiency project is the public approval of the project. Most communities report an improvement in the image of the organization when public dollars are used more efficiently.

RESC 15 should install energy and utility saving devices throughout the regional education service center. By initiating an energy and utility improvement process, the annual operating costs for utilities for regional education service center will improve. Automated switches (including direct digital controls on HVAC equipment) and valves lower utility consumption. Lower utility consumption will reduce costs and give the appearance of a frugal government agency. Such actions should improve the public's perception of the service center and government as a whole.

Most resource conservation managers would estimate that the installation of utility saving equipment described above would save at least 20¢ per square foot. However, the installation of energy savings equipment typically requires a three year payback. Therefore the savings to RESC 15 with 54,080 square feet is estimated to be $10,816 (54,080 times $.20). Because the implementation of this plan will take approximately six months, only half of the

savings will be realized in fiscal year 2007–08, but the full savings will be realized in fiscal year 2008–09.

FACILITIES MASTER PLAN

The RESC 15 does not have a facilities master plan that can be directly translated into immediate, mid-term and long-term projects.

The lack of this master plan creates a series of difficulties including not having addressed long-term parking needs and raising questions regarding long-term retrofitting of facilities to meet the rapidly changing demands of modern technology.

A number of planning processes and documents can be used to build and maintain facilities that meet the changing needs of a region. A facilities master plan is the result of these planning efforts and becomes the organization's policy statement for allocating resources and developing alternatives for facility improvement. Facility master plans become increasingly important as a district's enrollment changes and facilities age. Even for an organization like RESC 15, a facilities master plan can be used to plan appropriately.

The center does not have a dedicated facilities planning function, but rather uses a business officer to develop scenarios for consideration with growth.

The lack of a facilities master plan hinders planning for growth. A facilities master plan is based on verified existing data, a complete understanding of both facilities conditions and the future implications of needs for the educational service center. An effective master plan includes an accurate inventory of each room, current internal room utilization, current external room utilization and assessments of all repairs, and renovations necessary for long-tem use.

Many larger sized organizations hire professionals to develop all or parts of the facilities master plan. RESC 15 has existing staff that can create a simple facilities master plan.

RESC 15 should conduct a facilities analysis and incorporate results into a long-range facilities master plan. The implementation of this recommendation should result in a useable long-range facilities use master plan. The plan should include specific recommendations that reflect the identification of deferred maintenance needs, documented cost estimates and a timeline to address these recommendations. Development of the plan should be coordinated with the board of directors. Once the plan has been completed, it should be reviewed and updated annually and approved by the board of directors.

UTILITY MANAGEMENT AUDITS

RESC 15 does not conduct utility management audits resulting in a lack of data to support decisions on energy management and other related potential cost-savings.

Utility management firms are often hired once per year to obtain all telephone, gas, electricity, water, long distance, and Internet records. They audit these records to identify potential savings. The records are also compared to records obtained from provider utility companies. Discrepancies in records often result in returned savings to the RESC. Typically, the utility management firms keep a percentage of identified savings as a fee for the services.

By not conducting these audits, the center may be missing opportunities for conserving expenditures that may be better used in delivering educational services to client.

RESC 15 should conduct utility management audits. The implementation of this recommendation should result in conserving energy with resulting savings in expenditures. Utility audits for the service center and guidance to school districts on use of utility audits should produce much needed increased efficiency and economies for Region 15. Typically organizations can secure assistance with utility management audits from a variety of sources. The RESC should contact the local public utilities service provider for assistance. If the public utilities provider does not offer

this service then the RESC should turn to the private sector providers such as Honeywell Corporation or Johnston Controls Corporation. These types of firms usually offer the audit at no cost to the organization with optional retrofitting services paid for through identified savings as they occur.

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources. The results of the audits will vary, but often results in funds being returned to the service center through a reduction in utilities expenses.

FIELD SERVICE AGENTS

The field service agents perform important functions for member districts and these services should be maintained.

RESC 15 employs two part-time (.5 each) field service agents who serve as liaisons to superintendents, administrators, and school board members. They assist districts and other service center employees in Region 15 in interpreting the following policies and legal requirements:

- Texas Education Code, and all state laws impacting education;
- federal laws, rules, and regulations;
- decisions and rulings made by the Texas Education Agency and the State Education Commissioner;
- policies and procedures established by the State Board of Education;
- policies and procedures established by the Texas Board of Educator Certification;
- policies and procedures established by the Texas Teacher Retirement System;
- State Attorney General Rulings;
- Federal Court Rulings (U.S. Fifth Circuit, U. S. Supreme Court); and
- decisions and rulings made by TEA hearing officers.

After each legislative session, field service personnel conduct workshops for school boards and administrators. They are certified to deliver the Instructional Leadership Development, Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS), the Principal Assessment Program, and the three levels of school board training. In addition to taking phone calls and attending regional superintendents' meetings, field service personnel make on-site visits to districts several times per semester. They serve as mentors to new superintendents, and provide guidance in the areas of school finance, graduation requirements, discipline issues, and any other assistance requested by the schools. Field service personnel attend all service center staff meetings and School Improvement Committee meetings.

The field service agents play an integral role in providing quality services to member districts.

RESC 15 should maintain funding for the field service positions. The recent downsizing of the Texas Education Agency makes it problematic for district administrators, especially those in remote and rural sections of the state, to obtain important information in a timely manner. Field service agents are able to respond quickly to questions and requests. Their extensive knowledge of state and federal regulations and their proximity to the districts expedites the transfer of needed information to ensure that districts meet compliance standards.

CONTRACTS WITH PRIVATE VENDORS

RESC 15 does not aggressively seek opportunities for school boards to contract with private vendors to provide training.

There are three levels of school board training. The first level is for legislative and legal issues. This training usually takes place as an "update workshop." The second level of school board training is for team building. This level is mandated by the legislature and can only be conducted by the regional education service centers or pre-qualified vendors. It cannot be outsourced to anyone else. The third level of training can be on any other topic. This training is commonly referred

to as "customized" training. Field Service Agents, employed by RESC 15 commonly do most school board training. **Exhibit 15-4** details the continuing education requirements for school board members.

Exhibit 15-4
Continuing Education for Board Members

Type of Continuing Education	New Board Members	Experienced Board Members	Provider
Local District Orientation	Required but no specified time	Not Required	Local District
Orientation to Texas Education Code	3 hours	Not Required	Regional Education Service Center
Update to the Texas Education Code	Of sufficient length to address major changes	Of sufficient length to address major changes	Regional Education Service Center
Team Building Session/Assessment of Continuing Education Needs of the Board-Superintendent Team	At least 3 hours	At least 3 hours	Regional Education Service Center or another registered provider
Additional Continuing Education, Based on assessed need and the Framework for School Board Development	At least 10 hours	At least 5 hours	Regional Education Service Center or another registered provider
Total Number of Minimum Hours	16 hours plus local district orientation and update	8 hours plus update	N/A

Source: RESC 15, Board of Directors, 2004.

RESC 15 should seek options for school boards to contract with private vendors for any level-two training. Although RESC 15 appears to be providing board training in an efficient and cost-effective manner, local boards should have the option of outsourcing for any or all training. Although requiring a change in legislation, preventing sole source contracting helps drive costs down and encourages creative approaches to providing training services.

HUMAN RESOURCES ADMINISTRATION

RESC 15 does not have an appropriate administrator designated as an alternate Human Resources contact to substitute for the executive director.

RESC 15 has several employees charged with the human resources functions. The executive director has assumed the responsibility as the HR director and has received considerable assistance from his administrative assistant. For many of the human resource functions, this arrangement works adequately. However, because the center is fairly "flat" in its organizational structure, some staff members will feel uneasy about going to their "boss" for advice or assistance. Examples of this might be in issues of salary or benefits and perceived unfair treatment.

An alternate HR contact is often identified in those cases where the executive director is the primary human resources contact. This allows a "safety valve" for those employees who may feel uneasy about going to their top administrator for advice or assistance.

RESC 15 should identify an alternate human resources contact person for staff. Through the identification of an alternate human resource contact, the staff has an optional contact for issues that may not be appropriate for discussion with the executive director. Through the alternate contact, the executive director can still be apprised of human resource policy and procedure issues without staff being personally identifiable. The staff may rarely, if ever, use this option, but having it in place creates an atmosphere of respect and good communications within the organization.

MINORITY RECRUITMENT

RESC 15 has very few minority employees in a region that is heavily populated by minority populations.

A total of 53.8 percent of the students in RESC 15 are from minority populations (49.4 percent are Hispanic.). However, only 12.3 percent of the teaching staff is from a minority population and only 19.5 percent of the support staff are from minority populations.

The center has tried several methods of recruiting qualified minority candidates for job openings, but reports minimal success.

Recruiting and hiring a greater number of people from different cultures, backgrounds, and races has the potential of bringing a different set of solutions and more ways of solving problems common to school districts throughout the region. A more diverse staff can create energy and increase the probability that decisions regarding programs and services will more adequately meet the needs of the center's clients. In addition, a diverse work force can generate unique, fresh, and innovative ideas and suggestions. Employees from diverse backgrounds can share new knowledge and information about the needs of different groups. This diversity will enhance the center's ability to respond to schools and districts in a creative manner.

RESC 15 should intensify efforts to recruit qualified minority applicants for job openings. By intensifying the recruitment of qualified minority populations for job openings at the regional education service center, the staff make-up will more accurately reflect the ethnic mix of the community it serves. Because there are language differences in the community, this should result in better communications that will reduce misunderstandings and provide an environment where minority students have the best possible opportunities to succeed. This should result in a more diverse staff with better communications and an improved professional image within the community.

This recommendation will require a greater recruitment effort. Additional advertising in a wider geographic area will be necessary. In addition, some additional time will need to be spent cultivating new contacts and sources of referral. The fiscal impact of such an expanded search effort is estimated at $2,000 per year. MGT shows a 50 percent cost reduction in the first year due to the implementation date of January 2005.

SINKING FUND

RESC 15 has not established an effective facilities rental fee structure to assist in accruing funds for future renovations.

The regional education service centers are able to charge a space usage fee to programs occupying the building. In addition, indirect costs are charged to eligible programs. Although not used in Region 15, some service centers also charge a rental fee for the use of conference or meeting space. These fees are used by some regional education service centers to pay for facility maintenance and non-voted debt on their buildings. Although RESC 15 does not have this "debt," it will someday have to replace the major components of the building or perhaps the

building itself. Presently there is no sinking fund that holds monies for that purpose.

Efficiently operated RESCs have a rental fee structure and sinking fund structure that enables to organization to offset costs for operating and updating the facility.

RESC 15 should establish a sinking fund and assess a fee for use of conference or meeting space by outside organizations. Establishment of a rental fee structure will enable RESC 15 to accumulate funds to pay for future building renovation or replacement costs. This is a best practice used by most businesses that sublet space. When the funds are placed in a sinking fund, it allows earnings on investments rather than payment of interest on borrowed money. (Note: Subsequent to the on-site visit, RESC 15 adopted a rental fee structure to be implemented on September 1, 2004.)

FISCAL YEAR CALENDAR

RESC 15 does not have the same fiscal year as all of its member districts, which results in some inefficiencies.

Presently the fiscal year for RESC 15 is from September 1 to August 30. All 43 member school districts also use the same fiscal year. However, it is possible to have different fiscal years among RESCs.

When RESC 15 and its member districts have a common fiscal year, there is no "overlap" between the fiscal accounting by fiscal year. Accruals of both expenses and revenue are simplified to a common 60 day period that is the same for all entities. Because of the legislative and TEA finance and funding timelines, a September 1 – August 31 fiscal year would be more efficient to implement and maintain than a July 1 – June 30 fiscal year.

RESC 15 should ensure that Region 15 has the same fiscal year as its member districts. By having the regional education service center and its member districts having the same fiscal year, it should simplify the timing of fiscal reporting and make comparative analysis easier. Because of legislative and TEA functions, a September 1 – August 31 fiscal year would probably be easier to implement and maintain than a July 1 – June 30 fiscal year.

CASH FLOW MODEL

Region 15 does not have a simple cash flow model to complement its existing accounting software.

RESC 15 has enjoyed a healthy fund balance for many years. The fund balance allows the RESC to cover any cash demands required by annual operations. Most funds are expenditure driven, thus requiring the expenditure of cash before TEA will reimburse the RESC. RESC financial personnel are unable to tell how close the cash demands come to exhausting the cash balance, but are confident that adequate cash supplies are always available. No cash flow model is in place.

The Finance department appears to be maintaining adequate levels of operational cash. The department is maintaining three accounts: a general computer clearing account, payroll clearing, for payroll checks and a sweep account used on a daily basis. In addition, some funds are invested in certificates of deposit.

Exhibit 15-5 is an example of a simple cash flow model that could be adapted for RESC 15 use.

Exhibit 15-5
Sample Cash Flow Model

	July	August	September	October
Beginning Balance	$0	$1,446,250	$1,748,750	$577,750
County Receipts	2,493,750	75,000	75,000	75,000
State Receipts	262,500	1,387,500	0	1,387,500
Federal Receipts	150,000	150,000	170,000	170,000
Total Receipts	2,906,250	3,058,750	1,993,750	2,210,250
Payroll (Gross)	1,050,000	1,050,000	1,100,000	1,100,000
Payables	410,000	260,000	316,000	366,000
Total Expenditures	1,460,000	1,310,000	1,416,000	1,466,000
End Balance	**$1,446,250**	**$1,748,750**	**$577,750**	**$744,250**
	November	**December**	**January**	**February**
Beginning Balance	$744,250	$960,750	($260,250)	$2,468,750
County Receipts	75,000	75,000	4,125,000	75,000
State Receipts	1,387,500	0	0	1,575,000
Federal Receipts	170,000	170,000	170,000	170,000
Total Receipts	2,376,750	1,205,750	4,034,750	4,288,750
Payroll (Gross)	1,100,000	1,100,000	1,100,000	1,100,000
Payables	316,000	366,000	466,000	416,000
Total Expenditures	1,416,000	1,466,000	1,566,000	1,516,000
End Balance	**$960,750**	**($260,250)**	**$2,468,750**	**$2,772,750**
	March	**April**	**May**	**June**
Beginning Balance	$2,772,750	$1,651,750	$580,750	$1,059,750
County Receipts	75,000	75,000	75,000	75,000
State Receipts	0	0	1,500,000	0
Federal Receipts	170,000	170,000	170,000	170,000
Total Receipts	3,017,750	1,896,750	2,325,750	1,304,750
Payroll (Gross)	1,100,000	1,100,000	1,100,000	1,100,000
Payables	266,000	216,000	166,000	216,000
Total Expenditures	1,366,000	1,316,000	1,266,000	$1,316,000
End Balance	**$1,651,750**	**$580,750**	**$1,059,750**	**($11,250)**

Source: MGT of America, 2004.

RESC 15 should create a simple cash flow model using existing electronic spreadsheet software. A cash flow model will enable RESC 15 to predict its cash requirements for a year in advance. The model should recognize federal, state, and local revenues; payroll and accounts payable expenditures should also be included. Both revenue and expenditure patterns should be predicted using historical information. Any future receipt or expenditure anomalies should be entered into the model.

ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT

The RESC 15 Annual Financial Report is not developed in a format for a certificate of excellence award.

The RESC 15's Annual Financial Report is prepared by the RESC's auditors; however, the financial reports are not consistent with the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting guidelines. This report includes the auditor's opinion letter and all of the necessary financial statements, footnote disclosures and other disclosures, to comply with current governmental accounting principles as promulgated by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) as well as reports required by the federal government relating to the Single Audit Act, which mandates an independent financial and compliance audit of federal financial assistance programs. This report provides a picture of the overall financial position of the center, but it lacks additional information that could be used to more effectively communicate how the financial

activity for the fiscal year has impacted each center's programs and services.

The Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) and the Association of School Business Officials (ASBO) provide recommended standards for Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports (CAFR). A governmental entity that meets these standards will receive a "Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting." To receive this type of reporting recognition, a center must publish an easily readable and efficiently organized comprehensive annual financial report.

The Annual Financial Report is the final event in the annual planning and budgeting process as the organization completes the cycle and lays the foundation for the next budget process.

The requirements for an easily readable and efficiently organized comprehensive annual report include:

- **Introductory Section** - This section includes a letter from the chief financial officer that summarizes the fiscal operations and the strategic plan of the district, an organization overview, and clearly indicates that the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report is a report of the management of the RESC and that the management of the RESC is responsible for its preparation.
- **Financial Section** – This section includes:
  - The Independent Auditors' Report;
  - Management's Discussion and Analysis;
  - Government-Wide Financial Statements;
  - Fund Financial Statements;
  - Summary of Significant Accounting Policies;
  - Notes to the General Purpose Financial Statements; and
  - Combining and Individual Fund Information and Other Supplementary Information.
- **Statistical Section** – This section includes selected financial and demographic information generally presented on a multi-year basis.

The overall intent of the CAFR should be to provide financial reports that demonstrate both fiscal and operational accountability.

RESC 15 should prepare future Annual Financial Reports in a manner consistent with the guidelines that would qualify the report to earn the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting.

Information regarding the preparation of a CAFR, to include copies of the checklist used to review the financial reports can be obtained from GFOA by emailing a request to *CAFRProgram@gfoa.org*. RESC 4 has received a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting from GFOA and copies of its report could provide a format to be used.

The achievement of the Certificate is less important than the preparation of a Comprehensive Annual Financial Report that will more effectively communicate the financial position of the Center and relate the financial results with the original budget document.

The fee to seek a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting is $850.

SMALL DISTRICT FINANCIAL COOPERATIVE

Small districts often lack the personnel and resources needed to efficiently perform all required business functions. RESC 15 assists some of the districts in the area of finance and bookkeeping. However, there are other RESC 15 districts that could potentially benefit from additional assistance.

Very small school districts in Texas typically do not have the resources to establish sophisticated and comprehensive business services divisions. RESCs and larger school districts have business service divisions that could easily co-op services to smaller districts.

The RESCs and cooperatives (or like organizations in other states) frequently organize payroll services, accounts payable services, purchasing, asset management, and other necessary business related services for small school districts. Such a service could assist many of the small districts in RESC 15.

RESC 15 should conduct a feasibility study to determine if a finance cooperative organization pattern for small districts would be beneficial. Personnel from within the Finance division can conduct a study to determine which districts have difficulties handling financial and business affairs because of the lack of or a shortage of qualified personnel on staff. Once this determination has been made, the districts identified can be invited to an information sharing meeting. A task force can be established to determine if a finance cooperative could effectively be developed and which finance services can be offered.

This study can include reviewing the option of utilizing a large district(s) capacity to provide a group of small school districts with some or all fiscal services. This can result in small districts outsourcing identified services to the larger district and reducing costs and increasing efficiencies.

The financial impact of this recommendation can be minimal. Expenses can be limited to meals and travel, with each agency paying for their own expenses. There is a potential savings in personnel cost by the districts if some or all of their financial responsibilities were taken over by a finance cooperative. Additionally, personnel could be reassigned resulting in an increase in the availability of district personnel to meet other needs.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

RESC 15 is not taking effective measures to improve the safety and security of its facility.

Regional Educational Service District 15 is continuously hosting conferences and classes for teachers, administrators and support staff from throughout the region. These classes involve hundreds of people and are being conducted during the week day, evenings, and weekends. In light of the sensitive nature of some of the information the center deals with, and the type of equipment that is often unattended, the center may be subjecting themselves to possible safety, security and theft problems.

Implementing increased security will reduce the risk of loss through theft and vandalism. Although it would not be immediately noticeable, the long term reduction in loss should positively impact the insurance rates paid by the center. In addition, member districts will have a positive model for this risk management strategy and will tend to replicate the benefits in their systems.

RESC 15 should increase security through installation of Web cameras in sensitive or high risk areas. Regional Education Service District 15 should consider increasing security measures in key areas of the facility. These measures might be as simple as installing inexpensive web cameras in sensitive areas with a monitor located in the receptionist's office. The immediate result would be an increased level of security and a decrease in the chance of theft.

The installation of Web cams is estimated to be $200.

FISCAL IMPACT

Recommendation		2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	5-Year (Costs) or Savings	One-Time (Costs) or Savings
15-4	Install energy and utility savings devices.				$5,408	$10,816	$16,224	
15-9	Intensify efforts to recruit minority applicants for job openings.	($1,000)	($2,000)	($2,000)	($2,000)	($2,000)	($9,000)	
15-13	Seek the certificate of achievement for excellence in financial reporting.	($830)	($830)	($830)	($830)	($830)	($4,150)	
15-15	Install Web cameras.							($200)
	Total	**($1,830)**	**($2,830)**	**($2,830)**	**$2,578**	**$7,986**	**$3,074**	**($200)**

CHAPTER 16:

AMARILLO

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AMARILLO

The Panhandle Educational Services Organization (PESO) was established in 1965 (which is currently Regional Education Service Center XVI). The overriding concept was that through a cooperative approach on the part of schools, better use could be made of federal funds. PESO was staffed to provide technical assistance to administrators as they began dealing with the complex processes associated with federal funds. In addition, PESO established cooperative teacher training and other appropriate support programs.

PESO officially opened on January 1, 1966 and the implementation of the ESEA programs mandated in 1965 became the first priority. Project Educational Improvement (PEI) (ESEA, Title I) was the first service offered to the districts in this area. PEI was established as a remedial reading program to fulfill Title I requirements.

The next September, the Texas Cooperative Dissemination Project (ESEA, Title III) became operative as the second major program to be implemented by PESO. This program introduced the newest education methods, materials and strategies in panhandle classrooms. During the fall season, the Neighborhood Youth Corps and Head Start programs were added.

During 1967, on a recommendation from the State Board of Education, the Texas Legislature mandated that the regional media centers function as regional planning agencies. As the logical choice for this area, PESO became "PESO" Education Service Center 16 and served as a model for the other 19 service centers. The addition of a media library was the next major expansion for the Education Service Center. With an annual budget of $500,000 and 35 employees, the service center assisted 82 school districts with 85,000 students.

After 36 years as an education service center, Region Education Service Center XVI has grown and changed as needs and resources have changed. PESO, as an acronym, has been dropped and the name changed to Region 16. Once funded mainly by federal monies, the RESC's revenues now include increasing amounts of state and local funds. The first services were specific programs that schools could adopt. Now the emphasis is on finding the service to fit the need of the school, whether it be offered by the RESC or researched and developed. Today, Region 16 services 63 school districts, one charter school and approximately 78,000 students.

Established January 1, 1966, Region 16 was the first education service center in Texas. The following year, 19 additional service centers were established by the state legislature.

Today, Region 16 has an annual budget of just over $22 million compared to the $500,000 budget of 1967–68. With an average annual payroll exceeding $9 million, approximately 340 professional and support employees carry out the assigned services.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Region 16 maintains a streamlined professional staff organizational structure.
- Regular media exposure assists Region 16 staff in promoting its services and providing for positive public relations.
- Region 16 uses digital controls to maintain internal temperatures and cycles its heating and air conditioning units, both of which reduce energy costs.
- The At-Risk Conference is an annual collaboration event effectively addressing the needs of at-risk students in Region 16.
- Region 16 provides crisis management assistance and tools to schools to enable students to cope with crisis effectively and allow them to continue focusing on academics.

- The RESC 16 Migrant Program successfully uses data to improve program offerings and migrant students' test scores show a trend of improvement.
- The Region 16 Special Education Department is operating efficiently and effectively through excellent improvement planning presses, analysis of data, collaboration with other agencies, and providing quality services to member districts and Windham schools.
- RESC 16 has developed a highly structured staff evaluation process that ensures a fair and consistent approach.
- RESC 16 uses a structured hiring process to ensure consistent and appropriate human resources practices.
- RESC 16 follows a structured process to ensure its compensation plan is competitive and appropriate.
- RESC 16 maintains an exit interview form that is designed to provide the service center with value-added information.
- Region 16 has established and is managing successful purchasing cooperative activities for school districts in Region 16.
- Region 16 maintains an effective process for reporting cash management activities and results to the board of directors.
- Region 16 maintains low insurance premiums based on minimal claims experience.
- In recognition of the critical roles played by all district staff in ensuring quality PEIMS data, RESC 16 staff has emphasized the importance of broad staff awareness and training.
- RESC 16 has been active in assisting districts with accessing federally-funded technology grants, resulting in winning three grant awards in the past five years.
- RESC 16's use of VNC, CISCO, VPN, and RDP allows the center to provide prompt and low-cost support to school districts.

FINDINGS

- Region 16 pays for meeting space to hold board meetings.
- The Region 16 Board of Directors has not been fully involved in, nor have they been updated on, the strategic plan and other related planning documents.
- Region 16 staff has not conducted a summative evaluation of its strategic planning.
- The RESC 16 Board of Directors does not conduct board self-evaluations.
- Region 16 has too many custodians at the Nelson Street location.
- Administrators must find uses for its excess space.
- Region 16's fees for consultants to provide educational services are exorbitant. Internal employees could be providing these services.
- RESC 16 has a variety of data indicating schools/districts with low (or declining) performance; however, RESC 16 has no systemwide, written plan for assisting these low performing schools.
- Region 16 does not have criteria in place for the amount of time RESC staff should be on-site in member districts.
- Region 16 does not conduct evaluations of several educational programs and services.
- Some components of a comprehensive job description are lacking in Region 16.
- Region 16 does not use an electronic application form.
- The Region 16 budget document fails to effectively communicate how the budget fulfills its objectives identified in the strategic plan. Further, the budget in not in-line with the guidelines provided by National Advisory Council on State and Local Budgeting (NACSLB).

- Region 16 does not have budget preparation guidelines.
- The budget document identifies summary revenue information for the general fund by subfund, but the revenues are not summarized in the document.
- The time and effort sheets prepared by the staff of Region 16 identify only the time that is attributable to specific projects; thus, the time and effort documents do not reconcile to the time reporting process.
- The Region 16 annual financial report is not developed consistent with GFOA guidelines and, therefore, does not qualify for a Certificate of Achievement in Excellence award.
- Region 16 has no policy nor procedures to make adjustments in fees for services.
- Region 16 has no policy on the amount of funds that should be retained in the fund balance.
- Region 16 has no policy nor guidelines on the use of proprietary funds.
- Region 16 has been using the same audit firm for over 20 without seeking proposals.
- Region 16 does not operate a cooperative for the purchase or lease of copiers.
- Region 16 does not maintain a cooperative with vending machines companies to provide competitive rates for member districts.
- Although the establishment and use of purchasing cooperatives within Region 16 is beneficial, there may also be value in exploring the potential benefits from an organization called U.S. Communities Government Purchasing Alliance (U.S. Communities) that works nationwide to aid in the pooling of purchasing activities for public agencies.
- Printing services are too costly in Region 16; however in order to set target goals, additional management data are needed.
- Region 16 has no cash forecasting strategies in place.
- Region 16 has confidential information in its accident reports which need to be removed as these reports are public documents.
- The executive director of Region 16 is provided a car. This practice is not cost-effective.
- RESC 16 currently does not offer online workshop registration, requiring that staff registrars process virtually all registrations in paper format.
- The Technology Services Division and Instructional Division at Region 16 duplicate services.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 16-1: Hold board meetings at the Region 16 facility, invite staff to participate in the meetings when appropriate, and consider having lunches catered by the Amarillo High School culinary students.** The implementation of this recommendation should serve several important purposes including the following:

  - providing students a valuable, program-related learning experience;
  - giving Board of Directors an opportunity to see the product of the collective educational efforts of teachers, principals, and supporting staff including the RESC personnel;
  - establishing the meeting of the Board of Directors in a facility more amenable to RESC staff participation without the added "club" expense; and
  - reducing the expenses for board of director meetings.

Board minutes should be posted on the Web site so staff can keep up-to-date on important decisions affecting the center. Creating an environment where RESC staff can actively attend and provide valuable program and services information to the Board of Directors should contribute to the board members having a better understanding of the roles and responsibilities of RESC personnel.

- **Recommendation 16-2: Involve the Board of Directors in the development of the RESC strategic plan, establish procedures for periodic review of the plan's implementation, and actively involve staff in making presentations at board meetings.** The implementation of this recommendation should ensure that all Board of Directors are involved in the strategic planning process. As this recommendation is implemented the Board of Directors should adopt a policy and related procedures that ensure continued involvement.

- **Recommendation 16-3: Revise the summative evaluation portion of the region's strategic planning process.** The implementation of this recommendation should result in the development and standardization of a comprehensive summative evaluation process. RESC administrative personnel should contact other RESCs to obtain copies of their instruments for careful review. The RESC should develop a tailored version suited to their needs. Full implementation of this recommendation should then result in evaluations providing additional data upon which to make future decisions.

- **Recommendation 16-4: Provide for an annual self-evaluation of the board.** Providing feedback, both formally and informally, is basic in any improvement process. Structured feedback in the form of an evaluation instrument can supplement honest ongoing dialogue and discussion.

- **Recommendation 16-5: Reduce the Nelson Street custodial position to 50 percent full-time equivalent (FTE).** By reducing this position to a 0.5 FTE, the service center will bring the facility's custodial support level to 15,400 square feet per full-time equivalent staff, a level much closer to the industry average. Assuming the cost of providing such services would decrease proportionately to the amount of staffing hours, the annual cost per square foot to clean this facility would decrease to $1.69.

- **Recommendation 16-6: Lease vacant and unused facility space until RESC 16 growth requires additional work, training, or storage space.** RESC 16 should consider leasing a portion of it unused space to another organization. This will allow it to earn revenue that may be used for future facilities maintenance and capital improvements. Conservatively, the lease of a moderate area, such as 5,000 square feet (less than half the amount allowable under its tax exempt debt status), would bring in net revenues more than $86,000 over a five-year period. The estimated fiscal impact for this recommendation assumes that the service center will lease an area of 5,000 square feet and charge its tenants a discounted lease that follows the federal administrative reimbursement rate of $1.06 per square foot. It also assumes that the service center will spend no more than $40 per square foot to renovate the area in FY 2004–05 (as the building is already renovated to accommodate office use), and that it would be leased for at least six months a year.

- **Recommendation 16-7: Train professional consultants/staff to deliver services to client districts that are often handled though outside consultant contracts.** This fiscal impact is calculated by adding the amounts spent by each department ($211,914 + $388,990.20 = $600,904 and then divided by 22 months for a monthly average of $27,314 x 12 months = $ 327,768 annualized. Therefore savings for year two would be estimated at $32,777, $65,554 the third year, and $98,330 the fourth and fifth year. The implementation of the recommendation should result in identifying specific areas that existing professional staff be trained and deliver services to client district. The implementation of this recommendation should involve adopting a goal of reducing annual expenditures for outside consultant services 10 percent the second year, reduce by 20 percent in year three, and in years four and five reduce by 30 percent. The cost of the training the RESC staff cannot be determined until the specific training areas have been identified.

- **Recommendation 16-8: Assemble a systemwide team, including representatives from member districts, to develop and systematically implement a written plan to offer assistance to the lower performing schools in Region 16.** While many excellent efforts to assist low performing schools in Region 16, there is no systematic plan for doing so. By implementing this recommendation, the region should have a strong unified plan and avoid duplicating efforts and services to schools and ultimately assisting in increased student performance.

- **Recommendation 16-9: Set an expectation of the amount of time specialists should spend in the field directly providing services to schools and districts.** The implementation of this recommendation should result in establishing an RESC administrative standard for the amount of time specialists and other representative should spend in the field. The RESC administration should survey other RESCs to obtain information on their practices. Additionally, a careful review of the amount of travel time involved in go to and from their assigned responsibilities in school/school districts should be factored into the adopted procedure or standard. Once established, a trial period of up to six months should be implemented to permit an assessment of the standards and for the implementation of any appropriate adjustments.

- **Recommendation 16-10: Ensure educational programs and services are evaluated for effectiveness and discontinue programs that are not making adequate progress.** Effective program evaluations should be conducted regularly in an effort to make effective program decisions and eliminate those programs showing little progress.

- **Recommendation 16-11: Revise staff job descriptions to include important elements.** The implementation of this recommendation should provide staff with more information to effectively perform their jobs.

- **Recommendation 16-12: Create an electronic version of the RESC 17 application form that applicants may complete with a word processing program.** To ensure that applicants do not delete or alter key elements of the application form, Human Resource Services staff can create a form with protected cells that

cannot be altered. MS Word offers this capability.

- **Recommendation 6-13: Develop a budget document that is consistent with the recommended practices of the NACSLB.** The Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) web site contains a section entitled *Best Practices in Public Budgeting*. This Web site, http://www.gfoa.org/services/nacslb, contains extensive information on the best practices in governmental budgeting and provides access to numerous examples of how these best practices have been used by other governmental entities. Most examples are for cities or counties, thus, some may not be relevant to Region 16; however, the key is to understand the concept of how public budgeting should be presented and then adapt to needs of the Region. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) also provides extensive information on budgeting practices and includes descriptions of different types of budgets This information can be located by accessing http://www.tea.state.tx.us/school.finance/audit/resguide10/budget/ on the internet.

- **Recommendation 16-14: Establish a standard process and guidelines for the development of the Region 16 budget.** The financial system used by Region 16 has the capability of providing standard formats for budget preparation as seen on the administration portion of the budget development materials. All participants in the process should be required to provide financial information in a consistent format.

- **Recommendation 16-15: Provide comprehensive financial information for the budget document by including detailed information involving revenues and provide the beginning fund balance and the estimated ending fund balance information for each fund.** The fund balance and revenue information is readily available in the existing financial records. The identification of the revenue amounts should be estimated based on prior year actual revenues combined with expectations for the coming year projected by the various program managers.

- **Recommendation 16-17: Establish a time and effort reporting process that accounts for total hours worked that can be reconciled to the payroll records.** Evaluate the method used for time reporting for the support staff to determine if it can be modified to be integrated with the Time and Effort reporting process. If this is not possible, the information to be included on the Time and Effort documents should be expanded to reconcile with the payroll information.

- **Recommendation 16-18: Prepare the annual financial report for the year ending August 31, 2005 in a manner consistent with guidelines that would qualify the report to earn the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting.** Information regarding the preparation of a comprehensive annual financial report, to include copies of the checklist used to review the financial reports can be obtained from GFOA by emailing a request to CAFRProgram@gfoa.org. The Region 4 Regional Education Center as well as has the Highland Park Independent School District, a district in Region 16 have both received a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting from GFOA and copies of these reports will provide a basis for the format to be used. The achievement of the certificate is less

important than the preparation of a comprehensive annual financial report that will more effectively communicate the financial position of Region 16 and relate the financial results with the original budget document. If Region 16 desires to seek a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting, the fee is $830.

- **Recommendation 16-19: Establish a board of directors policy and related internal procedures to create an approved process for establishing, increasing, reducing, or making interim adjustments to fees for services.** Region 16 has already made a number of decisions in the area of establishing fees and making fee adjustments, but they have been accomplished in the absence of any formal process. A review of these activities over the past five years should be undertaken to identify the validity of the current process for establishing fees, understanding the long term financial impact of holding fees at a stable level over time, and identifying the types of circumstances that have allowed for the reduction of workshop fees and the most recent decision to reduce the final quarterly billing for the districts. Based on the results of the review, a draft policy and associated internal procedures should be developed and reviewed with the representatives of the client school districts. After an in-depth evaluation, the Board of Directors should be presented with the proposed policy and procedures for approval.

- **Recommendation 16-20: Develop a policy addressing level of undesignated fund balance in General Fund to be maintained by Region 16.** The establishment of a policy on the management of fund balance will provide long-term guidance for future financial decisions. This policy should be developed in conjunction with development of the policy for establishing, increasing, reducing, or making interim adjustments to fees for services, with the strategic plan, and other formal long term plans for capital improvements or other future capital needs such as those for technology.

- **Recommendation 16-21: Establish a management policy for proprietary funds to include guidelines for net income and expected level of Unrestricted Net Assets.** The financial activities for these funds should be reviewed for the previous two years as well as the current year (2003–04). This analysis should include the identification of the estimated cash requirements for the ensuing five year period, an assessment of the source of the revenues (client school districts, grant programs, internal users, etc) and should lead to the establishment of pricing strategies and expectations for a reasonable level of Unrestricted Net Asset for each fund.

- **Recommendation 16-22: Develop a Request for Proposal (RFP) process for audit services upon completion of the August 31, 2004 financial records audit.** A Request for Proposals (RFP) for audit services should include the following:

  - identify the scope of the audit;
  - require that the financial statements will conform to the independence standard promulgated in the General Accounting Office's *Government Auditing standards*; and
  - include a reference to the desire to have an auditing firm that is familiar with the preparation of

Comprehensive Financial Reports (CAFRs) for governmental entities.

The proposal should seek a multiyear agreement of at least five years. The process should include the requirement for at least three references from other governmental clients of the firm.

The price for the audit services should not be the primary consideration in the selection of the audit firm. The process should be structured so that the key factor in the selection process will be to select the firm deemed to be capable of providing the highest quality audit services.

A proposal should be sought from the existing audit firm. The process should be completed by January 2005 to provide adequate time for the firm selected to become familiar with the activities of Region 16.

- **Recommendation 16-23: Explore the possibility of establishing a cooperative purchasing activity for purchase or lease of copiers for Region 16.** To determine the feasibility of a copier purchasing cooperative, it will be necessary to obtain an inventory of the copiers in use throughout the region. Specific information required would include the make and model, the age of the equipment, the vendor providing copier services, and current contractual arrangements. It will also be necessary to obtain service level information and determine the level of satisfaction the districts have with their current agreements. With accurate inventory and service information, it will be possible to determine the potential options for developing a copier contract for those districts that are in a position to acquire new copiers and establish a schedule for other districts that will be in a position to obtain copiers at a later date.

- **Recommendation 16-24: Contact the school districts in Region 16 to determine if there is interest in pursuing a cooperative purchasing program for selection of vendors to provide vending machine services.** This process can be explored by sending a letter to each school district in Region 16 to determine the level of interest in the program. If there is interest, an inventory should be undertaken to identify the number and types of machines in the schools, the contractual arrangements for each machine to include compensation to the schools and the contractual periods. It will also be important to contact the vending machine vendors to determine the different market regions for each vendor.

- **Recommendation 16-25: Contact U.S. Communities to explore the options that may be available to coordinate a purchasing cooperative with this organization for the school districts in Region 16.** Information regarding the U.S. Communities Program is available on the Internet at *www.uscommunities.org.*

- **Recommendation 16-26: Establish a management information capability for the Print Shop to support the RESC's goal to reduce printing service fees.** The management information collection process will include detailed time reporting associated with each print job; the time spent supporting the copier program, and identifying the workload generated by each Region 16 program. Pricing goals should be established and the program should be evaluated by comparing the prices for certain jobs with industry standards. A management reporting process should also be developed to provide data on the progress the program has made in reducing costs.

- **Recommendation 16-27: Develop a cash forecasting capability to provide effective management of cash and placement of investments when interest rates increase.** The cash needs for Region 16 are reasonably consistent from year to year. To project future cash needs on a weekly and monthly basis, it will be necessary to undertake an analysis of routine cash activities for the previous two years. This information should provide a basis for the projection of cash needs for future periods. Based on the projected cash needs, along with anticipated changes in interest rates, decisions can be made regarding the amount and maturities for investments.

- **Recommendation 16-28: Remove the detailed information for each accident from the Accident Prevention Plan and Annual Report.** It is important to retain the various workers' compensation forms for purposes of managing the claims, but it is excessive and inappropriate to include personal information such as name, address, date of birth and social security number in a public document.

- **Recommendation 16-29: Convert the compensation package for the executive director to include an auto allowance when the current vehicle is deemed to have reached the end of its economic life.** All operating costs associated with the use of the vehicle assigned to the Executive Director, to include insurance, fuel and maintenance should be evaluated to determine when it will become more cost effective to dispose of the vehicle and establish an auto allowance for the Executive Director.

- **Recommendation 16-30: Use online interfaces with the MIS system to enable online workshop registration and review of training history.** Although the service centers' MIS software currently does not come with an online registration interface, other centers have created such a tool in order to limit unnecessary work for their staff. RESC 16 should contact other centers to discuss the feasibility of replicating their tools, thereby avoiding any duplication of efforts.

- **Recommendation 16-31: Reorganize Technology Services within Instructional Services.** By moving technology services into instructional services, RESC 16 will minimize duplication of effort, increase communication and collaboration, and maximize organizational efficiency. MGT recommends that RESC eliminate its director of technology services position and move all technology services staff to instructional services. Fiscal year 2004–05 is an opportune time to make such a transition, as the center's current director of technology services is expected to retire.

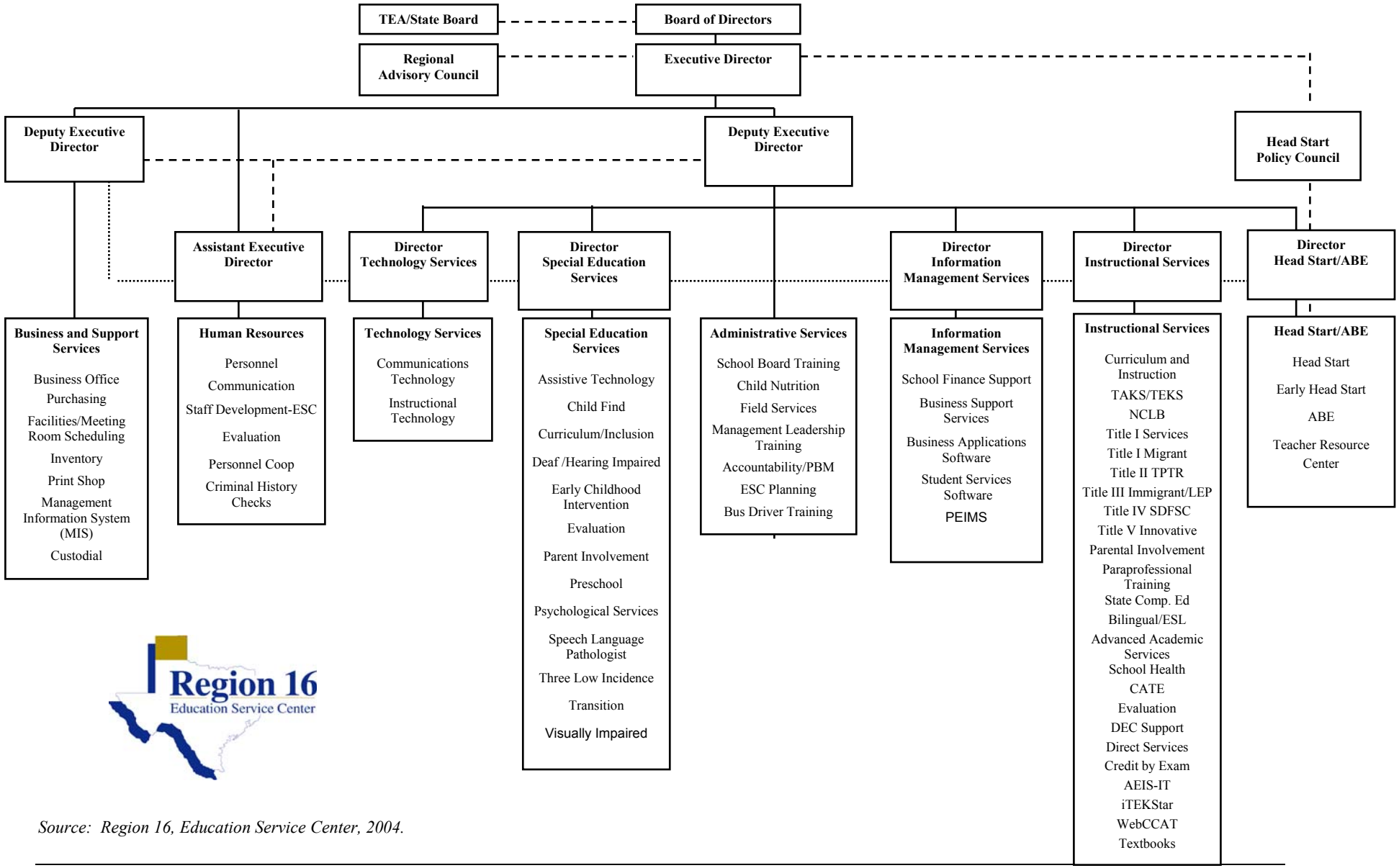
DETAILED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

DOWNSIZED ORGANIZATION

RESC 16 has effectively downsized its organizational structure. **Exhibit 16-1** shows the organizational chart which has been board approved and will take effect on September 1, 2004. This organizational structure is different from the 2002-03 organization in that it:

- eliminated one associate director position;
- provided a director for administrative services;.

Exhibit 16-1
RESC 16
Organization Structure
Effective September 1, 2004



Source: Region 16, Education Service Center, 2004.

reduced the number of field service agents by using Title I specialists to conduct many of the marketing of services to districts; and
- eliminated five vacancies (one administrative secretary, one office clerk, one technology assistant, one paternal involvement assistant, and one speech/language pathologist).

The region has saved $130,000 by downsizing its organization from last year. The structure is efficient and effective in serving its clients at the most economical employee expenses.

One-hundred (100) percent of the superintendents responding to MGTs survey indicate that they either strongly agree or agree that the *RESC in our region is highly effective and efficient*. Written comments from superintendents in MGTs survey support this finding. Among the comments are:

- "Region 16 decreased staff through attrition this year; even with a smaller staff our students perform well largely due to an outstanding group of people at ESC 16."

- "I think Region 16 Education Service Center is constantly working on decreasing costs, improving the level of services, and providing additional services."

- "Region 16 is very efficient. Every district was given a rebate this year with any excess funds (approximately $150,000)."

Additionally, a summary of the region's balanced score card data shows that Region 16 is operating efficiently and effectively. **Exhibit 16-2** shows an overview of the Balanced Score Card data.

Accomplishment: Region 16 maintains a streamlined professional staff organizational structure.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Region 16 promotes excellent public relations by routinely submitting news briefs to the Amarillo Globe News and other media forums. Topics for the news briefs include, but are not limited to:

- training on state accountability;
- opening of a Teacher Resource Center;
- technology workshops;
- Region 16 Awards at the Texas School Public Relations Conference;
- advanced placement summer institutes;
- announcements of TEA and Region 16 Public Meetings;
- Safe and Drug Free Schools events; and
- conferences on emotional/behavioral disorders and educating the challenging student.

The news briefs are effective in notifying the educational and general public regarding upcoming events and news worthy accomplishments of the center. Most other centers visited do not submit new briefs to the media; MGT believes this is a commendable practice and should continue in all centers. It is an inexpensive forum for getting positive and useful region news to the public.

Accomplishment: Regular media exposure assists Region 16 staff in promoting its services and providing for positive public relations.

Exhibit 16-2
Region 16 Education Service Center
Balanced Scorecard Data
(September 1, 2003 – May 31, 2004)

16,757 Individuals trained
Definition: The total number of individuals trained which includes district participants and school board members

30% of ESC staff delivered training through the Distance Learning Network
Definition: The percent of professional staff delivering or facilitating learning opportunities through distance learning including ITV and Internet

33% of trainings utilized instructional technology
Definition: The percent of workshops in which participants actively use hardware or software that will impact teaching and learning

96,071 of contact hours delivering training
Definition: The total number of contact hours of training delivered by ESC staff

94% of participants "strongly agreed" or "agreed" that "knowledge and skills will be applied in current assignments."
Definition: The average training evaluation rating for all workshops

323 high school students enrolled through Distance Learning Network
Definition: The total number of students enrolled in classes through Regional Distance Learning Networks. Classes are for dual credit, high school credit only, and Higher Ed. level credit

9128 students served directly
Definition: Students, infant to adult, served directly by the ESC service

9045 parents served directly
Definition: The number of parents served directly by ESC service

108,162 technical assistance contacts made by 145 professional staff
Definition: The number of consulting assistance contacts on-site or in person, not including contacts made during workshops

0% PID errors reported by districts and charters
Definition: The percent of Personal Identification (PID) errors by districts/charters

11,261 hours ESC staff attended professional development
Definition: The number of hours each full time employee attends professional development activities

870 hours ESC staff attended technology training
Definition: *The number of hours each full time employee attends technology training*

Source: RESC 16 Balanced Score Card Summary, 2004.

CLIMATE CONTROLS

RESC 16 maintenance staff use automated and digital climate controls to maintain the facility's temperature.

These controls prevent staff from adjusting temperatures to their individual preferences, which can lead to excess energy use and costs. RESC 16 also uses automated controls to setback its heating and air conditioning units in zones that are not being used during the workday, and throughout the facility during non-working hours.

Industry data indicate that this practice can reduce heating and cooling energy costs by 10 to 15 percent

Accomplishment: Region 16 uses digital controls to maintain internal temperatures and cycles its heating and air conditioning units, both of which reduce energy costs.

PROGRAM REVIEW

Region 16 has an effective process in place for analyzing and eliminating programs which are no longer needed.

Four examples to support this finding include:

- **Reading Recovery** - The loss of Academic 2000 funding made full implementation of Reading Recovery impossible for some campuses. The Reading Recovery program at Region 16 ESC was discontinued at the completion of the 2001-02 school year.

- **Modeling the Components of Balanced Literacy Contract** - This contract was developed to accommodate requests from Canadian ISD and Dimmitt ISD. They needed additional classroom modeling to support teachers who had been previously trained in Reading Recovery and Early Balanced Literacy. This contract was discontinued at the completion of the 2002-03 school year after the district requests were fulfilled.

- **Title II Shared Services Arrangement** - Because of the reauthorization of the federal programs and The *No Child Left Behind Act* of 2001, Title II Eisenhower changed to Title II, Part A-Teacher and Principal Training and Recruitment. Region 16 no longer offered a Shared Services Arrangement after the 2001-02 school year Instead, the Title II, Part A contract was developed to provide districts more funding flexibility.

- **Advanced Academic Services** - Student Seminars - Student Seminars are not compatible with the Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students as they are enrichment in nature. Therefore, after receiving input from districts, the Student Seminars were discontinued at the completion of the 2002–03 school year. However, a seminar resource list was developed and mailed to districts.

Accomplishment: The process used by Region 16 for eliminating programs and services is effective and results in placing program resources where most needed.

AT-RISK CONFERENCE

Region 16 Education Service Center has provided an At-Risk Conference to Region 16 districts for the past ten years. RESC staff coordinates between divisions, with Amarillo Independent School District and West Texas A&M University to maximize manpower and provide a high quality conference. A committee of approximately 35 people plans a year in advance for the conference.

The conference was originally started in order to provide quality training to help teachers meet the needs of economically disadvantaged and other high risk students. Region 16 teachers do not usually have opportunities to

attend state and national conferences. Therefore, RESC 16 contracts with quality, innovative state and national speakers that area teachers would not otherwise have an opportunity to hear. The focus of the conference is providing strategies to use when working with students in at-risk situations.

The average attendance over the past ten years is approximately 2,200 educators per year. Attendance at the 2003 At-Risk Conference included 1,607 teachers and 457 other educators (administrators, paraprofessionals, and counselors) for a total attendance of 2,064.

The At-Risk Conference was started almost eleven years ago in response to requests from area teachers to address the needs of at-risk students. Data show that Region 16 at-risk student performance has increased in the past two years.

Accomplishment: The At-Risk Conference is an annual collaboration event effectively addressing the needs of at-risk students in Region 16.

CRISIS MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

RESC 16 has an excellent Crisis Management Program (CAP) for its member districts.

The objectives of the program are to:

- coordinate crisis management training for schools, and
- form a crisis response team, develop training for the team, and coordinate the team's responses to schools.

The goals of the CAP are to:

- assist the local caregivers to plan their immediate and longer-term activities in the aftermath of a catastrophe;
- give support to local caregivers in their efforts to respond to the catastrophe;
- train local caregivers in immediate crisis response and long-term stress reactions to trauma; and
- help local caregivers by modeling and providing debriefing sessions to critical population groups.

Region 16 team members initially received five days of training in National Organization for Victim Assistance (NOVA) model. Other Region 16 team members receive an initial one day training and continuous update training four times a year of three hours each session.

Samples of the types of crisis the team responds to include:

- Panhandle Independent School District – Spring 2002
  - Response to call from superintendent due to car accident that killed two high school students
- Happy Independent School District – Spring 2003
  - Response to call from superintendent due to tornado destroying part of school and many homes in community
- Hart Independent School District – Fall 2003
  - Response to call from superintendent due to suicide attempt by high school student
- Plemons-Stinnett-Phillips Consolidated School District – Spring 2004
  - Response to call from superintendent due to car accident that killed a high school student

Accomplishment: Region 16 provides crisis management assistance and tools to schools to enable students to cope with crisis effectively and allow them to continue focusing on academics.

MIGRANT EDUCATION PROGRAM

RESC 16's Migrant Education Program has successfully used data to improve program offerings and migrant students' test scores show a trend of improvement.

Exhibit 16-3 includes data on migrant student performance on Texas' state assessments.

Exhibit 16-3
Region 16 All Migrant Students TAAS/TAKS Data
Percent Met Minimum Expectations TAAS

TEST	1998–99	1999–2000	2000–01	2001–02	Net Gain/Loss
Reading	75.50	77.20	80.80	83.50	8.00
Math	77.20	84.70	88.40	90.00	12.80
Writing	62.50	79.10	80.10	75.80	13.30
Science	77.30	72.80	83.00	87.60	10.30
Social Studies	40.90	47.30	53.50	69.50	28.60

Source: RESC 16, 2004.

Factors contributing to these positive trends include:

- Region 16's Migrant Program historically provides fiscal support to Region 16 core curriculum specialist to ensure that workshops on effective instructional strategies include those specific to the diverse learner.
- Region 16's Migrant Parental Involvement component stresses the importance of student academic success. Migrant Parent Conferences include strategies for parents to support academics in the home.
- Building Bridges, an instructional program (mostly home-based), for migrant three and four year olds. Building Bridges supports and trains parents as the child's first teacher and partner in education.
- Region 16's Migrant Program provides training for Partners in Literacy.
- Region 16's Migrant Program provides training in Early Literacy and Balanced Literacy.
- In accordance with the Texas Education Agency's Migrant Areas of Focus, Region 16's Migrant Program provides migrant services coordination for Secondary Credit Accrual through the University of Texas Distance Learning Migrant Program, SMART (Summer Migrants Accessing Resources through Technology), PASS (Portable Assisted Study Sequence).
- In accordance with the Texas Education Agency's Migrant Areas of Focus, Region 16's Migrant Program provides Graduation Enhancement through the Post Secondary Planning Guide initiative and career awareness programs.
- Region 16 migrant funds supported a certified teacher to provide one-on-one tutorials to high priority migrant students who had not passed prior administrations of the reading and writing portions of the exit level TAAS test. The six students receiving assistance passed all of the TAAS retests (8 tests).

In 2002–03, the state of Texas began its new TAKS testing. For the first administration, a

decrease in the number of students meeting minimum expectations was anticipated and evident. The standard for meeting minimum expectations rose from two SEMs below panel recommendation in 2002–03 to one SEM below panel recommendation in 2003–04 and will rise to the panel recommendation for the 2004–05 test administration. Consequently the comparison of results reported below is based on unequal standards.

Exhibit 16-4 shows an example of Region 16's 2002–03 results that reflect the variance at two SEMs below panel recommendation, at one SEM below panel recommendation and at panel recommendation. Also attached please shown are the raw score standards for third grade reading for 2003 and for 2004 showing that the passing standard changed from 20 out of 36 correct to 23 out of 36 correct. It is anticipated that the results for migrant and non-migrant will realize growth when compared longitudinally to the same passing standard.

Exhibit 16-5 reflects the rising trend in college attendance for migrant students graduating from Region 16's Shared Services Arrangement districts.

Exhibit 16-4
Percent Met Minimum Expectations TAKS- Migrant

TEST	2002–03	2003–04	Net Gain/Loss
Reading	74.90	74.50	-0.40
Math	68.10	65.00	-3.10
Writing	78.00	61.00	-17.00
Science	54.90	54.50	-0.40
Social Studies	80.80	78.30	-2.50
Percent Met Minimum Expectations TAKS Non-Migrant			
TEST	**2002–03**	**2003–04**	**Net Gain/Loss**
Reading	87.90	84.00	(3.90)
Math	79.30	78.00	(1.30)
Writing	86.70	91.00	4.30
Science	74.70	75.00	0.30
Social Studies	90.90	90.50	(0.40)

Source: Region 16, 2004.

Exhibit 16-5
Number of Region 16 Migrant Student Graduates and Number of Migrant Students Enrolled in Postsecondary Education
2000–04 School Years

School Year	# of Migrant Graduates	# Enrolled in Postsecondary Education
2000–01	75	29
2001–02	75	36
2002–03	71	39
2003–04	73	48

Source: Region 16, 2004.

Reported factors contributing to this rising trend include the following:

- Region 16's migrant counselors developed and continue to modify a postsecondary Planning guide. Training on the guide is offered to migrant students, staff and parents in English and Spanish. This guide has been requested by and shared with school districts throughout Texas as well as New York, New Jersey, Florida and Michigan.

- Due in large part to the efforts of Region 16's migrant counselor, West Texas A & M University applied for and was awarded the College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP) in 1999.

- Due in large part to the efforts of Region 16 migrant counselor, Amarillo College applied for, and was awarded, the High School Equivalency Program (HEP) grant. This program provides GED training and testing for eligible migrant students and advocates continuing education for GED recipients.

- The Region 16 migrant program holds one of its two annual parent conferences each year on college campuses in the region (West Texas A & M University, Amarillo College, Clarendon Community College and Frank Phillips College) to expose migrant parents to the college experience. As is possible, college students who graduated as migrants lead campus tours and share their experiences with parents.

- Region 16 counselors have been instrumental in working with higher education, school districts and parents in disseminating information on Texas HB1403, legislation which opens the doors of post secondary education to undocumented immigrant graduates, many of whom are migrant, from Texas high schools. Qualifying undocumented immigrant students can enroll in public universities and colleges at state rates and apply for non-federal financial aid.

Accomplishment: The RESC 16 Migrant Program successfully uses data to improve program offerings and migrant students' test scores show a trend of improvement.

SPECIAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Region 16 Special Education Department is operated efficiently and effectively through excellent improvement planning processes, analysis of data, collaboration with other agencies, and providing quality services to member districts as well as Windham schools.

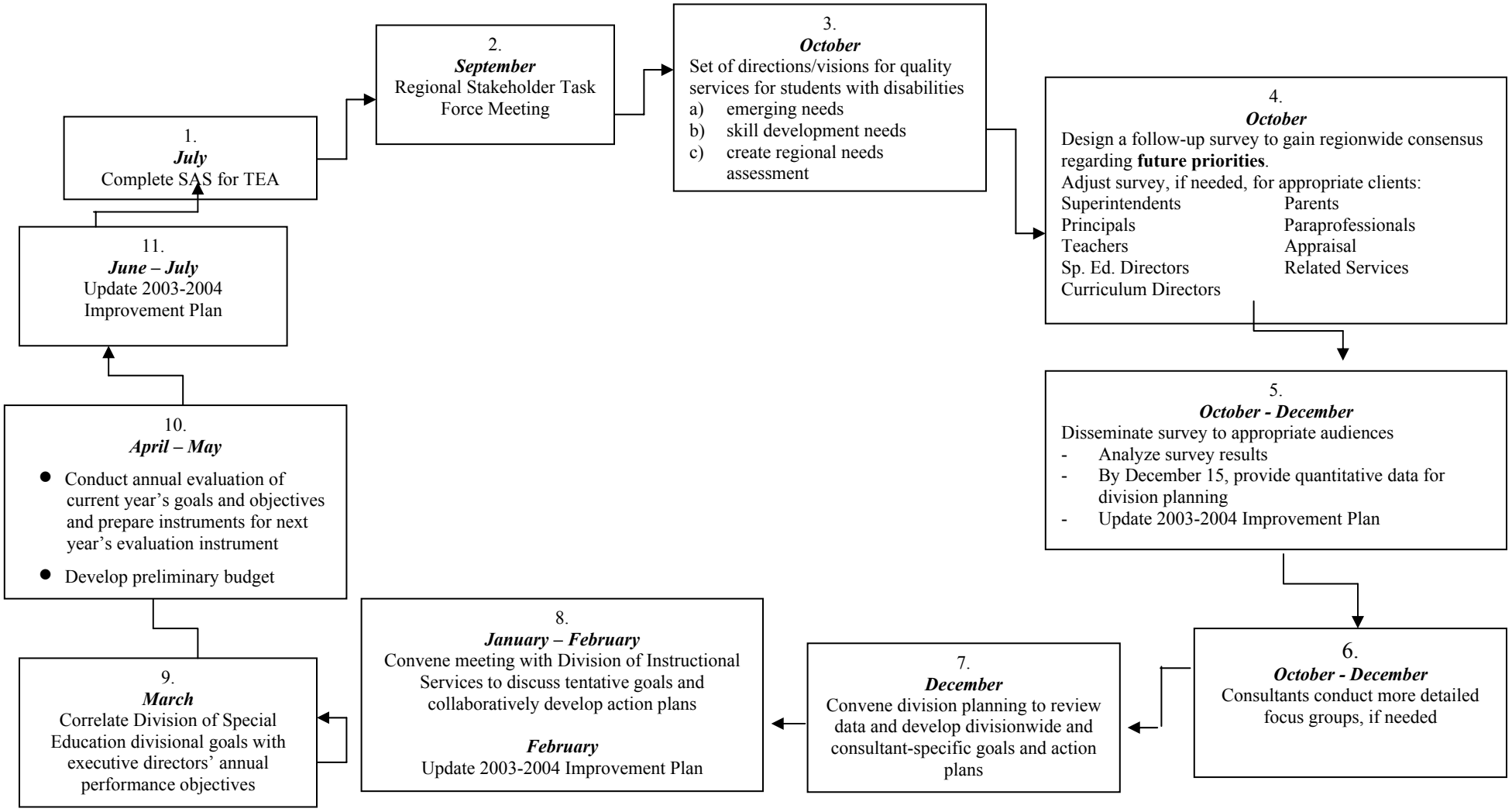
While MGT found examples of many excellent programs, training, and initiatives being delivered by Region 16 staff, the leadership and staff of the Special Education Department stood out as having written a, succinct course of action for improvement based on numerous data sources.

Exhibit 16-6 shows the improvement planning process the department staff use broken down by monthly tasks. Staff interviewed state activities are planned according to this process and it has been an efficient way to implement the department's improvement goals.

The Special Education Department also collaborates with the other directors of Special Education in the state to conduct on-site visits to various schools throughout the state in an effort to identify special education best practices.

MGT's survey shows that 95 percent of the superintendents surveyed are either satisfied or strongly satisfied with the special education services compared to an average of 91 percent.

Exhibit 16-6
Region 16 Education Service Center
Division of Special Education
Improvement Planning Process
2003–04



Source: Region 16, Special Education Department, 2004.

statewide. Also, on a five-scale rating, the average rating was a 4.65 from school staff attending special education training from September 1, 2003 until June 23, 2004.

A review of collaborative efforts shows that the Special Education Department has established partnerships and provided training to: Amarillo College, other RESCs, Frank Phillips Junior College, Non-public schools, parents, Texas Tech University, West Texas A & M University, and Windham School District.

MGT found in a review of records that the autism and visually impaired programs are exceptionally strong and rated highly by member districts

Leadership in the Special Education Department are keenly aware that Region 16 Special Education scores are lower than the state average in 3rd grade reading, 4th grade writing. 5th grade math, 7th grade math and writing, 10th grade social studies, and 11th grade math. An analysis of scores has been conducted and a plan of action to address these deficiencies is being implemented.

Accomplishment: The Region 16 special education department is operating efficiently and effectively through excellent improvement planning presses, analysis of data, collaboration with other agencies, and providing quality services to member districts and Windham schools.

STAFF EVALUATION

RESC 16 has developed a structured and comprehensive staff evaluation process that is monitored by Human Resource Services staff. The process involves annual evaluator trainings to ensure consistent and fair practices across the center's numerous divisions and components.

Each January, Human Resource Services staff provide evaluators a detailed instructional handout on the evaluation process. The handout summarizes the evaluation period, target dates, preparation steps, evaluation procedures, and required documentation. Human Resource Services staff also provide a series of hour-long trainings on evaluators and secretaries' individual responsibilities.

The evaluation forms are structured to provide feedback across a standard set of criteria that the service center values. Both professional and support staff are evaluated across the standard areas shown in **Exhibit 16-7** below. The form is also designed to facilitate discussion between staff and their supervisors on growth potential, professional development targets, and individual responsibilities as identified in job descriptions.

Exhibit 16-7
RESC 16 Standard Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation Criteria
Planning and Organization
Delivery of Services
Human Relations / Communication
Professionalism

Source: RESC 16 staff evaluation forms, 2004.

The evaluation process also includes a *Supervisor Evaluation* form, by which staff can evaluate the communication and leadership skills of their supervisor, commend them for their strengths, and recommend areas for improvement. Finally, to ensure the quality of the evaluation process, staff are asked to complete an *Evaluation of ESC Evaluations* form. This form is designed to gather feedback on the evaluation instrument and process. In response to staff feedback, Human Resources Services staff update the evaluation forms annually.

Accomplishment: RESC 12 has developed a highly structured staff evaluation process that ensures a fair and consistent approach. Staff evaluation forms are designed to assess all staff against a standard set of indicators, as well as criteria unique to their job description.

HIRING PROCESS

The Region 16 Human Resource Services Department designed an effective hiring process to ensure consistent recruitment and hiring practices across the center's various divisions and components. **Exhibit 16-8** lists the key steps in this process.

Exhibit 16-8
Key Steps and Responsibilities in RESC 16's Hiring Process

Task	Division Staff	Human Resource Services Staff
Discuss position and hiring timeline. Finalize interview team. Determine advertising methods.	✔	✔
Develop criteria for applicant screening matrix and submit to HR.	✔	
Develop interview questions and submit to HR.	✔	
Compile applications and develop applicant review packets with interview questions and screening matrices.		✔
Interview applicants and complete screening matrices. Meet with team to identify top three candidates for interviews.	✔	
Meet to discuss top three candidates and establish interview timeline.	✔	✔
Schedule and conduct interviews	✔	
Reach consensus on a top and alternate candidate.	✔	
Determine salary offer.	✔	✔
Check references.	✔	
Discuss results of reference checks.	✔	✔
Conduct second round interview with top candidate	✔	✔
At conclusion of interviews, prepare job applicant folders and provide to FR staff.	✔	
Send letters of notification to applicants.		✔

Source: RESC 16 Human Resources Posting / Screening / Interviewing / Hiring Procedures, 11/15/01.

As previously shown in **Exhibit 16-7**, division staff have the primary responsibilities in ensuring that the hiring process proceeds as planned. However, Human Resource Services staff must be consulted and involved in the process at regular intervals. This ensures strict oversight and process controls.

Accomplishment: RESC 16 uses a structured hiring process to ensure consistent and appropriate human resources practices.

MARKET ASSESSMENT

Region 16 conducts a regular review of compensation to ensure competitiveness with the current market.

Market salary data are often time-sensitive and can quickly become out-of-date due to a variety of external and internal factors. The Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) Human Resources Services Division recommends that market salary studies be conducted every three to five years and that organizations conduct annual reviews to assess any major changes in the job market. TASB also recommends that organizations conduct market studies outside of the three to five year cycle if there has been a major change in leadership, program reorganization, high staff turnover, or if the regional market for a particular staff type has gone through significant changes.

In 1997, RESC 16 contracted with TASB to conduct a market study and assist in creating pay grades and assigning positions to those grades. Since that time, the service center has followed a structured process to maintain the plan. In addition to conducting a follow-up

market study three years after the initial study, the service center abides by the following steps to ensure its pay grades are in line with the regional labor market:

- follow established hiring and salary setting procedures;
- study all salaries every spring to make sure that each employee's pay scale fits into the center's *Compensation Plan;*
- study cost of living trends and make pay raise recommendations and adjustments to the pay grades accordingly; and
- conduct a market study every three to five years to ensure that the compensation plan is competitive and make changes based on this data.

Accomplishment: RESC 16 follows a structured process to ensure its compensation plan is competitive and appropriate.

EMPLOYEE EXIT SURVEY

An Employee Exit Survey allows an organization to determine why employees leave and, in turn, improve retention and satisfaction for active employees. In order to add value to an organization, an exit survey should, at a minimum, address the following areas:

- reasons for leaving the organization;
- satisfaction with management practices and supervision;
- working conditions and work/life balance;
- compensation and benefits;
- organizational structure and management;
- job attributes; and
- training and development.

RESC 16 maintains an exit interview form that addresses each of the above areas and more. If departing staff have already obtained a new job, they are asked to explain what they think to be the most attractive characteristics of that job. The exit survey also asks respondents to provide recommendations for improving the service center and whether they thought there were appropriate opportunities for advancement.

Accomplishment: RESC 16 maintains an exit interview form that is designed to provide the Service Center with value-added information.

PURCHASING COOPERATIVES

Region 16 provides effective purchasing cooperative activities.

Region 16 provides a purchasing cooperative for the purchase of office products, teaching supplies and paper products to the school districts in the region. This is a one-time purchase activity that provides the districts in Region 16 the opportunity to gain lower prices for these products as well as participate in a program that will process the orders and have delivery of the products prior to the beginning of the school year.

The process includes a calendar that begins in February where the districts identify the quantities of the products required. The information received from the districts is aggregated and bids are advertised in March with a formal opening of the bids in April. Representatives from client districts are involved in the evaluation of the products and after the bids have been awarded, the districts process their orders directly with the vendors. Approximately half of the districts in Region 16 participate in this program which operates at no cost for the districts, resulting in the purchase of over $300,000 of supplies among the participating districts.

School districts in Region 16 are also afforded the opportunity to participate in the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) Statewide Purchasing Cooperative through Region 16. Services provided to support this program include working with TASB to include Region 16 districts in the program, training to the participating districts on how to access and use the TASB system, and assisting individual schools as necessary to insure they

are able to access the program and gain maximum benefit from the program.

Accomplishment: Region 16 has established and is managing successful purchasing cooperative activities for school districts in Region 16.

CASH MANAGEMENT

The Deputy Executive Director of Business Services provides monthly reports on the status of cash and investments to the Board of Directors at their bi-monthly meetings. These reports include a cash balance summary, current month interest earnings and interest earned to date from various sources. Also included is an investment report that summarizes the activity in the various investment pool accounts.

Accomplishment: Region 16 maintains an effective process for reporting cash management activities and results to the board of directors.

INSURANCE PREMIUMS

The insurance premiums for Region 16 have increased significantly over the past three years with the major increase occurring in the area of property insurance (see **Exhibit 16-9**). The increase in the property coverage is associated with the completion of the new facility at 5800 Bell Street. The completion of this facility and the retention of the older facility on Cleveland Street have resulted in a major increase in the insurable property values for Region 16, resulting in the increased premiums.

Exhibit 16-9
Insurance Premiums
2001-2002 Through 2002-2003

Coverage	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	Increase (Decrease)	Percent Increase (Decrease)
Property	3,519	19,270	33,591	30,072	854.56%
Liability	4,398	5,017	8,627	4,229	96.16%
Vehicle	4,361	5,936	4,930	569	13.05%
Crime	142	237	971	829	583.80%
Umbrella	1,250	1,500	1,745	495	39.60%
Workers' Compensation	67,759	72,010	69,932	2,173	3.21%
Blanket Accident Head Start	1,970	6,352	8,081	6,111	310.20%
Total	**$83,399**	**$110,322**	**$127,877**	**$44,478**	**53.33%**

Source: Region 16 Business Office.

Although the premium increases since 2001–02 are significant, Region 16 has been managing this area effectively.

- The major premium increase is in the property coverage which is a function of the increased value associated with the new facility.
- Although the cost of liability insurance has almost doubled, the premiums being paid by Region 16 are in line with similar premiums for the other RESCs. For instance, the cost for liability insurance in Region 17 has been in excess of $13,000 since 2001–02. This increase is a reflection of the insurance market and indicates that Region 16 had been receiving lower than normal rates for liability coverage prior to the 2002–03 fiscal year.
- The 2002-2003 premium for the crime coverage is also consistent with that being paid by other RESCs. Like the liability coverage, Region 16 had been paying lower than normal rates for this coverage prior to 2002-2003.

- The decrease in the workers' compensation premium is very unusual as most governmental entities have experienced increases for this coverage in recent years. this reduction in premium can be attributed to the impact of the Region 16 Safety Program.

- The increase in the premiums for the blanket accident coverage for the Head Start Program is a function of the insurance market. This policy covers accidents for students in the Head Start Program. While bids for other coverages typically involve four to five different carriers, Region 16 receives only two bids for this coverage. Region 16 has had only a single minor claim involving this coverage during the past three years.

Accomplishment: Region 16 maintains low insurance premiums based on minimal claims experience.

SAFETY PROGRAM

Region 16 has implemented a safety program that includes an Accident Prevention Plan. This plan provides appropriate information relating to the responsibility of management, record keeping, safety and health education, safety inspections, and accident investigations. Region 16 also provides periodic safety meetings and includes different safety tip sheets each month with the pay checks for all employees.

Accomplishment: Region 16 has established an effective safety program.

PEIMS DATA

RESC 16 employees are well-trained and focused on the quality of PEIMS data.

RESC 16 staff who provide PEIMS training and support focus their efforts on preparing a broad range of school district staff to contribute to the data quality process. With the central focus of their training being "no solo flights," RESC 16 recommends that districts include all levels of staff in a minimum level of PEIMS training, including top and mid-level administrators, data clerks, support staff, and teachers. PEIMS support staff report that this strategy has led to broader support for the PEIMS reporting process among district staff and has improved data quality.

Accomplishment: In recognition of the critical roles played by all district staff in ensuring quality PEIMS data, RESC 16 staff has emphasized the importance of broad staff awareness and training.

TECHNOLOGY GRANTS

RESC 16 has engaged in several collaborations to access state and federal technology grants for member school districts.

In each of these collaborations, RESC 16 provided administrative, development, and program delivery support:

- **In FY 2002–03**, RESC 16 served as the fiscal agent on an application for a TARGET grant to fund the Panhandle Academic Advancement in Literacy and Math (PAALM) project. This project is funded at $900,000 over a period of three-years and is designed to increase the reading and math skills of students in grades 3 to 5. As part of the PAALM project, RESC 16 provides training to classroom teachers on how to use handheld computers and related learning software. Participating classrooms are equipped with handheld computers for student and teacher use.

- **In FY 2000–01**, RESC 16 served as the fiscal agent for a regional TIE grant to improve academic achievement, including technology literacy, for all students and to improve teacher's ability to integrate technology effectively into their curriculum and instruction. This project was funded at $2,944,644.

- **In FY 1997–98**, RESC served as the fiscal agent for a regional TIE grant to train teachers to become more comfortable with using computers, instructional software, productivity software, and the Internet. Specifically, this project trained teachers to write educationally sound lesson plans that incorporate technology in their curricula.

Accomplishment: RESC 16 has been active in assisting districts with accessing federally-funded technology grants, resulting in winning three grant awards in the past five years.

TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT SERVICES

RESC 16 uses several tools to minimize its need to travel to district sites and improve their response time to clients' technical support needs. Staff use Virtual Network Computing (VNC), CISCO, Virtual Private Network (VPN), and Remote Desktop Protocol (RDP) to provide technical assistance, troubleshoot, install software updates and fixes on districts' networks and desktops, and provide ad hoc training.

Accomplishment: RESC 16's use of VNC, CISCO, VPN, and RDP allows the center to provide prompt and low-cost support to school districts.

DETAILED FINDINGS

BOARD MEETING SPACE

Region 16 pays for meeting space to hold board meetings.

Region 16 has a spacious, well maintained facility including a board room and several meeting rooms, yet the board has its regular meetings at the Amarillo Club at a cost to the center. The fee for the Amarillo Club membership is $85 a month ($1,200 per year) and costs the center approximately $150 for meals. Additionally, interviews indicate many board members do not regularly visit the Region 16 facility located on Bell Street, thus they are not afforded the opportunity to see any training or "action" at the center. Also staff interviewed stated they are unaware of what goes on in the board meetings, minutes are not posted, and they rarely have an opportunity to present their program best practices or challenges to the board.

MGT questioned leadership at the Amarillo High School which is located less than two miles from Region 16 center. The high school offers home economics classes which include culinary and cooking units. Many school districts across the nation are using their schools' home economic classes to cater school district events. By having the board meetings at the service center, it benefits RESC staff as well as students.

RESC 16 should hold board meetings at the Region 16 facility, invite staff to participate in the meetings when appropriate, and consider having lunches catered by the Amarillo High School culinary students. The implementation of this recommendation should serve several important purposes including the following:

- providing students a valuable, program-related learning experience;
- giving the board of directors an opportunity to see the product of the collective educational efforts of teachers, principals, and supporting staff including the RESC personnel;
- establishing the meeting of the board of directors in a facility more amenable to RESC staff participation without the added "club" expense; and
- reducing the expenses for board of directors' meetings.

Board minutes should be posted on the Web site so staff can keep up-to-date on important decisions affecting the center.

Creating an environment where RESC staff can actively attend and provide valuable program and services information to the Board of Directors should contribute to the board

members having a better understanding of the roles and responsibilities of RESC personnel.

The board pays $85 a month ($1,200 per year) to be a member of the Amarillo Club as well as pays $150 for six yearly meetings for an approximate cost of $900. By hosting the meetings at the regional facility and having a local high school cater the event at a much reduced cost of approximately $450 (plus give students the experience and pleasure of providing meals), the center could save an estimated $1,650 per year. The savings would be half for the first year due to the implementation date beginning in January 2005.

BOARD MEMBER INVOLVEMENT

The Region 16 Board of Directors has not been fully involved in, nor have they been updated on, the strategic plan and other related planning documents.

Typically, boards of control establish procedures for providing input and periodic review of major planning documents and related implementation processes. Board members interviewed expressed general knowledge of major planned initiatives; however, they did not indicate that they had been involved in the development processes.

While the board approves the strategic plan, some board members were unsure of what the key components are in the region's strategic plan. Also, staff indicate that they would like to have more of an opportunity to inform board members on their district services and initiatives.

RESC 16 should involve the board of directors in the development of the RESC strategic plan, establish procedures for periodic review of the plan's implementation, and actively involve staff in making presentations at board meetings. The implementation of this recommendation should ensure that all board of directors are involved in the strategic planning process. As this recommendation is implemented the board of directors should adopt a policy and related procedures that ensure continued involvement.

STRATEGIC PLANNING EVALUATION

Region 16 staff has not conducted a summative evaluation of its strategic planning activities.

Exhibit 16-10 shows a sample page from the Region 16 strategic plan for improving student performance. As shown, the summative review consists of checking off if the activity was accomplished or not. Subsequent to MGT's on-site visit, staff state the reasons for not accomplishing goals is discussed; however, the discussions have never been recorded. Other RESCs use a more thorough process in the summative reviews of its goals including barriers, explanations, and or any type of explanation if the activity or goal was not accomplished. By recording this in writing, staff can use the summative evaluation notes to make appropriate improvements in future planning.

RESC 16 should revise the summative evaluation portion of the region's strategic planning process.

The implementation of this recommendation should result in the development and standardization of a comprehensive summative evaluation process. RESC administrative personnel should contact other RESCs to obtain copies of their instruments for careful review. The RESC should develop a tailored version suited to their needs. Full implementation of this recommendation should then result in evaluations providing additional data upon which to make future decisions.

Exhibit 16-10
Region 16 Strategic Plan For Improving Student Performance
2003–04

GOAL:	I. Student performance is improving within the RESC region
OBJECTIVE:	I.A.2 Within the region, gaps in TAKS/SDAA performance among the student groups reported in the accountability system are less than average gaps reported statewide in all subject areas tested.
STRATEGY:	I.A.2 (h) Provide training and support to staff and parents in working with students with disabilities
SUMMATIVE EVALUATION:	Are the region gaps in TAKS/SDAA performance among student groups less than statewide average gaps (AEIS?)

					Formative Evaluation Review			Summative Review	
Activity	**Staff Responsible***	**Timeline**	**Resources**	**Formative Evaluation**		**Nov.**	**Mar.**		**June**
Provide training in strategies to work effectively with students with Low Incidence Disabilities		May 2004	IDEA-B Discretionary	Follow-up questionnaire	**Considerable Progress** Some Progress No Progress Discontinue.	— — — —	— — — —	Accomplished Yes No	 — —
Provide VI disability specific training and support to staff and parents to increase performance levels in students with visual impairments		Sept. 2003 – May 2004	IDEA-B Discretionary (VI) SSVI	Pre/post inventory, Follow-up survey, (TAKS, SDAA, LDAA, TPRI)	**Considerable Progress** Some Progress No Progress Discontinue.	— — — —	— — — —	Accomplished Yes No	 — —
Provide modifications training in the inclusive classroom.		Aug. 2003 – July 2004	IDEA-B Discretionary	Follow-up survey sent to campus administrators to determine impact of training on student performance.	**Considerable Progress** Some Progress No Progress Discontinue.	— — — —	— — — —	Accomplished Yes No	 — —
Provide sign language instruction for teachers, parents, siblings, and community members.		Oct. 2, 2003, Oct. 9, 2003, Oct. 16, 2003, plus 2 sessions per site Spring 2004	IDEA-B Discretionary	Follow-up at each session as to the number of new signs introduced in their classrooms and the number of new signs emerging from the students.	**Considerable Progress** Some Progress No Progress Discontinue.	— — — —	— — — —	Accomplished Yes No	 — —
First Year English Language Arts Teachers: TAKS Overview Grades 6–8		Sept. 2003	Local Funds	TAKS Data Analysis: Interest of Administrators and Teachers, Workshop Attendance and Evaluation.	**Considerable Progress** Some Progress No Progress Discontinue.	— — — —	— — — —	Accomplished Yes No	 — —

Source: Region 16, Strategic Plan.
**MGT removed staff names for purposes of this report.*

BOARD SELF-EVALUATION

The RESC 16 Board of Directors does not conduct board self-evaluations. Board training takes place each year and the Board of Directors evaluates the executive director annually; however, there is no forum for evaluating the progress of the RESC 16 board. The board does not evaluate itself, although some board members reported participation in "informal" feedback communications.

Governing boards in any organization can improve their performance through a formal self-evaluation in addition to an informal feedback process. In addition, by conducting and annual evaluation, the board shows the importance of the evaluation process to the entire operation. As a result, both the board and the organization develop a culture of participation in improvement cycles. Better organizations and improved performance are the end results. **Exhibit 16-11** is one example of a self assessment instrument used by some boards.

Exhibit 16-11
Sample Board Self-Assessment Instrument

Meeting Evaluation

DIRECTIONS: By evaluating our past meeting performance, we can discover ways to make future meetings shorter and more productive. Check each item "Adequate" or "Needs Improvement". If you check "Needs Improvement, include suggestions for improvement.

Adequate	Needs Improvement	
_____	_____	Our meeting was businesslike, results-oriented and we functioned like a team.
_____	_____	Our discussion was cordial and well balanced (not dominated by just a few members).
_____	_____	We confined our discussion to agenda items only.
_____	_____	Our agenda included positive issues as well as problems.
_____	_____	We discussed policy issues rather than day-to-day management issues.
_____	_____	We followed parliamentary rules and consulted legal or professional counsel when needed.
_____	_____	The president or chairperson controlled and guided the meeting.
_____	_____	We dealt successfully with controversial items and attempted to develop solutions acceptable to all members.
_____	_____	Everyone contributed to the meeting.
_____	_____	All members were prepared to discuss material that was sent to them in advance.
_____	_____	Reports were clear, well prepared and provided adequate information for decision making.
_____	_____	Printed materials given to us were easy to understand and use.
_____	_____	Our meeting room was comfortable and conducive to discussion and decision making.
_____	_____	All members were in attendance and on-time - - and the meeting began and concluded on time.
_____	_____	For committees and ad hoc groups: There was adequate reason for us to meet.

My best suggestions for improving our next meeting is...

Source: MGT of America, 2004.

RESC 16 should provide for an annual self-evaluation of the board. Providing feedback, both formally and informally, is basic in any improvement process. Structured feedback in the form of an evaluation instrument can supplement honest ongoing dialogue and discussion.

NUMBER OF CUSTODIANS

Region 16 has too many custodians at the Nelson Street location.

RESC 16 is comprised of three facilities: the Bell Street facility, which houses the majority of service staff and the administrative, business, and production offices; the Cleveland Street facilities, which serves as the administrative and service hub of RESC 16's Head Start and Adult Basic Education (ABE) services; and the Nelson facility, which houses a Head Start program. **Exhibit 16-12** identifies each facility, along with its regular use area (that which requires regular custodial services).

Exhibit 16-12
RESC 16 Facilities' Regular Use Areas

Building	Use Area
Bell Street Facility	73,752
Cleveland Street Facilities	57,778
Nelson Street Head Start Center	7,673
Total	**139,203**

Source: RESC 16 Building Information sheets, 2004.

Custodial needs at both the Bell Street and Nelson Street facilities are met with a blended form of full-time staff and contracted services. At the Nelson Street facility, one full-time staff member manages the building's custodial services. **Exhibit 16-13** lists the number of number of daily work hours dedicated to clean each site, along with the annual cost per square foot to provide custodial services.

Exhibit 16-13
Annual Cost per Square Foot to Maintain RESC 16 Facilities

Building	Daily Work Hours[a]	Area Cleaned per Hour (Square Feet)	Annual Cost of Custodial Services[b]	Annual Cost per Square Foot
Bell Street Facility	30.91	2,386	$78,387	$1.06
Cleveland Street Facilities	26.94	2,147	$59,513	$1.03
Nelson Street Head Start Center	7.62	1,007	$25,909	$3.38

Source: RESC 16 staff allocation formulas for building maintenance, data element FuaM #29, 2004.
[a] *Hours include both full-time staff and contracted services.*
[b] *Costs include staff salaries and benefits, as well as custodial contract amount. Some custodial staff dedicate a percentage of their time to custodial duties. In these cases, a proportionate amount of their salaries and benefits were included in the cost shown.*

In terms of the number of square feet cleaned per hour, the custodial staff at the Nelson Street facility is half as efficient as those at the other facilities (1,007 square feet per hour compared to 2,386 and 2,147 square feet). Additionally, the annual cost to clean a square foot at Nelson Street facility is more than triple that at the Bell Street and Cleveland Street facilities. Finally, the staff member at the Nelson Street facility maintains a notably smaller area (7,673 square feet) than the industry average of 18,000 to 20,000 square feet per full-time custodian. Subsequent to MGT's on-site visit, it was stated that the higher number of custodial staff at the Nelson Street location is a requirement of the Head

Start Program; however, no data were provided to MGT to verify this requirement. While it is expected that larger facilities would be less expensive to maintain due to efficiency of scale, such a marked difference is not justified.

RESC 16 should reduce the Nelson Street custodial position to 50 percent full-time equivalent (FTE). By reducing this position to a 0.5 FTE, the service center will bring the facility's custodial support level to 15,400 square feet per full-time equivalent staff, a level much closer to the industry average. Assuming the cost of providing such services would decrease proportionately to the amount of staffing hours, the annual cost per square foot to clean this facility would decrease to $1.69.

Cost savings will result from a reduction in personnel costs. The current salary for a full-time position is $26,000. A half-time position's salary is estimated at $13,000. This recommendation should be implemented in 2005-06.

EXCESS SPACE

Administrators must find uses for its excess space. For example, RESC 16's Bell Street facility, the main administrative and service building, exceeds its current needs.

The service center purchased the facility in FY 2000–01 after spending several years searching for a building that would appropriately accommodate its staff and training activities. The recently renovated building offers staff ample work, training, and storage space. **Exhibit 16-14** shows the allocation of space within the Bell Street facility.

As shown in **Exhibit 16-14**, 21 percent of the facility is currently vacant or unused, a greater area than is used for office and work space. Region 16 financed the purchase and renovation of its main facility, using a tax-exempt debt process which states that a facility cannot have more than 10 percent (11,000 square feet) of its space leased to an outside entity. This space could be leased to provide the service center with additional revenues that may be put towards future capital improvements.

Exhibit 16-14
Space Utilization at RESC 16 Bell Street Facility

Type of Use	Area	Percent of Total Area
Hallways	24,363	22%
Vacant/Unused	23,668	21%
Office Space/Work Areas	20,719	19%
Storage and Mechanical Space	20,429	19%
Conference Rooms/Labs	13,230	12%
Break Rooms/Common Areas	5,706	5%
Restrooms	1,556	1%
Reception Areas	732	1%
Total	**110,403**	**100%**

Source: RESC 16 Summary of Facility Usage, FY 2003–04.

RESC should lease vacant and unused facility space until RESC 16 growth requires additional work, training, or storage space. RESC 16 should consider leasing a portion of it unused space to another organization. This will allow it to earn revenue that may be used for future facilities maintenance and capital improvements. Conservatively, the lease of a moderate area, such as 5,000 square feet (less than half the amount allowable under its tax

exempt debt status), would bring in net revenues more than $86,000 over a five-year period.

The estimated fiscal impact for this recommendation assumes that the service center will lease an area of 5,000 square feet and charge its tenants a discounted lease that follows the federal administrative reimbursement rate of $1.06 per square foot. It also assumes that the service center will spend no more than $40 per square foot to renovate the area in FY 2004–05 (as the building is already renovated to accommodate office use), and that it would be leased for at least six months that year.

CONSULTANT FEE

Region 16's fees for consultants to provide educational services are exorbitant. Internal employees could be providing these services.

Region 16 educational services staff need to examine ways to reduce the amount of outside consultant fees for general and special education instructional services. Excluding Head Start, there are a total of 63 professionals rendering services to member districts and schools. There are a total of nine in curriculum and instruction, six in Migrant/bilingual/ESL, eight Title I, and 40 in Special Education.

A review of records shows from September 2002 through June 2004, a total of $211,914 was spent on outside consultants for special education services and during that same time period, a total of $388,990 was spent on general education outside consultants.

A review of the types of training being delivered by the outside consultants show that Region 16 internal staff have the credentials and capacity to deliver a minimum of 30 percent of this training.

RESC 16 should train professional consultants/staff to deliver services to client districts that are often handled though outside consultant contracts. This fiscal impact is calculated by adding the amounts spent by each department ($211,914 + $388,990.20 = $600,904 and then divided by 22 months for a monthly average of $27,314 x 12 months = $ 327,768 annualized. Therefore, savings for year two would be estimated at $32,777, $65,554 the third year, and $98,330 the fourth and fifth year.

The implementation of this recommendation should result in identifying specific areas that existing professional staff be trained and deliver services to client district. The implementation of this recommendation should involve adopting a goal of reducing annual expenditures for outside consultant services 10 percent the second year, reduce by 20 percent in year three, and in years four and five reduce by 30 percent.

The cost of the training the RESC staff cannot be determined until the specific training areas have been identified.

ASSISTANCE TO LOW PERFORMING SCHOOLS

RESC 16 has a variety of data indicating schools/districts with low (or declining) performance; however, RESC 16 has no systemwide, written plan for assisting these low performing schools.

When interviewed, staff from the various departments had numerous methods for offering and providing assistance to the schools, but the various plans are not consistent.

Other RESCs in the state such as the School Improvement Team at RESC 6, have a team composed of members of the Leadership and Development Department, and have developed a standardized set of services designed to assist to low performing campus interventions. The typical scope and sequence of Region 6's interventions are detailed in **Exhibit 16-15**.

Exhibit 16-15
RESC 6 Low Performing Campus Intervention Program Steps

1. The RESC 6 receives TAKS scores from TEA and a staff member desegregates the data to the campus and classroom level. The staff analyzes the data to identify trends, areas of significant strengths and weaknesses, and underperforming campuses.
2. TEA delivers final accountability ratings, identifying schools that have been designated as academically unacceptable.
3. Schools targeted for intervention are divided among the six members of the team. The team chair contacts the campus principal within forty-eight hours of receipt of the ratings from TEA.
4. An appointment is made for the principal and chair to meet at the school within two weeks.
5. The team member visits the campus principal taking a folder which contains campus AEIS data from the prior year, accountability table, and contract. During this visit, the team chair outlines the accountability process and describes the RESC intervention plan. The chair brings a copy of the campus plan back to the RESC.
6. The team chair and campus principal mutually schedule dates for the proposed interventions. A copy of the schedule is sent to the superintendent.
7. The team chair oversees each step in the intervention process, the Texas School Improvement Initiative (TSII) visit, and the follow-up activities.
8. Each low-performing campus is asked to evaluate the service each May. That input is used to refine the service the next year.

Source: RESC 6 Low Performing Campus Interventions Program Description, 2004.

Intervention services provided by RESC 6 staff typically include technical assistance in the following areas:

- analyzing current and prior-year data;
- analyzing, revising, and/or critiquing the campus plan and school needs assessment;
- planning and/or implementing staff development activities based on campus needs; and
- planning for, conducting, and following-up after TSII visit.

Region 16 needs to consult with Region 6 and other RESCs which have developed coordinated plans to assist low performing school in member districts.

RESC 16 should assemble a systemwide team, including representatives from member districts, to develop and systematically implement a written plan to offer/provide assistance to the lower performing schools in Region 16. While many excellent efforts to assist low performing schools in Region 16, there is no systematic plan for doing so. By implementing this recommendation, the region should have a strong unified plan and avoid duplicating efforts and services to schools and ultimately assisting in increased student performance.

The team should immediately begin a plan to address the subject and grade levels shown in **Exhibit 16-16.** As shown, Region 16's scores are lower than the state average in these areas.

Exhibit 16-16
Comparison of Select Region 16 and State Preliminary TAKS Scores
2004

	Region 16 Special Education	State Special Education
3rd Grade		
Reading	35%	49%
4th Grade		
Writing	73%	81%
5th Grade		
Math	66%	67%
7th Grade		
Math	45%	47%
Writing	71%	76%
10th Grade		
Soc. Studies	59%	63%
11th Grade		
Math	54%	55%

Source: Region 16 and TEA, 2004.

ON-SITE TIME IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Region 16 does not have criteria in place for the amount of time RESC staff should be on-site in member districts.

Region 16 instructional directors have not set an expectation of the percentage of time specialists and staff should be spending in the field. A review of time logs and interviews show that the amount of time for specialists vary greatly.

On the other hand, in Region 17, and in some other service centers use a written expectation that specialists serve in the field a minimum of 70 percent of their time.

RESC 16 should set an expectation of the amount of time specialists should spend in the field directly providing services to schools and districts. The implementation of this recommendation should result in establishing an RESC administrative standard for the amount of time specialists and other representative should spend in the field. The RESC administration should survey other RESCs to obtain information on their practices. Additionally, a careful review of the amount of travel time involved in going to and from their assigned responsibilities in school/school districts should be factored into the adopted procedure or standard. Once established, a trial period of up to six months should be implemented to permit an assessment of the standards and for the implementation of any appropriate adjustments.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

Region 16 does not conduct evaluations of several educational programs and services.

MGT only received information on Head Start, Early Head Start, Title I, Title I, Part C Migrant, Title II, AP/IB Project, Title IV, Texas Reading Initiative, Advanced Academic Services, School Health, Special Education, and New Employee Orientation. Other service centers visited such as Region 17 provided approximately 40 percent more program evaluations than did Region 16. Some of what Region 16 provided is not a true program evaluation, but rather a summary of the program or training participants' evaluation results.

Only a few of the program evaluations provided to MGT from Region 16 had recommendations from either the state or outside consultant for improvement. For example, TEA provided an evaluation of Region 16's HIV Prevention Education Cooperative Agreement and some deficiencies were found in the program such as progress had not been made on school health specialists sending notification to middle and high school campuses in their regions of the availability of the School Health Education Profile. While the region is following-up on evaluation/audit recommendations, more program evaluations should be conducted to ensure the effectiveness of the programs.

RESC 16 should ensure educational programs and services are evaluated for effectiveness and discontinue programs that are not making adequate progress. Effective program evaluations should be conducted regularly in an effort to make effective program decisions and eliminate those programs showing little progress.

JOB COMPONENTS

Some components of a comprehensive job description are lacking in Region 16.

RESC 16's job descriptions include the following key elements:

- job title;
- position status (exempt or non-exempt);
- supervisor;
- position's primary purpose/goal;
- required and desirable qualifications;
- specific responsibilities;
- supervisory responsibilities, if any;
- equipment and software used; and
- working conditions (mental and physical demands and environmental factors).

Comprehensive job descriptions can serve several purposes, including assisting with the structuring and hiring of new positions. Indeed, RESC 16 uses their job descriptions as part of their vacancy announcements. To maximize the role the job descriptions can play in this important purpose, they should also include the following information:

- equipment and software used; and
- working conditions (mental and physical demands and environmental factors).

These additional data elements will provide applicants the information they need to assess whether a position is an ideal match for them. The service center will also benefit from this, as the vacancy announcements would be are more likely draw an appropriate applicant pool.

RESC 16 should revise staff job descriptions to include important elements. The implementation of this recommendation should provide staff with more information to effectively perform their jobs.

ELECTRONIC APPLICATION

Region 16 does not use an electronic application form.

To apply for a position with RESC 16, interested applicants are required to complete an application form, which is available only in hardcopy or Acrobat Reader format. This requirement is inefficient, as it requires applicants to complete a form by hand or with a typewriter.

RESC 16 should create an electronic version of the RESC 17 application form that applicants may complete with a word processing program. To ensure that applicants do not delete or alter key elements of the application form, Human Resource Services staff can create a form with protected cells that cannot be altered. MS Word offers this capability.

BUDGET DOCUMENT

The Region 16 budget document fails to effectively communicate how the budget fulfills its objectives identified in the strategic plan. Further, the budget in not in-line with the

guidelines provided by National Advisory Council on State and Local Budgeting (NACSLB).

The budget for the RESC consists of a document entitled "Budgets, Supplement to Exhibit 3" and contains four sections. However, the official budget only contains Section 2. The entire budget consists of:

- **Section 1**: Proposed Budget Amendments for 2002–03:
  - A summary list of the various sub-funds in the General Fund with the approved 2002–03 budget and the proposed 2002–03 budget which identifies those sub-funds being amended along with a separate section which includes the Child and Adult Care Food Program (a special revenue fund) which has an amendment and the Wide-Area Network Services Fund which is an enterprise fund that had no amendment;
  - a page identifying a reason for the amendments;
  - a compilation of General Funds by function and expenditure category for the approved budget;
  - a compilation of the General Funds by function and expenditure category for the proposed budget; and
  - a separate page for each sub-fund being amended identifying the functions and expenditure categories.

- **Section 2**: Official Budget for 2003–04"
  - a compilation of budgeted expenditures for the General Fund by sub-fund to include a column for the Approved 2002–03 Budget and the Proposed 2003–04 Budget. Also included is the information of the Wide Area Network Enterprise Fund and the Child & Adult Care Food Program. A replica of this page is included in **Exhibit 16-17**; and
  - a separate page for each sub-fund of the general Fund for the Proposed Budget by Function and Expenditure category.

- **Section 3**: New and Amended Special Revenue Funds for 2002–03:
  - Summary of Grants received from TEA for 2002–03; and
  - a schedule identifying each grant from TEA with expenditures identified by expenditure category.

- **Section 4:** New Special Revenue Funds for 2003–04:
  - Summary of Grants Received from TEA; and
  - Summary of Grants/Funding Received from Non-TEA Grantors.

The term *supplement to Exhibit 3* is a reference in the title of this document that relates to materials provided to the Board of Directors at their meeting on August 29, 2003. The agenda item for this topic at this meeting reads as follows:

- Review of and consider approval of budgets and special revenue funds. (Action and Information)
  A. Proposed Budget Amendments for 2002–03 (Action)
  B. Review and consider approval of Official Budget for 2003–04 (Action)
  C. New and Amended Special Revenue Funds for 2002–03 (Information)
  D. New Special Revenue Funds for 2003–04 (Information)

The section in the support materials for the agenda references a supplemental exhibit.

Exhibit 16-17
Compilation of Budgeted Expenditures
2003–04

	Item No.	Fund No.	Fund Title	Approved 2002–03 Budget	Proposed 2003–04 Budget	Increase (Decrease)	Page No.
**	1	196	At-Risk Conference	$50,000	$50,000	$0	3
**	2	190	Bus Driver Training	$18,170	$18,170	$0	4
**	3	174	Business and Finance Services	$0	$28,000	$28,000	5
**	4	176	Cisco Center	$30,258	$33,620	$3,362	6
**	5	175	Computer Services	$814,984	$814,984	$0	7
**	6	102	ESC State	$1,200,405	$1,448,959	$248,554	8
**	7	185	GED Testing	$26,500	$26,500	$0	9
**	8	199	General Fund	$1,620,811	$1,209,613	($411,198)	10
**	9	193	Instructional Services Contracts	$1,235,647	$1,277,699	$42,052	11
**	10	177	Internet Filtering	$43,508	$46,689	$3,181	12
**	11	173	Management and Leadership	$144,470	$112,200	($32,270)	13
**	12	172	Media	$60,005	$42,903	($17,102)	14
**	13	178	Network Contracts	$95,062	$105,625	$10,563	15
**	14	179	Nova Net	$173,571	$171,065	($2,506)	16
**	15	169	Support Services Contract	$134,736	$130,803	($3,933)	17
	16	180	Teacher Resource Center	$24,721	$0		
**	17	171	Video Streaming	$39,612	$45,000	$5,388	18
**	18	198	Workshops	$245,500	$250,000	$4,500	19
			TOTALS	**$5,957,960**	**$5,811,830**	**($121,409)**	
**	1	283	Child & Adult Care Food Program	$150,000	$150,000	$0	20
***	2	711	Wide Area Network Services	$667,742	$662,826	($4,916)	
			TOTALS	**$817,742**	**$812,826**	**($4,916)**	

Source: RESC 16, 2004.
**Amended Budget*
*** New Budget*
****This budget was Approved at the June 2003 board meeting.*

These materials are accounting documents that include a large amount of financial information, but fail to describe the various programs or provide any information that would be of value to an individual who is not totally familiar with the activities of Region 16.

Regional Education Service Centers make program and service decisions and allocate resources to programs and services via the budget process. As a result, this process is one of the most significant activities undertaken by any RESC, yet the formal document that reflects the results of these resource decisions fails to provide any information regarding the financial impact of these decisions.

The Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) and seven other state and local government associations created the National Advisory Council on State and Local Budgeting (NACSLB) in 1995 and charged it with developing a set of recommended practices in the area of state and local budgeting. The Council concluded its work in December 1997. The GFOA endorsed the work of the NACSLB, including the NACSLB's definition, mission, and key characteristics of the budget process as follows:

- definition of the budget process – consists of activities that encompass the development, implementation, and evaluation of a plan for the provision of services and capital assets.
- mission of the budget process – help decision makers make informed choices about the provision of services and capital assets and to promote stakeholder participation in the process.
- key characteristics of the budget process include:
  - incorporates a long-term perspective;
  - establishes linkages to broad organizational goals;
  - focuses budget decisions on results and outcomes;
  - involves and promotes effective communication with stakeholders; and
  - provides incentives to government management and employees.

The NACSLB also states:

> "The key characteristics of good budgeting make it clear that the budget process is not simply an exercise in balancing revenues and expenditures one year at a time, but is strategic in nature, encompassing a multi-year financial and operating plan that allocates resources on the basis of identified goals. A good budget process moves beyond the traditional concept of line item expenditure control, providing incentives and flexibility to managers that can lead to improved program efficiency and effectiveness."

The 2003–04 Budget for the RESC 16 compares with the factors identified by NACSLB as follows:

- **Long-term Perspective** – There is no long-term perspective included in any of the Region 16 budget materials. The materials presented show the appropriations for the previous year and identify amounts, fund titles for the current year.

- **Establishes Linkages to Broad Organizational Goals** – Region 16 has developed a strategic plan, but the budget document fails to identify how the budgeted amounts will impact the achievement of the goals of this plan.

- **Focuses on Results and Outcomes** – The budget materials presented to the Board of Directors for Region 16 are accounting documents, they are not documents designed to support a decision making process. They identify summary information by

various funds and programs, but fail to relate this information to expected results.

- **Involves and Promotes Effective Communication with Stakeholders** – As previously noted, the official budget for Region 16 is an accounting document and provides very little information, even to those familiar with the programs provided by the center.

- **Provides Incentives to Government Management and Employees** – The current budget process includes no incentives for managers to identify how current processes can be modified to reduce costs.

NACSLB states that the mission of the budget process is to help decision makers make informed choices about the provision of services and capital assets and to promote stakeholder participation in the process. The process currently in use by Region 16 fails to provide the decision makers with the necessary information to make informed choices, nor does it provide a clear picture of the activities of Region 16.

RESC 16 should develop a budget document that is consistent with the recommended practices of the NACSLB. The Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) web site contains a section entitled *Best Practices in Public Budgeting*. This Web site, http://www.gfoa.org/services/nacslb, contains extensive information on the best practices in governmental budgeting and provides access to numerous examples of how these best practices have been used by other governmental entities. Most examples are for cities or counties, thus, some may not be relevant to Region 16; however, the key is to understand the concept of how public budgeting should be presented and than adapt to needs of the Region.

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) also provides extensive information on budgeting practices and includes descriptions of different types of budgets This information can be located by accessing *http://www.tea.state.tx.us/school.finance/audit/resguide10/budget/* on the Internet.

BUDGET PREPARATION GUIDELINES

Region 16 does not have budget preparation guidelines.

There are no formal materials provided to the staff for the preparation of the annual budget. Each division director uses a different process to prepare budget information for their division or department. These materials are than provided to the deputy director for business operations who compiles the data for the budget. This approach provides no consistent process for evaluation of programs or criteria to support budgetary decisions.

Budget guidelines provide an effective tool to be used by center managers to establish consistency among units.

RESC 16 should establish a standard process and guidelines for the development of the Region 16 budget. The financial system used by Region 16 has the capability of providing standard formats for budget preparation as seen on the administration portion of the budget development materials. All participants in the process should be required to provide financial information in a consistent format.

REVENUE SUMMARY INFORMATION

The budget document identifies summary revenue information for the general fund by sub fund, but the revenues are not summarized in the document.

The revenues are identified by the following four major categories:

- local revenues;
- state revenues;
- federal revenues; and
- other resources.

There is no identification of the different sources of the local revenues which were estimated to be $3.4 million for the 2003–04 fiscal year. This amount represents 59 percent of the total General Fund revenues.

There is no provision to increase fund balance (revenues are higher than expenditures) or reduce fund balance (expenditures are higher than revenues) with detailed information once the budget has been approved. The fund balance is the beginning amount of resources available and the activities of the ensuing year will either result in an increase or a decrease in the fund balance. In most cases, governmental entities budget to have expenditures equal revenues and if at year end the actual revenues exceed expenditures, there will be an increase to fund balance. In some cases, governmental entities may elect to fund current year activities with a portion of fund balance, however, if the fund balance resources are to be used for ongoing operating costs, this is considered to be a poor practice as the entities are funding ongoing expenditures with a one-time revenue that will not be available in future years.

To provide a total picture of the budget and the projected financial position of Region 16, it is necessary to provide fund balance and more detailed revenue information in the budget document.

RESC 16 should provide comprehensive financial information for the budget document by including detailed information involving revenues and provide the beginning fund balance and the estimated ending fund balance information for each fund. The fund balance and revenue information is readily available in the existing financial records. The identification of the revenue amounts should be estimated based on prior year actual revenues combined with expectations for the coming year projected by the various program managers.

PAYROLL RECORDS

The time and effort sheets prepared by the staff of Region 16 identify only the time that is attributable to specific projects, thus, the time and effort documents do not reconcile to the time reporting process.

Support staff complete time sheets for the time worked, but this is a direct payroll activity and is not integrated with the time and effort reporting process. Professional staff receive a monthly salary and submit leave requests for days of work missed for any reason such as sick, vacation, etc. All employees are allocated to programs based on estimates of their work load and the previous years' experience. However, Region 16 RESC procedure CFA states that all employees who serve clients or who are funded by a combination of local/state/federal funds must complete time and effort for 100 percent of their time, not just for the time attributable to a specific project. The time and effort information is reviewed quarterly and the allocation for employees are adjusted accordingly for the following quarter.

The quarterly adjustment process is cumbersome and the recording of time spent only on specific programs for some employees results in a process that does not easily reconcile to the payroll.

RESC 16 should establish a time and effort reporting process that accounts for total hours worked that can be reconciled to the payroll records. Evaluate the method used for time reporting for the support staff to determine if it can be modified to be integrated with the Time and Effort reporting process. If this is not possible, the information to be included on the Time and Effort documents should be expanded to reconcile with the payroll information.

ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT

The Region 16 annual financial report is not developed consistent with GFOA guidelines and, therefore, does not qualify for a Certificate of Achievement in Excellence award. The annual financial report is in the format required by TEA and described in the Texas Financial and Accountability Resource Guide, but it could be strengthened.

The annual financial report for the year ended August 31, 2003 was prepared by the district's auditors. This report includes the auditor's opinion letter and all of the necessary financial statements, footnote disclosures and the management's discussion and analysis disclosures, to comply with current governmental accounting principles as promulgated by the Governmental Accounting Stands Board (GASB) as well as reports required by the federal government relating to the single audit act which mandates an independent financial and compliance audit of federal financial assistance programs. This report provides a picture of the overall financial position of the Region 16 Education Service Center, but it lacks additional information that could be used to more effectively communicate how the financial activity for the fiscal year has impacted the programs and services provided by Region 16.

The Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) and the Association of School Business Officials (ASBO) provide recommended standards for Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports (CAFR). A governmental entity that meets these standards will receive a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting. To receive this type of reporting recognition, Region 16 must publish an easily readable and efficiently organized comprehensive annual financial report.

The annual financial report is the final event in the annual planning and budgeting process as the organization completes the cycle and lays the foundation for the next budget process.

The requirements for an easily readable and efficiently organized comprehensive annual report include:

- **Introductory Section** - This section includes a letter from the chief financial officer that summarizes the fiscal operations and the strategic plan of the district, an organization overview, and clearly indicates the comprehensive annual financial report is a report of the management of the RESC and that the management of Region 16 is responsible for its preparation.

- **Financial Section** – This section includes:

  - the independent auditor's report;
  - management's discussion and analysis;
  - government-wide financial statements;
  - fund financial statements;
  - summary of significant accounting policies;
  - notes to the general purpose financial statements; and
  - combining any individual fund information and other supplementary information.

- **Statistical Section** – This section includes selected financial and demographic information generally presented on a multi-year basis.

The current annual financial report format contains the necessary financial information in the financial section, but lacks descriptions of the types of funds within the financial section. Other significant information is provided in the transmittal letter and the statistical section, both sections which provide an opportunity to enhance the understanding of the financial information to the reader. It would also be helpful to provide additional financial information in the combining and other supplementary information section that will help to clarify the budgets and actual expenditures for the many programs of Region 16.

RESC 16 should prepare the annual financial report for the year ended August 31, 2005 in a manner consistent with guidelines that would qualify the report to earn the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting.

Information regarding the preparation of a comprehensive annual financial report, to include copies of the checklist used to review the financial reports can be obtained from GFOA by emailing a request to CAFRProgram@gfoa.org. The Region 4 Regional Education Center as well as has the Highland Park Independent School District, a district in Region 16 have both received a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting from GFOA and copies of these reports will provide a basis for the format to be used.

The achievement of the certificate is less important than the preparation of a comprehensive annual financial report that will more effectively communicate the financial position of Region 16 and relate the financial results with the original budget document. If Region 16 desires to seek a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting, the fee is $830.

FEES FOR SERVICES

Region 16 has no policy nor procedures to make adjustments in fees for services.

Exhibit 16-18 identifies the revenues, expenditures and changes in fund balance for Region 16 for the fiscal years 2000-2001 through 2002-2003. Local and Intermediate Revenues in the General Fund increased by 11.92 percent between 2001-2002 and 2002-2003 while the total operating expenditures increased by 2.71 percent for the same period. These changes, along with a net increase in expenditures associated with the new facility of $199,391 ($1,152,917 facility expenditures - $953,526 transfer from the Capital Fund) along with a one time gain from a decision to opt out of the Health Insurance Cooperative results in a fund balance increase of $597,337, a 30.40 percentage increase from 2001-2002.

Part of the reason for the increase in revenue involves the local and intermediate sources, which are generated by the fees associated with the various programs offered by Region 16. The most significant factors involving the increase in the Local and Intermediate Revenues include:

- Implementation of *No Child Left Behind* resulted in a change in how Region 16 addressed the Title 2 and Title 4 programs which were originally included in the Federal Program Revenues provided to Region 16; these resources were received by Region 16 and services were provided on a shared services arrangement among the participating districts. The new requirements have the districts writing their own Title 2 and Title 4 grants and the services are still provided, however, they are offered via traditional contracts, resulting in $327,000 in additional revenue that is now classified as Local and Intermediate Sources rather than as Federal Sources.

- Fees for the Title I contracts were increased to offset a loss of $90,000 of resources provided by TEA.

- Region 16 experienced higher than anticipated increases in participation for Video Streaming, Computer Services, and Local Area Network contracts, resulting in an amount of $88,000 higher than originally anticipated.

- A new "pay as you go" Migrant Conference generated an additional $43,000.

- Other "pay as you go" conferences and workshops provided an additional $57,000.

- The overall increase in revenue was offset by $148,000 in reductions for a number of programs.

Exhibit 16-18
Statements of Revenues, Expenditures, and Changes in Fund Balance
2000–01 through 2002–03

Revenues, Expenditures, and Fund Balance	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	Increase (Decrease) 2001-2002 to 2002-2003	
				Amount	Percentage
Revenues					
Local and Intermediate Sources	$3,102,697	$3,314,182	$3,709,228	$395,046	11.92%
State Program Revenues	1,460,377	1,466,409	1,681,372	214,963	14.66%
Federal Program Revenues	725,721	743,277	600,102	(143,175)	-19.26%
Total Revenues	**5,288,795**	**5,523,868**	**5,990,702**	**466,834**	**8.45%**
Expenditures					
Instruction	1,508,738	136,002	56,839	(79,163)	-58.21%
Instructional Resources & Media Services		160,021	145,989	(14,032)	-8.77%
Curriculum & Instructional Staff Development		1,275,171	1,391,090	115,919	9.09%
Instructional Leadership		53,751	43,269	(10,482)	-19.50%
Guidance Counseling & Evaluation Services			17,444	17,444	
Health Services		935	52,109	51,174	5473.16%
General Administration		1,328,730	1,285,326	(43,404)	-3.27%
Plant Maintenance & Operations		196,622	270,335	73,713	37.49%
Data Processing Services		1,054,324	1,063,208	8,884	0.84%
Instructional and School Leadership	38,517				
Support Services (Pupil)	1,098				
School District Administrative Support	1,221,816	961,350	981,494	20,144	2.10%
Support Services - Nonstudewnt Based	1,158,307				
Ancillary Services	826,506				
Debt Service	406,215				
Debt Service - Principal- on Long-Term Debt		621778	163043	(458,735)	
Debt Service - Interest on Long-Term Debt		284437	243172	(41,265)	
Facilities Acquisition and Construction		246702		(246,702)	
Total Expenditures	**5,161,197**	**6,319,823**	**5,713,318**	**(606,505)**	**-9.60%**
Excess of Revenues Over Expenditures	127,598	(795,955)	277,384	1,073,339	
Other Financing Sources (Uses)					
Sale of Real and Personal Property		799			
Transfers In		953,526			
Total Other Financing Sources (Uses)		954,325			
Extraordinary Items					
Other Resources	185,689		201,780		
Net Change in Fund Balance	**313,287**	**158,370**	**479,164**	**597,337**	
Beginning Fund Balance	1,438,286	1,806,718	1,965,088		
Increase (Decrease) in Fund Balance (2)	55,145				
Ending Fund Balance	**$1,806,718**	**$1,965,088**	**$2,444,252**	**$597,337**	**30.40%**

Source: Annual Financial Reports, 2000–01 through 2002–03.

The state program revenues increased as a result of increases for all school districts and RESCs to address for medical insurance. The Federal Program Sources declined due to a change in the approved rate of indirect costs from a rate of 7.536 percent to 5.581 percent between 2001–02 and 2002–03.

Because of the uncertainty regarding the RESC funding from TEA during the 2002-2003 fiscal year, expenditure reductions occurred by not filling vacant positions and reducing routine operating cost when possible.

Exhibit 16-19 provides a comparison of the expenditures incurred in special revenue funds for 2000–01 through 2002–03. There has been a significant reduction in the special revenue fund expenditures between 2001–02 and 2002–03. The main cause of this reduction is the loss of resources from the ESEA Title III Technology Program.

A key element regarding the Local and Intermediate Revenue Sources involves the manner in which fees are established for programs. Region 16 makes an effort to establish fees that are designed to offset costs of providing the various programs. When a new program is being developed, a tentative budget is established with fees based on anticipated participation resulting from the interest in specific programs expressed by the school districts.

Once fees have been established, very few are modified and the fees remain stable over time. The two major programs offered by Region 16 are for Instructional Services Contracts and Computer Services. The fees for these contracts associated with Instructional Services have not changed since 2000–01 even though costs increased to maintain these programs.

Exhibit 16-20 identifies the programs that have experienced fee increases and decreases since 2000–01. All but one of the programs with increases are associated with technology. The Teacher of the Visually Impaired has low participation and the costs have been established to assure that revenues will offset the associated costs of the program.

Region 16 bills the participating districts as follows:

Month Billed	Amount Billed
October	30 percent
January	30 percent
April	40 percent

During the 2003–04 fiscal year, it was determined that the revenues would exceed the costs for major programs and a process was developed to provide a rebate to districts by reducing the April billing by an overall amount of $150,000.

Although Region 16 has shown good faith in trying to pass savings to client districts when possible, there is no policy or formal procedure to provide direction for these types of decisions. Establishing and sustaining fees at a consistent level over time to match revenues with expenditures for the programs offered by Region 16 is not an exact science; however, there should be policy in place to mange the fee structure.

RESC 16 should establish a board of directors policy and related internal procedures to create an approved process for establishing, increasing, reducing, or making interim adjustments to fees for services.

Exhibit 16-19
Special Revenue Funds
Statement of Expenditures
2000–01 through 2002–03

Special Revenue Fund Program	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	Increase (Decrease) 2000–01 to 2002–03	Increase (Decrease) 2001–02 to 2002–03
ESEA Title IV Safe and Drug Free Schools	$48,351	$51,373	$49,456	$1,105	($1,917)
Head Start	1,701,996	2,132,147	2,410,890	708,894	278,743
HIV Education	6,087			(6,087)	0
ESEA II, TA Support			20,963	20,963	20,963
Title I School Support	132,145	127,459	37,665	(94,480)	(89,794)
ESEA Title I Part C - Migrant	291,667	323,218	305,749	14,082	(17,469)
IDEA – Part B Preschool	146,603	156,517	129,160	(17,443)	(27,357)
IDEA – Part B Discretionary	1,006,826	1,025,342	1,001,346	(5,480)	(23,996)
ESEA Title VI Innovative Education	52,406	44,973	385	(52,021)	(44,588)
ESC Child Nutrition	121,496	127,720	129,103	7,607	1,383
Vocational Ed Basic Grant	48,058	48,479	47,611	(447)	(868)
English Acquisition & Enhancement			23,326	23,326	23,326
Title V, TRMI			53,920	53,920	53,920
Consolidated Admin Funds	42,362	43,367	15,886	(26,476)	(27,481)
Child and Adult Care Food Programs	80,605	95,150	144,547	63,942	49,397
RECEST	26,965	30,382	27,307	342	(3,075)
Social Study Center for Development	490			(490)	0
Early Head Start	1,365,787	1,650,545	1,678,909	313,122	28,364
Tx. Beginning Ed Support System	64,821	165,551	109,395	44,574	(56,156)
Project Gear Up	5,983	1,631	183	(5,800)	(1,448)
SSA ESEA title IV Drug Free	88,271	130,310	69,785	(18,486)	(60,525)
SSA Head Start	5,180,674	6,054,849	6,040,966	860,292	(13,883)
SSA Goals 2000	87,655			(87,655)	0
SSA ESEA II Prof. Development	164,625	139,067		(164,625)	(139,067)
SSA ESEA I, C Migrant	772,101	876,327	986,927	214,826	110,600
SSA Adult Basic Education	251,262	232,437	333,112	81,850	100,675
SSA Learn and Serve America	68,644	64,192	58,328	(10,316)	(5,864)
SSA TANF Family Support	107,427	128,208	73,323	(34,104)	(54,885)
SSA ESEA Title IV Innovative Ed	113,705	77,833		(113,705)	(77,833)
SSA - ESEA Title III Technology	1,125,164	1,250,279	217,901	(907,263)	(1,032,378)
SSA-ESEA, Title II, A TPTR		1,615	30,787	30,787	29,172
SSA Enhancing Ed Technology			632,660	632,660	632,660
SSA-English Acquisition & Enhance			49,007	49,007	49,007
SSA-V, A Innovative Programs			25,076	25,076	25,076
Select School Support Services	4,019	979		(4,019)	(979)
Visually Impaired	140,041	143,370	139,280	(761)	(4,090)
Non-Ed Community Based Support	0	9,796	10,385	10,385	589
School Health	46,590	31,761	33,330	(13,260)	1,569
Certification	7,476	7,512	4,083	(3,393)	(3,429)
Gifted and Talented	13,500	14,000	14,000	500	0
Technology	301,599	387,233	377,935	76,336	(9,298)
Head Start State	237,563	369,309		(237,563)	(369,309)
RECEST State	3,750			(3,750)	0
Employee Health Insurance			281,833	281,833	281,833
Early Childhood	910,378	1,146,326	1,179,196	268,818	32,870

Exhibit 16-19 (continued)
Special Revenue Funds
Statement of Expenditures
2000–01 Through 2002–003

Program	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	Increase (Decrease) 2000–01 to 2002–03	Increase (Decrease) 2001–02 to 2002–03
GR Decentral	26,836	74,764		(26,836)	(74,764)
TXBESS	32,660			(32,660)	0
Child Nutrition State	9,851	7,147		(9,851)	(7,147)
TRI-Student Success Initiative	1,748	91,554	85,456	83,708	(6,098)
Community Supervision & Correction Dp	29,800	28,419	31,199	1,399	2,780
Select Sup. Services (II-VI)	6,506			(6,506)	0
ESC Projects	55,909	64,435	54,456	(1,453)	(9,979)
Teacher Reading Academies	100,338	85,974	28,229	(72,109)	(57,745)
Teaching Reading Academy Stipends	281,400	258,000	68,400	(213,000)	(189,600)
Other State Special Revenue Funds	11,935	200,339	209,053	197,118	8,714
SSA-State Adult Basic Education	92,395	71,844	87,871	(4,524)	16,027
SSA – TANF	33,696	40,457	52,242	18,546	11,785
EDNET	337,555	445,349	142,543	(195,012)	(302,806)
Levi Straus Grant	4,353	2,043	13,604	9,251	11,561
HIV Contract	1,774	5,362	5,485	3,711	123
RCEST Business Partnership	2,750	10,720	6,763	4,013	(3,957)
Tobacco Free Amarillo		21,858	27,771	27,771	5,913
Early Childhood Intervention	159,189	174,934	198,733	39,544	23,799
Total	**$15,955,787**	**$18,672,456**	**$17,755,520**	**$1,799,733**	**($916,936)**

Source: Annual Financial Reports, 2000–01 through 2002–03.

Exhibit 16-20
Schedule of Region 16 Programs
With Fee Rate Increases or Decreases
2000–01 through 2004–05

Rate Increases	200001	200102	200203	200304	200405
AEIS Software Services	$600 Annual $45 District Wide Data Download	$600 Annual $45 District Wide Data Download	$850 Annual $45 District Wide Data Download	$850 Annual $45 District Wide Data Download	$850 Annual $45 District Wide Data Download
Participation	29	31	35	32	N/A
LAN Maintenance and Installation	40 Hours - $2,200 Additional Days - $400	40 Hours - $2,200 Additional Days - $400	40 Hours - $2,500 Additional Days - $400	40 Hours - $2,500 Additional Days - $400	40 Hours - $2,500 Additional Days - $400
Participation	20	29	32	33	N/A
Internet Services	$2,400 Plus T-1 Telecommunications Access Fee	$2,400 Plus T-1 Telecommunications Access Fee	$2,400 Plus T-1 Telecommunications Access Fee	$3,000 Plus T-1 Telecommunications Access Fee	$3,600 Plus T-1 Telecommunications Access Fee
Participation	56	55	58	55	N/A
Teacher of the Visually Impaired	N/A	N/A	$200 Per Day $100 Per Half Day	$250 Per Day $125 Per Half Day	$300 Per Day $150 Per Half Day
Participation	N/A	N/A	4	7	N/A
Video Conferencing	$12,000 Per Year Plus T-1 Telecommunications Access Fee	$12,000 Per Year Plus T-1 Telecommunications Access Fee	$9,600 Per Year Plus T-1 Telecommunications Access Fee	$9,000 Per Year for 1st Site $6,000 Per Year for Additional Sites Plus T-1 Telecommunications Access Fee	$7,800 Per Year for 1st Site $4,500 Per Year for Additional Sites Plus T-1 Telecommunications Access Fee
Participation	18	28	35	30	N/A
Information Management Services RSCCC Business	N/A	N/A	Base Cost $5,700 Plus $550 for Multi User Network	Base Cost $5,985 Plus $700 for Multi User Network	Base Cost $5,700 Plus $500 for Multi User Network
Participation	N/A	N/A	54	53	N/A
Information Management Services WIN School	N/A	To Be Determined Depending on Participation	$3,900 Base Cost/Campus $275 Class Attendance $360 MAC User Platform	$3,900 Base Cost/Site $350 Class Attendance/Site Class Grades $150/Site	$3,900 Base Cost/Site $275 Class Attendance/Site Class Grades No Charge
Participation	N/A	56	56	54	N/A

Source: Annual Financial Reports, 2000–01 through 2002–03.

Region 16 has already made a number of decisions in the area of establishing fees and making fee adjustments, but they have been accomplished in the absence of any formal process. A review of these activities over the past five years should be undertaken to identify the validity of the current process for establishing fees, understanding the long term financial impact of holding fees at a stable level over time, and identifying the types of circumstances that have allowed for the reduction of workshop fees and the most recent decision to reduce the final quarterly billing for the districts.

Based on the results of the review, a draft policy and associated internal procedures should be developed and reviewed with the representatives of the client school districts. After an in-depth evaluation, the Board of Directors should be presented with the proposed policy and procedures for approval.

FUND BALANCE

Region 16 has no policy on the amount of funds that should be retain in the fund balance.

Over the years, portions of the fund balance have been reserved or designated as shown in **Exhibit 16-21**.

Exhibit 16-21
Analysis of Reservation and Designation of Fund Balance
1999–2000 through 2002–03 Fiscal Years

Fiscal Year	Reserve Inventory	Encumbrances	Prepaid Items	Other Reserves	Other Designated	Undesignated	Total Fund Balance
1999–2000	$26,337	$571,424	$0	$0	$500,000	$340,525	**$1,438,286**
2000–01	$16,832	$604,273	$0	$406,215	$0	$779,398	**$1,806,718**
2001–02	$21,714	$560,011	$2,501	$406,215	$389,312	$585,335	**$1,965,088**
2002–03	$5,663	$678,238	$0	$406,215	$401,153	$952,983	**$2,444,252**

Source: Annual Financial Reports for years 1999–2000 through 2000–03.

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) has identified an undesignated fund balance for the General Fund at August 31 (unreserved and undesignated) of up to 20 percent of prior year expenditures as being a reasonable level of undesignated fund balance. This is based on the concept that the undesignated fund balance should be equal to approximately 2.5 months of operating expenses. For Region 16 to meet the 20 percent guideline for year ending 2003, the unreserved fund balance should not exceed $1,142,663 ($5,713,318 x 20%). The Undesignated Fund Balance at August 31, 2003 appears to indicate that Region 16 is well under the 20 percent guideline. The following is a discussion of the major reserves and designations of the Fund Balance for the General Fund for the Year Ended August 31, 2003:

- **Reserve for Encumbrances**
  Encumbrances are defined as commitments in the form of purchase orders and contracts for goods and services not yet received. When encumbrances are reserved, the entry is reversed at the beginning of the following year and these encumbrances become expenditures when the goods or services are delivered and the invoices are paid.

  Region 16 does not record encumbrances for the General Fund at year end, but does encumber amounts for contracts prior to end of the fiscal year. The amount of $678,238 represents twenty five contracts with obligations that are due the first week in September through the end of the next fiscal year. By treating these

contracts as a reserve aids in maintaining the unrestricted fund balance below the 20 percent guideline, but creates a reserve for numerous contracts that Region 16 does not have an obligation to pay until well into the following fiscal year.

Although the reserve for encumbrances is a major reservation of Fund Balance, there is no reference in the August 31, 2003 Annual Financial Report. Note E, Other Accounting Polices in the Notes to Financial Statements discusses other reserves and designations, but does not address the reserve for encumbrances.

- **Other Reserves**
  This amount is for debt service on the principal and interest payment to be made in the 2003–04 fiscal year for the capital lease associated with the construction of the new Region 16 facility in 2000. This is a self-imposed restriction of fund balance by Region 16 and is not consistent with recommended generally accepted accounting principles. This is an annual obligation and the resources to pay this obligation have been budgeted for in 2003–04. It should be noted that the independent auditor for Region 16 RESC researched this item and decided it did comply with GAAP and agreed with this decision to reserve fund balance for the subsequent years debt payments.

- **Other Designated**
  The Other Designated amount of $401,153 represents the set aside for the balloon payment to be paid for the building lease purchase of $574,726 which will be due on December 16, 2015. The Board of Directors has authorized an increase of three percent per year to this designation to retire the total balloon payment and the Commissioner of Education has approved this designation. This designation represents sound fiscal management and is an effective way to accumulate the necessary resources to pay the balloon payment in 2015.

If the Fund balance for the Undesignated Fund Balance for the General Fund were to be reported identifying only those contracts due and payable in September of the following year and excluding the Other Reserve associated with the debt service payment, the results would be as follows:

Fund Balance

Reserved for Inventory	$5,663
Reserved for Encumbrances	263,987
Other Designated Fund Balance	401,153
Undesignated	1,773,449
Total Fund Balance	$2,444,252

If the Fund Balance reserves and designations were to be revised based on the above analysis, the Unrestricted Fund Balance for the General Fund in Region 16 would represent 31 percent of the General Fund expenditures.

The current approach for identifying the Unrestricted Fund Balance technically meets the 20 percent guideline. The ultimate issue is to determine what a reasonable Unrestricted Fund Balance should be for an entity that is designed to operate on a break-even basis and achieves the fund balance with an ongoing excess of revenues over expenditures. The issue of the unrestricted fund balance is one that should be addressed.

The GFOA recommends that an unreserved fund balance in the general fund be of no less than five to 15 percent of regular general fund operating revenues, or no less than one to two months of regular General Fund operating expenditures. GFOA also identifies other pertinent issues associated with the fund balance in the General Fund to include:

- the predictability of revenues and the volatility of expenditures (i.e., higher

levels of unreserved fund balance may be needed if significant revenue sources are subject to unpredictable fluctuations or if operating expenditures are highly volatile);

- the availability of resources in other funds as well as the potential drain upon General Fund resources from other funds (i.e., availability of resources in other funds may reduce the amount of unreserved fund balance needed in the general fund, just as deficits in other funds may require a higher level of unreserved fund balance to be maintained in the general fund);

- liquidity (i.e., a disparity between when financial resources actually become available to make payments and the average maturity of related liabilities may require that a higher level of resources be maintained); and

- designations (i.e., governments may wish to maintain higher levels of unreserved fund balance to compensate for any portion of unreserved fund balance already designated for a specific purpose).

The 20 percent level of unrestricted fund balance for the RESCs takes the GFOA concepts into consideration. If the manner in reporting the reserves and designations are adjusted, Region 16 has attained a significant Unrestricted Fund Balance over the past four years, yet this has occurred in the absence of any formal fiscal policy or process.

Region 16 currently has no policy on the management of fund balance and no structured process to support the designation of unreserved fund balance.

RESC 16 should develop a policy addressing level of undesignated fund balance in General Fund to be maintained by Region 16. The establishment of a policy on the management of fund balance will provide long-term guidance for future financial decisions. This policy should be developed in conjunction with development of the policy for establishing, increasing, reducing, or making interim adjustments to fees for services, with the strategic plan, and other formal long term plans for capital improvements or other future capital needs such as those for technology.

PROPRIETARY FUNDS

Region 16 no policy nor guidelines on the use of proprietary funds.

The proprietary funds in Region 16 have accumulated a large amount of Unrestricted Net Assets much of which occurred during the 2002–03 fiscal year. This is especially true of the financial activities for the year ended August 31, 2003 which is reflected in **Exhibit 16-22** and indicates Unrestricted Net Assets of the four Proprietary Funds increased by $568,481.

Exhibit 16-22
Analysis of Unrestricted Assets
All Proprietary Funds
1998–1999 through 2002–03 Fiscal Years

Fiscal Year	Internal Service Funds			Wan Enterprise	Total
	Plant	Printing	Computer		
1998–99	$226,734	$246,170	($198,304)	$0	**$274,600**
1999–2000	$277,712	$302,844	($174,624)	($30,094)	**$375,838**
2000–01	$272,482	$345,787	($98,809)	$41,247	**$560,707**
2001–02	$54,907	$157,915	($100,741)	$47,882	**$159,963**
2002–03	$301,464	$203,363	$47,425	$176,192	**$728,444**

Source: Annual Financial Reports for years 1999–2000 through 200–03.

The total Unrestricted Assets for 2001–02 were reduced by $250,000 with a transfer from the Printing Fund to the General Fund. These resources were used to help offset the first year costs for the new facility.

Exhibit 16-23 identifies the Statement of Revenues and Expenses for Year Ended August 31, 2003.

Exhibit 16-23
Revenues and Expenses
All Proprietary Funds
For the Year Ended August 31,2003

2002–03 Activity	Internal Service Funds			Wan Enterprise	Total
	Plant	Printing	Computer		
Unrestricted Net Assets August 31, 2002	**$54,907**	**$157,915**	**($100,741)**	**$47,882**	**$159,963**
Revenues	943,238	289,421	272,422	674,489	2,179,570
Expenses	715,512	217,259	151,746	550,642	1,635,159
Operating Income	227,726	72,162	120,676	123,847	544,411
Non Operating Revenues (Expenses)	2,843	0	0	0	2,843
Change in Net Assets	**$230,569**	**$72,162**	**$120,676**	**$123,847**	**$547,254**
Percentage Change in Net Assets	**24.44%**	**24.93%**	**44.30%**	**18.36%**	**25.11%**

Source: Annual Financial Report, 2003–03.

To achieve a change in Net Assets of 25.11 percent of total revenues indicates that these funds were doing more than breaking even during the 2003–03 fiscal year. These substantial increases have occurred because the users of the services have been charged more than was necessary to maintain these funds on a break-even basis. If the higher revenues had not been achieved, the fund balance for the unrestricted portion of the fund balance in the General Fund would have been higher.

The activities of the proprietary funds are significant and the Board of Directors should establish a policy regarding the management of these funds to include the expected level of Unrestricted Net Assets for each fund as well as the expected level of net income to be achieved by each fund on an annual basis.

RESC 16 should establish a management policy for proprietary funds to include guidelines for net income and expected level of Unrestricted Net Assets. The financial activities for these funds should be reviewed for the previous two years as well as the current year (2003–04). This analysis should include the identification of the estimated cash requirements for the ensuing five year period, an assessment of the source of the revenues (client school districts, grant programs, internal users, etc) and should lead to the establishment of pricing strategies and expectations for a reasonable level of Unrestricted Net Asset for each fund.

It is difficult to identify the exact savings that may accrue to Region 16 programs through an adjustment in the rates for the services of the Proprietary Funds, but it would appear that the overall rate structure could be reduced by at least ten percent, resulting in a cost reduction to all programs of approximately $218,000 annually.

AUDIT SERVICES

Region 16 has been using the same audit firm for over 20 without seeking proposals. Although the current audit firm is clearly qualified to perform the audit for Region 16, it is considered a good management practice to seek proposals from audit firms on a periodic basis.

The Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) identified recommended practices for the procurement of audit services in 1996 and subsequently updated this information in 2002. GFOA recommends entering into multiyear agreements of at least five years, but that after the expiration of a contract agreement, that the governmental entity initiate a Request for Proposal process for auditor selection. Often in the case of governmental audits, there may not be an adequate number of qualified auditors in certain locations. If this is the case, it is still recommended that the process be initiated and that an effort be made to actively seek the participation of all qualified firms, to include the current auditors.

RESC 16 should develop a Request for Proposals (RFP) process for audit services upon completion of the August 31, 2004 financial records audit. A Request for Proposals (RFP) for audit services should include the following:

- identify the scope of the audit;
- require that the financial statements will conform to the independence standard promulgated in the General Accounting Office's *Government Auditing standards*; and
- include a reference to the desire to have an auditing firm that is familiar with the preparation of Comprehensive Financial Reports (CAFRs) for governmental entities.

The proposal should seek a multiyear agreement of at least five years. the process should include the requirement for at least three references from other governmental clients of the firm.

The price for the audit services should not be the primary consideration in the selection of the audit firm.

The process should be structured so that the key factor in the selection process will be to select the firm deemed to be capable of providing the highest quality audit services.

A proposal should be sought from the existing audit firm. The process should be completed by January 2005 to provide adequate time for firm selected to become familiar with the activities of Region 16.

COPIES PURCHASES

Region 16 does not operate a cooperative for the purchase or lease of copiers.

Copiers are a major cost item for smaller school districts that lack the opportunity to take advantage of economies of scale in the purchasing process. It may be possible for Region 16 to work with the districts in the region to develop a region-wide bid for copiers with a resulting reduction in the cost of copies for the participating districts. By coordinating a program of this nature, it will also be possible to support the participating school districts when there are service issues to be resolved.

RESC 16 should explore the possibility of establishing a cooperative purchasing activity for purchase or lease of copiers for Region 16. To determine the feasibility of a copier purchasing cooperative, it will be necessary to obtain an inventory of the copiers in use throughout the region. Specific information required would include the make and model, the age of the equipment, the vendor providing copier services, and current contractual arrangements. It will also be necessary to obtain service level information and determine the level of satisfaction the districts have with their current agreements.

With accurate inventory and service information, it will be possible to determine the potential options for developing a copier contract for those districts that are in a position to acquire new copiers and establish a schedule for other districts that will be in a position to obtain copiers at a later date.

If it is feasible to implement a cooperative purchasing program for copiers, there will

clearly be a cost savings to the participating districts; however, the amount of these savings will only become apparent after the analysis of current operations. This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

VENDING MACHINE COOPERATIVE

Region 16 does not maintain a cooperative with vending machines companies to provide competitive rates for member districts.

The potential for establishing a cooperative program to seek contracts with vending machine companies may be an area where a valuable service can be provided to the school districts in Region 16. Since the mid 1990's, many school districts across the country have entered into contracts with soft drink vending machine companies. Prior to the district-wide approach, the vending machine companies would enter into individual contracts with the high schools, resulting in situations where the revenue received was often based on the ability of the local school administrator to negotiate a favorable contract.

In one large school district with 16 high schools, individual schools had contracts with soft drink venders that provided a $15,000 up front payment to the individual schools for a five year contract with a variety of commission levels. This district prepared a district-wide request for proposal and received a $2.3 million up front payment for a seven year contract as well as a standard commission rate of 55 percent on the sale of the products. The increase in the commissions provided from $7,000 to $14,000 in additional revenue to the individual high schools in this district.

The districtwide vending machine contracts have been successful because of the economies of scale that can be achieved by combining the purchasing power of all of the schools in the district. The same opportunity may be available for the school districts in Region 16. School districts or schools operating in isolation do not have the leverage to maximize revenues from these sources.

There has been some controversy regarding the presence of vending machines in schools, however, there have been a number of changes in recent years where these machines can provide products other than soft drinks.

RESC 16 should contact the school districts in Region 16 to determine if there is interest in pursuing a cooperative purchasing program for selection of vendors to provide vending machine services. This process can be explored by sending a letter to each school district in Region 16 to determine the level of interest in the program. If there is interest, an inventory should be undertaken to identify the number and types of machines in the schools, the contractual arrangements for each machine to include compensation to the schools and the contractual periods. It will also be important to contact the vending machine vendors to determine the different market regions for each vendor.

If it is feasible to implement a cooperative purchasing program for vending machines, there will clearly be a cost savings to the participating districts, however, the amount of these savings will only become apparent after the analysis of the existing agreements. This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

U.S. COMMUNITIES SERVICES

Although the establishment and use of purchasing cooperatives within Region 16 is beneficial, there may also be value in exploring the potential benefits from an organization called U.S. Communities Government Purchasing Alliance (U.S. Communities) that works nationwide to aid in the pooling of purchasing activities for public agencies. This is a nonprofit organization that can reduce the cost of purchased goods through competitively solicited contracts for quality products using lead public agencies.

One example is the contract for school furniture, which was solicited for U.S. Communities by the Wichita Public Schools. This agreement is with School Specialty which provides Virco student furniture. The

agreement calls for differing discounts from the standard price based on the overall dollar volume of the order.

The U.S. Communities program was founded by the:

- Association of School Business Officials International (ASBO);
- National Association of Counties (NACo);
- National Institute of Governmental Purchasing (NGIP);
- National League of Cities (NLC); and
- United States Conference of Mayors (USCM).

There are numerous contracts currently in place that include office/school supplies, office furniture, technology products, janitorial supplies, and office machines. A key element of the U.S. Communities program is that the vendors guarantee that they will not provide a lower price than that included in the U.S. Communities contract to any other entity.

Participation in this type of agreement is authorized in the State of Texas in Title 7, Chapter 791, Subchapter C on the Governmental Code.

RESC 16 should contact U.S. Communities to explore the options that may be available to coordinate a purchasing cooperative with this organization for the school districts in Region 16. Information regarding the U.S. Communities Program is available on the *Internet at www.uscommunities.org.*

PRINT SHOP

Printing services are too costly in Region 16; however in order to set target goals, additional management data are needed.

Region 16 has a Print Shop with sophisticated equipment and, in many cases, users can send jobs directly to the equipment and the Printing Technician can complete the job without requiring original copies. This program can provide multi-color printing services and generates approximately 450,000 copies per month.

As noted in Section E, Financial Condition and Funding Adequacy, the printing program is operated as an internal service fund and it has generated significant profits in recent years. The copiers at the Region 16 facility are also included in this internal service fund. This program has operated successfully with a minimum of management information. Region 16 has recognized the need for redirection in funding and set a 10 percent reduction as their goal for 2003–04.

Given the level of profits earned by this fund in recent years, there is clearly an opportunity to reduce the printing fees charged to the users of this service. To more effectively understand the cost of operation that will lead to effective pricing strategies, procedures to more closely track the labor hours and the actual cost of providing the printing services should be developed.

RESC 16 should establish a management information capability for the Print Shop to support the RESC's goal to reduce printing service fees. The management information collection process will include detailed time reporting associated with each print job; the time spent supporting the copier program, and identifying the workload generated by each Region 16 program. Pricing goals should be established and the program should be evaluated by comparing the prices for certain jobs with industry standards. A management reporting process should also be developed to provide data on the progress the program has made in reducing costs.

CASH FORECASTING

Region 16 has no cash forecasting strategies in place. Cash management activities for Region 16 consist mainly of the maintenance of the investment of resources in two investment pools established for governmental units in Texas and in the use of interest bearing checking accounts.

Sound cash management involves the maintenance of a balance between retaining an adequate amount of available cash for daily operations and investing idle cash for longer periods at higher rates to yield the highest aggregate return. The goal is to ensure smooth operations while attaining the highest possible return on the cash investments. Effective projections of cash requirements over time enhance the ability to maximize the earnings from the investment of surplus cash.

Effective cash management requires:

- a sound cash management program that involves cash forecasting;
- a system for monitoring cash as it moves within the district;
- surplus cash investment strategies and mechanisms; and
- effective banking and investment relationships.

Region 16 currently does not have a cash forecasting process or strategies for addressing the investment of surplus cash. These factors have not been significant in the past two years as interest rates have been low and the return on the rates in the interest bearing checking accounts have often been equal to or greater than individual investments.

Cash is currently maintained in interest bearing checking accounts or in one of two investment pools established for the use of governmental entities in Texas. Procedures are in place to process billings on a timely basis, checks are written once a week on Fridays, grant reimbursements are prepared monthly and the receipts from the granting agencies are processed directly to the accounts of Region 16.

The cash forecasting component has been less of a factor in recent years because of low interest rates and the fact that the interest rates for checking accounts are often equal to or greater than those offered for separate investments.

The use of TexPool and Lone Star investment pools is beneficial to Region 16 as cash can be transferred in and out of these pools on a daily basis. With the potential of increases in interest rates, it may become advantageous for Region 16 to also consider fixed maturity investments. To effectively manage cash assets in an environment where greater returns are possible from the use of a variety of investment opportunities, it will be necessary to have a process in place to provide for a more formal cash planning process.

RESC 16 should develop a cash forecasting capability to provide effective management of cash and placement of investments when interest rates increase. The cash needs for Region 16 are reasonably consistent from year to year. To project future cash needs on a weekly and monthly basis, it will be necessary to undertake an analysis of routine cash activities for the previous two years. This information should provide a basis for the projection of cash needs for future periods. Based on the projected cash needs, along with anticipated changes in interest rates, decisions can be made regarding the amount and maturities for investments.

As interest rates increase, the effective use of cash forecasting will enhance the ability of Region 16 to earn increased levels of investment income. This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

ACCIDENT REPORTS

Region 16 has confidential information in its accident reports which need to be removed as these reports are public documents.

The Accident Prevention Plan and Annual Report Review includes copies of the actual Workers' Compensation First Report of Injury or Illness forms used for managing each claim. These forms include detailed information relating to each employee involved in a workers' compensation claim to include the address, phone number, date of birth, salary and social security number for the employees involved. Also included is a copy of the Supervisor's Accident Investigation Report.

The inclusion of the documents required for each claim is excessive and because this report is a public document, it is inappropriate to include this information in the report.

Effective reports can be provided to the Board of Directors without including the specifics of each individual claim. The summary reports included in the existing document are an effective tool for communicating the issues involved with the workers' compensation program.

RESC 16 should remove the detailed information for each accident from the Accident Prevention Plan and Annual Report. It is important to retain the various workers' compensation forms for purposes of managing the claims, but it is excessive and inappropriate to include personal information such as name, address, date of birth and social security number in a public document.

CAR FOR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The executive director of Region 16 is provided a car. This practice is not cost-effective.

This is a one-time capital cost during the purchase year with maintenance and upkeep expenses in subsequent years. When the vehicle is to be replaced, there will be another increase in current expenditures for the year of purchase. It is best in governmental organizations for positions of leadership to be provided a vehicle allowance rather than having use of an entity-owned vehicle. The provision of a vehicle allowance records the total cost of mileage for the executive director on an annual basis, resulting in a more accurate reflection of these operating costs from year-to-year. Beyond the issue of more accurate budgeting and financial reporting, there are often-political issues that may surface when decisions are made on the type of vehicle to be purchased and the public perception that the provision of a vehicle is an example of governmental waste.

RESC 16 should convert the compensation package for the executive director to include an auto allowance when current vehicle is deemed to have reached the end of its economic life. All operating costs associated with the use of the vehicle assigned to the Executive Director, to include insurance, fuel and maintenance should be evaluated to determine when it will become more cost effective to dispose of the vehicle and establish an auto allowance for the executive director.

ONLINE REGISTRATION

RESC 16 currently does not offer online workshop registration, requiring that staff registrars process virtually all registrations in paper format. This is an unnecessary work step, as it is possible to design an online registration interface with the service centers' MIS system. RESC 16 also does not offer workshop registrants an online tool to view their training history, thus requiring staff registrars to print training records for all participants. Subsequent to MGT's on-site visit, staff indicated the online registration should be made available to clients by September 1, 2004.

For example, RESC 12 contracted independently for an online registration and transcript review tool, which allows past workshop participants to print records of their training history. RESC 17 created an online registration system that allows workshop registrants to create individual accounts, register for workshops, and cancel reservations as needed. With each reservation or cancellation, the system automatically updates workshop rosters and sends a confirmation to the registrant *and* their supervisor.

RESC 16 should use online interfaces with the MIS system to enable online workshop registration and review of training history. Although the service centers' MIS software currently does not come with an online registration interface, other centers have created such a tool in order to limit unnecessary work for their staff. RESC 16 should contact other centers to discuss the

feasibility of replicating their tools, thereby avoiding any duplication of efforts.

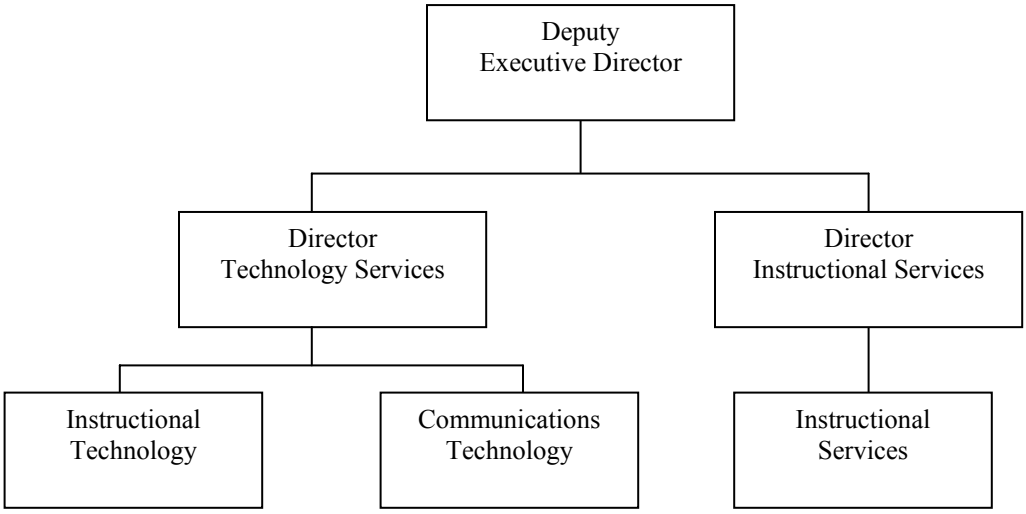
DUPLICATION OF SERVICES

The Technology Services Division and Instructional Division at Region 16 duplicate services.

RESC 16's Technology Services Division shares a common goal with the Instructional Services Division: to improve student performance via the enhancement of instructional services. Because of this shared goal, the two divisions duplicate efforts.

The Instructional Services Division strives to enhance districts' instructional services via professional development and targeted technical assistance for teachers, administrators, and students. Technology Services strives to do the same by providing networking, Internet, videoconferencing, and other technology services that support the vision, training, and planning needed to successfully incorporate technology in classroom instruction. **Exhibit 16-24** shows the current organization of these two divisions.

Exhibit 16-24
RESC 16
Technology Services and Instructional Services Organization



Source: RESC 16 Organizational Chart, July 2004.

As shown in **Exhibit 16-24,** Technology Services is comprised of two components. Instructional Technology provides districts with technology-based curricular enhancements and has secured several TIE and TIF grants to support these efforts. The component's services include instruction on how to incorporate technology and software into the classroom. Communications technology supports the regions' local area networks, including the Internet and videoconferencing, which also lend themselves to improved instructional services.

With missions that strive to the same outcome and methods that rely on improvements to instructional techniques, Technology Services and Instructional Services are likely to duplicate services. Although Technology Services staff report that this has not been the case, Instructional Services staff indicate that the divisions have duplicated efforts in the past. They cited an example in which the units developed similar training services related to science instruction. Additionally, both divisions indicated that the growing use of technology in the classroom requires that they

regularly communicate and collaborate. Technology Services staff report that they collaborate with Instructional Services staff on up to 15 percent of their instruction-related projects. Additionally, Instructional Services staff check in with Instructional Technology staff at least weekly to share ideas and obtain feedback on projects.

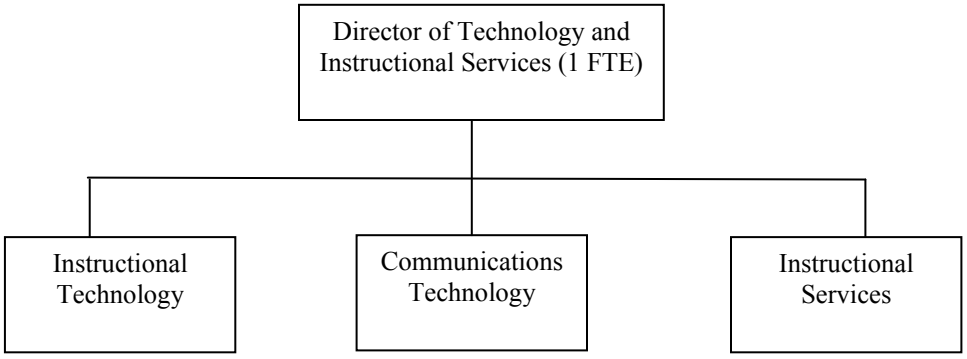
In recognition of the shared goals between technology and instructional services, other Service Centers have merged these two units to maximize collaboration and organizational efficiency, and minimize duplication of efforts. The Service Center in Region 17 made this transition in 2002, as did RESC 18 in June 2004. Both RESC 17 and RESC 18 reported that this transition has been cost effective and operationally-effective, as it has reduced personnel costs, improved collaboration, and minimized duplication of efforts.

RESC 16 should reorganize technology services within instructional services. By moving Technology Services into Instructional Services, RESC 16 should minimize duplication of effort, increase communication and collaboration, and maximize organizational efficiency. MGT recommends that RESC eliminate its director of Technology Services position and move all Technology Services staff to Instructional Services. The 2004–05 fiscal year is an opportune time to make such a transition, as the center's current director of Technology Services is expected to retire. **Exhibit 16-25** illustrates how Technology Services and its components could be organized within Instructional Services.

To ensure the success of this transition, the current directors of Technology Services and Instructional Services should jointly establish transitional guidelines and expectations, and closely monitor the reorganization process. MGT also recommends that RESC 16 maintain separate coordinators for each component to ensure that the service center preserves its content expertise and that existing staff receive the mid-level leadership to which they are accustomed. For guidance on how to ensure a successful transition and future collaborations, RESC 16 leadership may want to consult with their colleagues at RESC 17 and RESC 18.

Under the proposed structure, all positions in Instructional Services and Technology Services will be maintained with the exception of the director of Technology Services. Cost savings will result from a reduction in personnel costs, as the service center will not need to replace its director of Technology Services. This recommendation should be implemented in the 2005-06 school year, as the current director of Technology Services is expected to retire in 2004–05.

Exhibit 16-25
Instructional Services after Inclusion of Technology Services Organization



Source: Created by MGT of America, 2004.

FISCAL IMPACT

	Recommendation	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	5-Year (Costs) or Savings	One-Time (Costs) or Savings
16-1	Hold board meetings at the RESC 16 facility.	$825	$1,650	$1,650	$1,650	$1,650	$7,425	
16-5	Reduce the Nelson Street custodial position to 50 percent full-time equivalent (FTE).	$0	$13,000	$13,000	$13,000	$13,000	$52,000	
16-6	Renovate and generate revenue from leased space.	$36,000	$63,600	$63,600	$63,600	$63,600	$290,400	($200,000)
16-7	Reduce outside consultant expenditures.	$0	$32,777	$65,554	$98,330	$98,330	$294,991	
16-18	Seek the certificate of achievement for excellence in financial reporting.	($830)	($830)	($830)	($830)	($830)	($4,150)	
16-21-	Establish financial policy for proprietary funds and adjust rates accordingly.	$0	$218,000	$218,000	$218,000	$218,000	$872,000	
16-31	Reorganize technology services within instructional services.	$0	$81,345	$81,345	$81,345	$81,345	$325,380	
	Total	**$35,995**	**$409,542**	**$442,319**	**$475,095**	**$475,095**	**$1,838,046**	**($200,000)**

CHAPTER 17:

LUBBOCK

CHAPTER 17

LUBBOCK

Twenty (20) counties surrounding Lubbock, Texas comprise Regional Education Service Center (RESC or Region) 17. The area consists of 18,966 square miles, with 58 public school districts, four charter schools and several private schools, comprising 243 campuses. The current student enrollment is 77,899. Region 17 is primarily a rural agricultural region with one 5A district, two 4A districts, seven 3A districts, eleven 2A districts and thirty-seven 1A districts. Over half of the districts have fewer than 500 students.

The mission of Region 17 is to be "passionately committed to developing and nurturing healthy, thriving, learning communities across Region 17 by guiding and supporting schools in their quest for educational excellence." The overall planning process, built upon that mission, encompasses all facets of the organization, as well as aspects of the Criteria for Performance Excellence. An additional goal of the planning process is to promote financial and organizational accountability in terms of the use of funds and the measure for the success of activities. Also, the planning process promotes further development of the vision and mission as set forth in the strategic plan developed in 2001–02.

Key elements of the Region 17 planning process include *Criteria for Performance Excellence.* These are embedded within the operational plan. The core values and the seven criteria are reflected within the entirety of the document, and they operate as a system throughout the organization to determine progress in those area. The two plans include:

- ***Strategic Plan***—establishes vision, mission and direction for Region 17. It defines the beliefs as an organization, the mission statement and organizational goals, parameters and action plans.
- ***Operational Plan***—provides for the general operations in each department, component or individual actions as directed by the strategic plan and/or performance as outlined by state and local performance measures. The operational plan reflects major job functions and activities within those functions.

The state has three basic goals for all regional education service centers:

- improve student performance;
- enable school districts to operate more efficiently and economically; and
- implement initiatives assigned by the legislature or the commissioner.

Region 17 has established performance measures by which to evaluate the effectiveness of the progress towards accomplishing these state goals. Region 17 has also established local performance measures to assist in evaluating effectiveness in additional areas. The performance measures and summary results for 2003–04 are listed in **Exhibit 17-1.**

The trends in student demographics are reflected in **Exhibit 17-2** below (as reported in the AEIS data on the TEA Web site.) The Hispanic student population is increasing. The White student population is decreasing and the other student groups are stable. Additionally, the percentage of students qualifying as economically disadvantaged is increasing.

Exhibit 17-1
Performance Measures and Summary Results
2003–04

Performance Measures	2003–04 Results
Student performance is increasing	TAKS All Students Category: 19 areas equal or above state average at 1 SEM
Survey results demonstrate positive impact	81 percent of services rated as good or excellent on annual survey
District participation maintained or increased	100 percent of districts participated in at least one SSA or contracted service
Districts participated in state-required training	109 workshops relating to state initiatives were presented
Strategic action plans completed	eight of nine action plans successfully implemented

Source: RESC 17, 2004.

Exhibit 17-2
Trends in Student Demographics

Region 17	1993–94	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03
African American	8.1	8.3	8.3	8.2
Hispanic	44.2	47.9	48.5	48.9
White	47.0	43.0	42.4	41.9
Other	0.7	0.8	0.9	1.0
Economically Disadvantaged	51.9	54.0	54.4	55.8

Source: Region 17 Web site, http://www.esc17.net/escweb/districts/coopscontracts.htm, 2004.

Finally, a wide range of services is offered by Region 17 to support all aspects of school administration, instruction, and support. Professional development and technical assistance for all school staff, including administrators, teachers, paraprofessionals, support staff and parents is a significant part of the work of RESC 17. In addition, cooperatives offered to schools provide benefits including volume purchasing of materials, supplies and USDA Commodities; federal contract management; Internet service; instructional resources; business and student software support and much more. A list of each district in Region 17 and the services each district receives can be found at http://www.esc17.net/escweb/districts/coopscontracts.htm

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- RESC 17 leadership enforces strong accountability measures resulting in increased staff productivity.
- RESC 17's legal services are highly effective, economical, and provide sound legal counsel to RESC 17 and its member districts.
- Region 17 staff effectively communicate, share best practices, and pool resources with other regional service centers.
- Region 17 has teamed with Texas Tech University to provide excellent training for educational leaders.
- RESC 17 contracted for an energy audit and new systems controls that are expected to save the service center more than $450,000 over a ten-year period.

- RESC 17 effectively contracts its educational programs with member districts in a cost-effective and efficient delivery system.
- Region 17's Student Assistance Program is an exemplary model and should be duplicated in other RESCs in an effort to identify at-risk students and provide appropriate interventions prior to special education referral.
- Region 17 maintains a consistent set of budget worksheets that provide an easy audit trail to document the allocation of the resources developed for the annual budget.
- Region 17 maintains an effective system for collecting time and effort information and integrating this system with the payroll/total compensation process.
- Region 17 maintains a process that places the total fund balance from operations in the general fund.
- Region 17 maintains financial records and systems that have resulted in the absence of recommendations involved with management letters and compliance with all necessary federal requirements.
- Region 17 maintains an efficient and well-documented accounts receivable system.
- Region 17 establishes and manages a successful purchasing cooperative activity for member school districts.
- Region 17 provides a comprehensive program to support the food services programs for schools throughout the west Texas area.
- Region 17 maintains low insurance premiums based on minimal claims experience.
- RESC 17 has developed a client-driven online registration system with automated responses and notifications.
- RESC 17 has developed on online room reservation system that eliminates the need for hardcopy forms in reserving a workshop room.
- RESC 17 uses electronic communication tools to increase staff responsiveness to client needs and minimize the need for on-site visits.
- RESC 17's *Digital Video on Demand* service provides smaller school districts prompt access to a library of educational videos that they would not be able to access over a WAN.

FINDING

- While Region 17 has a comprehensive strategic planning process, commonly referred to as Performance Criteria for Excellence (based on the Baldrige model), input from clerical and other support staff should be strengthened.
- While reductions in RESC 17 staff have taken place, further reduction and reorganization of staff are warranted.
- RESC 17 needs to improve it public relations internally and externally.
- RESC 17 does not have effective temperature controls during non-business hours.
- Windham School District staff located within Region 17 are not effectively served by the RESC.
- RESC 17 has a variety of data indicating schools/districts with low (or declining) performance; however, there is no systemwide, written plan for assisting these schools.
- RESC 17 is not the fiscal agent for the federally-funded Head Start Program. RESC 17 has the potential to capitalize on additional funding by acting as a fiduciary agent for the Federal Head Start Program should any opportunities arise.
- RESC 17 has no electronic application form.
- RESC 17 uses two standard forms to conduct staff evaluations – one for professional staff and another for support staff. Each form is general and does not track specific job responsibilities.

- The Employee Exit Survey used by RESC 17 is not comprehensive. Additional information could be collected to make the form more effective as a tool to make internal human resources improvements in Region 17.
- The Region 17 budget document fails to effectively communicate how the budget will fulfill the objectives identified in the Region 17 Comprehensive Plan. Further, in many areas, the budget document is not consistent with the recommended practices of the National Advisory Council on State and Local Budgeting (NACSLB).
- The inclusion of Internal Service Funds in the 2003–04 Official Budget Summary provides inaccurate information on the estimated revenues and expenditures for Region 17.
- The Annual Financial Report for Region 17 does not contain all the information necessary to qualify the report to earn the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting.
- Region 17 has no formal board policy nor internal procedures for the process of making interim adjustments for fee for services.
- Region 17 has no policy nor criteria on its level of unreserved fund balance.
- Region 17 lacks a Capital Improvement Construction and Financing Plan. Further, the Region 17 Board of Directors has not addressed the appropriate source of revenue to pay for these services.
- Region 17 has been using the same audit firm for over 20 years without seeking proposals.
- The purchasing policy in Region 17 does not provide clear direction regarding the process.
- Region 17 does not operate a cooperative purchasing activity for the purchase or lease of copiers.
- Region 17 does not have a cooperative purchasing program for vending machine services in member districts.
- The U.S. Communities Government Purchasing Alliance (U.S. Communities) has many cooperative services available to regional education centers and school districts throughout the country. Region 17 has not explored the possibility of using these services.
- Cash management activities for Region 17 currently consist of investments in Certificates of Deposit and in interest bearing checking accounts. There is currently no formal process to forecast cash needs.
- While the current format of the Region 17 Investment Report contains all required components as prescribed in the Public Funds Investment Act [(Section 2256.023(b)], all pertinent information on investments are not included in this report.
- The automobile provided for the executive director in Region 17 is not cost-efficient.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 17-1: Create forums for allowing all staff the opportunity to provide input into decision making and providing recommendations for improvement.** The implementation of this recommendation should ensure that all RESC staff participate in important planning activity. Furthermore, securing input for support staff should provide information from a perspective often overlooked by the professional and administrative staff. MGT consultants have found that organizations that have taken extra steps to ensure that all staff has an important role in decisionmaking typically have staff that are more satisfied in their jobs. It has been documented that higher satisfaction

results in better employee job performance.

- **Recommendation 17-2: Restructure the organization by combining like positions, eliminating positions, and ensuring a more appropriate reporting structure.** The implementation of this recommendation should streamline the organization and increase its efficiency and effectiveness. New job descriptions must be created for the combined positions.

- **Recommendation 17-3: Improve Region 17's public relations efforts.** The news briefs can be effective in notifying the educational and general public regarding upcoming events and newsworthy accomplishments of the center. It is an inexpensive forum for getting positive and useful region news out to the public as well as keeping internal staff informed.

- **Recommendation 17-4: Use temperature setbacks during evening and weekend hours.** Rather than its typical 72 to 74 degree Fahrenheit setting, the Service Center should program its evening and weekend thermostat to 82 degrees during the cooling season, and 62 degrees during the warming season. Additionally, the Service Center should begin these setbacks within two hours of the conclusion of a typical workday and throughout the weekend and on holidays. Industry standards estimate that such setbacks can assist a facility in reducing its energy costs by approximately $0.04 per square foot. The fiscal impact shown below uses this estimate, along with the Service Center's area – 70,912 square feet. However, the savings potential may be much higher. The Johnson Controls March 2002 performance review indicated that, over an eight month period, the Service Center's higher than average HVAC runtime hours resulted in a $3,563 reduction in savings. Applied over a 12-month period, these cost reductions could amount to as much as $5,345.

- **Recommendation 17-5: Create a plan to serve Region 17 students in the Windham School District.** The implementation of this recommendation should ensure that all districts, including Windham are provided quality services and training.

- **Recommendation 17-6: Assemble a systemwide team, including representatives from member districts, to develop and systematically implement a written plan to offer assistance to the lower performing schools in Region 17.** The implementation of this recommendation should ensure a systematic process for assisting lower performing schools in place and should reduce any duplication efforts among RESC 17 staff.

- **Recommendation 17-7: Investigate the federal Head Start Program in Region 17 and determine whether RESC 17 can apply for and obtain fiduciary responsibility for the program to enhance revenue.** The Head Start Program is a federally-funded program. In other regional education service centers, Head Start has provided much needed revenue to sustain the service center. This new service line could provide additional funding to RESC 17 and provide valuable services to Region 17 communities.

- **Recommendation 17-8: Revise the staff orientation process so that a new employee's immediate supervisor reviews the job description with the new hiree and obtains signatures indicating**

agreement with assigned responsibilities. This revised process should ensure that new hires and their supervisors can promptly and directly address questions about job descriptions as part of the hiring process.

- **Recommendation 17-9: Create an electronic version of the RESC 17 application form and make it available online.** RESC 17 should create an electronic version of its application form and make it available on the RESC 17 Web site. This will minimize the workload of the Human Resources specialists and facilitate the information submittal process for applicants. It will also have a moderate fiscal impact by reducing postage expenditures.

- **Recommendation 17-10: Revise the evaluation instruments to assess staff's performance on a standard set of evaluation criteria as well as those that relate to their job descriptions.** Although it may seem more efficient for RESC 17 to postpone revision of its staff evaluation forms until the system of service centers decides how to structure such forms, it is in the best interest of employees (and therefore the performance of the service center) to create an immediate mechanism for appropriate performance feedback. RESC 17 should revise their evaluation forms to rate staff performance on a standard set of criteria, as well as those that are specific to a particular component or position. These criteria should not be grouped into large categories for a single assessment. Rather, staff should be evaluated on individual measures so that they can identify specific skills and attributes they need to improve.

- **Recommendation 17-11: Improve the employee exit survey to gather information relevant to the improvement of the organization's human resources, staff support, and professional development practices**. By revising its exit survey, RESC 17 can ensure that it has adequate data to improve the organization and prevent costly employee turnover. To minimize the costs of administering the survey, RESC 17 should consider making this survey available online.

- **Recommendation 17-12: Develop a budget document that will be consistent with the recommended practices of the NACSLB. The GFOA Web site contains a section entitled, Best Practices in Public Budgeting.** This Web site, which is http://www.gfoa.org/services/nacslb, contains extensive information on the best practices in governmental budgeting and provides access to numerous examples of how these best practices have been used by other governmental entities. Most of the examples are for cities or counties; thus, some may not be relevant to Region 17. However, the key is to understand the concept of how public budgeting should be presented and than to adapt it to the needs of Region 17. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) also provides extensive information on budgeting practices to include descriptions of different types of budgets This information can be located by accessing *http://www.tea.state.tx.us/school.finance/audit/resguide10/budget/* on the Internet.

- **Recommendation 17-13: Identify the total revenues and expenditures for the Region 17 budget that accurately identify the actual totals anticipated to be received and expended by establishing a separate budgetary section for the internal**

service funds. The implementation of this recommendation will have no impact on any of the financial systems or information contained therein; it is simply a matter of changing the summary pages in the budget document and providing a description of the funds and how they are used.

- **Recommendation 17-14: Prepare the Annual Financial Report for the year ending August 31, 2005 in a manner consistent with the guidelines that would qualify the report to earn the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting.** Information regarding the preparation of a CAFR, to include copies of the checklist used to review the financial reports can be obtained from GFOA by emailing a request to CAFRProgram@gfoa.org. The Region 4 Regional Education Center as well as has the New Deal Independent School District, a district in Region 17 have both received a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting from GFOA and copies of these reports will help provide a basis for the format to be used. The achievement of the certificate is less important than the preparation of a Comprehensive Annual Financial Report that will more effectively communicate the financial position of Region 17 and relate the financial results with the original budget document.

- **Recommendation 17-15: Establish a board policy and related internal procedures that will create an approved process for establishing, increasing, reducing, or making interim adjustments to fees for services.** A review of the fee development activities over the past five years should be undertaken to identify the validity of the current methods for establishing fees and understanding the long-term financial impact of holding fees at a stable level over time. Based on the results of this review, a draft policy and associated internal procedures should be developed and reviewed with the representatives of the client school districts and after an in-depth evaluation, the Board of Directors should be presented with the proposed policy and procedures for approval.

- **Recommendation 17-16: Develop a board of directors policy addressing the level of unreserved fund balance to be maintained by Region 17 and include criteria for the determination for designations of the fund balance.** The establishment of a policy on the management of fund balance will provide long-term guidance for future financial decisions. This policy should be developed in conjunction with the creation of a policy on fees per Recommendation 17-5, the Comprehensive Plan, and other formal long-term plans for capital improvements or other future capital needs such as those for technology.

- **Recommendation 17-17: Prepare a Capital Improvement Construction and Financing Plan to address the issue of a possible addition to the Region 17 facility for use by the Adult Education Program.** The development of this plan should coincide with the creation of the Board of Directors' policy referenced in Recommendation 17-5. A key component of this plan would involve the ability of the Adult Education Program to generate adequate resources to provide for the annual debt service. Because this is a grant funded program, there are limitations on the amount of direct costs that can be charged for the use of facilities. The available resources may or may not be adequate for this purpose. If

this is the case, it may be possible to construct an addition that could be used for multiple purposes, easing the burden on the Adult Education Program.

- **Recommendation 17-18: Develop a Request for Proposals (RFP) process for audit services upon completion of the audit of the August 2004 financial records**.

  A Request for Proposals (RFP) for Audit Services should include the following:

  - identify the scope of the audit;
  - require that the financial statements will conform to the independence standard promulgated in the General Accounting Office's *Government Auditing standards*;
  - include a reference to the desire to have an auditing firm that is familiar with the preparation of Comprehensive Financial Reports (CAFRs) for governmental entities;
  - seek a multi-year agreement of at least five years;
  - include the requirement for at least three references from other governmental clients of the firm;
  - price the audit services so that cost is not the primary consideration in the selection of the audit firm.

  The process should be structured so that a key factor in the selection process will be to select the firm deemed to be capable of providing the highest quality audit services.

  A proposal should be sought from the existing audit firm; the process should be completed by January 2005 to provide adequate time for the firm selected to become familiar with the activities of Region 17.

- **Recommendation 17-19: Revise Policy CH (local) to include direction regarding authorization levels and the types and number of bids required for products or services based upon the dollar level of the purchase.** Policies of this nature are used by governmental entities throughout the country as these types of procedures are not unique to RESCs. Sample polices can be obtained from other RESCs in Texas, school districts, cities, and counties. Most of these entities have Web sites and a variety of samples can be obtained. The necessary information should include levels of authorization by dollar level and levels of bidding requirements based on the dollar amount involved.

- **Recommendation 17-20: Explore the possibility of establishing a cooperative purchasing activity for the purchase or lease of copiers for Region 17.** To determine the feasibility of a copier purchasing cooperative, it will be necessary to obtain an inventory of the copiers in use throughout the region. Specific information required would include the make and model, the age of the equipment, the vendor providing copier services, and current contractual arrangements. With accurate inventory information, it will be possible to determine the potential options for developing a copier contract for those districts that are in a position to acquire new copiers and establish a schedule for other districts that will be in a position to obtain copiers at a later date.

- **Recommendation 17-21: Contact the school districts in Region 17 to determine if there is interest in pursuing a cooperative purchasing program for the selection of vendors to provide vending machine services.** This process can be explored

by sending a letter to each school district in the Region to determine the level of interest in the program. If there is interest, an inventory should be undertaken to identify the number and types of machines in the schools, the contractual arrangements for each machine to include compensation to the schools and the contractual periods. It will also be important to contact the vending machine vendors to determine the different market regions for each vendor.

- **Recommendation 17-22: Contact U.S. Communities to explore the options that may be available to coordinate a purchasing cooperative with this organization for the school districts in Region 17.** Information regarding the U.S. Communities Program is available on the Internet at *www.uscommunities.org.*

- **Recommendation 17-23: Develop a formal cash forecasting capability and a written strategy for the investment of surplus cash to position Region 17 to maximize investment earnings when interest rates increase.** To project future cash needs on a monthly basis, it will be necessary to undertake an analysis of routine cash activities for the previous two years. For those months where there are significant deviations related to inflows and outflows from the previous year, the cause of the deviations should be evaluated to determine if these types of circumstances will occur in future periods. Once this has been completed, a multi-year cash forecast should be developed and it should be reviewed and adjusted on a quarterly basis.

- **Recommendation 17-24: Revise the format of the Investment Report to include all of the pertinent information relating to the investment and provide earnings to date information by fund.** The information required to revise the current Investment Report is readily available and it will only be a matter of revising the report format.

- **Recommendation 17-25: Convert the compensation package for the executive director to the use of an auto allowance when the current vehicle is deemed to have reached the end of its economic life.** All operating costs associated with the use of the vehicle assigned to the Executive Director, to include insurance, fuel and maintenance should be evaluated to determine when it will become more cost-effective to dispose of the vehicle and establish an auto allowance for the Executive Director.

- **Recommendation 17-26: Offer only one student software package and eliminate one Information Management System consultant**. Given the comparable products, RESC 17 should consider marketing and offering support for only one student software product. Because the RSCCC Student software interfaces with the RSCCC Business software used by 41 of the region's districts, and is developed within the Regional Service Center system, RESC 17 may want to focus its efforts on marketing and supporting this product. RESC 17 should also consider eliminating one of the consultant positions that provides software and PEIMS support. Assuming all districts currently using Win School changed their systems over to RSCCC Student 2000, there would remain a total of 46 clients that would need continued software support. By eliminating one consultant position, the Service Center can increase the number of clients served per consultant to 15, as well as reduce its personnel costs.

DETAILED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM

Region 17 has a strong accountability system in place. The executive director has improved the accountability measures in his eight years of leadership at the center. A review of the Balanced Score Card data (from September 1, 2003 through May 31, 2004) shows that:

- 13,319 individuals have been trained;
- 34 percent of the trainings used instructional technology;
- 59,710.3 contact hours of training were delivered by staff;
- 95 percent of the participants in the trainings either strongly agreed or agreed that the training knowledge and skills will be applied in current assignments;
- 11,998 students were directly served;
- 5,541 parents were served;
- 21,303 technical assistance contacts were made by RESC 17 staff; and
- there were 0 percent PID errors reported by districts.

These data have improved since the current executive director has made substantive changes in the accountability of RESC 17 staff. Methods of accountability strongly adhered to include time and effort reports, survey feedback from clients, TAKS scores, departmental improvement/action plans and goals, personal professional development plans for each employee, and high visibility of the executive director and leadership team.

More than one staff member commented, "If the feedback is not excellent from our clients, Dr. Wargo lets us know about it and expects improvement."

MGT staff attended a staff meeting while on-site and the agenda included an overview of where Region 17 stands on the accomplishments of its strategic plan, a review of accountability and performance measures, and a review of expectations for staff evaluations. Clearly, the staff is kept well informed on how each and every member is held accountable for achieving individual and group goals.

The leadership is also actively searching for ways to streamline the organization. Eighteen (18) positions were eliminated and/or staff resigned and the positions were not filled in 2002–03. Interviews indicate that several of the 18 staff who resigned did so due to the increased accountability measures that the executive director has implemented. Many interviewees made statements such as "the old way of work drastically changed with the new administration and that the services delivered to clients are now based on data—not just relationships."

MGT surveys support the high quality of leadership and services provided by RESC 17. One-hundred percent of the superintendents and employees responding to the survey either agree or strongly agree that the RESC 17 is responsive to requests for services (the statewide average was 94 percent). Also, 90 percent of the RESC employees either agree or strongly agree that the RESC officials enforce high work standards.

When asked to describe the leadership style of the executive director, phrases included the following:

- forward-thinking;
- visionary;
- highly respected;
- expects us to be accountable;
- not a micromanager;
- believes in us and expects great things from us; and
- he compliments and encourages us when we are successful.

Accomplishment: RESC 17 leadership enforces strong accountability measures resulting in increased staff productivity.

LEGAL SERVICES

RESC has efficient and effective legal services. The legal services are provided to RESC 17 by an attorney who is housed at the

RESC. The attorney is a former TASB council member and was hired two years ago by RESC 17. The attorney pays $1,000 a month to rent space at the RESC and has a flat retainer fee for the services he provides for the service center. The retainer includes at least 20 hours per week of his time, which equates to an hourly rate of about $50/hour. This is a significantly reduced rate for his normal services. The attorney provides assistance to districts for "level 1" types of services which include phone calls related to legal issues. If, however, a district needs "level 2" services (i.e., terminations, grievances, etc.), each district must pay the attorney directly for those services.

The types of legal questions raised by member districts generally correlate to the time of year the questions are asked. During the summer when districts are formulating their budgets and setting their tax rates, questions surrounding those two issues dominate the phone calls received. As the school year starts in late August, questions relating to student admission, transfer and residency are frequently asked. During the school year, questions relating to student discipline, employee misconduct, employee/parent/ student grievances, and school district contracting and business operations are prevalent. After the new year begins, school district attention is usually turned toward employee contract issues, such as contract employee evaluations, contract renewals/nonrenewals, and terminations, although it is reported that student discipline and employee/parent/student grievances are also reoccurring issues during this time of year. As the school year ends, questions relating to school start date waivers, student discipline, graduation ceremonies, and valedictorian/salutatorian honors predominate the questions posed to legal counsel.

The attorney attends all RESC 17 leadership team meetings and board meetings, and regularly communicates with the leadership team. Since the attorney has been working for and with RESC 17 over the past two and a-half years, there has been a significant improvement in legal services provided.

Accomplishment: RESC 17's legal services are highly effective, economical, and provide sound legal counsel to RESC 17 and its member districts.

COLLABORATION WITH OTHER RESCs

RESC 17 collaborates extensively with other regional service centers in the state. Each staff member interviewed could provide numerous collaborative efforts with other RESCs to promote best practices. Among the many examples include:

- Region 17 works collaboratively with Regions 10 and 13 on the development of AEIS-IT , WebCCat, and TEKSTAR. Also, curriculum and instruction staff work closely with Region 16 with best practices as it relates to rural district needs.
- Region 17 collaborates with Regions 6, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 in hosting the annual Academy of Teachers of Young Children. Over 1,000 various regional staff attended the event held in the 2003–04 school year.
- Region 17's Special Education Department collaborates with Regions 7, 9, 11, 14, 15, 16, 17, and 18 in the Assistive Technology Conference held each summer.

Additionally, the staff members use a toll free number to communicate regularly with other RESC staff statewide.

As a result of this collaboration, the services provided to RESC member districts have been more effective.

Accomplishment: Region 17 staff effectively communicate, share best practices, and pool resources with other regional service centers.

LEADERSHIP SKILL TRAINING

Region 17 collaborates with Texas Tech University (TTU) in offering a program that

prepares school superintendents with the leadership skills needed to embrace their role in the 21st century. The program was fostered by a collaborative team-teaching relationship created between the Educational Leadership Program at TTU and selected administrative personnel at Region 17. TTU faculty do not possess prior superintendent experience while select service center staff do possess this experience. Participants commented that the teaming of the academic and practitioner instructors for each class has become the cornerstone of success for the program. Prior to the implementation of this program, there was little correlation between certification status and actual preparedness for the stressful demands of becoming and succeeding as a school district superintendent.

The benefits this program brings to both Region 17 and the districts are numerous. It is critical that leaders in districts in transition view the service center as a resource and it is important the service center maintain relationships with districts.

The validation of the program is evidenced by the receipt of a $300,000 three-year grant from the Richardson Foundation. It is designed to support a project entitled, "Establishing a Preparation Model for the 21st Century Texas School Superintendent." Also, data show that of the total 75 of the program's participants, 50 have been placed in central offices or superintendent positions.

This program was also highlighted in *Perspectives, A Journal of Research and Opinion about Educational Service Agencies* published by the Association of Educational Service Agencies so other service centers nationwide can learn about this best practice.

Accomplishment: Region 17 has teamed with Texas Tech University to provide excellent training for educational leaders.

ENERGY SAVINGS

Region 17 has implemented cost-effective energy saving mechanisms.

Responsive energy management is essential to efficient energy use as well as good business practices. Facility managers may use energy audits, performance contracts, automated controls, building upgrades, and high efficiency lighting to strengthen their bottom line. RESC 17 implemented several of these tools when they contracted with Johnson Controls in 2000 to improve their heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning (HVAC) system, install equipment and software to enable automated scheduling and control the HVAC equipment, and replace lighting fixtures with more efficient units. Between May 2000 and March 2002, the estimated cost savings from these controls were $43,756. Over the course of ten years, the improvements are expected to save the service center more than $450,000.

Accomplishment: RESC 17 contracted for an energy audit and new systems controls that are expected to save the service center more than $450,000 over a ten-year period.

CONTRACTING EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Region 17's system for contracting educational programs in two levels is sound, timely, and based on member districts' needs. Level I is the least expensive contracted services because the districts come to the service center for training where on Level II, the service center staff go to the district to deliver services. The price of the services is based upon the size of the district. Districts can choose which services they want based on their needs assessments. There is no packaging of services; they can select individual services tailored to their district's needs. The only choice districts need to make is whether they want to come to the center for the services or want the services brought to their district.

Requirements of the *No Child Left Behind Act* gave the curriculum contracted services the impetus to restructure into the two-level system of services. The focus for the 2004–05 school year is to increase the current focus on instructional delivery and to assist teachers in

utilizing research-based instructional strategies.

Exhibit 17-3 shows the listing of districts and their contracted services for the 2004–05 school year. As shown, 10 districts have chosen the Level I for contracted curriculum services and 44 districts have chosen Level II for contracted curriculum services as of mid-July 2004.

MGT survey results show that 98 percent of the superintendents surveyed either agree or strongly agree that their district frequently utilizes services provided by the RESC, and 95 percent also agree or strongly agree that the RESC 17 provides quality services. Also, 84 percent of the superintendents agree or strongly agree that the current method of funding the RESCs to provide services to districts and allowing each RESC to charge the district for other services in highly effective in meeting the needs of the districts. When compared to statewide averages, only 67 percent of the superintendents statewide either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.

The 2003–04 performance gains data indicate that this system of delivering curriculum services is working. In 22 out of 26 areas, Region 17 has surpassed the state gains.

Also, RESC has no satellite offices and provides services to its districts efficiently and effectively without the need for additional satellite offices.

Accomplishment: RESC 17 effectively contracts its educational programs with member districts in a cost-effective and efficient delivery system.

STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Region 17 conducts excellent Student Assistance Program (SAP) Team training, which assists member districts in identifying at-risk students and providing appropriate intervention assistance to assist in providing a pre-referral process for special education. The two-day training prepares teams of Grades 3 through 5 from K-12 campuses to immediately implement the SAP. The SAP is an approach that utilizes existing services and efforts, while upgrading the school's ability to effectively respond to student needs and promote resiliency.

SAP includes:

- an identification and Intervention process established on campus to assist any student who is experiencing academic, learning, behavioral, social, physical , or emotional concerns;
- facilitation by a multi-disciplinary Core Team;
- reliance on school information such as grades, attendance, and behavior not on areas outside the school's venues; and
- connecting students with most appropriate resources.

SAP accomplishments include:

- pre-referral for special education;
- a framework for connecting existing services so that the "left hand and the right hand" work together;
- a vehicle for organizing 504 accommodation efforts;
- assistance to teachers with classroom intervention strategies; and
- the creation of collaboration with existing community resources such as family services.

Accomplishment: Region 17's Student Assistance Program is an exemplary model and should be duplicated in other RESCs in an effort to identify at-risk students and provide appropriate interventions prior to special education referral.

Exhibit 17-3
Listing of Districts and Their Contracted Services
for the 2004–05 School Year

School District	Adult Educ.	Title I	Title III	G/T Level I	G/T Level II	Curr. Contr Serv	Curr. Contr Serv	Read-ing Level I	Reading Level II	Bilin-gual	Drug Free Schools	Coop Purch Program	Educator Place Ser	Ad Tech Services	RSCCC Business	RSCCC Student	Win School	Cisco	ITV Network	Web Hosting
Abernathy	x	x	x				x	x		X	x	x		x	x		x		x	
Amherst	x	x	x		x		x		x	X	x	x		x	x	x			x	x
Anton	x	x	x	x			x	x		X	x	x		x	x	x			x	
Borden County	x	x	x		x					X	x	x	x	x	x	x			x	x
Brownfield	x	x	x		x		x		x	X		x	x	x					x	
Cotton Center	x	x	x		x		x		x		x			x	x		x		x	x
Crosbyton	x		x	x		x				X		x	x	x	x	x			x	
Dawson	x	x	x	x			x			X		x		x	x	x			x	
Denver City	x	x		x			x	x				x	x	x					x	
Floydada	x		x			x			x	x			x	x	x		x		x	
Frenship	x				x		x		x	x			x	x					x	
Guthrie	x	x	x	x			x	x		x	x			x	x	x			x	x
Hale Center	x	x	x		x		x	x		x	x	x	x	x					x	x
Idalou	x	x	x	x		x				x		x		x	x		x		x	
Jayton-Girard	x		x		x		x			x	x			x	x		x		x	
Klondike	x	x	x		x		x	x		x	x	x		x	x	x			x	x
Lamesa	x			x			x	x		x			x	x	x				x	
Levelland	x	x	x		x		x		x	x			x				x	x	x	x
Littlefield	x	x	x	x			x	x		x			x	x				x	x	x
Lockney	x	x	x		x		x		x					x	x	x				
Loop	x	x	x		x	x		x		x				x					x	
Lorenzo	x		x	x			x			x		x		x	x	x			x	
Lubbock																		x		
Lubbock-Cooper	x	x	x		x		x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x		x			
Meadow	x	x	x		x		x			x		x	x	x	x		x		x	x
Morton	x	x	x	x			x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x
Motley County	x	x	x		x		x			x	x			x	x	x			x	
Muleshoe	x					x		x				x	x		x	x			x	
New Deal	x		x		x		x	x		x	x		x	x					x	
New Home	x		x	x		x		x		x				x	x		x		x	
O'Donnell																			x	
Olton	x			x			x			x			x	x	x		x		x	x
Paducah	x	x	x		x		x		x	x	x			x	x	x			x	

Exhibit 17-3 (continued)
Listing of Districts and Their Contracted Services
for the 2004–05 School Year

School District	Adult Educ.	Title I	Title III	G/T Level I	G/T Level II	Curr. Contr Serv	Curr. Contr Serv	Read-ing Level I	Reading Level II	Bilin-gual	Drug Free Schools	Coop Purch Program	Educator Place Ser	Ad Tech Services	RSCCC Business	RSCCC Student	Win School	Cisco	ITV Network	Web Hosting
Patton Springs	x	x	x	x			x			x			x	x	x	x			x	
Petersburg	x	x	x	x			x	x		x				x	x		x		x	x
Plains	x	x	x		x		x		x	x	x	x	x	x				x	x	x
Plainview	x		x				x		x		x		x	x					x	
Post	x	x	x		x		x		x	x	x			x			x		x	x
Ralls	x	x	x		x		x		x	x		x	x	x			x		x	x
Roosevelt	x	x	x		x		x			x			x	x	x		x		x	
Ropes	x	x	x	x			x			x				x			x		x	
Sands	x	x	x	x			x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			x	
Seagraves	x	x	x		x		x		x	x	x	x	x	x					x	
Seminole	x	x					x					x	x	x					x	
Shallowater	x	x	x	x			x	x		x			x	x	x	x		x	x	x
Slaton	x		x		x		x		X	x	x	x		x	x	x			x	
Smyer	x	x	x	x		x		x		x	x		x	x	x	x			x	x
Southland	x	x	x	x		x				x	x	x		x	x		x		x	
Spade	x	x	x		x		x		X	x				x	x		x		x	x
Springlake-Earth	x		x	x		x			X	x					x	x			x	
Spur	x				x		x		X				x	x	x	x			x	
Sudan	x		x		x	x		x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	
Sundown	x	x	x							x	x			x					x	
Tahoka	x	x	x		x		x		X	x	x		x	x	x		x		x	x
Wellman-Union	x	x	x		x		x		X	x		x		x	x		x		x	x
Whiteface	x	x	x		x		x			x	x	x	x	x		x			x	
Whitharral	x	x	x		x		x		X	x	x	x		x	x		x		x	
Wilson	x	x	x		x		x		X	x			x	x	x	x			x	
Total District	**56**	**41**	**49**	**20**	**30**	**10**	**44**	**17**	**22**	**49**	**27**	**27**	**31**	**53**	**39**	**23**	**21**	**6**	**55**	**20**

Source: Region 17 Executive Director's Office, 2004.

BUDGET WORKSHEETS

The financial information used to develop the 2003–04 official budget provides an easy to follow audit trail regarding where the resources are allocated.

Although the budget document needs to be revised, the process used to arrive at the ultimate budget amounts is well done. Region 17 uses standard forms to identify the line item expenditures for each program. These forms include:

- **Summary Worksheets**
  - estimated Allocation of Payroll by Employee; and
  - estimates of the component charges for the various Internal Service Funds (Networking, Communications, Delivery, and Office and Storage Rental);
- **Program Worksheets**
  - budget recap-local revenues - this worksheet identifies the estimated revenues to be obtained to support the program;
  - budget recap - this form identifies the amount to be budgeted for each line item expenditure category; and
  - fixed costs budget worksheet – this worksheet identifies the portion of the salary and benefits to be allocated for each employee anticipated to be allocated to the program as well as internal service fund charges; and
  - budget worksheet by organization.

These worksheets contain information pertaining to the prior year actual amount, the current year original budget, and a column to identify the amounts to be budgeted for the following year.

Accomplishment: Region 17 maintains a consistent set of budget worksheets that provide an easy audit trail to document the allocation of the resources developed for the annual budget.

PAYROLL TIME SHEETS

Region 17 uses an excellent process for recording time and effort that reconciles to the payroll time sheets resulting in an accurate allocation of the payroll costs to the various programs and services.

The total payroll, to include the cost of all employee benefits, is recorded in the Contracted Services Internal Service Fund. These resources are then distributed to the appropriate programs based on the actual time worked on the programs by the employees recorded per the Time and Effort/Payroll Timesheets.

Accomplishment: Region 17 maintains an effective system for collecting time and effort information and integrating this system with the payroll/total compensation process.

FUND BALANCE

Region 17 uses an internal service fund to allocate charges for space use and for a delivery system that provides deliveries between the Region 17 headquarters and the client school districts every two weeks. The current policy is to transfer any net income from this fund to the general fund at year end. The amounts of these transfers for the past three years are as follows:

Year	Amount
2001	$16,415
2002	$68,350
2003	$66,298

The annual expenses for this fund are approximately $1 million and have not changed appreciably over the past three years. The practice of transferring the balances of this fund to the general fund results in a clear picture of the true fund balance associated with operations is identified in the general fund.

Accomplishment: Region 17 maintains a process that places the total fund balance from operations in the General Fund.

FINANCIAL RECORDS

Region 17 maintains excellent financial records and systems that have resulted in the absence of recommendations involved with management letters and compliance with all necessary federal requirements.

During the past five years (1997-1998 through 2002–03), there has been no management letter from the auditors and no Findings or Questioned Costs associated with the Report on Compliance and Internal Control Over Financial Reporting Based on an Audit of Financial Statements Performed in Accordance with Government Auditing Standards or The Report on Compliance with Requirements Applicable to Each Major Program and Internal Control over Compliance in Accordance with OMB Circular A-133.

A management letter is a formal, written document that conveys the auditor's findings and observations regarding particular aspects of the clients operations. These documents typically encompass issues such as the internal control environment, purchasing practices, accounting policies and procedures, and financial reporting practices. The lack of a management letter implies that there are no major internal control issues in Region 17.

The reports on compliance often referred to as the "single audit," involve compliance with the requirements of the various Federal programs managed by Region 17. For each year, the compliance reports have indicated that:

- an unqualified Report has been issued on the financial statements;
- there were no reportable conditions;
- there has been no non-compliance is material to the financial statements;
- the auditor's report on compliance for major programs has been unqualified;
- Region 17 is a low risk auditee;
- there were no findings required to be reported; and
- there were no findings of questions of costs related to federal awards.

Accomplishment: Region 17 maintains financial records and systems that have resulted in the absence of recommendations involved with management letters and compliance with all necessary federal requirements.

ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE

Region 17 has an excellent accounts receivable process. After each workshop, a Workshop Billing Report is completed by the workshop leader identifying the location, date and time of the workshop along with a listing by client organization of the individuals attending, identification of the client purchase order number if provided, and the fee to be billed. The report is signed by the workshop coordinator and submitted to the Business Office for billing. Invoices are prepared and mailed to the organizations. The outstanding accounts receivable are reviewed with the Board of Directors at each meeting.

The financial software, RSCCC, used by Region 17 does not have an accounts receivable module. The accounts receivable are processed on a PC system and then entered into the main financial system at the end of each month. Region 17 and other regions using similar financial software have been in contact with the software provider to develop an accounts receivable capability.

Accomplishment: Region 17 maintains an efficient and well-documented accounts receivable system.

PURCHASING COOPERATIVE

Region 17 operates an effective purchasing cooperative with member districts.

Region 17 coordinates a purchasing cooperative for the purchase of office products, teaching supplies, computer products and paper products for the school districts in the region. This is a one-time purchase activity that provides the districts in

Region 17 the opportunity to gain lower prices for these products as well as participate in a program that will process the orders and have delivery of the products prior to the beginning of the school year. A total of 43 districts within Region 17 and five districts outside Region 16 participate in this program.

Accomplishment: Region 17 establishes and manages a successful purchasing cooperative activity for the school districts in Region 17.

FOOD SERVICE COOPERATIVE

Region 17 provides the management for the West Texas Food Service Cooperative, a multi-regional service that serves 132 school districts, charter schools, and other governmental entities located in Regions 16, 17, 18, and 19, an effective food service program. The cooperative manages activities associated with the purchasing and distribution of food and the contracts associated with the processing of USDA commodities.

Each year prior to the bid process, the Food Services directors from the school districts participating in the cooperative have the opportunity to evaluate new products and help to determine the products that will be included in the bid process for the upcoming school year.

Beyond the purchase and processing of commodities, the cooperative provides an extensive program of training and technical assistance to the members of the cooperative.

Accomplishment: Region 17 provides a comprehensive program to support the food services programs for schools throughout the west Texas area.

LOW INSURANCE PREMIUM

The Cost of Insurance for Region 17 has been modest over the past three years with minimal claims, resulting in slight reductions in the premiums for liability, vehicle, and crime coverage.

The cost for the various coverages are included in **Exhibit 17-4**. The increase in the property and workers' compensation premiums are a function of the insurance market. The only claims filed by Region 17 in the past three years have been five workers' compensation claims for a total cost of $1,366. Because of the limited claims experience, Region 17 is required to pay very modest premiums for insurance coverage. Many other RESCs do not exemplify this best practice.

Accomplishment: Region 17 maintains low insurance premiums based on minimal claims.

ONLINE WORKSHOP REGISTRATION

RESC 17 maintains an online registration system that allows workshop registrants to create individual accounts, register for workshops, and cancel reservations as needed. With each reservation or cancellation, the system automatically updates workshop rosters and sends a confirmation to the registrant *and* their supervisor. These features minimize the amount of work that staff registrars must do and simplify the training approval and notification process for education professionals and school districts.

Accomplishment: RESC 17 has developed a client-driven online registration system with automated responses and notifications.

ONLINE ROOM REGISTRATION

RESC 17 has developed an online registration system that meets the needs of member districts in scheduling center rooms.

RESC 17 uses a Lotus database with a Web interface to create an online room reservation system. Service Center staff use this system to reserve rooms for workshops, schedule staff meetings, request technical support prior to a workshop, and request conference room configurations. This system has eliminated the need to complete workshop request and room reservation forms and ensures that all staff have prompt access to the information needed to schedule and set-up a workshop.

Exhibit 17-4
Insurance Premiums
2001-2002 Through 2003-2004

Coverage	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	(Decrease)	(Decrease)
Property	$25,718	$34,701	$35,536	$9,818	38.18%
Liability	14,695	13,397	13,397	(1,298)	-8.83%
Vehicle	3,990	3,585	2,750	(1,240)	-31.08%
Crime	950	722	722	(228)	-24.00%
Workers' Compensation	12,404	14,832	15,850	3,446	27.78%
Total	**$57,757**	**$67,237**	**$68,255**	**$10,498**	**18.18%**

Source: Region 17 Insurance Invoices for the years 2001-2002 through 2003-2004.

Accomplishment: RESC 17 has developed on online room reservation system that eliminates the need for hardcopy forms in reserving a workshop room.

ELECTRONIC TELECOMMUNICATION TOOLS

RESC 17 uses electronic telecommunication tools to minimize their need to travel to district sites and to improve their response time to clients' needs.

Staff use Virtual Network Computing (VNC), a password-enabled remote desktop communication tool to provide technical support and training without having to be on-site. Staff indicate this tool has been invaluable in providing prompt guidance on how to accomplish software-related tasks or troubleshoot server and network problems. RESC 17 staff also use Yahoo! Messenger to increase their responsiveness to districts. They use this tool to consult with colleagues while communicating with a district by phone, allowing them to remain in contact with a client *and* colleagues while providing technical assistance.

Accomplishment: RESC 17 uses electronic communication tools to increase staff responsiveness to client needs and minimize the need for on-site visits.

DIGITAL VIDEO DELIVERY

RESC 17 successfully initiated a pilot project of digital video delivery to classrooms. *Digital Video on Demand* places up to 350 educational films on schools' local area networks (LAN), rather than via video streaming over the Internet. This service allows teachers to immediately access educational videos regardless of the available bandwidth on the region's wide area network (WAN). Staff indicate it has been especially useful in smaller districts, whose schools are typically served by a small number of T1 lines.

Digital Video on Demand allows up to 40 LAN users to play the same or different videos at the same time, depending on the network's hardware. All videos are divided into chapters, which allows teachers to instantly play segments of a video. To access the videos, a computer must have loaded into its system a patented video player that uses Windows Media Player as an engine.

Accomplishment: RESC 17's *Digital Video on Demand* service provides smaller school districts prompt access to a library of educational videos that they would not be able to access over a WAN.

DETAILED FINDINGS

STRATEGIC PLANNING

While Region 17 has a comprehensive strategic planning process commonly referred to as Performance Criteria for Excellence (based on the Baldrige model), input from

clerical and other support staff should be strengthened.

Two years ago, the center hired an outside consultant (Cambridge) to assist in developing the Performance Criteria for Excellence. Thirty (30) RESC staff members were pulled together for a three-day planning session; however, according to interviews support staff were not included in the sessions.

The region's strategic plan is based on the state's three basic performance measures, which include:

- student performance is increasing in the RESC Region;
- the RESC assists districts in increasing efficiency, effectiveness, and economy of operations; and
- the RESC advances statewide initiatives in the region.

Exhibit 17-5 shows that student performance is increasing in RESC 17 from 2002–03 to 2003–04.

MGTs survey shows the rating given by staff is 63 percent agree or strongly agree that "administrative decisions are made promptly and decisively and only 67 percent of the staff agree or strongly agree that the RESC administrators are easily accessible and open to input." These results are much lower than statewide averages of 84 and 91 percent, respectively.

Staff indicate a need for a site-based decision-making team at RESC 17. This team needs to be composed of a cross-section of employees (professional and support) to ensure all voices are heard when important center decisions are being discussed. A comment made often in interviews was there was little input from the "bottom up." Morale with some staff is low and having an opportunity to provide input into the center's improvement should be considered.

RESC 17 should create forums for allowing all staff (professional and support) the opportunity to provide input into decision making and providing recommendations for improvement. The implementation of this recommendation should ensure that all RESC staff participate in important planning activity. Furthermore, securing input for support staff should provide information from a perspective often overlooked by the professional and administrative staff. MGT consultants have found that organizations that have taken extra steps to ensure that all staff have an important role in decision making typically have staff that are more satisfied in their jobs. It has been documented that higher satisfaction results in better employee job performance.

STAFFING REDUCTIONS

While reductions in RESC 17 staff have taken place, further reduction and reorganization of staff are warranted. **Exhibit 17-6** shows the organizational structure of the region. As shown, there is one associate executive director, and two directors (one for Curriculum and Technology Services and one for Federal/State Support Services). Additionally, there are nine coordinators (curriculum, technology, communications/media, adult education, special education, child nutrition, professional development and student support, and field services and Title I). The total number of RESC 17 staff is 87 serving a total of 58 districts.

A review of data, the organizational chart, job descriptions, and interviews show that the following organization changes should be made for a more effective and efficient organizational structure:

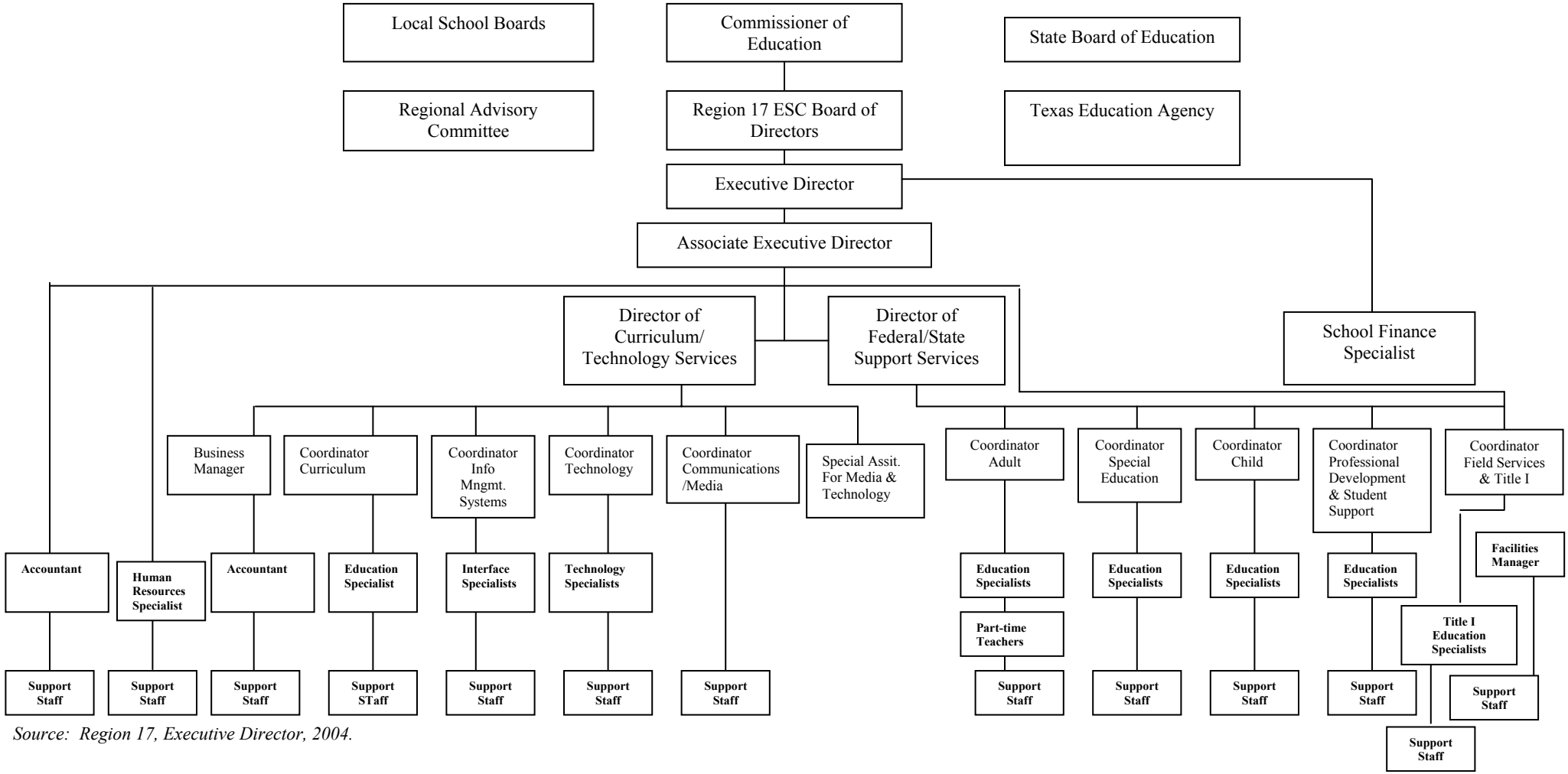
- The special assistant for Media and Technology is retiring on August 31. The key responsibilities are similar to those being performed by the coordinator of Communications/ Media.
- The Title I specialists report to the coordinator of Field Services and Title I. This reporting structure is ineffective.

Exhibit 17-5
Student Performance
2002-03 and 2003-04

			2002–03	2003–04
I	**Student Performance is increasing in the ESC Region.**			
	1	Student performance increasing.	All Students 17 Areas Equal or Above State Average at 2 Standard Error of Measure	All Students 19 Areas Equal or Above State Average at 1 Standard Error of Measure
II	**The ESC assists districts in increasing efficiency, effectiveness, and economy of operations.**			
	2	Survey results demonstrated positive impact	83% of services rated as Excellent/Good	81% of services rated as Excellent/Good
	3	Maintained or increased district participation.	100% of Districts Participate in at least one SSA/Contracted Service	100% of Districts participate in at least one SSA/Contracted Service
III	**The ESC advances statewide initiatives in the region.**			
	4	Districts participated in state-required training.	71 Workshops relating to State Initiatives presented	109 Workshops relating to State Initiatives presented
IV	**Local**			
	5	Strategic action plans competed.	7 of 8 identified Action Plans Successfully Implemented	8 of 9 identified Action Plans Successfully Implemented

Source: RESC 17 Performance Criteria for Excellence Plan, 2004.

Exhibit 17-6
Education Service Center – Region 17
2003–04 Organization



Source: Region 17, Executive Director, 2004.

- The position of coordinator of Field Services and Title I should be closely monitored to ensure this position warrants a full-time staff member.
- The Human Resource specialists report directly to the associate executive director. Many of their responsibilities are recordkeeping and business in nature and may be better suited to reporting to the business manager.
- Some of the responsibilities of the Coordinator of Information Management Systems and Coordinator of Technology overlap and are not consolidated.
- There is no one person overseeing instructional technology; there are three or four staff members who share this responsibility; however, no one person has oversight to ensure that quality instructional technology training is being coordinated and delivered.

RESC 17 should restructure its organization by combining like positions, eliminating positions, and ensuring a more appropriate reporting structure. The implementation of this recommendation should streamline the organization and increase its efficiency and effectiveness. New job descriptions must be created for the combined positions.

The special assistant for Media and Technology position's salary is $29,891, plus benefits of $7,024 for a total annual savings of $36,915. The Coordinator of Information Management System position's salary is 62,000, plus benefits of approximately $8,000 for a total annual savings of $70,000.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

RESC 17 needs to improve it public relations internally and externally. While survey results show the district staff (clients) are overall pleased with services, little is being done in public relations to share the best practices and news of RESC 17. Many RESCs promote center activities by writing press releases or contacting media with the "good news" from the center. Region 17 does not produce any press releases, or any type of internal or external newsletters. When asked why the center does not write press releases on the center activities, the common response was "we want to put the spotlight on the districts, not the center."

Other RESCs such as Region 16 promote excellent public relations by routinely submitting news briefs to the *Amarillo Globe News* and other media forums. Topics for the news briefs include, but are not limited to:

- training on state accountability;
- opening of a Teacher Resource Center;
- technology workshops;
- Region 16 Awards at the Texas School Public Relations Conference;
- advanced placement summer institutes;
- announcements of TEA and Region 16 Public Meetings;
- Safe and Drug Free Schools; and
- conferences on emotional/behavioral disorders and educating the challenging student.

RESC 17 should improve Region 17's public relation efforts. The news briefs can be effective in notifying the educational and general public regarding upcoming events and newsworthy accomplishments of the center. It is an inexpensive forum for getting positive and useful region news out to the public as well as keeping internal staff informed.

TEMPERATURE CONTROLS

RESC 17 does not have effective temperature controls during non-business hours.

With the installation of equipment and software to improve and control the Service Center's HVAC system in 2000, RESC 17 had the ability to begin using temperature setbacks during non-business hours to reduce its energy costs. However, staff indicate that they do not use significant setbacks, as staff sometimes work during evenings and weekends. The

Service Center can implement a more aggressive setback practice without notably compromising the comfort of staff who may work late into the evenings or on weekends. A moderate, ten-degree setback is generally recommended by energy management professionals and, if implemented at the end of each workday and on weekends, can reduce annual heating and cooling energy costs by 10 to 15 percent. Indeed, a performance review of RESC 17's energy cost reductions conducted by Johnson Controls in March 2002 reveals that the Service Center experienced a decline in cost avoidance due to higher than expected HVAC run-time hours. Had the Service Center engaged in temperature setbacks, it would have benefited from additional cost savings.

RESC 17 should use temperature setbacks during evening and weekend hours. Rather than its typical 72 to 74 degree Fahrenheit setting, the Service Center should program its evening and weekend thermostat to 82 degrees during the cooling season, and 62 degrees during the warming season. Additionally, the Service Center should begin these setbacks within two hours of the conclusion of a typical workday and throughout the weekend and on holidays. Industry standards estimate that such setbacks can assist a facility in reducing its energy costs by approximately $0.04 per square foot. The fiscal impact shown below uses this estimate, along with the Service Center's area – 70,912 square feet. However, the savings potential may be much higher. The Johnson Controls March 2002 performance review indicated that, over an eight month period, the Service Center's higher than average HVAC runtime hours resulted in a $3,563 reduction in savings. Applied over a 12-month period, these cost reductions could amount to as much as $5,345.

WINDHAM SCHOOL DISTRICT

Windham School District staff located within Region 17 are not effectively served by the RESC.

RESC 17 provides few services to the Windham School District. A review of data show few Windham staff have participated in trainings and interviews indicate staff have not placed Windham School District on their priority list. In fact, some staff commented they were "afraid to visit the Windham facilities."

RESC 17 should create a plan to serve Region 17 students in the Windham School District. The implementation of this recommendation should ensure that all districts, including Windham are provided quality services and training.

LOW PERFORMING SCHOOLS

RESC 17 has a variety of data indicating schools/districts with low (or declining) performance; however, there is no systemwide, written plan for assisting these schools. When interviewed, staff from the various departments had numerous methods for offering and providing assistance to the schools, but the various plans are not consistent nor coordinated.

Other RESCs in the state such as the School Improvement Team at RESC 6, have a team composed of members of the Leadership and Development Department, and have developed a standardized set of services designed to assist low performing schools. The typical scope and sequence of Region 6's interventions are detailed in **Exhibit 17-7**.

Intervention services provided by RESC 6 staff typically include technical assistance in the following areas:

- analyzing current and prior-year data;
- analyzing, revising, and/or critiquing the campus plan and school needs assessment;
- planning and/or implementing staff development activities based on campus needs; and
- planning for, conducting, and following-up after TSII visit.

Exhibit 17-7
RESC 6 Low Performing Campus Intervention Program Steps

1. The RESC 6 receives TAKS scores from TEA and a staff member desegregates the data to the campus and classroom level. The staff analyzes the data to identify trends, areas of significant strengths and weaknesses, and underperforming campuses.
2. TEA delivers final accountability ratings, identifying schools that have been designated as academically unacceptable.
3. Schools targeted for intervention are divided among the six members of the team. The team chair contacts the campus principal within forty-eight hours of receipt of the ratings from TEA.
4. An appointment is made for the principal and chair to meet at the school within two weeks.
5. The team member visits the campus principal taking a folder which contains campus AEIS data from the prior year, accountability table, and contract. During this visit, the team chair outlines the accountability process and describes the RESC intervention plan. The chair brings a copy of the campus plan back to the RESC.
6. The team chair and campus principal mutually schedule dates for the proposed interventions. A copy of the schedule is sent to the superintendent.
7. The team chair oversees each step in the intervention process, the Texas School Improvement Initiative (TSII) visit, and the follow-up activities.
8. Each low-performing campus is asked to evaluate the service each May. That input is used to refine the service the next year.

Source: RESC 6 Low Performing Campus Interventions Program Description, 2004

Region 17 need to emulate effective low performing school assistance strategies used in other RESCs and in school districts in Texas and nationally.

RESC 17 should assemble a systemwide team, including representatives from member districts, to develop and systematically implement a written plan to offer assistance to the lower performing schools in Region 17.

The implementation of this recommendation should ensure a systematic process for assisting lower performing schools in place and should reduce any duplication efforts among RESC 17 staff.

HEAD START PROGRAM

RESC 17 is not the fiscal agent for the federally-funded Head Start Program. RESC 17 has the potential to capitalize on additional funding by acting as a fiduciary agent for the Federal Head Start Program should any opportunities arise. Other RESCs and school districts around the country often serve as the fiscal agents for these types of programs and other federal or grant-driven projects and/or services.

RESC 17 should investigate the federal Head Start Program in Region 17 and determine whether or not RESC 17 can apply for and obtain fiduciary responsibility for the program to enhance revenue. The Head Start Program is a federally-funded program. In other regional education service centers, Head Start has provided much needed revenue to sustain the service center. This new service line could provide additional funding to RESC 17 and provide valuable services to Region 17 communities.

STAFF ORIENTATION

Several staff in different departments oversee the staff orientation process at RESC 17. **Exhibit 17-8** identifies each staff member involved in the orientation process and the areas that they review with new staff.

As indicated in **Exhibit 17-8**, new hires' immediate supervisors review with them their general duties and responsibilities, yet interviews with staff indicate it is the Human Resource specialist who obtains their signature on their job description indicating agreement with assigned responsibilities. This process creates room for confusion and process delays, as the Human Resources specialist is not in the appropriate position to address questions about job responsibilities.

Exhibit 17-8
Distribution of Review Responsibilities in the New Staff Orientation Process

Title	Responsibilities
Assistant to Executive Director	• Explain vacation and leave benefits
Business Manager	• Explain insurance and non-leave benefits
Facilities Manager	• Provide building keys. • Explain security codes and building procedures.
Human Resources Specialist	• RESC 17 Web site, weekly calendar, maintenance of time and effort, and building map. • Review job description and obtain new hire's signature indicating agreement with assigned responsibilities.
Employee's Immediate Supervisor	• Review job duties and assignments and position's general professional protocol.

Source: Interviews with RESC staff, June 2004.

RESC 17 should revise the staff orientation process so that a new employee's immediate supervisor reviews the job description with the new hiree and obtains signatures indicating agreement with assigned responsibilities. This revised process should ensure that new hires and their supervisors can promptly and directly address questions about job descriptions as part of the hiring process.

ELECTRONIC APPLICATION FORM

RESC 17 has no electronic application form.

To apply for a position with RESC 17, interested applicants are required to contact the Human Resources Specialist to request an application form, which is available only in hardcopy format. The Human Resources specialist mails this form to interested applicants along with a cover letter and complete job description. This process is inefficient, as it requires staff to mail out information that could be placed on the Internet or sent by email. Furthermore, it requires applicants to complete a form by hand or with a typewriter.

RESC 17 should create an electronic version of its application form and make it available online. This will minimize the workload of the Human Resources specialists and facilitate the information submittal process for applicants. It will also have a moderate fiscal impact by reducing postage expenditures.

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources. Moderate savings will result from eliminating the use of postage to send hardcopies of the application forms. RESC 17 sends out 250 application forms annually. MGT assumed $0.37 postage to send this form. This recommendation should begin implementation in 2005-06.

STAFF EVALUATION

RESC 17 uses two standard forms to conduct staff evaluations – one for professional staff and another for support staff. Each form is general and does not track specific job responsibilities.

Support staff are evaluated annually according to the following criteria:

- job-related skills: planning and organization, specialized knowledge and skills, personal and professional image, and communication with clients;

- interpersonal skills: internal communication and external communication/public relations; and
- compliance with local, state, and federal laws, policies, and procedures.

Professional staff are evaluated annually according to the following criteria:

- leadership and management: program planning and organization, fiscal management, and leadership;
- delivery of services: communication skills and consultative and technical assistance; and
- job-related skills: specialized knowledge and skills, personal and professional image, and presentation skills;
- interpersonal skills: internal communication and external communication/public relations; and
- compliance with local, state, and federal laws, policies, and procedures: leadership.

Exhibit 17-9 provides an excerpt from the form RESC 17 uses to evaluate professional staff.

The evaluation form shown in **Exhibit 17-9** does not lend itself to the purpose of encouraging employees to reach an improved level of performance. Its primary limitation is that it rates staff performance in broad categories rather than individual measures. For example, professional staff are ranked generally for their leadership and management skills, rather than for their specific skills in planning and organization or fiscal management.

Exhibit 17-9
Sample Rating Scale from RESC 17 Professional Staff Evaluation Form

Domain I. Leadership/Management	Rubics (Circle The Appropriate Number)
Effectively uses strategies to perform tasks in: • Decision making/problem solving • Personnel supervision • Fiscal management • Appropriate goal setting practices program leadership (design, planning, organization, implementation, assessment)	❹ The performance of leadership/management tasks and the use of leadership/management strategies exceed the expectations of the ESC and promote the organization's mission. There is evidence of exceptional performance of most or all of the tasks. There are few, if any, tasks that are not exceptionally accomplished. In addition, creative and inventive strategies may be effectively used to accomplish tasks.
Criterion 1. Program Planning/Organization	❸ The performance of leadership/management tasks and the use of leadership/management strategies meet the expectations of the ESC and promote the organization's mission. Strategies are effectively utilized to accomplish most, if not all, of the tasks. There may be some tasks that are not fully accomplished: however, they do not interfere with the total effectiveness of the job performance.
Criterion 2. Fiscal Management	❷ The performance of leadership/management tasks and the use of leadership/management strategies do not completely meet the expectations of the ESC and promote the organization's mission. Strategies are ineffectively utilized, or not utilized, to accomplish some of the tasks to the extent that they may seriously interfere with the total effectiveness of job performance. Some serious, or potentially serious, discrepancies between ESC expectations and job performance exist.
Criterion 3. Leadership	❶ The performance of leadership/management tasks and the use of leadership/management strategies do not meet the expectations of the ESC and promote the organization's mission. Tasks are absent or are minimally/ineffectively accomplished to the extent that they seriously interfere with the total effectiveness of the job performance.

Source: Region 17 Education Service Center Professional Staff Evaluation Form, 2003–04.

RESC 17 does use a Professional Development Form that has greater potential to encourage employee growth and performance. This form allows staff and supervisors to list individual development goals and rate progress on those goals. However, this form does not focus on *performance* improvement. RESC 17 leadership recognizes the limitations in its evaluation forms and plans to improve them in the future. However, they have decided to postpone this effort until the service centers, *as a group,* decide whether to use common evaluation forms.

Exhibit 17-10 lists both standard and specialized criteria that RESC 17 may want to consider in revising its evaluation form.

Exhibit 17-10
Standard Staff Evaluation Criteria

- Observes designated work hours.
- Adheres to the policies and procedures of the Service Center.
- Displays a pleasant, courteous, and helpful manner.
- Establishes and maintains effective working relationships with colleagues.
- Establishes and maintains effective working relationships with clients.
- Meets project deadlines established by supervisor.
- Accepts responsibility for individual workload.
- Assists others with overflow tasks.
- Effectively uses technology appropriate for the job assignment.
- Maintains accurate and up-to-date records in area of responsibility and submits them in a timely manner.
- Produces accurate products (use of proper grammar, spelling, and punctuation).
- Plans and schedules work effectively.
- Demonstrates effective public relations skills with Service Center partners.
- Is self-directed and can be relied upon to do the job with minimal supervision.
- Provides effective leadership in planning, developing, implementing, and evaluating programs in area(s) of responsibility.
- Designs and delivers staff development and training for clients in area of responsibility.
- Effectively supervises and evaluates personnel assigned to department/division.
- Prepares budget and supervises expenditures in area of responsibility.

Source: RESC 12 Employee Appraisal Form, 2004.

RESC 17 should revise the evaluation instruments to assess staff's performance on a standard set of evaluation criteria as well as those that relate to their job descriptions. Although it may seem more efficient for RESC 17 to postpone revision of its staff evaluation forms until the system of service centers decides how to structure such forms, it is in the best interest of employees (and therefore the performance of the service center) to create an immediate mechanism for appropriate performance feedback. RESC 17 should revise their evaluation forms to rate staff performance on a standard set of criteria, as well as those that are specific to a particular component or position. These criteria should not be grouped into large categories for a single assessment. Rather, staff should be evaluated on individual measures so that they can identify specific skills and attributes they need to improve.

EMPLOYEE EXIT SURVEY

The Employee Exit Survey used by RESC 17 is not comprehensive. Additional information could be collected to make the form more effective as a tool to make internal human resources improvements in Region 17.

An Employee Exit Survey allows an organization to determine why employees leave and, in turn, improve retention and

satisfaction for active employees. In order to add value to an organization, an exit survey should address a variety of areas, including:

- reasons for leaving the organization;
- satisfaction with management practices and supervision;
- work/life balance;
- compensation and benefits;
- organizational structure and management;
- job attributes; and
- training and development.

Currently, RESC 17 asks all exiting employees to complete an exit report prior to their departure. This report records the employee's name, position, department, dates of employment, and type of termination (resignation, retirement, dismissal, etc.). The report also asks employees to indicate their general reasons for leaving. However, this report does not address most of the areas identified in the bulleted list above, thus limiting the service center's opportunity for growth and improvement.

Exhibit 17-11 lists possible exit survey questions.

RESC 17 should improve the employee exit survey to gather information relevant to the improvement of the organization's human resources, staff support, and professional development practices. By revising its exit survey, RESC 17 can ensure that it has adequate data to improve the organization and prevent costly employee turnover. To minimize the costs of administering the survey, RESC 17 should consider making this survey available online.

Exhibit 17-11
Sample Exit Survey Questions

Multiple Choice Questions	
Reasons for leaving (check all that apply):	
• Higher Pay • Benefits • Better job opportunity • Commute • Conflict with other employees	• Conflict with managers • Family and personal reasons • Relocation/Move • Career Change • Company Instability • Other (describe)
Scaled Responses (e.g., Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree, Not Satisfied to Very Satisfied)	
Statements about one's job: • Job was challenging • Skills were effectively used • Job orientation was effective • Work load was reasonable • Sufficient resources were available • Work environment was safe, comfortable and appropriately equipped	Statements about the organization's management: • Gave fair and equal treatment. • Was available to discuss job-related issues • Welcomed suggestions and encouraged feedback • Maintained consistent policies and practices • Provided recognition for achievements • Encouraged cooperation/collegiality • Provided development opportunities
Statements about one's department: • Had good synergy • Had adequate equipment • Was adequately staffed • Was efficient	Statements about one's supervisor: • Had knowledge of the job • Had knowledge of supervision • Was open to suggestions • Recognized employees' contributions
Statements about compensation and benefits: • Medical insurance package • 403(b) savings plan • Retirement program • Paid time off • Job market competitiveness of salary	Statements about opportunities for professional growth: • Had adequate opportunity for continuing education • Had adequate on-the-job training and guidance • Had adequate mentoring

Source: Created by MGT, 2004.

COMMUNICATION BUDGET

The Region 17 budget document fails to effectively communicate how the budget will fulfill the objectives identified in the Region 17 Comprehensive Plan. Further, in many areas, the budget document is not consistent with the recommended practices of the National Advisory Council on State and Local Budgeting (NACSLB).

The 2003–04 Official Budget for the Region 17 Education Service Center consists of a nine-page document that includes:

- a cover page;
- a pie chart of 2003–04 budgeted revenues identified as local, state, and federal;
- a pie chart of 2003-04 budgeted expenditures identifying budget allocations as follows:
  - instruction-related
  - media
  - curriculum training
  - instructional leadership
  - guidance, evaluation
  - administration
  - plant and operations
  - data processing
  - LEA support
- one page entitled Education Service Center – Region 17, 2003–04 Official Budget. (This page identifies the amount of revenue and expenditure per the categories included in the pie charts for three types of funds; General, Special Revenue, and Internal Service which is recreated as **Exhibit 17-12)**; and
- five pages entitled Official Budget for 2003-04 – Summary, which identifies 30 separate programs in a format identified in **Exhibit 17-13**.

This information is followed on the final page by a summary of what comprises the estimated fund balance decrease as reflected in **Exhibit 17-14**.

The 2003–04 Official Budget is an accounting document that identifies summary information, but fails to describe the various programs or provide any information that would be of value to an individual who is not totally familiar with the activities of Region 17. It provides no comparison with previous year information to identify any changes from prior years and there is no written information that discusses key elements of the current year budget. It is also very difficult to understand the relationships between the various sections of the document. The total budget for the 2003-04 Fiscal Year contained in **Exhibit E-12** ($10,374,925) is a different number than the 2003-04 appropriations amount from **Exhibit E-14** ($10,204,232).

Regional Education Service Centers make program and service decisions and allocate scarce resources to programs and services via the budget process. As a result, this process is one of the most significant activities undertaken by any RESC, yet the formal document that reflects the results of these resource decisions fails to provide any information regarding the resulting financial impact.

The Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) and seven other state and local government associations created the National Advisory Council on State and Local Budgeting (NACSLB) in 1995 and charged it with developing a set of recommended practices in the area of state and local budgeting. The Council concluded its work in December 1997. The GFOA endorsed the work of the NACSLB, including the NACSLB's definition, mission, and key characteristics of the budget process as follows:

- **Definition of the Budget Process –** The budget process consists of activities that encompass the development, implementation, and evaluation of a plan for the provision of services and capital assets.

Exhibit 17-12
Education Service Center
2003–04 Official Budget
August 26, 2003

Revenues/Expenditures	General Fund	Special Revenue	Internal Service	Totals
Revenues				
Local	$3,145,634	$841,500	$1,060,499	$5,047,633
State	1,704,192	440,403		2,144,595
Federal	162,747	2,655,848		2,818,595
Total Revenues	**$5,012,573**	**$3,937,751**	**$1,060,499**	**$10,010,823**
Transfer in		2,294	-	
Total Revenues & Transfer in	**$5,012,573**	**$3,940,045**	**$1,060,499**	**$10,010,823**
Expenditures				
11- Instruction related	$71,284	$651,612		$722,896
12- Media	66,737	646		67,383
13- Curriculum training	1,589,039	1,736,665		3,325,704
21- Instructional leadership	3,550	51,411		54,961
31- Guidance, evaluation services	9,439	223,194		232,633
32- Migrant records	1,698	28,183		29,881
41- Administration	720,785	111,401	193,168	1,025,354
51- Plant & operations	352,680	199,052	634,151	1,185,883
53- Data processing	1,056,654	115,457	245,760	1,417,871
61- Community support services		16,814		16,814
62- Lea support	1,058,289	977,742	57,821	2,093,852
81- Facilities acquisition			20,000	20,000
93- Payments to SSA members		11,000		11,000
Total Expenditures	**$4,930,155**	**$4,123,177**	**$1,150,900**	**$10,204,232**
Other Uses/Transfers Out	2,294			2,294
Total Expenditures & Other				
Uses/Transfers Out	$4,932,449	$4,123,177	$1,150,900	$10,206,526
Difference	$80,124	$(183,132)	($90,401)	($195,703)
Carry forward funds to be used in 03/04 budget				168399
Total budget for 2003–2004 fiscal year				**$10,374,925**

Source: Region 17, Official Budget, 2003–04.

Exhibit 17-13
Official Budget for 2003/2004 - Summary
Pages 5 Through 8

Project	Amount	Project	Amount
ESC State Base	1,307,132	SSVI	168,220
	(1,307,132)		(168,220)
	0		0
General Fund	3,705,441	Apprenticeship	17,227
	(3,625,317)		(17,227(
	80,124		0
Title IV Drug Free Supplemental	47,474	Non Ed	18,048
	(47,474)		(18,048)
	0		0
HIV	5,100	School Health	32,669
	(5,100)		(32,669)
	0		0
ESEA Title I Migrant	266,052	Gifted/Talented State	10,000
	(266,052)		(10,000)
	0		0
IDEA B Preschool	147,213	TRS Suppl Compensation	28,500
	(147,213)		(28,500)
	0		0
IDEA B Discretionary	1,105,478	State Child Nutrition	11,608
	(1,105,478)		(11,608)
	0		0
Nutrition Federal	0	Adult Ed State	120,221
	0		(120,221)
	0		0
CATE - Technical Support, Non-traditional	45,976	TANF State	66,579
	(45,976)		(66,579)
	0		0
Title III ELA	23,294	WADA	270,000
	(23,294)		(497,159)
	0		(227,159)
Con Admin Funds - DEC	8,865	Internet Access	485,000
	(8,865)		(474,723)
	0		10,277
Title IV Safe Drug Free SSA	96,301	RSC Excellence in Science Teach	23,000
	(96,301)		(23,000)
	0		0
Adult Ed Federal (231, 225 & 223)	620,275	Onteractive Video	63,500
	(620,275)		(29,750)
	0		33,750
TANF Federal	84,719	Delivery	87,938
	(84,719)		(63,615)
	0		33,750
Title III ELA SSA	172,432	Internal Charges	972,561
	(172,432)		(1,087,285)
	$0		(114,724)

Source: Region 17, Official Budget, 2003–04.

Exhibit 17-14
Summary Pages
RESC 17 Official Budget For 2003–04 Summary

Board Meeting on August 26, 2003

Project	Amount
2003-04 Estimated Revenues	10,010,823
Estimated Fund Balance Decrease	193,409
2003-04 Appropriations	10,204,232
FUND BALANCES	
General Fund	80,124
Internet Access	10,277
Internal Service Funds	(90,401)
	0
WADA	(227,159)
Interactive Video	33,750
Estimated Fund Balance Decrease	(193,409)
RECONCILIATION	
General Funds	80,124
Special Revenue Funds	(183,132)
Internal Service Funds	(90,401
Estimated Fund Balance Decrease	(193,409)

Source: Region 17, Official Budget, 2003–04.

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- **Mission of the Budget Process** – To help decision makers make informed choices about the provision of services and capital assets and to promote stakeholder participation in the process.

- **Key characteristics of the budget process:**

  - incorporates a long-term perspective;
  - establishes linkages to broad organizational goals;
  - focuses budget decisions on results and outcomes;
  - involves and promotes effective communication with stakeholders; and
  - provides incentives to government management and employees.

The NACSLB also states:

> "The key characteristics of good budgeting make it clear that the budget process is not simply an exercise in balancing revenues and expenditures one year at a time, but is strategic in nature, encompassing a multi-year financial and operating plan that allocates resources on the basis of identified goals. A good budget process moves beyond the traditional concept of line item expenditure control, providing incentives and flexibility to managers that can lead to improved program efficiency and effectiveness."

The 2003–04 Official Budget for the Region 17 Regional Education Center compares with the factors identified by NACSLB as follows:

- **Long-term Perspective** – There is no long-term perspective included in any of the Region 17 budget materials. The budget reflects a year-to-year approach to financial management by providing financial information only for the ensuing budget year.
- **Establishes Linkages to Broad Organizational Goals** – Region 17 has developed a Comprehensive Plan, but the budget document fails to identify how the budgeted amounts will impact the achievement of the goals identified in this Plan.
- **Focuses on Results and Outcomes** – The budget materials presented to the Board of Directors for Region 17 are accounting documents, they are not documents designed to support a decision making process. They identify summary information by various funds and programs, but fail to relate this information to expected results.
- **Involves and Promotes Effective Communication with Stakeholders**– As previously noted, the Official Budget for Region 17 is an accounting document and provides very little information, even to those familiar with the programs provided by the Center. However, as reported by Region 17, there is evidence of planning meetings and budget meeting during the development of the document.
- **Provides Incentives to Government Management and Employees** – The current budget process includes no incentives for managers to identify how current processes can be modified to reduce costs.

NACSLB states that the mission of the budget process is to help decision makers make informed choices about the provision of services and capital assets and to promote stakeholder participation in the process. The process currently in use by Region 17 fails to provide the decision makers with the necessary information to make informed choices.

RESC 17 should develop a budget document that will be consistent with the recommended practices of the NACSLB. The GFOA Web site contains a section entitled, Best Practices in Public Budgeting. This Web site, which is

http://www.gfoa.org/services/nacslb, contains extensive information on the best practices in governmental budgeting and provides access to numerous examples of how these best practices have been used by other governmental entities. Most of the examples are for cities or counties; thus, some may not be relevant to Region 17. However, the key is to understand the concept of how public budgeting should be presented and then to adapt it to the needs of Region 17.

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) also provides extensive information on budgeting practices to include descriptions of different types of budgets. This information can be located by accessing *http://www.tea.state.tx.us/school.finance/audit/resguide10/budget/* on the Internet.

INTERNAL SERVICE FUNDS

The inclusion of the Internal Service Funds in the 2003–04 Official Budget Summary provides inaccurate information on the estimated revenues and expenditures for Region 17.

Governmental Accounting and Financial Reporting, prepared by the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) identifies Internal Service Funds as follows:

> "Some services provided by governments are funded by user fees. These activities are recorded in a separate fund. The intent of using a separate fund is to segregate the activity to assure the cost of providing the service can be recovered from the users. Fees to the users for the service not only includes labor and materials, but also a proportional share of capital costs of equipment and facilities consumed as well as other expenses such as utilities and general overhead. There is a direct relationship between the service provided and the fee paid by the consumer."

Internal Service Funds are used as a tool to accurately distribute the total costs for certain central services to user departments or programs within a governmental entity.

Region 17 includes the following internal service funds in the column entitled Internal Service formerly shown in **Exhibit 17-12**:

- delivery and transportation fund;
- plant operations;
- communications; and
- networking.

Because the revenues of the Internal Service Funds are generated by expenditures in the general or special revenue funds, the inclusion of internal service funds revenues and expenditures for purposes of summarizing the overall budget of an organization will result in an overstatement of revenues and expenditures in the amounts attributable to the Internal Service Funds.

RESC 17 should identify the total revenues and expenditures for the Region 17 budget that accurately identify the actual totals anticipated to be received and expended by establishing a separate budgetary section for the internal service funds.

The implementation of this recommendation will have no impact on any of the financial systems or information contained therein; it is simply a matter of changing the summary pages in the budget document and providing a description of the funds and how they are used.

ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT

The Annual Financial Report for Region 17 does not contain all the information necessary to qualify the report to earn the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting.

The Annual Financial Report for the Year Ended August 31, 2003 was prepared by the center's auditors with each page identifying the audit firm. This report includes the auditor's opinion letter and all of the necessary financial statements, footnote disclosures and the Management's Discussion and Analysis disclosures, to comply with current governmental accounting principles as promulgated by the Governmental Accounting

Standards Board (GASB) as well as reports required by the federal government relating to the Single Audit Act, which mandates an independent financial and compliance audit of federal financial assistance programs. This report provides a picture of the overall financial position of the Region 17 Education Service Center, but it lacks additional information that could be used to more effectively communicate how the financial activity for the fiscal year has impacted the programs and services provided by Region 17.

The Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) and the Association of School Business Officials (ASBO) provide recommended standards for Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports (CAFR). A governmental entity that meets these standards will receive a "Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting." To receive this type of reporting recognition, Region 17 must publish an easily readable and efficiently organized comprehensive annual financial report.

The Annual Financial Report is the final event in the annual planning and budgeting process as the organization completes the cycle and lays the foundation for the next budget process.

The requirements for an easily readable and efficiently organized comprehensive annual report include:

- **Introductory Section** - This section includes a letter from the chief financial officer that summarizes the fiscal operations and the strategic plan of the district, provides an organization overview, and clearly indicates that the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report is a report of the management of the RESC and the management of Region 17 is responsible for its preparation.

- **Financial Section** – This section includes:
  - the independent auditors' report;
  - management's discussion and analysis;
  - government-wide financial statements;
  - fund financial statements;
  - summary of significant accounting policies;
  - notes to the general purpose financial statements; and
  - combining individual fund information and other supplementary information.

- **Statistical Section** – This section includes selected financial and demographic information generally presented on a multi-year basis.

The current Annual Financial Report Format contains the necessary financial information in the Financial Section, but lacks descriptions of the types of funds within the Financial Section. Other significant information is provided in the transmittal letter and the Statistical Section, and both sections provide an opportunity to enhance the understanding of the financial information to the reader. It would also be helpful to provide additional financial information in the Combining and Other Supplementary Information Section that will help to clarify the budgets and actual expenditures for the many programs of Region 17.

The overall intent of the CAFR should be to provide financial reports that demonstrate both fiscal and operational accountability. RESC 17 should prepare the Annual Financial Report for the year ended August 31, 2005 in a manner consistent with the guidelines that would qualify the report to earn the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting.

Information regarding the preparation of a CAFR, to include copies of the checklist used to review the financial reports can be obtained from GFOA by emailing a request to *CAFRProgram@gfoa.org*. The Region 4 Regional Education Center as well as has the

New Deal Independent School District, a district in Region 17 have both received a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting from GFOA and copies of these reports will help provide a basis for the format to be used.

The achievement of the certificate is less important than the preparation of a Comprehensive Annual Financial Report that will more effectively communicate the financial position of Region 17 and relate the financial results with the original budget document.

If Region 17 desires to seek a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting, the fee is $500. This recommendation should be implemented in 2005-06.

FEES FOR SERVICES

Region 17 has no formal board policy nor internal procedures for the process of making interim adjustments for fee for services.

Since 2000–01, the revenues in the central fund have increased by 24.71 percent while the expenditures have increased by only 13.75 percent. In most situations, this would be considered a positive result as revenues have increased at a greater rate than expenditures. In the case of a governmental entity that provides services to other governmental entities, this could indicate that the rates being charged are higher than necessary.

Exhibit 17-15 provides a summary of the revenues, expenditures, and changes in fund balance for the years 2000–01 through 2002–03.

The major cause of the increase in the local funding for the period 2002–03 is a result of the reduction in federal resources for the Eisenhower Math/Science program ($382,000) and the Title VI funding ($104,404). These programs were continued as local contracts, resulting in revenues from the fees for these programs being collected in the General Fund.

In the expenditure category, the plant and operations expenditures reflect unusual activity with a major decrease in 2001–02 with a corresponding increase in 2002–03. These changes have resulted from two unrelated activities. The first involves a study undertaken in 2000–01 to evaluate the building utilities for the Region 17 facility. This study cost $179,000, thus creating an unusual one-time expenditure for the fiscal year 2000–01, leading to a major reduction in these costs for 2001–02. As noted above, Region 17 lost federal funding from two major grants and when these grants were active, Region 17 was able to allocate costs associated with plant operations and maintenance to the grants. These costs included items such as rental for meeting rooms ($22,500) and office and storage space ($35,200).

The administrative costs reflect a dramatic increase from 2000–01 to 2001–02. There were a variety of reasons for these increases to include a one-time accrual for leave reimbursement to properly account for the future payment for unused sick leave for retirees, a one-time increase of $79,000 for various employee benefit programs, and $19,000 for consulting services associated with the development of the current comprehensive plan.

Exhibit 17-16 provides a comparison of the expenditures incurred in the special revenue funds for the 2000–01 through 2002–03 years. There has been a significant reduction in the special revenue fund expenditures between 2001–02 and 2002–03. These reductions occurred throughout all of the special revenue funds mainly because of reductions associated with uncertainty regarding the future of the RESCs that occurred during the 2003 legislative session. Expenditures were reduced dramatically and a number of staff members resigned and were not replaced.

Exhibit 17-15
Statements, Expenditures and Changes in Fund Balance
2000–01 through 2002–03

	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	Increase (Decrease) 2000–01 to 2002–03	Increase (Decrease) 2001–02 to 2002–03	% Increase (Decrease) 2000–1 to 2002–03	% Increase (Decrease) 2001–02 to 2002–03
Revenues							
Local and Intermediate Sources	$2,526,197	$2,801,142	$3,404,608	$878,411	$603,466	34.77%	21.54%
State Program Revenues	1,371,113	1,480,201	1,576,367	205,254	96,166	14.97%	6.50%
Federal Program Revenues	217,748	194,389	151,083	(66,665)	(43,306)	(30.62%)	(22.28%)
Total Revenues	**4,115,058**	**4,475,732**	**5,132,058**	**1,017,000**	**656,326**	**24.71%**	**14.66%**
Expenditures							
Instruction	51,592	60,112	74,153	22,561	14,041	43.73%	23.36%
Instructional Resources and Media Services	243,799	281,687	311,768	67,969	30,081	27.88%	10.68%
Curriculum Development and Staff Development	1,178,968	1,217,799	1,406,488	227,520	188,689	19.30%	15.49%
Instructional Leadership	2,439	2,813	3,755	1,316	942	53.96%	33.49%
Guidance Counseling and Evaluation Services	4,127	7,990	9,984	5,857	1,994	141.92%	24.96%
Social Work Services	882	1,661	1,796	914	135	103.63%	8.13%
General Administration	547,173	781,181	758,107	210,934	(23,074)	38.55%	(2.95%)
Plant Maintenance and Operations	433,352	267,922	353,585	(79,767)	85,663	(18.41%)	31.97%
Data Processing Services	739,363	853,027	834,444	95,081	(18,583)	12.86%	(2.18%)
Community Services	0	192	0	0	(192)	0.00%	)100.00%)
School district Administrative Support Services	708,354	825,815	697,819	(10,535)	(127,996)	(1.49%)	(15.50%)
Facilities Acquisition and Construction	3,650	10,961	0	(3,650)	(10,961)	(100.00%)	(100.00%(
Total Expenditures	**3,913,699**	**4,311,160**	**4,451,899**	**538,200**	**140,739**	**13.75%**	**3.26%**
Excess of Revenues Over Expenditures	201,359	164,572	680,159	478,800	515,587	237.78%	313.29%
Transfers In	32,984	79,285	83,805	50,821	4,520	154.08%	5.70%
Net Change in Fund Balance	**234,343**	**243,857**	**763,964**	**529,621**	**520,107**	**226.00%**	**213.28%**
Beginning Fund Balance (1)	2,069,093	2,235,794	2,479,651				
Increase in Fund Balance (2)	16,415	0	0				
Ending Fund Balance	**$2,319,851**	**$2,479,651**	**$3,243,615**	**$529,621**	**$520,107**	**22.83%**	**20.98%**

Source: Region 17, Annual Financial Reports, 2000–01 through 2002–03.

Exhibit 17-16
Special Revenue Funds
Statement of Expenditures
2000–01 through 2002–03

Program	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	Increase (Decrease) 2000–01 to 2002–03	Increase (Decrease) 2001–02 to 2002–03
Drug Free Supp 84.186A	$63,311	$130,590	$52,187	($11,124)	($78,403)
HIV/AIDS 93.938	3,181	5,862	3,578	397	(2,284)
ESEA T-11 Sch Spt 84.282A	175,509	120,213	14,050	(161,459)	(106,163)
Tech Assistance 84.010A			68,327	68,327	68,327
Migrant 84.010	275,923	288,463	283,148	7,225	(5,315)
Learn & Serve 94.001	59,009	56,680	59,000	(9)	2,320
IDEA B Preschool 84.173	138,936	124,467	117,825	(21,111)	(6,642)
IDEA B Discretionary 84.027	1,069,442	1,077,111	1,042,253	(27,189)	(34,858)
Title VI TRI 84.298	90,378	104,404	0	(90,378)	(104,404)
Child Nutrition 10.560	250,896	275,377	275,056	24,160	(321)
Career Tech Ed 84.048	32,799	50,717	35,521	2,722	(15,196)
Title III ELA 84.365A			23,572	23,572	23,572
Title V TRMI 84.298			60,992	60,992	60,992
Texas Teacher Quality 84.336A	212,345	213,914	113,029	(99,316)	(100,885)
TIE Grant 84.318	1,116,087	81,670	0	(1,116,087)	(81,670)
Project Gear Up		1,846	0	0	(1,846)
Cons Adm 84.999			18,964	18,964	18,964
Drug Free 84.186A		125,018	142,044	142,044	17,026
Adult Ed Sec 231 84.002		391,811	450,970	450,970	59,159
Adult Ed Sec 225 84.002		96,040	96,078	96,078	38
Adult Ed Sec 223 84.002		7,839	13,799	13,799	5,960
TANF Federal 93.558		259,479	169,137	169,137	(90,342)
Title II TPTR 84.367A			149,339	149,339	149,339
Title III ELS 84.365			125,746	125,746	125,746
Title V Innovative 84.298A			3,996	3,996	3,996
SSVI	159,097	167,387	158,032	(1,065)	(9,355)
Apprentice Training	22,900	14,832	21,098	(1,802)	6,266
Non Educational Support	18,443	16,655	22,584	4,141	5,929
School Health 93.994	49,436	31,823	32,922	(16,514)	1,099
State G/T	13,925	23,338	22,790	8,865	(548)
Tech Support		41,083	69,210	69,210	28,127
Technology Support	111,812	343,442		(111,812)	(343,442)
State Technology	352,343		136,800	(215,543)	136,800
TRS Supplement			120,379	120,379	120,379
Other State Grants(1)	663,492	899,608	541,650	(121,842)	(357,958)
Adult Ed State		121,494	120,153	120,153	(1,341)
TANF State		59,053	73,867	73,867	14,814
Region 17 Tech Consortium		577,573	434,043	434,043	(143,530)
ESC Review Consulting			97,186	97,186	97,186
Internet Access		417,966	359,640	359,640	(58,326)
Interactive Video	2,112	3,012	11,587	9,475	8,575
Certification		10,080		0	(10,080)
RSC Science	27,766	31,775		(27,766)	(31,775)
Mentor Schools	10,294	3,580		(10,294)	(3,580)
Social Studies	1,978	1,235		(1,978)	(1,235)
Math Science		382,042		0	(382,042)
Title VI 84298		50,840		0	(50,840)
TWC Job Training	118,478			(118,478)	0
State Certification	8,500			(8,500)	0
Cal State Grant	500			(500)	0
VIP Project	900			(900)	0
Other Local			20,227	20,227	20,227
Total Expenditures	**$5,049,792**	**$6,608,319**	**$5,560,779**	**$510,987**	**($1,047,540)**

Source: Annual Financial Reports, 2000–001 through 2002–03.

A key element regarding the local and intermediate revenue sources involves the manner in which fees are established for programs. Fees for Region 17 programs are developed by the individual program coordinators. Once fees have been established, with the exception of some technology–related programs, very few are modified and the fees remain stable over time. Region 17 has a number of local contracts with unique fee structures and there is no schedule that identifies the various programs offered by Region 17 and the fees associated with these programs.

There is no policy or formal procedure to provide direction for establishing fees and sustaining them at a consistent level over time and trying to match revenues and expenditures for the variety of programs offered by Region 17. The fact that Region 17 has consistently had circumstances where revenue has exceeded expenditures would indicate a more structured process involving a formal policy and associated procedures for establishing fees will ultimately benefit the school districts in Region 17.

RESC 17 should establish a board policy and related internal procedures that will create an approved process for establishing, increasing, reducing, or making interim adjustments to fees for services. A review of the fee development activities over the past five years should be undertaken to identify the validity of the current methods for establishing fees and understanding the long-term financial impact of holding fees at a stable level over time.

Based on the results of this review, a draft policy and associated internal procedures should be developed and reviewed with the representatives of the client school districts and after an in-depth evaluation, the Board of Directors should be presented with the proposed policy and procedures for approval.

The development of a policy and associated procedures should result in a consistent process for identifying fees and ultimately reduce the financial gains that will accrue to Region 17 from general operations. The savings achieved will then be passed on to the client school districts in the form of reduced fees for services. This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

UNRESERVED FUND BALANCE

Region 17 has no policy nor criteria on its level of unreserved fund balance.

The operating impacts on the financial activities of Region 17 over the past three years have resulted in an average increase in the General Fund Balance of 32 percent annually since August 31, 1998. The annual increases in the fund balance are reflected in **Exhibit 17-17**.

Over the years, portions of the fund balance have been reserved or designated as identified in **Exhibit 17-17**. For the years ended August 31, 1999 through August 31, 2002, amounts were designated for future construction. The nature of the construction plans were not disclosed in the annual financial reports and no formal planning for capital improvements has occurred. For the three-year period beginning August 31, 2000, substantial amounts ranging from $1,450,000 to $1,750,000 have been designated for construction.

Exhibit-17-17
Analysis of Ending Fund Balance
for Years 1997–98 Through 2002–03

Year Ended	Ending Fund Balance	Reserved Non-Core Services(1)	Vested Sick Leave Benefits(2)	Reserved Capital Projects (3)	Designated (4) (5)	Unreserved
8/31/1998	$1,265,890	$58,279	$94,450			$1,113,161
8/31/1999	1,979,615		103,433		250,000	1,626,182
8/31/2000	2,069,093		65,698	179,413	1,450,000	373,982
8/31/2001	2,319,851		84,057		1,500,000	735,794
8/31/2002	2,479,651				1,750,000	729,651
8/31/2003	3,243,615				2,450,000	793,615
Increase from 8/31/1998	**$1,977,725**	**($58,279)**	**($94,450)**	**$179,413**	**$2,450,000**	**($319,546)**

Source: Region 17 Annual Financial Reports for 1997-1998 through 2002–03 fiscal years.
(1) To provide additional services beyond core services in future years.
(2) This reserve eliminated in August 31, 2002 report because of change in accounting principle. The vested amounts are now recorded as expenditures.
(3) Capital construction project of $379,413 with $179,413 to be completed
(4) Designated for future building and renovation needs
(5) The specific designation for this amount is not identified

The August 31, 2003 annual financial report identifies the designation of $2,450,000, but the purpose of the designation is not disclosed in the annual financial report. The Board of Directors appropriated this amount at the October 2003 meeting as follows:

> *"*The Board of Directors is aware of the uncertainty of ESC funding. During the 2002–03 fiscal year, all state and federal funding was frozen for approximately two months. Further, contracts signed with the Texas Education Agency and Texas Department of Agriculture provide that funding may be reduced or eliminated at any time throughout the 2003–04 fiscal year. The Board of Directors is also aware that Region 17 has a substantial decrease in total funding (state, federal, local) for the 2003–04 fiscal year.
>
> It is recommended that the board, in accordance with Section 1.2.9.2 of *the Financial Accountability System Resource Guide*, approve an appropriate unreserved designated fund balance as of August 31, 2003, the fiscal year end."

As noted, this designation was based upon Section 1.2.9.2 Unreserved Fund Balance in the *Financial Accountability System Resource Guide* maintained by the Texas Education Agency. This guide states:

> "Portions of the fund balance may be identified, i.e., designated, by management to reflect tentative plans or commitments of governmental resources. Designations require board action to earmark fund balance for bona fide purposes that will be fulfilled within a reasonable period of time**.** These tentative amounts are not the same as fund balance reserves since they represent planned actions, not actual commitments. Such plans may change and never be budgeted or result in expenditures in future periods of time."

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) has identified an undesignated fund balance for the General Fund at August 31 General Fund Balance (unreserved and undesignated) of up to 20 percent of prior year expenditures as being a reasonable level of undesignated fund balance. This is based on the concept that the undesignated fund balance should be equal to

approximately 2.5 months of operating expenses. For Region 17 to meet the 20 percent limitation for year end 2003, the unreserved fund balance should not exceed $1,142,663 ($5,713,318 x 20%). The Undesignated Fund Balance at August 31, 2003 appears to indicate that Region 17 is well under the 20 percent limitation. As noted previously in **Exhibit 17-17**, with the designation of $2,450,000, the unreserved amount is currently $793,615, well within the 20 percent limitation. Without this designation, the unreserved fund balance in the General Fund would represent 63 percent of the 2002–03 operating expenses.

There are two issues involved with the designation of the $2,450,000 of fund balance in the General Fund. First, is the lack of disclosure regarding the purpose for the designation in the annual financial report and the associated lack of any description regarding the basis for the specific amount identified; the second relates to whether this amount fits the definition of a "bona fide purpose that will be fulfilled in a reasonable period of time."

The most recent designation and the designations for construction in previous years have all been established with no structured process and with no stated policy involving the management of fund balance in the General Fund.

The GFOA recommends that an unreserved fund balance in the general fund be of no less than five to 15 percent of regular general fund operating revenues, or no less than one to two months of regular general fund operating expenditures. GFOA also identifies other pertinent issues associated with the fund balance in the general fund to include:

- the predictability of revenues and the volatility of expenditures (i.e., higher levels of unreserved fund balance may be needed if significant revenue sources are subject to unpredictable fluctuations or if operating expenditures are highly volatile);
- the availability of resources in other funds as well as the potential drain upon general fund resources from other funds (i.e., availability of resources in other funds may reduce the amount of unreserved fund balance needed in the general fund, just as deficits in other funds may require a higher level of unreserved fund balance to be maintained in the general fund);
- liquidity (i.e., a disparity between when financial resources actually become available to make payments and the average maturity of related liabilities may require that a higher level of resources be maintained); and
- designations (i.e., governments may wish to maintain higher levels of unreserved fund balance to compensate for any portion of unreserved fund balance already designated for a specific purpose).

The 20 percent level of unrestricted fund balance for the RESCs takes the GFOA concepts into consideration. Region 17 has attained a significant fund balance over the past five years, yet this has occurred in the absence of any formal fiscal policy or process. The fund balance resulting from the activities over the past five years may be in non-compliance with the 20 percent limitation, which is considered a reasonable level by the TEA. If there is to be a continual increase in the fund balance with designations for future use of these resources, the designations should be based upon a formal planning process that supports the designation.

Region 17 has no policy on the management of fund balance and no structured process to support the designation of unreserved fund balance.

RESC 17 should develop a board of directors policy addressing the level of unreserved fund balance to be maintained by Region 17 and include criteria for the determination for

designations of the fund balance. The establishment of a policy on the management of fund balance will provide long-term guidance for future financial decisions. This policy should be developed in conjunction with the creation of a policy on fees per and other formal long-term plans for capital improvements or other future capital needs such as those for technology.

CAPITAL FUND

Region 17 lacks a Capital Improvement Construction and Financing Plan. Further, the Region 17 Board of Directors has not addressed the appropriate source of revenue to pay for these services.

Although it is laudable to desire to pay for a major addition to the current facility with resources that have been saved for that purpose, the end result is that an asset with a useful life well in excess of 20 years will be paid for by today's taxpayers (via the fees paid to Region 17 by the local school districts) while benefiting future taxpayers.

In *America and the New Economy,* Anthony Carnevale states: "Investment decisions should take into account the interests of future generations. Because future generations will benefit from current investment, it is fair to support investment with borrowing that which must be paid back in the future. By the same token, those who will repay the debt should get a fair share of the benefits.

Another author, L.L. Ecker-Racz notes that:

> "In many, if not most circumstances, however, debt financing of a capital improvement is fully compatible with conservative management. Indeed, fairness to taxpayers requires it. This, for example, is the case when a community urgently needed a relatively costly capital investment (such as a sewer system or a school plant) that will serve the community for a generation or longer. In this situation, it would be unfair to charge the total cost to the taxpayers who happen to live in the community during the year or two when the project is being financed."

The issue of financing capital improvements and the source of the resources to pay for these improvements should be addressed by the Region 17 Board of Directors. The resources are available to pay for an addition to the Region 17 facility, however, there should be a discussion regarding how the improvements should be financed and if a decision is made to do so, it should be with the agreement of those school districts that have been the major recipients of Region 17 services for the past five years.

RESC 17 should prepare a Capital Improvement Construction and Financing Plan to address the issue of a possible addition to the Region 17 facility; for use by the Adult Education Program. The development of this plan should coincide with the creation of the board of directors' policy. A key component of this plan would involve the ability of the Adult Education Program to generate adequate resources to provide for the annual debt service. Because this is a grant funded program, there are limitations on the amount of direct costs that can be charged for the use of facilities. The available resources may or may not be adequate for this purpose. If this is the case, it may be possible to construct an addition that could be used for multiple purposes, easing the burden on the Adult Education Program.

EXTERNAL AUDIT SERVICES

Region 17 has been using the same audit firm for over 20 years without seeking proposals. Although the current audit firm is qualified to perform the audit for Region 17, it is considered a good management practice to seek proposals from audit firms on a periodic basis.

The Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) identified recommended practices for the procurement of audit services in 1996 and subsequently updated this information in 2002. GFOA recommends entering into multiyear agreements of at least five years in

duration, but that after the expiration of a contract agreement, the governmental entity should initiate a Request for Proposal process for auditor selection. Often in the case of governmental audits, there may not be an adequate number of qualified auditors in certain locations. If this is the case, it is still recommended that the process be initiated and that an effort be made to actively seek the participation of all qualified firms, to include the current auditors.

RESC 17 should develop a Request for Proposals (RFP) process for audit services upon completion of the audit of the August 2004 financial records. A Request for Proposals (RFP) for Audit Services should include the following:

- identify the scope of the audit;
- require that the financial statements will conform to the independence standard promulgated in the General Accounting Office's *Government Auditing standards*; and
- include a reference to the desire to have an auditing firm that is familiar with the preparation of Comprehensive Financial Reports (CAFRs) for governmental entities.

The proposal should seek a multiyear agreement of at least five years. The process should include the requirement for at least three references from other governmental clients of the firm.

Price for the audit services should not be the primary consideration in the selection of the audit firm. The process should be structured so that the principal factor in the selection process will be to select the firm deemed to be capable of providing the highest quality audit services.

A proposal should be sought from the existing audit firm. The process should be completed by January 2005 to provide adequate time for firm selected to become familiar with the activities of Region 17.

PURCHASING POLICY

The purchasing policy in Region 17 does not provide clear direction regarding the purchasing process.

Policy CH (local) for Purchasing and Acquisition is focused only on the legal aspects of contracts and bidding procedures and addresses the issue of purchasing authorization by stating: "the Executive Director or designee shall have the authority to make budget purchases unless the board policy requires the board to make or approve a purchase."

This policy provides flexibility for the management of Region 17 in the area of purchasing activities, but it does not address key requirements regarding the different levels of authority assigned to members of the administrative staff based upon the amount or nature of the purchase to be incurred.

RESC 17 should revise Policy CH (local) to include direction regarding authorization levels and the types and number of bids required for products or services based upon the dollar level of the purchase. Policies of this nature are used by governmental entities throughout the country as these types of procedures are not unique to RESCs. Sample polices can be obtained from other RESCs in Texas, school districts, cities, and counties. Most of these entities have Web sites and a variety of samples can be obtained. The necessary information should include levels of authorization by dollar level and levels of bidding requirements based on the dollar amount involved.

PURCHASING OF COPIERS

Region 17 does not operate a cooperative purchasing activity for the purchase or lease of copiers.

Copiers are a major cost item for smaller school districts that lack the opportunity to take advantage of economies of scale in the

purchasing process. It may be possible for Region 17 to work with the districts in the region to develop a regionwide bid for copiers with a resulting reduction in the cost of copier services for the participating districts.

RESC 17 should explore the possibility of establishing a cooperative purchasing activity for the purchase or lease of copiers for Region 17. To determine the feasibility of a copier purchasing cooperative, it will be necessary to obtain an inventory of the copiers in use throughout the region. Specific information required would include the make and model, the age of the equipment, the vendor providing copier services, and current contractual arrangements.

With accurate inventory information, it will be possible to determine the potential options for developing a copier contract for those districts that are in a position to acquire new copiers and establish a schedule for other districts that will be in a position to obtain copiers at a later date.

PURCHASING OF VENDING MACHINES

Region 17 does not have a cooperative purchasing program for vending machine services in member districts.

The potential for establishing a cooperative program to seek contracts with vending machine companies may be an area where Region 17 can provide a valuable service to the client school districts. Since the mid 1990's, many school districts across the country have entered into contracts with soft drink vending machine companies. Prior to the district-wide approach, the vending machine companies would enter into contracts with the individual schools, resulting in situations where the revenue received was often based on the ability of the local school administrator to negotiate a favorable contract.

In one large school district with 16 high schools, the individual high schools had entered into contracts with soft drink venders that provided a $15,000 up front payment to the individual schools for a five year contract with a variety of commission levels depending upon the school. This district prepared a district-wide request for proposal and received a $2.3 million up front payment for a seven year contract as well as a standard commission rate of 55 percent on the sale of the products. The increase in the commissions provided from $7,000 to $14,000 in additional revenue to the individual high schools in this district.

The distinct-wide vending machine contracts have been successful because of the economies of scale that can be achieved by combining the purchasing power of all of the schools in the district. The same opportunity may be available for the school districts in Region 17. Smaller school districts or schools operating in isolated areas do not have the leverage to maximize revenues from these sources.

There has been some controversy regarding the presence of vending machines in schools; however, there have been a number of changes in recent years where these machines can provide products other than soft drinks.

RESC 17 should contact the school districts in Region 17 to determine if there is interest in pursuing a cooperative purchasing program for the selection of vendors to provide vending machine services. This process can be explored by sending a letter to each school district in the Region to determine the level of interest in the program. If there is interest, an inventory should be undertaken to identify the number and types of machines in the schools, the contractual arrangements for each machine to include compensation to the schools and the contractual periods. It will also be important to contact the vending machine vendors to determine the different market regions for each vendor.

If it is feasible to implement a cooperative purchasing program for vending machines, there will clearly be a beneficial financial impact for the participating districts; however, the amount of these savings will only become apparent after the analysis of the existing

agreements has been completed and a financial estimate can be developed. This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

U.S. COMMUNITIES SERVICES

The U.S. Communities Government Purchasing Alliance (U.S. Communities) has many cooperative services available to regional education centers and school districts throughout the country. Region 17 has not explored the possibility of using these services.

Although the establishment and use of purchasing cooperatives is beneficial, there may also be value in exploring the potential benefits from an organization called U.S. Communities Government Purchasing Alliance (U.S. Communities) that works nationwide to aid in the pooling of purchasing activities for public agencies. This is a nonprofit organization that can reduce the cost of purchased goods through competitively solicited contracts for quality products using lead public agencies.

One example is the contract for school furniture, which was solicited for U.S. Communities by the Wichita Public Schools. This agreement is with School Specialty, which provides Virco student furniture. The agreement calls for differing discounts from the standard price based on the overall dollar volume of the order.

The U.S. Communities Program was founded by the:

- Association of School Business Officials International (ASBO);
- National Association of Counties (NAC);
- National Institute of Governmental Purchasing (NIGP);
- National League of Cities (NLC); and
- United States Conference of Mayors (USCM).

There are numerous contracts currently in place that include office/school supplies, office furniture, technology products, janitorial supplies, and office machines. A key element of the U.S. Communities program is that the vendors guarantee that they will not provide a lower price than that included in the U.S. Communities contract to any other entity.

Participation in this type of agreement is authorized in the State of Texas in Title 7, Chapter 791, Subchapter C on the Governmental Code.

RESC 17 should contact U.S. Communities to explore the options that may be available to coordinate a purchasing cooperative with this organization for the school districts in Region 17. Information regarding the U.S. Communities Program is available on the internet at www.uscommunities.org.

CASH FORECASTING

Cash management activities for Region 17 currently consist of investments in Certificates of Deposit and in interest bearing checking accounts. There is currently no formal process to forecast cash needs.

Sound cash management involves the maintenance of a balance between retaining an adequate amount of available cash for daily operations and investing idle cash for longer periods to yield the highest aggregate return. The goal is to ensure smooth operations while attaining the highest possible return on the cash investments. Effective projections of cash requirements over time enhance the ability to maximize the earnings from the investment of surplus cash.

Effective cash management requires:

- a sound cash management program that involves cash forecasting;
- a system for monitoring cash as it moves within the district;
- surplus cash investment strategies and mechanisms; and
- effective banking and investment relationships.

Region 17 currently does not have a cash forecasting process in place nor are there strategies for addressing the investment of surplus cash. These factors have not been significant in the past two years as interest rates have been low and the return on the rates in the interest bearing checking accounts have often been equal to or greater than individual investments.

Region 17 had an average cash balance of $3.1 million during the 2002–03 fiscal year with a high balance of $3.5 in April 2004 and a low balance of $2.8 million in March 2004. For the 2003–04 fiscal year, the average balance through May 2004 has been $3.9 million. These are significant amounts and with the expectation that interest rates will be increasing, steps should be taken to assure that Region 17 will achieve a maximum return on the available cash.

The most significant circumstance that can be anticipated is interest rates on investments like certificates of deposits and investment pools will begin to exceed those currently available in the checking accounts. It will therefore become important to develop procedures that will minimize the balances in the checking accounts.

RESC 17 should develop a formal cash forecasting capability and a written strategy for the investment of surplus cash to position Region 17 to maximize investment earnings when interest rates increase.

To project future cash needs on a monthly basis, it will be necessary to undertake an analysis of routine cash activities for the previous two years. For those months where there are significant deviations related to inflows and outflows from the previous year, the cause of the deviations should be evaluated to determine if these types of circumstances will occur in future periods. Once this has been completed, a multi-year cash forecast should be developed and it should be reviewed and adjusted on a quarterly basis.

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources and will ultimately provide increased interest earnings that cannot be projected at this time because they will be dependent on increases in interest rates to a level above that of the checking accounts.

INVESTMENT REPORT

While the current format of the Region 17 Investment Report contains all required components as prescribed in the Public Funds Investment Act [(Section 2256.023(b)], all pertinent information on investments are not included in this report.

The current reporting on investments identifies only investments with maturities and does not identify balances in checking accounts. These reports also identify beginning balances, current month activity and ending balances, but information regarding the type of investment, the identifying account number and the institution holding the investment is not identified. This report also fails to identify the investment earnings to date, both by fund and in the aggregate. An investment report should include all of the pertinent information relating to the various investments and provide a status report on the investment earnings to date.

RESC 17 should revise the format of the Investment Report to include all of the pertinent information relating to the investment and provide earnings to date information by fund. The information required to revise the current Investment Report is readily available and it will only be a matter of revising the report format.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S CAR

The automobile provided for the executive director in Region 17 is not cost-efficient.

A car is currently provided for the executive director. This causes a one-time cost the year the vehicle is purchased and thereafter, the only cost recorded involves the maintenance and upkeep. When the vehicle is to be replaced, there will be another rise in current costs. It is best in governmental organizations

for positions of leadership to be provided a vehicle allowance rather than having use of an entity-owned vehicle. It provides for more consistent budgeting and eliminates the political issues that often surface when decisions are made on the type of vehicle to be purchased and the public perception that the provision of a vehicle is an example of governmental waste.

RESC 17 should convert the compensation package for the executive director to the use of an auto allowance when the current vehicle is deemed to have reached the end of its economic life. All operating costs associated with the use of the vehicle assigned to the Executive Director, to include insurance, fuel and maintenance should be evaluated to determine when it will become more cost-effective to dispose of the vehicle and establish an auto allowance for the Executive Director.

DUAL STUDENT SOFTWARE PRODUCTS

RESC 17 offers school districts two student software products –RSCCC Student 2000, which was developed by RESC 20 through the Regional Service Center Computer Cooperative, and Win School, developed by Chancery.

Staff indicate that the Service Center markets and provides support for both products in order to give districts a choice in their student software selection. They also indicate that the products are essentially equal in their ability to meet district's data management and reporting needs and in their ease of use.

Currently, RESC 17 has two staff who support 23 districts and one alternative school in using RSCCC Student 2000, and two who offer support to 21 districts and one private school using Win School. Between the two software programs, each staff member supports an average of 12 clients. A review of two other Service Centers' staff to district ratios for student software services revealed an average of 18 to 19 clients per consultant, indicating that RESC 17 could be more efficient in providing software and related PEIMS support services to clients.

RESC 17 should offer only one student software package and eliminate one Information Management System consultant. Given the comparable products, RESC 17 should consider marketing and offering support for only one student software product. Because the RSCCC Student software interfaces with the RSCCC Business software used by 41 of the region's districts, and is developed within the Regional Service Center system, RESC 17 may want to focus its efforts on marketing and supporting this product. RESC 17 should also consider eliminating one of the consultant positions that provides software and PEIMS support. Assuming all districts currently using Win School changed their systems over to RSCCC Student 2000, there would remain a total of 46 clients that would need continued software support. By eliminating one consultant position, the Service Center can increase the number of clients served per consultant to 15, as well as reduce its personnel costs.

The projected cost savings for 2004-05 was obtained from draft salary estimates for the Management System consultant position developed by RESC 17. The base salary of $33,380 plus a 23 percent benefits ($9,970) rate equals a total savings of $43,350. The implementation of this recommendation should begin in the 2005-06 school year.

FISCAL IMPACT

Recommendation		2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	5-Year (Costs) or Savings	One-Time (Costs) or Savings
17-2	Eliminate position for the special assistant for Media and Technology and the Information Management System Coordinator.	$0	$106,915	$106,915	$106,915	$106,915	$427,660	
17-4	Use temperature setbacks during evening and weekend hours.	$2,836	$2,836	$2,836	$2,836	$2,836	$14,180	
17-9	Create an electronic version of the RESC 17 application form and make it available online.	$0	$95	$95	$95	$95	$380	
17-14	Seek the certificate of achievement for excellence in financial reporting.	($830)	($830)	($830)	($830)	($830)	($4,150)	
17-26	Offer only one student software package and eliminate one Information Management System Consultant.	$0	$43,350	$43,350	$43,350	$43,350	$173,400	
	Total	**$2,006**	**$152,366**	**$152,366**	**$152,366**	**$152,366**	**$611,470**	**$0**

CHAPTER 18:

MIDLAND

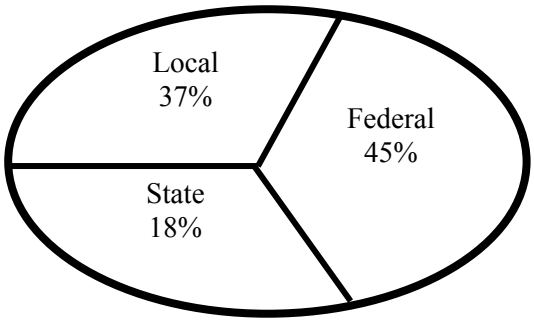
CHAPTER 18

MIDLAND

Region XVIII, headquartered in Midland, covers 37,553 square miles and includes 19 counties, 38 school districts including charter schools, approximately 6,000 educators, and approximately 76,000 students. A seven-member board elected by members of local district boards governs Region 18. The governance of Region 18 includes an executive director and a deputy executive director and five components directors.

Region 18 receives funding from state, local and federal sources. **Exhibit 18-1** shows the RESC 18 total revenues from these three sources:

Exhibit 18-1
Region 18
Revenue Sources



Source: Independent Audit of Region 18 Education Service Center for 2003.

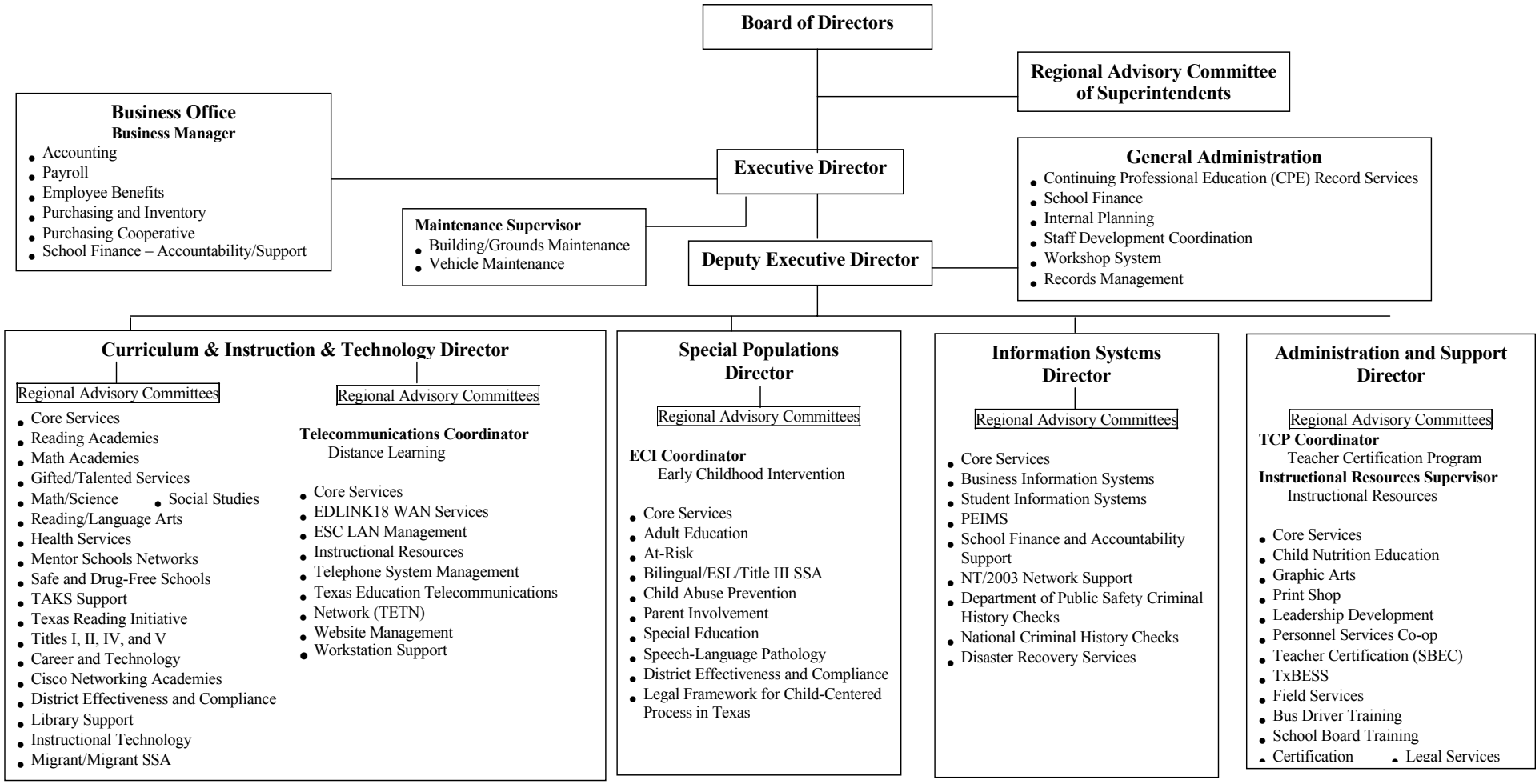
The cornerstone of school improvement is professional growth and continuing education of educators. Region 18 ESC is comprised of the following components or departments as shown in **Exhibit 18-2**.

- Administration and Support
- Curriculum and Instruction
- Information Systems
- Special Populations
- Telecommunications
- Business Office

The Administration and Support component provides school board training and leadership development for school administrators. Consultants offer technical assistance in campus and district planning, site-based decision-making, accreditation, emergency teaching permits, personnel services, and bus driver training. Region 18 manages instructional resources (approximately 7,000 videos) and provides child nutrition services and alternative teacher certification.

The Curriculum and Instruction component provides professional development and technical assistance in curriculum design, alignment, delivery and assessment. Region 18 employees provide training and support in English/language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Region 18 assists districts with Title I, Title II, Title IV, Title V, library services, the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS). Region 18 employees also offer assistance in the integration of technology into the classroom and training in safe schools and crisis management

Exhibit 18-2
Region 18
Organizational Structure
2004-05



Source: Region 18, 2004.

The Information Systems component provides microcomputer and mainframe (accessed via the Web) software and technical support of Public Information Management Systems (PEIMS), student accounting and business accounting. Consultants provide Department of Public Safety and national criminal history checks. Region 18 provides network support and disaster recovery support as well.

The Special Populations component provides technical assistance and training to assist districts in meeting mandated program requirements for students receiving services through special education, bilingual/ESL programs, and Migrant Education programs. Region 18 provides staff development in state/federal regulations, state initiatives, curriculum development, instructional strategies and modifications, remedial techniques, material utilization and parental involvement. The Special Education Director administers the Early Childhood Intervention Program.

The Business Office component manages all accounting and payroll activities for Region 18. Employee benefits are also managed under this department. Region 18 has established several purchasing cooperatives for its member districts; the purchasing and inventory controls for their activities are coordinated under the direction of the Business Office manager. The Business Office also provides technical support to districts regarding school finance and accountability efforts. The Business Office also files required financial reports to the Texas Education Agency and to state and federal governments.

The Telecommunications component administers the Local Area Network (LAN), Region 18 telephone system, and Wide Area Network (WAN), a cooperative (EDLINK18) comprised of the region's thirty-four school districts, four charter schools, two universities, and three community colleges. The Telecommunications Component also administers EDLINK18, which provides members with Internet access, filtered email services, and interactive videoconferencing that allows distance learning between campuses. Consultants provide connectivity from districts to the Texas Education Telecommunications Network (TETN) and to Region 18. **Exhibit 18-3** lists the 2003-04 goals and objectives for Region 18.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- RESC 18 hires highly skilled and experienced custodial staff to ensure the cleanliness and orderliness of their work and conference areas.
- RESC 18 has established action teams and action plans that consist of a cross-section of region staff.
- RESC 18 designed a Professional Development, Curriculum and Instruction (PDCI) Program to provide its member districts with individualized, campus-based professional development and technical support.
- RESC 18 partners with 17 "high-need" districts to provide effective integration of technology and proven teaching practices into instruction through the award of a competitive technology grant.
- RESC 18 effectively serves as the statewide coordinator for the Legal Framework for the Child-Centered Process.
- The leadership and staff at RESC 18 have developed a positive work environment that supports employee satisfaction and dedication.
- The leadership and management at RESC 18 have developed formal job descriptions and a structured process to update them annually.
- The management and staff of the Business Office at Region 18 have cross-trained their staff to ensure that no interruptions occur in the financial operations of the center.

Exhibit 18-3
Region 18 Education Service Center
2003–04 Goals and Objectives

GOAL I:	REGION 18 EDUCATION SERVICE CENTER POSITIVELY IMPACTS STUDENT PERFORMANCE.
Objective 101	Through collaborative planning, Region 18 ESC teams assist districts and campuses to meet or exceed the state accountability standards.
Objective 102	Region 18 ESC personnel receives effective professional growth and training to address needs and initiatives for improving student performance.
Objective 103	Region 18 ESC delivers effective training and services empowering teachers thereby enabling students to meet or exceed the state accountability standards.
GOAL II:	REGION 18 ESC PROVIDES COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP.
Objective 201	Region 18 ESC identifies and showcases best practices for teaching and learning including technology for classroom application.
Objective 202	Region 18 ESC creates and implements an internal support system to maintain staff enthusiasm and a commitment to excellence.
Objective 203	Ongoing evaluations of the Region 18 ESC Plan of Action, including the use of student performance data, are used for planning, monitoring and adjusting Region 18 ESC services.
GOAL III:	REGION 18 ESC PROVIDES FOR EFFECTIVE UTILIZATION OF INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGY.
Objective 301	Region 18 ESC personnel develops and delivers training and resources in the use of technology.
Objective 302	Region 18 ESC facilitates the expansion of the technological capacity and infrastructure for LEAs.
Objective 303	Region 18 ESC investigates and promotes best practices and provides efficient technical support for the ESC Local Area Network.
GOAL IV:	REGION 18 ESC DEMONSTRATES AND PROMOTES EFFICIENCY OF OPERATIONS.
Objective 401	Region 18 ESC demonstrates efficient fiscal management in all aspects of ESC operations.
Objective 402	Region 18 ESC personnel promote and assist LEAs with sound fiscal management in the economy and efficiency of school operations.
Objective 403	Region 18 ESC personnel effectively markets programs and services.

Source: Region 18, 2004.

- The absence of debt service contributes to the center's healthy fund balance, which in turn permits the funding of construction, facility repairs and alteration projects.
- The Internal Service Fund for RESC 18's vehicle replacement program is an appropriate funding mechanism for vehicle purchases, maintenance, and repair.
- The budgeting process and reports are comprehensive and contain all necessary information.
- RESC 18 is successful at obtaining grants and other sources of funding for the provision of unique and mission critical services to member districts.
- RESC 18 ensures that all center employees know and understand the center's purchasing processes and thresholds by providing clear and concise instructions in the Employee Handbook and on the RESC Web site.
- Region 18 manages a successful purchasing cooperative activity for school districts within the region and for some districts residing in other regions.
- Region 18 carefully analyzes market conditions to generate the highest returns on investments.
- RESC 18's use of VNC, NetMeeting, and RDP allows staff to provide prompt and low-cost support to school districts.
- RESC 18 developed a formal use policy and fee structure for its distance learning service which can serve as a guideline for other service centers.

FINDINGS

- There is no receptionist or office clerk at the RESC satellite office in Alpine and the office has not been managed effectively.
- RESC 18 has failed to maintain valid contracts with vendors.
- RESC 18 does not maintain an off-site, monitored fire alarm service.
- RESC 18's fire alarm system are not inspected on an annual basis.
- RESC 18 does not have an effective organizational structure for providing services in the Special Populations Department. The department is understaffed.
- RESC 18 does not use a toll-free number to provide remote access for personnel and member districts to contact the RESC 18 satellite office located in Alpine.
- RESC 18 does not use a Listserv to assist in providing follow-up assistance for participants who receive training in member districts.
- There is no single staff member responsible for overseeing the job announcement and applicant review process at RESC 18.
- There is no staff member at RESC 18 responsible for overseeing the staff evaluation process and ensuring that each evaluation component follows the center's expected procedures.
- During the past five years (1997-1998 through 2002-2003), the auditors preparing the Regional Education Service Center's Annual Financial Report have not provided a management letter.
- RESC 18 is not actively seeking alternative revenue sources nor cost savings from non-curriculum program areas.
- The inclusion of the Internal Service Funds in the center's Financial Statements provides inaccurate information on the estimated revenues and expenditures for Region 18.
- RESC 18 uses an excellent process for recording time and effort for hourly employees that reconciles to payroll time sheets resulting in an accurate allocation of payroll costs to various programs and services. However, salaried employees are not required to submit timesheets or activity reports,

unless their time is charged to a specific fund for specific activities. This results in a lack of accountability and potential staff inefficiencies.

- The RSCCC2K financial software package, used by the center and purchased from Region 20, does not have an accounts receivable module.
- The center, as part of the RSCCC2K financial software package, currently owns an automated purchasing system, but prefers to perform all purchasing functions manually.
- Region 18 does not have a contracting process that ensures internal policies and TEA regulations are not violated.
- Region 18 does not receive consistent, detailed billing of its fuel purchases.
- Region 18 does not apply quantifiable criteria for the selection of its contractors/vendors, which is typically standard in contracting to determine the most qualified vendor to provide goods or services.
- RESC 18 lacks internal controls for its motor pool fleet.
- Region 18's manual inventory process is time consuming and inefficient. The process for the center's fixed assets is only partially automated.
- The premium for Property/Casualty/Honesty/Liability coverages increased from $56,418 in FY 2002-2003 to $65,955 in FY 2003-2004, even though no losses have been incurred for the same period.
- RESC 18's technology staff misunderstand the appropriate criteria for technology purchases, resulting in purchasing practices that have made equipment maintenance more difficult and less efficient.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 18-1: Hire a receptionist/clerk position for the Alpine, Texas RESC 18 satellite office.** By implementing this recommendation, RESC 18 should provide for an occupied office and the function of an office clerk to manage the office in support of staff members who are frequently traveling to remote districts.

- **Recommendation 18-2: Review all facilities maintenance contracts to ensure that they are accurate, valid, and provide services at lowest cost.** The RESC 18 purchasing agent should contact the center's vendors to review and formalize current contracts. The purchasing agent should also develop a contract review schedule to ensure all contracts are up-to-date and reviewed on a regular basis.

- **Recommendation 18-3: Contract with the current fire alarm or security system providers for a monitored fire alarm system.** The RESC 18 maintenance supervisor and purchasing agent should coordinate to ensure that the center has an off-site monitored fire alarm system. This may be done as part of the contract review process recommended in Recommendation 18-2. The cost of this service is established at $300 per year. The first year savings is reduced by 50 percent due to the implementation beginning in January 2005.

- **Recommendation 18-4: Conduct fire alarm system inspections annually.** To assist in tracking the inspection schedules, the maintenance supervisor should maintain a calendar of required facilities maintenance systems inspections.

- **Recommendation 18-5: Create one instructional consultant position for the special populations component at RESC 18.** By implementing this recommendation, RESC 18 should shift tasks and responsibilities for specific programs and services from existing Special Population consultants to create a more efficient

and effective component. Each consultant position should be specifically defined for the unique programs for which they are providing services. Since one of the positions that was lost was specifically designed to provide services and technical assistance to Bilingual/ESL programs in districts, this new position should be viewed as an effort to create more efficient and effective services to Bilingual/ESL programs throughout member districts. Directors should meet with the executive director and current staff members to determine the redistribution of tasks and responsibilities when designing this position.

- **Recommendation 18-6: Add a toll-free number to the existing primary business line to provide remote access for personnel and member districts to contact the RESC 18 satellite office located in Alpine, Texas.** By implementing this recommendation, RESC 18 should establish remote access for satellite program services personnel to a voice mail system to retrieve messages from member districts and stakeholders across the state. Furthermore, superintendents and other district personnel will have a communication system established at no cost to them as a means of contacting RESC 18 staff.

- **Recommendation 18-7: Establish a Listserv for all training participants to provide follow-up technical assistance following workshops and professional development activities at RESC 18.** By implementing this recommendation, RESC 18 should provide feedback and follow-up technical assistance using various technology-based systems.

- **Recommendation 18-8: Create a structured hiring process to minimize duplication of effort and to ensure that all vacancy announcements convey the same level of information and all component directors follow similar hiring procedures.** Given the staff size at RESC 18, it may not be practical for the service center to designate a full-time human resources position. However, the center should appoint a staff member to oversee its hiring functions and ensure that component directors and other leadership staff follow standard procedures. This staff member should provide guidance and oversight to ensure that vacancy announcements communicate a minimum level of information, components follow identical applicant review and interview processes, and respond to applicants in a timely and appropriate manner. Additionally, this staff member should ensure that component staff are not duplicating efforts unnecessarily.

- **Recommendation 18-9: Inform the center's auditor that it should be more cognizant of center shortcomings, such as those presented in this chapter, and report recommendations as to how to eliminate shortcomings.** The implementation of this recommendation will result in a greater level of internal controls for the Regional Education Service Center.

- **Recommendation 18-10: Seek alternative revenue sources and cost savings from other areas to ensure that the proper level of curriculum and staff development is provided to school districts.** Alternative revenue sources, including grants not typically awarded, such as the $900,000 Target Grant for the center's Mobile

Technology Bus, should be researched and obtained to provide additional funding for educational services.

- **Recommendation 18-11: Show the total revenues and expenditures for RESC 18 financial statements without reporting Internal Service Funds.** This change in reporting will provide an accurate representation of revenues and expenditures when presenting financial statements.

- **Recommendation 18-12: Require salaried employees to submit timesheets depicting activities performed on a bi-weekly basis in the same manner as hourly employees.** Implementing the use of timesheets for salaried employees will yield a more productive workforce and result in greater staff accountability.

- **Recommendation 18-13: Ensure that RESC 20, developer of RSCCC2K, provides the accounts receivable function to quickly incorporated in the software package.** Once the accounts receivable module is developed in RSCCC2K, the center's financial system will be fully integrated and will eliminate duplication of effort.

- **Recommendation 18-14: Use the RSCCC2K Requisition Module to capture requisition requests and generate purchase orders for vendors.** The requisition module is a part of the current software package and should be used to generate purchase orders.

- **Recommendation 18-15: Follow the center's own internal policies and TEA regulations when contracting, and rebid all contracts on an annual basis, unless specifically permitted in contract documents.** The annual bid process of all contracts should result in a competitive process, thereby allowing the Center to choose who can provide the best service or product at the best price.

- **Recommendation 18-16: Require all gasoline vendors to submit detailed billing information.** A detailed invoice will ensure accountability from the vendor and Center staff while providing specific information on gasoline expenditures.

- **Recommendation 18-17: Develop quantifiable selection criteria to determine the most qualified vendor.** Selection criteria, if established correctly and applied uniformly, will permit the center to identify and select the most qualified vendor to provide the desired goods or services.

- **Recommendation 18-18: Create a secure process for checking out center vehicles.** An authorized fleet manager residing in a centralized location should be responsible for keeping the locker locked at all times as part of the vehicle sign out process. This type of process will protect the center's fleet and minimize the potential for theft or loss.

- **Recommendation 18-19: Analyze the feasibility of using the library bar coding system, or others on the market, for the automation of RESC 18 fixed asset inventory process.** The automation of the entire inventory process will provide a more efficient and accurate way of identifying and tracking the center's fixed assets.

- **Recommendation 18-20: Solicit other bids to ensure RESC 18 is being charged appropriate insurance premiums.** Given the absence of claims, the center should be paying less than the current

premium for this type of insurance, even if it has to go outside of the cooperative.

- **Recommendation 18-21: Clarify and formalize technology purchase requirements.** RESC 18 purchasing staff should meet with technology staff to clarify and document the service center's technology purchasing criteria. This documentation should include indicators that technology and purchasing staff can use to assess "best value," including consideration of whether introduction of a new vendor would place undue burden on technology staff.

DETAILED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

CUSTODIAL WORK PROCESSES

Region 18's custodians have developed highly efficient work processes that assist them in exceeding industry standards for facility area maintenance per custodian. RESC 18's facility was impeccably clean and orderly.

The Service Center has two full-time staff that manage the center's custodial services. Excluding storage areas, these custodians maintain 52,120 square feet, each averaging a coverage area of more than 26,000 square feet. This is higher than the industry standard of 15,000 to 20,000 square feet per custodian. During interviews, RESC 18 custodians indicated that they are adequately supported in their jobs and think that their workload is manageable.

During interviews, RESC 18 custodians indicated that they maintain separate shifts that overlap by a few hours each day, with one starting early in the morning and ending in the afternoon, and another that begins mid-day and ends late in the evening. These shifts ensure that both custodians are available during the work-day to address any heavy cleaning or repetitive tasks, and that at least one custodian is available during the evening hours to manage tasks that are best addressed when the facility is empty. Both custodians indicated that they are adequately supported in their jobs and find their workloads manageable. They also indicate that team work is essential to their efficiency.

A review of other service centers' show that most of them rely on contracted services to provide custodial services. While such practices may be less costly, RESC 18 reported that they have been able to maintain higher quality and more consistent service by having full-time custodians. They also indicate that their custodial staff are more vested than contractors in ensuring the cleanliness and safety of the facility, and can serve in the additional role of night watch person, a feature highly valued by staff who work late into the evening. Should other service centers find it difficult to manage contracted custodial services, they may consider RESC 18's custodial model. The key to the success of this model is to hire highly experienced custodians with a demonstrated ability to work as a team.

Accomplishments: RESC 18 hires highly skilled and experienced custodial staff to ensure the cleanliness and orderliness of their work and conference areas.

ACTION TEAMS

RESC 18 has effectively organized its program service delivery components into action teams.

Action teams consist of members of several programs and meet quarterly. This effort reflects the inclusive model of integration of services across disciplines by developing an overlap of understanding across programs with experts from various fields. Each action team is appointed a facilitator to lead in the creation of an action plan that is consistent with the RESC 18 action plan. **Exhibit 18-4** lists the action teams currently organized at RESC 18. Interviews with staff members indicate that staff and administrators are generally assigned four to six action teams.

Exhibit 18-4
2004-05 Region 18 Action Teams

Region 18 ESC Plan of Action	Leadership Development
Alternative Assessment	Learn & Serve
Career and Technology	LID (Low Incidence Disabilities)
Child Nutrition	Migrant Education Program
Comprehensive School Health	Multicultural/Diverse Learners
Performance-Based Monitoring	NCLB
Discipline/Classroom Management	Parent Involvement
Bilingual/ESL/Title III	PDCI
ECI (Early Childhood Intervention)	PEIMS and Information Systems
EDLINK18	Safe & Drug-free Schools and Communities
English/Language Arts	Social Studies
Fine Arts Fiscal Management/Marketing Plan	Special Education
Gifted/Talented Education	Teacher Certification Program
Inclusion/Access to the General Curriculum	Title I Basic Services
Integrated Technology	Title II (Math and Science)
Integrated District and Campus Planning	Visual Impairment

Source: RESC 18, 2004.

Exhibit 18-5 shows the RESC 18 action plan for 2003-04. **Exhibit 18-6** shows an example of an action plan that was developed by the Special Education Action Team.

By organizing the region's delivery of services into action teams with accompanying plans of action, RESC 18 is optimizing staff resources while limiting any duplication of efforts.

Accomplishments: RESC 18 is commended for establishing action teams and action plans that consist of a cross-section of region staff.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

RESC 18 designed a Professional Development, Curriculum and Instruction (PDCI) Program to provide its member districts with individualized, campus-based professional development and technical support.

This program was finishing its first year of completion in June of 2004. The Curriculum and Instruction (C and I) team at RESC 18 works with teachers representing all four core areas, utilizing all or a portion of the district early release days. Prior to each day, a memo is issued to staff detailing the schedule or schedules of the day and detailing the specific tasks for each core area team. The 2003 TAKS test results serve as the initiative for training days.

A vertical team in each of the core areas of English Language Arts (Reading), Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies is typically assigned to one or more TAKS objectives on which to focus. Teams examine objectives and the student success on these

Exhibit 18-5
Region 18 RESC
Special Education Plan of Action
2003-04

SPECIAL EDUCATION
Objective: To provide leadership, training, and technical assistance and information dissemination to LEAs in the area of Special Education services for students with disabilities.

End Year Review 5/2004	Activities	Targeted Completion Date	Person(s) Responsible	Estimated Cost	Evidence of Successful Completion of Activity	ESC Objective
Completed	Organize, prepare, host & facilitate monthly Special Education Director Regional Advisory Committee meetings: • Sept 11, 2003 • Oct. 15-16, 2003 • Dec. 11, 2003 • Jan. 22, 2004 • Feb. 2-5, 2004 • Mar. 25, 2004 • Apr. 22, 2004 • June 14-15, 2004	Jun 2004	Sp. Ed. Staff	$12,000	Monthly Agendas Director Packets Sign-in Sheets Mail packets to absent directors	101 103
In Progress	Provide Special Education Directors with state, federal & local information via email, list-serves, mailouts and at director monthly director meetings	Aug 31, 2004	Sp. Ed. Staff	$2500	Agendas Copies of letters and packets mailed to directors Copies of letters in correspondence files	101 103
In Progress	Provide Special Education Directors with on-site technical assistance upon request	Aug 31, 2004	Sp. Ed. Director	$2000	Monthly Activity Reports MIS Workshop System Follow-up letters	101 103
In Progress	Provide district administration with special education updates	Aug 31, 2004	Sp. Ed. Director	$1000	Copies of letters in correspondence file	101 103
In Progress	Provide districts with data reports as related to the Data Analysis System PAS/DAS	May 2004	Sp. Ed. Staff	$500	Data reports	101
Completed	Provide training for directors/ business managers regarding issues related to special education funding • SpEd MOE Overview – Jan. 14, 2004 • Carole Edwards - May 13, 2004	Aug. 2004 Jan. 14, 2004 May 13, 2004	Sp. Ed. Staff	$2000	MIS Workshop System Sign-in sheets Evaluations	103
In Progress	Provide districts with technical assistance regarding funding: budgeting, SAS, WEB-ER, etc. (as requested) • Carole Edwards in May 2004	Aug. 2004	Sp. Ed. Staff	$500	Outgoing memos	103

Source: RESC 18, 2004.

Exhibit 18-6
Example Action Plan
Developed by the Special Education Action Team

Name of Acton Plan: Special Education Facilitator: Director of Specials Project
Members: All Special Populations Staff

NEED:

- Program description requires that RESC 18 provide leadership, training, and technical assistance in the areas of special education services for students with disabilities in accordance with the Agency's focus on increasing student performance.
- RESC 18 is the first point of contact for schools and communities regarding special education and participates with agency staff to promote and implement leadership activities. Pre-school: According to the 2003-2004 Needs Assessment Survey, respondents reported in the following five areas. They are listed in order of priority: I) Positive behavior support for young children. 2) pre-school coming environments, 3) developmentally appropriate practices, 4) effective strategies for working with students with autistic tendencies, and 5) parental involvement.

- **MEASURABLE OBJECTIVE(s):**

- To increase student performance of students with disabilities on statewide assessment instruments
- To provide teachers with effective, research based strategies to use in the classroom.
- To provide training and technical assistance as noted in the program description for each project;
- To provide quality leadership, joint training and technical assistance to educators, parents and community members; in public, private and charter schools, in the area of special education during the school year one hundred percent of die time.
- Through collaborative planning, the Special Education team will provide parents and community leadership, training and technical assistance in, but not limited to the following programs, projects and/or functions listed in the SAS: general leadership, instruction in the content areas, assistive technology, ChildFind, evaluation, LRE, parent coordination, multi-cultural and diverse learning, monitoring, funding, residential applications, non-educational community based funding, high school/transition, low incidence disabilities, behavior and discipline management, inclusion, visual impairments, Framework for Child-Centered Process, autism, decentralized functions, dyslexia, and promising practices to empower LEAs to increase performance of students with disabilities on statewide assessment instruments.
- Pre-school Provide a variety of training opportunities for pre-school educators and service providers in RESC 18 that deal with these issues. At least 65 educators and service providers will attend the Academy for Teachers of Young Children with offerings from at least 40 different presenters chosen to meet their needs. Both general and special educators of pre-school children with disabilities will receive regular visits and written communication from the pre-school specialist at RESC 18. ARD committee members will be prepared to offer a continuum of placement options to students with disabilities.

IMPACT ON STUDENT PERFORMANCE (Be specific):

By providing educators with effective and researched based teaching strategies, students' learning will increase. Student performance will increase as measured by the statewide accountability system.

Pre-school: Pre-school students with disabilities will develop language and pre-academic skills, and behave appropriately in classrooms that meet their needs. Pre-school students with disabilities will be better prepared for kindergarten when taught by general and special educators who have received training by top presenters in their field. Students will develop emotionally and socially, and will exhibit better language development and pre-academic skills when their teachers receive ongoing training and support. Students will develop improved language skills, social skills, and academic readiness when offered increased opportunities to interact with their nondisabled peers.

END OF EVALUATION
Was Objective met? __X___ Yes __ No

Source: RESC Director of Special Populations, 2004.

objectives. Resources include district score information, the TAKS Information booklets, and released TAKS tests. PDCI objectives typically include 1) the development of items for benchmark exams, and 2) the creation of lessons or activities for classroom instruction on the designated objectives. New TAKS objectives are frequently assigned each release day with the goal being coverage of all TAKS objectives before the examinations. All objectives are examined to some degree and teachers work on lessons, units, and activities for their assigned classes. Special trainings are also scheduled including training on fluency, writing, and the reading/writing connection.

Exhibit 18-7 illustrates a sample the journal entry that is used to record content areas, focus, training format, products, goals, and overall account of PDCI activities in schools/districts. The journal entry form is completed following training.

Accomplishments: RESC 18 designed a Professional Development, Curriculum and Instruction (PDCI) Program to provide its member districts with individualized, campus-based professional development and technical support.

Exhibit 18-7
Professional Development, Curriculum and Instruction (PDCI)
Journal Entry Sample for RESC 18

PDCI JOURNAL ENTRY	**2003-2004**
DISTRICT/CAMPUS:	**CONTENT AREA FOCUS: Core content areas**
DATE:	**TRAINING FORMAT:** *(Conference periods, pull-out, release time, staff day)* One-day training. Morning presentation in Curriculum Planning; Afternoon in sequencing curriculum using template
PARTICIPANT GROUP*: (grade levels, teams, etc.)* All teachers attended the training.	
JOURNAL ENTRY: *(Describe in a few words or bullets the central events of the day)* Teachers were to bring TEKS for all courses taught. In the presentation, Debbie Bynum, Jamye Swinford, and I used a Power Point presentation to teach the group. We completed the process described below with one set of TEKS for each teacher. We first worked on concept-based instruction (Erikson material). Teachers marked their TEKS for major concepts. We next reviewed and worked with Bloom's Taxonomy. Teachers then marked TEKS for upper level thinking. We introduced the Analysis Tool from ILD and developed the idea of Power TEKS. Teachers identified Power TEKS. We then provided a basic template, developed one or two generalizations for the course and asked them to plan their course sequence using Power TEKS. Teachers had some time in the Computer Lab to develop their templates.	
NOTES: *(Any special circumstances)*	
PRODUCT OR GOAL: Day of training—1 course mapped by Power TEKS.	
ASSIGNMENT: Follow-up goal—All courses taught mapped by Power TEKS	
FOLLOW-UP: Principal will request 1 day training in IDL for teachers for end of school year. Consultant may visit in district one day during class periods to meet with teachers and review and discuss completed templates.	
CONSULTANT	

Source: RESC 18, Division of Curriculum and Instruction, PDCI Program, 2004.

TECHNOLOGY GRANT

The RESC 18 Education Service Center, which serves 38 school districts across 19 counties of west Texas, partners with 17 "high-need" districts to provide more effective integration of technology and proven teaching practices into instruction. The RESC has been awarded a competitive technology grant of almost $900,000. These grant funds are a portion of the federal money available to Texas through Title II-D of the *No Child Left Behind Act*. RESC 18 received this partnership grant in the second wave of Texas grants awarded through the Technology Applications Readiness Grants for Empowering Texas (TARGET), administered by the Texas Education Agency.

The central feature of the RESC 18 project is the provision of greater access to high quality technology equipment and training for both teachers and students in partner districts. The primary factor determining eligibility of schools was a high poverty level, as determined by the United States Census. Non-qualifying districts were also invited to participate as partner districts. The school district grant partners are Alpine, Balmorhea, Crane, Culberson County (Van Horn), Forsan, Fort Davis, Fort Stockon, Glasscock County (Garden City), Grandfalls, Marathon, Marfa, McCamey, Pecos, Presidio, Rankin, Terlingua, Terrell County (Sanderson), and Valentine. The $890,000 grant will meet the technology integration challenge through a two-pronged approach.

Region 18 uses a Technology on Wheels (TOW) vehicle. This vehicle is being custom designed within a 38-foot commercial shell (similar to a Winnebago). When completed, the bus will contain a ten-student classroom, equipped with wireless network and extensive presentation capability. In addition, the bus will carry a wide variety of mobile technological equipment not readily available in these districts. Equipment includes Toughbook laptop computers, graphing calculators, hand-held devices (Palm Pilots), digital cameras, digital video cameras, as well as a range of specialized software tools. Microsoft and Adobe have donated the use of extensive software programs for use in this project. The bus will visit districts on a rotating basis, providing the equipment and extra staff to assist in the use of this equipment by students, teachers, and community members. A local company, Taylor Made Custom Coach of Odessa, is doing the custom design work. When completed and fully equipped the Target Bus will have a value of approximately $500,000.

Excellent training of a Technology Integration Professional (TIP) in each district supports the continued integration of technology into the classroom. Each TIP is a district employee. Many are regular classroom teachers. Region 18 staff, as well as contracted consultants, will train these individuals in the use of the technology equipment. Region staff will help coordinate the integration of this equipment into classroom instruction, grounded in best researched-based practices, and developed from the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills.

Accomplishments: RESC 18 partners with 17 "high-need" districts to provide more effective integration of technology and proven teaching practices into instruction through the award of a competitive technology grant of almost $890,000.

STATEWIDE COORDINATOR FOR CHILD-CENTER PROCESS

RESC 18 effectively serves as the statewide coordinator for the Legal Framework for the Child-Centered Process.

The Legal Framework for the Child-Centered Process is a template in an electronic format that summarizes state and federal requirements for special education by topic. Legal Framework for the Child-Centered Process is a tool for managing and maintaining records for student identification, eligibility, placement, services, progress, achievement, accountability, and graduation.

Schools throughout the state use the Legal Framework as a reference in managing the

special education system's procedures and records to ensure accountability that each student is provided the benefits of a free appropriate public education and that relevant special education data is accessible and used in managing system change for continuous student performance and program improvement.

The development, production and ongoing online maintenance of the Legal Framework are coordinated through the statewide network. The Legal Framework for the Child-Centered Process is under the leadership of RESC 18 Education Service Center with the support and staff participation from each of the other RESCs.

The Legal Framework is intended to support a district's efforts to eliminate costly and unnecessary paperwork, while maintaining due process protections and tailoring services to the needs of students. The Legal Framework for the Child-Centered Process is an electronic roadmap that will open up the world of knowledge. This tool can be used for electronic crisis diffusion. It is a dynamic document that could be considered a Web-based product with the intent to assure compliance with forms, anecdotal reports and process. The Legal Framework for the Child-Centered Process consists of specific individualized frameworks. The framework includes:

- initial referral for evaluation
- prior written notice
- parental consent
- determination of needed evaluation data
- full and individual evaluation
- auditory impairment
- autism
- deaf-blindness
- emotional disturbance
- specific learning disabilities
- mental retardation
- multiple disabilities
- non-categorical early childhood
- other health impairment
- orthopedic impairment
- speech impairment
- traumatic brain injury
- visual impairments
- parent
- admission, review, and dismissal meeting
- individual transition plan
- discipline procedures
- transfer students

The format of each framework consists of state and federal requirements as well as legal citations. The legal citations include:

- Code of Federal Regulations 300
- 5th Circuit Court Decisions
- Texas Education Code (TEC)
- Texas Administrative Code (TAC)
- State Board of Education Rules
- Commissioner's Rules

Legal citations are color-coded either black or blue. The black items indicate requirements to be documented in the special education process. They can be addressed on forms or by a representative statement in a written dialogue. The blue items are requirements, which must be reflected in practice. Upon completion of the monitoring process, this document also guides school personnel in completing corrective action plans. The various applications of this document are seemingly invaluable to districts across the state due to the constant accessibility of it.

Accomplishments: RESC 18 effectively serves as the statewide coordinator for the Legal Framework for the Child-Centered Process.

WORK ENVIRONMENT

Region 18 employees indicate that they enjoy their jobs, are well–supported, and receive adequate training and professional development.

Exhibit 18-8 shows a sampling of MGT survey results received from Region 18 employees. As shown, 100 percent of the employees responding to the survey either agree or strongly agree that their work is exciting, challenging that they have the authority to perform their responsibilities, and that they have adequate facilities. Ninety-seven (97) percent agree or strongly agree that they are satisfied with their job.

By ensuring such high workplace satisfaction levels, RESC 18 improves the likelihood for staff retention, maintenance of institutional knowledge, and organizational efficiency.

Accomplishments: The leadership and staff at RESC 18 have developed a positive work environment that supports employee satisfaction and dedication.

Exhibit 18-8
Sampling of MGT Survey Results

Statement	(%A+SA)(%D+SD)*
I find my RESCs to be an exciting, challenging place to work.	100/0
I feel that I have the authority to adequately perform my job responsibilities	100/0
I have adequate facilities in which to conduct my work.	100/0
I am very satisfied with my job.	97/0
I feel that my work is appreciated by my supervisor(s).	92/3
I feel that I am in integral part of the RESC team.	92/0

Source: MGT surveys, 2004.
**A + SA means agrees or strongly agrees; D + SD means disagrees or strongly disagrees*

JOB DESCRIPTIONS

The leadership and management at RESC 18 have developed formal job descriptions and a structured process to update them annually.

In 2003, RESC 18 contracted with TASB to conduct a salary survey and formally develop job descriptions. These job descriptions are comprehensive and include each position's title, qualifications, and general and detailed responsibilities. Additionally, RESC 18 plans to maintain their job descriptions by updating them annually as part of the staff evaluation process.

Comprehensive and up-to-date job descriptions can serve as effective tools for evaluation and strategic planning, and provide staff with a better understanding of their roles and responsibilities. For example, job descriptions can be used as a tool to clearly identify responsibilities and expectations, conduct or prepare for staff evaluations, develop professional development plans, and structure new positions. Finally, they can help illustrate the structure and expectations of an organization and be a useful tool in the creation of program policies and procedures.

By having comprehensive job descriptions, as well as an identified process to keep them current, RESC 18 ensures that management has the tools necessary to conduct fair staff evaluations, hire new staff, and make strategic organizational changes when needed.

Accomplishment: The leadership and management at RESC 18 have developed formal job descriptions and a structured process to update them annually.

CROSS-TRAINING

The region's Business Office employees who perform all of the financial functions for Region 18 are effectively cross-trained to perform the following:

- accounting;
- payroll;
- employee benefits;
- purchasing and inventory;
- purchasing cooperative; and

- school finance – accountability/support.

The staff in the Business Office is cross-trained in most functions provided by the office. This results in appropriate coverage of duties during periods of vacation or sick time and indicates that the center is functioning in a cohesive and efficient manner.

Accomplishment: The management and staff of the Business Office at Region 18 have cross-trained their staff to ensure that no interruptions occur in the financial operations of the center.

DEBT SERVICE

RESC 18 currently has no debt service.

Future construction and renovation will be funded through the designated fund balance. At the board's June 10, 2004 meeting, the executive director informed the directors that they will be soliciting bids for the painting of the interior of the conference center and the lower portion for the exterior of the building. These projects will be funded through designated reserves.

Accomplishment: The absence of debt service contributes to the center's healthy fund balance, which in turn permits the funding of construction, facility repairs and alteration projects.

INTERNAL SERVICE FUND

RESC 18 uses an Internal Service Fund for vehicle replacement that is very effective.

The fund generates approximately $175,000 per year and is based on $.35 per mile charged to the component user. Since the center maintains a fleet of 25 vehicles, it is vital that an appropriate vehicle replacement plan be in place.

The center replaces approximately three vehicles every year. This Internal Service Fund provides the adequate funding for the replacement of these vehicles, as well as the maintenance and repair of all other center vehicles, and thus the need for capital expenditures for vehicle replacement will not occur.

Accomplishment: The Internal Service Fund for RESC 18's vehicle replacement program is an appropriate funding mechanism for vehicle purchases, maintenance, and repair.

BUDGETING PROCESS

RESC 18's budgeting process and reports reflect a clear and logical plan.

The financial information used to develop the 2003-04 official budget provides an easy-to-follow audit trail regarding resource allocation. The process used to arrive at the final budget amounts is well done, with clear directions to Center staff, appropriate follow-up and adequate reporting to the Board of Directors.

The center's strategic plan addresses as one of its objectives the demonstration of efficient fiscal management in all aspects of RESC operations. This is accomplished through financial activities, including annual budget preparation and amendments (approximately six per year), targeted completion dates, responsibility assignments and evidence of successful completion of activities.

Accomplishment: The Region 18 budgeting process and reports are comprehensive and contain all necessary information.

ALTERNATIVE SOURCE OF FUNDING

RESC 18 successfully obtains alternative sources of funding for innovative programs. The center recently received a $900,000 Target Grant to purchase, furnish and utilize a mobile technology bus which will travel throughout the region to school districts for technology training. The bus will be equipped with laptops, printers, internet capability and other state-of-the-art technology that will provide teachers and students with an excellent learning tool.

Accomplishment: RESC 18 is successful at obtaining grants and other sources of funding for the provision of unique and mission critical services to member districts.

PURCHASING PROCESS

RESC 18 ensures that all center employees know and understand the center's purchasing processes and thresholds by providing clear and concise instructions in the Employee Handbook and on the RESC Web site.

The Employee Handbook and the center's Web site contain clear directions on how to prepare and process purchasing documents. The center uses a purchase requisition ("work order") approval process and the work order is converted to a six-part purchase order. Each part is distributed to the appropriate staff member; four staying in the Business Office for processing and payment authorization; and two are forwarded to the originating office. The originating office returns one portion to Business Office once merchandise has been received.

The process for routing, approving and managing the purchase requisition process is clear and easily understood by all users.

Accomplishment: RESC 18 ensures that all center employees know and understand the center's purchasing processes and thresholds by providing clear and concise instructions in the Employee Handbook and on the RESC Web site.

PURCHASING COOPERATIVE

Region 18 coordinates a successful purchasing cooperative for its member districts for the purchase of office supplies, teaching supplies, computer products and paper products.

This process is an annual purchase activity and provides districts the opportunity to gain lower prices for these products. Because of volume, the vendors provide items at a lower cost to districts in the cooperative. The center's purchasing agent maintains a schedule with prices and issues bids for the provision of these goods on an annual basis.

The cost for this cooperative is $500 per district. Currently, there are 39 districts participating in the cooperative, 12 of which are from outside of Region 18. Six districts within the region have chosen not to participate in the cooperative.

Accomplishment: Region 18 manages a successful purchasing cooperative activity for school districts within the region and for some districts residing in other regions.

CASH INVESTMENTS

Region 18 invests its cash surplus wisely. The center does not have any investments. It receives a higher interest rate (1.15%) on its two checking accounts, than it would participating in TexPool investments (.93%). Additionally, the center does not have petty cash, except for $75 in a locked box for the purpose of making change. Its cash management activities consist of the two checking accounts: one interest bearing account for payroll; and the other for operating expenses. As of May 31, 2004, the center had a cash balance of $1,851,576. The ending balance for FY 2002-03 was $3,187,289 and for FY 2001-02, $4,212,815.

Accomplishment: Region 18 carefully analyzes market conditions to generate the highest returns on its investments.

TECHNOLOGY TOOLS

RESC 18 uses several tools to minimize their need to travel to district sites and improve their response time to clients' ad hoc training and technical support needs.

Staff use password-enabled remote desktop communication tools to provide technical support and training without having to be on-site. Virtual Network Computing (VNC) and Microsoft NetMeeting allow staff to provide prompt guidance on how to accomplish software-related tasks or troubleshoot server and network problems.

With the advance permission of districts, RESC 18 staff also use Remote Desktop Protocol (RDP), which ensures them 24-hour

access to districts' systems. This tool allows RESC 18 staff to address client software, server, and network problems while district staff are away from their desks, minimizing any adverse service impacts on clients' productivity. These remote communication tools can be downloaded for free and are therefore readily available for other Service Centers to use with their regional clients.

Accomplishment: RESC 18's use of VNC, NetMeeting, and RDP allows staff to provide prompt and low-cost support to school districts.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS FEE STRUCTURE

RESC 18 is actively developing a use policy and fee structure for its telecommunications network to address findings that the system is currently subsidizing colleges' and universities' distance learning services. RESC 18's telecommunications network, EDLINK 18, provides comprehensive email, Internet, videoconferencing, distance learning, filtering, firewall, virus protection, FTP, and DNS services to the region's 33 school districts. EDLINK 18 is fully funded by Chapter 41 WADA funds. During FY 2003-04, RESC 18 technology staff learned that EDLINK 18's distance learning component was being used by local colleges and universities to provide distance learning options to college students, rather than just high school students seeking dual-credit courses. College students would attend these classes at district videoconferencing sites, either alongside high school students or in a separate classroom. Because institutions of higher learning do not contribute any funding to EDLINK 18, school districts essentially were subsidizing the colleges' and universities' distance learning services.

RESC 18 staff were active in addressing this issue and immediately sought to develop a formal use policy for colleges and universities. Before developing this policy and an accompanying fee structure, RESC 18 staff surveyed other service centers for their input. They learned that no other center had yet developed a formal policy to govern whether and how colleges and universities' used such networks. RESC 18 therefore developed its own policy and used actual costs and feedback from the region's higher education institutions on willingness to pay to develop a fee structure.

At the time of this report, this policy and fee structure are in draft format and under review by RESC 18 leadership. RESC 18 expects to implement the policy and fee structure during FY 2004-05 and plans to share its product with other service centers to guide them in similar efforts.

Accomplishment: RESC 18 developed a formal use policy and fee structure for its distance learning service which can serve as a guideline for other service centers.

DETAILED FINDINGS

ALPINE SATELLITE OFFICE

There is no receptionist or office clerk at the RESC satellite office in Alpine and the office has not been managed effectively.

RESC 18 has a satellite office located in Alpine, Texas, and approximately 165 miles from the central office in Midland. As shown in **Exhibit 18-9**, RESC 18 serves districts as close as 10 miles one-way and as far as 300 miles one-way driving distance. Interviews with current satellite staff, administrators, and board members show a need for district accessibility to RESC 18 program services personnel at this location. The current staff located at the satellite office include two early childhood intervention consultants, a field agent, and an educational consultant.

Exhibit 18-9
Estimated One-Way Mileage from RESC 18
to Member Districts
2004

Member Districts	Round Trip Mileage
Andrews ISD	76
Alphine ISD	328
Balmorhea ISD	244
Big Spring ISD	98
Buena Vista ISD	134
Coahoma ISD	120
Crane ISD	84
Culberson County ISD	346
Ector County ISD	20
Forsan ISD	116
Fort Davis ISD	316
Fort Stockton ISD	194
Glassock County ISD	94
Grady ISD	70
Grandfalls-Royalty ISD	130
Greenwood ISD	20
Iraan Sheffield ISD	186
Kermit ISD	112
Marathon ISD	310
Marfa ISD	358
McCamey ISD	126
Midland ISD	20
Monahans Wickett Pyote ISD	92
Pecos Barstow Toyah ISD	170
Presidio ISD	476
Rankin ISD	130
Reagan County ISD	174
San Vicente ISD	460
Stanton ISD	56
Terlingua CSD	520
Terrell County ISD	334
Valentine ISD	428
Wink Loving ISD	128

Source: RESC 18, 2004.

Due to the remoteness of member districts in the southern part of the region, satellite staff is rarely in the office, cannot access voice mail from remote locations, and superintendents have limited access in contacting staff at the office. Staff reflect that they often miss telephone calls, patrons drop by the office and no one is there to greet them, and if the office is frequently unoccupied, districts have no access to materials.

Exhibit 18-10 lists the current job description for the receptionist/clerk position at RESC 18.

Exhibit 18-10
Job Description Receptionist/Clerk

TITLE **Receptionist/Clerk**

QUALIFICATIONS: **High school diploma or equivalent work experience**

a. Must be able to communicate with the public in a pleasing and efficient manner.
b. Must be able to operate the telephone call director.
e. Must have knowledge of clerical or office skills, such as typing, word processing, and database management.
d. Must be able to demonstrate organizational skills.
e. Must be able to follow instructions.

Personal Characteristics:

a. Punctuality and Initiative
b. Tidiness of work area and effective organization of work
c. High quality of work and production of work
d. Attitudes and habits of helpfulness in working with fellow employees
e. Efficient time utilization
f. Ethical conduct

Other Considerations:

a. Must possess the qualities of voice, temperament, and emotions to constantly maintain good public relations with clients with whom she comes into contact either by telephone or in person.
b. Must always dress and conduct herself /himself in a manner that will present a good image of Region l8 Education Service Center to clients.

RESPONSIBILITIES: The Receptionist/Clerk shall assume the following responsibilities:

a. Answer the telephone and direct calls to the appropriate persons.
b. Take and deliver all telephone messages.
c. Receive guests at front entrance and make them comfortable.
d. Notify the proper person or department that there is a visitor; supply his or her name, business affiliation, and purpose of call.
e. Stay at desk at all times, unless being relieved for breaks and lunch.
f Produce contracts and maintain database for outside consultants, conference rooms, and other contracted services when provided requests.
g. Produce and maintain weekly consultant schedule.
h. Organize information via tickler file system and disseminate in a timely manner.
i. Maintain a current directory of Center personnel and their telephone extensions.
j. Before leaving in the evening, set up call director for night calls and record and take messages on answering machine.
k. Work under the general supervision of the Deputy Executive Director, performing recurring duties in accordance with established procedures.
l. Accept constructive criticism as a means of self-improvement.
m. Maintain a positive attitude toward improving self-enrichment skills.
n. Perform other duties as assigned.

Source: RESC Business Office, 2004.

RESC 18 should hire a receptionist/clerk position for the Alpine, Texas RESC 18 satellite office. By implementing this recommendation, RESC 18 should provide for an occupied office and the function of an office clerk to manage the office in support of staff members who are frequently traveling to remote districts.

The current salary for the receptionist/clerk position at RESC 18 is $20,975. The costs of adding this position will be $20,975 in salary, plus $4,492 in benefits, for a total of $25,467 However, if the service center chooses to implement this recommendation, funds saved by deleting the deputy executive director position can be used to fund the added receptionist/clerk in the Alpine, Texas satellite office. The first year is reduced by 50 percent due to the implementation beginning in January 2005.

CONTRACTS WITH VENDORS

RESC 18 has failed to maintain valid contracts with vendors.

RESC 18 does not maintain valid contracts with its lawn maintenance and pest control vendors. RESC 18's agreement with Alldredge Gardens lists only the vendor's services, and does not provide a contract date, amount, representative name, or signature. The contract with Boydston-Witten Pest Control, dated January 2001, identifies services and a payment schedule and is signed by a Boydston representative, but not by a RESC 18 representative. RESC 18's failure to maintain valid contracts places the service center in financial risk and also creates the potential for additional work on the part of RESC employees when misunderstandings regarding contractual terms and obligations occur.

Best practice states that when agreements are reached between parties that involve committing either or both parties to specific action, that these agreements should be reduced to writing. Creating these written contracts then forms the basis for avoiding misunderstandings and costly errors.

RESC 18 should review all facilities maintenance contracts to ensure that they are accurate, valid, and provide services at the lowest cost. The RESC 18 purchasing agent should contact the center's vendors to review and formalize its current contracts. The purchasing agent should also develop a contract review schedule to ensure all contracts are up-to-date and reviewed on a regular basis.

FIRE ALARM SERVICE

RESC 18 does not maintain an off-site, monitored fire alarm service.

A review of fire alarm inspection records shows that the service center has no off-site monitoring of its fire alarm system, a practice confirmed by its maintenance staff. Should a fire occur when staff are not on-site, a prompt emergency response is unlikely. Additionally, if only a few staff are on-site when a fire occurs and a fire incapacitates them, it is unlikely that they (or the building) would receive prompt emergency response.

RESC 18 should contract with the current fire alarm or security system providers for a monitored fire alarm system. The RESC 18 maintenance supervisor and purchasing agent should coordinate to ensure that the center has an off-site monitored fire alarm system. This may be done as part of the contract review process recommended in Recommendation H-2. The cost of this service is established at $300 per year. The first year savings is reduced by 50 percent due to the implementation beginning in January 2005.

FIRE ALARM INSPECTIONS

RESC 18's fire alarm system are not inspected on an annual basis.

Industry standards recommend that fire alarms in commercial buildings be inspected annually by a fire alarm technician and a copy of the inspection report sent to the local Fire Marshal's office. A review of RESC 18's fire alarm inspection records indicate that the most recent inspections were conducted in June 2004 and May 2002, indicating a two-year

inspection gap. Without regular inspections, the service center is less likely to address system deficiencies that can place the facility's capital and employees at risk.

RESC 18 should Conduct fire alarm inspections annually. To assist in tracking the inspection schedules, the maintenance supervisor should maintain a calendar of required facilities maintenance systems inspections.

SPECIAL POPULATIONS DEPARTMENT

RESC 18 does not have an effective organizational structure for providing services in the Special Populations Department. The department is understaffed.

RESC 18 has approximately 10 instructional consultants in the Special Populations component. **Exhibit 18-11** shows the organizational structure of the Special Population Department at RESC 18 and the programs and services that are provided by consultants. As shown, each consultant is responsible for specific programs, yet there is expected overlap in service areas and program needs.

According to RESC 18 administrators, legislative budget cuts resulted in the loss of 21 positions at RESC 18 for the 2003-04 school year. As a result of this funding reduction, three consultant positions were eliminated in RESC 18 from the Special Populations Department. The responsibilities of these three positions were distributed to remaining staff members and consultants. This redistribution of tasks and responsibilities has placed undue pressure on remaining staff. During on-site interviews, staff reflected that while tasks are still being completed, the actual time that was previously allocated to direct, campus-based training and technical assistance has been reduced due to the increased workload this school year.

Overall, staff reflected that the additional responsibilities, specifically in the Bilingual/ESL, low-incidence, and teacher certification programs has created considerable reduction in the total amount of time that districts can count on consultants being available to meet their district needs.

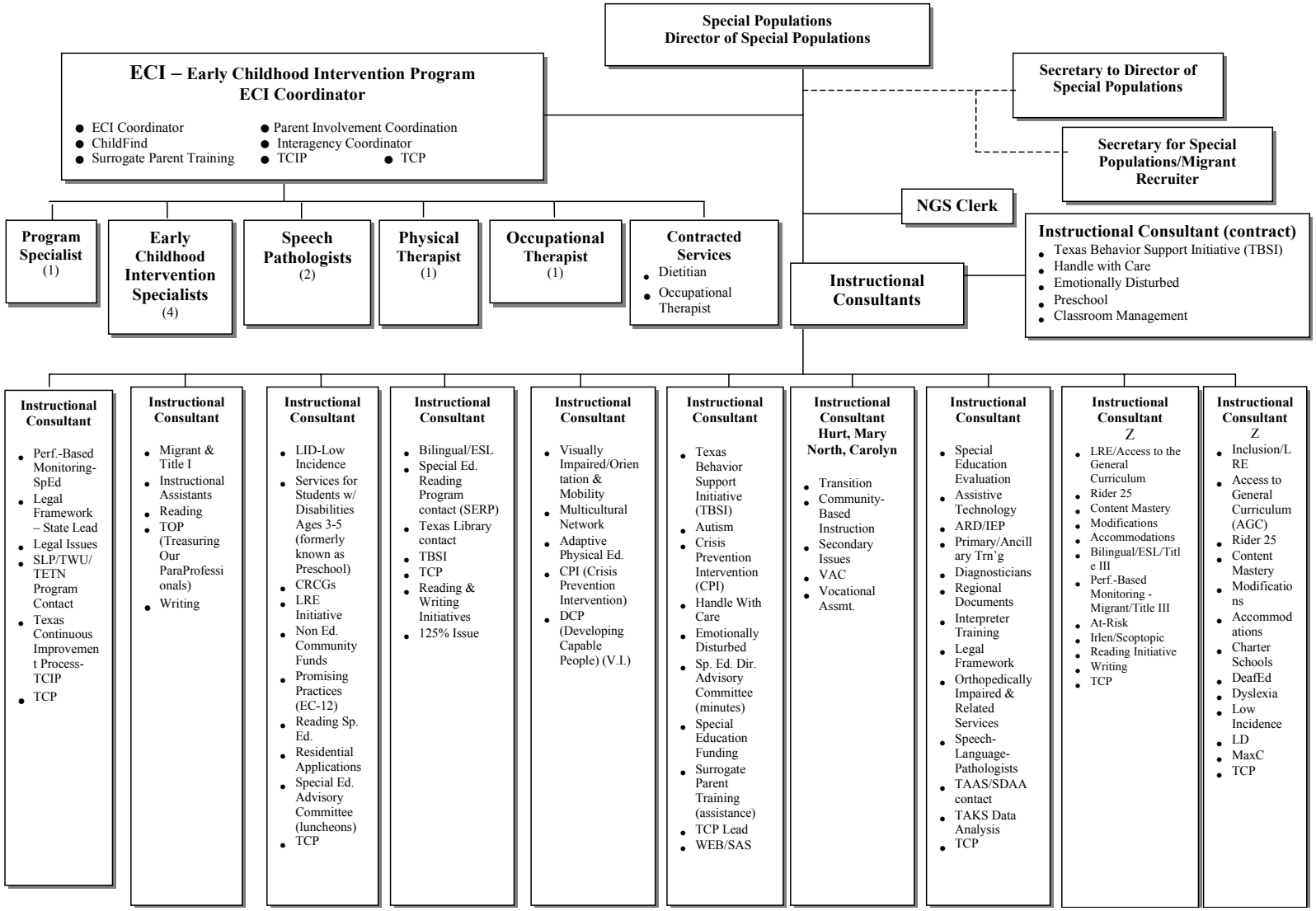
RESC 18 should create one instructional consultant position for the special populations component at RESC 18. By implementing this recommendation, RESC 18 should shift tasks and responsibilities for specific programs and services from existing Special Population consultants to create a more efficient and effective component. Each consultant position should be specifically defined for the unique programs for which they are providing services. Since one of the positions that was lost was specifically designed to provide services and technical assistance to Bilingual/ESL programs in districts, this new position should be viewed as an effort to create more efficient and effective services to Bilingual/ESL programs throughout member districts. Directors should meet with the executive director and current staff members to determine the redistribution of tasks and responsibilities when designing this position.

The current salary for instructional consultant for Special Populations is $51,796. The costs of adding this position will be $51,796 in salary, plus $5,072 in benefits, for an annual cost of $56,868.23. The first year is reduced by 50 percent due to the implementation date should begin in January 2005.

TOLL-FREE NUMBER

RESC 18 does not use a toll-free number to provide remote access for personnel and member districts to contact the RESC 18 satellite office located in Alpine.

Exhibit 18-11
Special Population Component
Organization
2004-05



Source: RESC 18, 2004.

RESC 18 has a satellite office located in Alpine, Texas, and approximately 165 miles from the central office in Midland. Due to the remoteness of member districts in the southern part of the region, satellite staff is rarely in the office, cannot access voice mail from remote locations, and superintendents have limited access in contacting staff at the office. Interviews with current satellite staff, administrators, and Board members revealed a need for district accessibility to RESC 18 program services personnel at this location. As previously shown in **Exhibit 18-2**, RESC 18 serves districts as close as 10 miles one-way and as far as 300 miles one-way driving distance.

RESC 18 currently has contracted with NTS Communications, Inc. for its telephone services, specifically the toll-free phone number for RESC 18. NTS Communications, Inc. has a local office located in Midland, Texas, and is considered one of the largest privately owned long distance companies in the nation. NTS's facilities-based local dial tone for businesses offers single billing for long distance, toll-free, local, and data services. NTS also offers call-waiting, caller-ID, voice mail, and bundled packages for its customers. According to the NTS Web site, toll-free rates for business local dial tone (Texas customers only) ranges from $0.079 (one-year installation) to $0.049 (three-year installation). There is a flat rate $1.00 per month and $5.00 initial installation fee.

RESC 18 should add a toll-free number to the existing primary business line to provide remote access for personnel and member districts to contact the RESC 18 satellite office located in Alpine, Texas. By implementing this recommendation, RESC 18 should establish remote access for satellite program services personnel to a voice mail system to retrieve messages from member districts and stakeholders across the state. Furthermore, superintendents and other district personnel will have a communication system established at no cost to them as a means of contacting RESC 18 staff.

LISTSERV

RESC 18 does not use a Listserv to assist in providing follow-up assistance for participants who receive training in member districts.

Each department (component) receives feedback from all workshop participants regarding the information they were presented. Participants provide feedback about the medium through which the workshop was designed (i.e., distance learning, PowerPoint presentation, handouts, interactive, technology-based, etc.) and the content of the workshop. Follow-up technical assistance is offered to all participants yet RESC 18 has not established a standardized medium to provide this assistance. Participants are welcome to email workshop facilitators with questions and concerns following attendance. Due to the extreme distance between many of the member districts served by RESC 18, several consultants indicate a willingness to provide feedback using various technology-based systems.

RESC 18 should establish a Listserv for all training participants to provide follow-up technical assistance following workshops and professional development activities at RESC 18. By implementing this recommendation, RESC 18 should provide feedback and follow-up technical assistance using various technology-based systems.

JOB ANNOUNCEMENTS AND APPLICATIONS

There is no single staff member responsible for overseeing the job announcement and applicant review process at RESC 18. Hiring functions are decentralized across service components and each component director develops needed vacancy announcements, interview questions, applicant scoring matrices, response letters, and interview processes. This practice leads to duplication of effort and a lack of formal controls.

MGT reviewed four available RESC 18 vacancy announcements and found that they provided varying levels of information about

open positions. **Exhibit 18-12** demonstrates differences among the four announcements.

As shown in **Exhibit 18-12**, the vacancy announcements differ notably in the types of information conveyed to applicants. All announcements indicate a minimum education requirement, but only one indicates the appropriate field of study. Two announcements indicate how the starting salary would be determined and the supervisor's title, while the others make no mention of this information. Furthermore, one announcement provides no information about the position's responsibilities, and two announcements provide only a general description. These outcomes indicate that the lack of formal controls over the service center's hiring process has allowed RESC 18 to communicate inconsistent levels of information to potential job applicants.

Exhibit 18-12
Variation in Information Included in RESC 18 Vacancy Announcements

Vacancy Announcement Information	Job Titles			
	Field Service Agent	Special Education Instructional Consultant	Early Childhood Intervention Specialist	Instructional Consultant for Special Education
Education Requirement	✔	✔	✔	✔
Field of Study (for Education Requirement)			✔	
Minimum experience	✔	✔	✔	✔
Necessary skills and knowledge	✔	✔	✔	✔
General description of responsibilities		✔	✔	✔
Detailed description of responsibilities				✔
Supervisor's Title	✔			✔
Starting Salary	✔			✔

Source: RESC 18 vacancy announcements available online at www/esc18.net and provided to MGT in a prepared data file, June 2004.

RESC 18 should create a structured hiring process to minimize duplication of effort and to ensure that all vacancy announcements convey the same level of information and all component directors follow similar hiring procedures. Given the staff size at RESC 18, it may not be practical for the service center to designate a full-time human resources position. However, the center should appoint a staff member to oversee its hiring functions and ensure that component directors and other leadership staff follow standard procedures. This staff member should provide guidance and oversight to ensure that vacancy announcements communicate a minimum level of information, components follow identical applicant review and interview processes, and respond to applicants in a timely and appropriate manner. Additionally, this staff member should ensure that component staff are not duplicating efforts unnecessarily.

STAFF EVALUATION

There is no staff member at RESC 18 responsible for overseeing the staff evaluation process and ensuring that each component follows the center's expected procedures.

Similar to the hiring process, staff evaluation functions are decentralized across the various components. Component directors and other

leadership staff independently establish evaluation schedules, develop evaluation forms, and maintain those forms amongst their administrative files. This practice has led to a lack of formal controls and failure to evaluate staff on a regular basis. During interviews, several staff indicated that they are not evaluated on a regular basis and some indicated that they had never been formally evaluated.

The decentralized practice has also led to duplication of effort, as each component director develops forms to evaluate their staff. A review of individual components' staff evaluation forms revealed that managers use a wide variety of criteria and rating scales. Additionally, some managers had not developed any specialized criteria and simply used the Service Center's *General Administration Formative/Summative Conference* form. This document lists only the employee's name, supervisor's name, date and time, and leaves space for staff to list topics discussed during the evaluation.

The lack of formal controls over RESC 18's staff evaluation process has led to inequitable practices. Staff are evaluated according to varying schedules, and some have never received the feedback necessary for professional growth and improvement. Staff should be evaluated regularly to ensure they receive the mentoring and feedback needed to improve their performance and contribute to the success of the Service Center.

Additionally, the scope of feedback received by staff varies significantly. While some receive feedback that relates directly to their job responsibilities, others receive feedback that is very general and non-structured. To ensure equitable evaluation practices that give all staff an opportunity for professional growth, the service center should establish common evaluation criteria that focus on service center objectives, as well as unique criteria relating to individual job descriptions.

Exhibit 18-13 lists both standard and specialized criteria that RESC 18 may consider in revising its evaluation form.

Exhibit 18-13
Standard Staff Evaluation Criteria

- Observes designated work hours
- Adheres to the policies and procedures of the Service Center.
- Displays a pleasant, courteous, and helpful manner.
- Establishes and maintains effective working relationships with colleagues.
- Establishes and maintains effective working relationships with clients.
- Meets project deadlines established by supervisor.
- Accepts responsibility for individual workload.
- Assists others with overflow tasks.
- Effectively uses technology appropriate for the job assignment,
- Maintains accurate and up-to-date records in area of responsibility and submits them in a timely manner.
- Produces accurate products (use of proper grammar, spelling, and punctuation).
- Plans and schedules work effectively.
- Demonstrates effective public relations skills with Service Center partners.
- Is self-directed and can be relied upon to do the job with minimal supervision.
- Provides effective leadership in planning, developing, implementing, and evaluating programs in area(s) of responsibility.
- Designs and delivers staff development and training for clients in area of responsibility.
- Effectively supervises and evaluates personnel assigned to department/division.
- Prepares budget and supervises expenditures in area of responsibility.

Source: RESC 12 Employee Appraisal Form, 2004.

RESC 18 should create a structured staff evaluation process to ensure that all staff are evaluated regularly and fairly. The RESC 18 should appoint a staff member to oversee its evaluation process and ensure that staff are evaluated according to the Executive Director' expectations. To facilitate an accountability review, RESC 18 should develop a common file location for all staff evaluation forms.

The service center should also develop evaluation forms that address standard evaluation criteria. While there should be some variation amongst staff's evaluation criteria, there should also be a minimum level of standardization to ensure that all staff receive fair and adequate feedback. The RESC 18 should standardize evaluation forms to ensure that all staff are evaluated according to common skills and responsibilities. This form should be structured to ensure flexibility, allowing component directors and managers to identify additional evaluation criteria that align with staff's individual job descriptions.

AUDITOR MANAGEMENT LETTER

During the past five years (1997-1998 through 2002-2003), the auditors preparing the Regional Education Service Center's Annual Financial Report have not provided a management letter. A management letter is a formal, written document that conveys the auditor's findings and observations regarding particular aspects of their client's operations.

These documents typically encompass issues such as internal controls, purchasing practices, accounting policies and procedures, and financial reporting practices. The lack of a management letter implies that there are no major internal control issues in Region 18. This was confirmed in a telephone conversation with the RESC's auditor.

The Annual Financial Report includes the auditor's opinion letter and all of the necessary financial statements, footnote disclosures, and the Management's Discussion and Analysis disclosures to comply with current governmental accounting principles as promulgated by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) as well as reports required by the federal government relating to the Single Audit Act which mandates an independent financial and compliance audit of federal financial assistance programs. This report provides a picture of the overall financial position of RESC 18, but it lacks additional information that could be used to more effectively communicate how the financial activity for the fiscal year has impacted the programs and services provided by RESC 18.

RESC 18 should inform the center's auditor that it should be more cognizant of center shortcomings, such as those presented in this chapter, and report recommendations as to how to eliminate shortcomings. The implementation of this recommendation will result in a greater level of internal controls for the Regional Education Service Center.

REVENUE SOURCE

RESC 18 is not actively seeking alternative revenue sources or cost savings from non-curriculum program areas.

The recent decrease in state and local funding has significantly impacted the delivery of services to the center's districts as is evidenced by the $1,859,388 (25.49 percent) decrease in expenditures for curriculum and instructional staff development. Curriculum and instructional staff development are critical components of the services offered to the center's member school districts. Efforts should be made to not sacrifice these services when revenue sources decrease.

Exhibit 18-14 depicts a three-year comparison of RESC 18 revenues, expenditures and fund balance. The exhibit shows that even though revenues at the state and local levels decreased substantially from FY 2001-02 to FY 2002-03 (14.70 percent and 8.74 percent, respectively), the fund balance increased significantly (15.62 percent), due primarily to the previous finding of a decrease in curriculum and instructional staff development. Exhibit 18-14 also shows a plant maintenance and operations increase of $239,762 (91.27 percent) and a school district

Exhibit 18-14
Three-Year Comparison of Revenues, Expenditures, and Fund Balance

Revenues/Expenditures	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	Increase (Decrease) 2001–02 to 2002–03 Amount	Increase (Decrease) 2001–02 to 2002–03 Percentage
Revenues					
Local and Intermediate Sources	$3,347,283	$5,942,242	$5,423,131	($519,111)	-8.74%
State Program Revenues	3,115,359	3,087,266	2,633,285	(453,981)	-14.70%
Federal Program Revenues	4,087,376	3,351,691	3,376,490	24,799	0.74%
Total Revenues	**10,550,018**	**12,381,199**	**11,432,906**	**(948,293)**	**-7.66%**
Expenditures					
Instruction	584,540	558,229	687,737	129,508	23.20%
Instructional Resources & Media Services	157,771	149,669	143,012	(6,657)	-4.45%
Curriculum & Instructional Staff Development	5,831,362	7,295,722	5,436,334	(1,859,388)	-25.49%
Instructional Leadership	50,481	17,133	0	(17,133)	-100.00%
General Administration	788,039	887,785	803,350	(84,435)	-9.51%
Plant Maintenance & Operations	305,926	262,687	502,449	239,762	91.27%
Data Processing Services	1,123,232	1,255,290	1,192,954	(62,336)	-4.97%
School District Administrative Support	1,053,149	1,180,109	1,479,906	299,797	25.40%
Facilities Acquisition and Construction	312,903	624,099	640,956	16,857	2.70%
Payments to Fiscal Agent/Member District of SSA	278,879	267,293	186,891	(80,402)	-30.08%
Total Expenditures	**10,486,282**	**12,498,016**	**11,073,589**	**(1,424,427)**	**-11.40%**
Excess of Revenues Over Expenditures	63,736	(116,817)	359,317	476,134	
Other Financing Sources (Uses)					
Transfers In	55,570	102,906	154,190	51,284	**49.84%**
Transfers Out	-55,570	(126,242)	(111,869)	14,373	**11.39%**
Total Other Financing Sources (Uses)	0	(23,336)	42,321	65,657	
Net Change in Fund Balance	**63,736**	**(140,153)**	**401,638**	**541,791**	
Beginning Fund Balance	3,621,661	3,965,485	3,825,332	(140,153)	**-3.53%**
Transfer from Internal Service Fund	298,026	0	0	0	**0.00%**
Ending Fund Balance	**$3,983,423**	**$3,825,332**	**$4,226,970**	**$597,337**	**15.62%**

Source: Annual Financial Reports, 2000-2001 to 2002-2003.

administrative support increase of $299,797 (25.40 percent) in expenditures. The center thus increased the fund balance and spent more on their building and cut back on educational services provided.

The region staff stated the cause of this increase in the fund balance and spending more on their building was due to:

> "The fund balance did increase due to the fact that the region staff was notified that state and federal funding would be cut, the management made the decision not to expand any local sources for travel and materials, in case they were put in a situation that they had to use fund balance to stay open when funds were cut, recaptured, or put on hold. The fund balance that was being spent on the building was designated for that purpose and was never intended to be used for staffing. We are limited to the amount of undesignated fund balance we have on hand and it appears that this report reflects both designated and undesignated fund balance."

RESC 18 should seek alternative revenue sources and cost savings from other areas to ensure that the proper level of curriculum and staff development is provided to school districts. Alternative revenue sources, including grants not typically awarded, such as the $900,000 Target Grant for the center's Mobile Technology Bus, should be researched and obtained to provide additional funding for educational services.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The inclusion of the Internal Service Funds in the center's Financial Statements provides inaccurate information on the estimated revenues and expenditures for Region 18. Internal Service Funds are used as a tool to accurately distribute the total costs for certain central services to user departments or programs within a governmental entity.

Region 18 includes the following internal service funds in its financial statements:

- motor pool;
- print shop;
- worker's compensation;
- unemployment compensation;
- computer usage;
- telecommunications;
- buildings and grounds; and
- salaries and fringe benefits.

Because the revenues of the internal service funds are generated by expenditures in the General or Special Revenue Funds, the inclusion of internal service funds revenues and expenditures for purposes of summarizing the overall financial position the center results in an overstatement of millions of dollars in revenues and expenditures in the amounts attributable to the internal service funds.

RESC 18 should show the total revenues and expenditures for RESC 18 financial statements without reporting Internal Service Funds. This change in reporting will provide an accurate representation of revenues and expenditures when presenting financial statements.

TIMESHEETS

RESC 18 uses an excellent process for recording time and effort for hourly employees that reconciles to payroll time sheets resulting in an accurate allocation of payroll costs to various programs and services. However, salaried employees are not required to submit timesheets or activity reports, unless their time is charged to a specific fund for specific activities. This results in a lack of accountability and potential staff inefficiencies.

RESC 18 should require salaried employees to submit timesheets depicting activities performed on a bi-weekly basis in the same manner as hourly employees. Implementing the use of timesheets for salaried employees will yield a more productive workforce and result in greater staff accountability.

FINANCIAL SOFTWARE PACKAGE

The RSCCC2K financial software package, used by the center and purchased from Region

20, does not have an accounts receivable module.

The center currently uses the accounts payable function and the addition of the accounts receivable function would result in an integrated accounting function. As a result of the current process, the accounts receivable are processed on the FoxPro system and then entered into the main financial system at the end of each month. This is a duplication of effort and thus an inefficient use of staff time.

RESC 18 should ensure that RESC 20, developer of RSCCC2K, provides the accounts receivable function quickly and be incorporated in the software package. Once the accounts receivable module is developed in RSCCC2K, the center's financial system will be fully integrated and will eliminate duplication of effort.

PURCHASING REQUISITION MODULE

The center, as part of the RSCCC2K financial software package, currently owns an automated purchasing system, but prefers to perform all purchasing functions manually.

The manual purchasing process involves requisitions, purchase orders, encumbrances, payments, etc. Using the manual system results in longer processing time, more opportunities for human error and an abundance of paperwork.

RESC 18 should utilize the RSCCC2K Requisition Module to capture requisition requests and generate purchase orders for vendors. The requisition module is a part of the current software package and should be used to generate purchase orders.

CONTRACTING PROCESS

Region 18 does not have a contracting process that ensures internal policies and TEA regulations are not violated.

The center has several contracts (landscaping, pest control, and alarm systems) that have not been rebid or legally renewed in at least three years. An analysis of these contracts, all of which exceed $300 annually, showed that there was no extension clause, yet they were extended without any documentation or bid process. Additionally, any purchase below $300 does not require competitive bidding, but does require that vendors participating in the cooperative be given priority. Currently, there is no process or documentation for verifying if the priority has been given nor attempted.

RESC 18 should follow the center's own internal policies and TEA regulations when contracting and rebid all contracts on an annual basis, unless specifically permitted in contract documents. The annual bid process of all contracts should result in a competitive process, thereby allowing the center to choose who can provide the best service or product at the best price.

FUEL PURCHASES

Region 18 does not receive consistent, detailed billing for fuel purchases.

The center currently has a procurement card procedure to allow center staff to make fuel and other necessary and justifiable purchases when in the field. A detailed procedure has been implemented for using gasoline cards (currently there are five different gasoline vendors) and department store credit cards (Wal Mart, Hobby Lobby, Office Depot and Home Depot).

Of the five approved gasoline vendors, only West Texas Gas, Inc., provides a monthly itemized invoice depicting date of use, driver, vehicle identification number, date and time of purchase, purchase price, number of gallons purchased and total fuel cost. MGT data show that the other four vendors submit a monthly invoice which provides only the amount owed.

RESC 18 should require all gasoline vendors to submit detailed billing information. A detailed invoice will ensure accountability from the vendor and Center staff while providing specific information on gasoline expenditures.

SELECTION OF CONTRACTORS/VENDORS

Region 18 does not apply quantifiable selection criteria for the selection of its contractors/vendors, which is typically standard in contracting to determine the most qualified vendor to provide goods or services. According to the center's "Formal Bid Process," no mention is made as to the selection criteria for vendors.

An example was provided where a low bidder was chosen as a vendor, but had not performed the contracted type of work previously. Eventually, another contractor was hired to finish the work the low bidder could not satisfactorily perform. In this case, quantifiable selection criteria would have resulted in a more qualified contractor being selected.

Selection criteria should at a minimum consider the bidder's qualifications, experience and price. Each criterion should be weighted according to the center's priorities (i.e. – are qualifications more important than price, if so, assign it a higher weight), and scored appropriately by a selection committee. The bidder with the highest score would be awarded the contract.

RESC 18 should develop quantifiable selection criteria to determine the most qualified vendor. Selection criteria, if established correctly and applied uniformly, will permit the center to identify and select the most qualified vendor to provide the desired goods or services.

MOTOR POOL FLEET

RESC 18 lacks internal controls for its motor pool fleet.

Due to the immense geographic distribution of RESC 18 member districts, the center has a fleet of 25 vehicles for staff to use in the field providing services to a district or school. The current process for signing out a vehicle consists of an employee selecting a "vehicle packet" from a locker located in the employee break room which contains packets for all 25 vehicles. Staff then signs a log sheet next to the locker to identify selected vehicle. The packets contain vehicle keys and five gasoline credit cards. This locker is left unlocked during the day and staff has access through an honor system. In order to minimize theft potential for vehicles, credit cards or loss of keys or credit cards, the locker should remain locked and authorized employees given keys to the locker.

It would be easy for an employee, visitor or stranger to walk into the room, take a packet and drive away with a vehicle. Although no loss has occurred and the vehicles are insured, the potential loss for this lack of a secure process is approximately $500,000 for the vehicles and another several thousand for the gasoline cards.

RESC 18 should create a secure process for checking out center vehicles. An authorized fleet manager residing in a centralized location should be responsible for keeping the locker locked at all times as part of the vehicle sign out process. This type of process will protect the center's fleet and minimize the potential for theft or loss.

MANUAL INVENTORY PROCESS

Region 18's manual inventory process is time consuming and inefficient. The process for the center's fixed assets is only partially automated.

The center purchases large expense items each year which are considered fixed assets (computers, etc.), which are marked with a numbered tag that identifies each asset. This process is currently performed manually be the purchasing agent. The tag number and other information are then and entered into a database and an inventory is conducted annually with a follow-up on missing items. The inventory is performed by the purchasing agent and one additional employee and consists of checking off items on a database report as they are identified. The largest expense item in inventory is the EDLINK 18 equipment (approximately $500,000).

This is a time consuming effort which is subject to human error. Bar coding systems provide an affordable alternative to the manual labeling, identification and inventory of fixed assets. Currently, the center's Curriculum Instruction Component has a bar coding system for its library which cost approximately $2,500.

RESC 18 should analyze the feasibility of using the library bar coding system, or others on the market, for the automation of RESC 18 fixed asset inventory process. The automation of the entire inventory process will provide a more efficient and accurate way of identifying and tracking the center's fixed assets.

INSURANCE PREMIUMS

The premium for Property/Casualty/Honesty/Liability coverages increased from $56,418 in FY 2002-2003 to $65,955 in FY 2003-2004, even though no losses have been incurred for the same period. This represents an annual increase of 17 percent. According to the center, the increases are due to additional building square footage and 9/11 consequences.

Typically, organizations are rewarded with lower premiums for no claim activity and the potential for liability is minimal. Region 18 is part of the insurance cooperative managed out of Region 13.

RESC 18 should solicit other bids to ensure RESC 18 is being charged appropriate insurance premiums. Given the absence of claims, the center should be paying less than the current premium for this type of insurance, even if it has to go outside of the cooperative.

REQUIREMENTS FOR TECHNOLOGY PURCHASES

RESC 18's technology staff misunderstand the appropriate criteria for technology purchases, resulting in purchasing practices that have made equipment maintenance more difficult and less efficient.

Texas Education Code Section 44.031 directs organizations to make technology purchases that provide the "best value." It does not have a least cost criterion and affords organizations flexibility in determining which characteristics contributed to a product's value. However, RESC 18 technology staff operate under the assumption that their technology purchases must follow a "least cost" criterion. This assumption, along with the Service Center's "reasonableness of replacement" criterion, has led to the Service Center having equipment that was manufactured by a range of vendors, creating unnecessary burden on technology staff.

RESC 18 generally follows a three to four-year replacement cycle for technology equipment, including computers, monitors, and servers. However, technology staff's "reasonableness of replacement" criterion, which is used to assess whether a unit truly needs to be replaced, leads to some technology purchases that are outside of the three to four-year cycle. Technology staff indicate that they must apply a "least cost" criterion in making all technology purchases. This criterion, along with varying replacement cycles, has led to the Service Center having equipment manufactured by a variety of vendors. Technology staff indicate that this situation makes it challenging for them to remain knowledgeable about the equipment and requires that they maintain relationships with several vendors to receive follow-up support, services, and replacement parts. Staff indicated that their responsibilities could be accomplished more efficiently if technology purchases were not dominated by a least cost criterion, as this would enable them to move towards a single vendor for a particular type of equipment.

Although MGT did not find RESC 18 in violation of Texas Education Code Section 44.031, technology staff's misunderstanding of the criteria that govern technology purchases places the center at risk of a violation. To avoid this risk and relieve the undue burden of managing equipment from multiple vendors, RESC 18 should clarify its technology purchasing policies.

RESC 18 should clarify and formalize technology purchase requirements. RESC 18 purchasing staff should meet with technology staff to clarify and document the service center's technology purchasing criteria. This documentation should include indicators that technology and purchasing staff can use to assess "best value," including consideration of whether introduction of a new vendor would place undue burden on technology staff.

FISCAL IMPACT

	Recommendation	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	5-Year (Costs) or Savings	One-Time (Costs) or Savings
a1	Hire receptionist/clerk for satellite office in Alpine.	($12,733)	($25,467)	($25,467)	($25,467)	($25,467)	($114,601)	
b2	Contract with the current fire alarm or security system providers to monitor the service center's fire alarm system.	($150)	($300)	($300)	($300)	($300)	($1,350)	
c1	Hire an instructional consultant for Special Populations.	($28,434)	($56,868)	($56,868)	($56,868)	($56,868)	($255,906)	
	Total	**($41,317)**	**($82,635)**	**($82,635)**	**($82,635)**	**($82,635)**	**($371,857)**	**$0**

CHAPTER 19:

EL PASO

CHAPTER 19

EL PASO

Regional Education Service Center 19 is located in El Paso. This Education Service Center supports 16 local education agencies. There are 12 school districts: El Paso ISD, Ysleta ISD, Socorro ISD, Clint ISD, Canutillo ISD, Anthony ISD, Tornillo ISD, Dell City ISD, Sierra Blanca ISD, Fabens ISD, San Elizario ISD, and Ft. Hancock ISD. There are four charter schools: Burnham; Paso del Norte Academy, El Paso Academy, and El Paso School of Excellence.

Region 19 encompasses 5,095 square miles. The RESC serves more than 163,000 students and over 10,700 administrative and campus staff in Hudspeth and El Paso counties. In addition to serving traditional school children and educators in the region, the RESC is home to a Head Start Program serving 4,016 children, which if classified as a school district, would make it the sixth most populous in the Region 19 service area. There are 34 Head Start sites in Region 19.

The RESC currently has 872 employees, of which 731 are employed through Head Start. The ethnicity of the staff is 7.1 percent, White 92.4 percent Hispanic, 0.4 percent African American and 0.1 percent Asian and Native American.

The student composition of Region 19 is shown in **Exhibit 19-1.** As shown, the region is primarily Hispanic, accounting for 87.2 percent of the total population. In addition, 2.7 percent are African American, 9.1 percent White, and 1 percent other. The region also has a high concentration of economically disadvantaged students with 74.7 percent of the students being classified as disadvantaged.

An analysis of RESC data shows that RESC 19:

- ranks seventh in student membership among the 20 RESCs and nearly tied with RESC 7;
- along with RESC 1 has the highest percentage of Hispanic ethnic population students;
- has the second smallest percentage of White population students and compares at 9.1 percent to 39.8 percent for the average for all RESCs, and
- has the second smallest African American population.

Because of the demographic characteristics of the region, the RESC has concentrated on developing programs in areas such as Bilingual/English as a Second Language, Migrant Programs, Homeless Programs, Head Start and Early Childhood Intervention.

Major RESC programs and services include accountability, professional development/training, curriculum and instructional program support, *No Child Left Behind*, direct services to students, teacher preparation and certification program, technology, and program administration.

RESC 19 provides an extensive list of services to the school districts in its region. According to their strategic plan, there are three initiatives affected by the services delivered: student achievement, efficiency of school districts, and statewide initiatives.

Exhibit 19-2 indicates the services provided and the related RESC objective.

Exhibit 19-1
Student Composition of Each RESC
2002–03 School Year

RESC Number	Regional Student Membership	Percent African American	Percent Hispanic	Percent White	Percent Other	Percent Economically Disadvantaged	Percent LEP
1	328,518	0.2	96.1	3.3	0.4	84.5	38.5
2	106,986	3.7	67.6	27.4	1.4	58.6	6.2
3	54,982	10.8	44.0	43.8	1.3	51.6	4.9
4	924,052	21.5	39.3	33.7	5.6	50.2	17.2
5	84,875	31.2	8.4	57.6	2.7	49.2	3.7
6	142,153	13.9	19.4	64.9	1.8	42.1	7.0
7	159,855	21.2	15.7	62.2	0.9	50.0	7.5
8	55,911	23.0	10.9	65.1	1.1	51.7	5.7
9	40,289	9.1	16.9	71.7	2.3	44.7	3.1
10	635,621	20.8	33.1	41.1	5.0	45.4	17.2
11	446,247	13.4	24.2	58.3	4.2	36.0	11.1
12	138,152	23.2	21.9	52.7	2.2	49.6	5.5
13	288,335	9.6	36.3	51.0	3.1	39.2	10.3
14	45,834	6.7	27.5	64.7	1.0	49.7	2.7
15	49,286	3.6	49.4	46.2	0.7	56.4	7.4
16	77,449	5.5	36.6	56.1	1.7	51.5	8.6
17	78,236	8.2	48.9	41.9	1.0	55.8	5.1
18	76,139	5.6	54.4	39.0	1.0	54.9	11.1
19	163,170	2.7	87.2	9.1	1.0	74.7	30.5
20	343,821	7.0	64.9	26.6	1.5	61.6	10.4
State Total	**4,239,911**	**14.3**	**42.7**	**39.8**	**3.2**	**51.9**	**14.9**

Source: TEA 2002–03 AEIS RESC reports.

Exhibit 19-2
RESC 19 Program Activities
2004

RESC Program/Service	Student Achievement	School District Efficiency	Statewide Initiative
Accountability			
• AEIS/PEIMS Support	√	√	√
• TEKS/TAKS Support	√	√	√
Professional Development/Training			
• Administrators	√	√	√
• Board Members	√	√	√
• Community Partners	√	√	
• Instructional Aides	√	√	√
• Parents	√	√	
• Support Staff	√	√	√
• Teachers	√	√	√
No Child Left Behind Support:			
• Achievement of "Adequate Yearly Progress"	√		
• Highly qualified teachers and instructional aides	√		
• Other NCLB Compliance	√		
Direct Services to Students:			
• Adult Education	√		
• Early Childhood Intervention	√		
• Distance Learning	√		
• Head Start	√		
• Math Science Partnership	√		
• Migrant Education	√		√
• Special Programs	√		
• Student Support Services	√		
Teacher Preparation and Certification Program:			
• Recruitment	√	√	
• Certification	√	√	
• Mentoring	√	√	
Consolidation of Functions:			
• Shared Services Arrangements		√	
• Consortia/Cooperatives		√	
• Media Services		√	
Technology:			
• Telecommunications services	√	√	√
• Integration of instructional technology in the classroom	√	√	
• PEIMS Technical Training and Support Services		√	
Program Administration:			
• Child Nutrition Program		√	√
• Coordinated Approach to Child Health (CATCH)		√	√
• Bus Driver Training		√	√

Source: RESC 19 Strategic Plan, 2004-2007.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- RESC 19 is recognized statewide for its consistently and highly successful Migrant Education Program.
- RESC 19 has successfully taken a hands-on approach to assisting low performing school districts with field service agents and resource allocations.
- RESC 19 is taking advantage of collaborative opportunities to serve the needs of El Paso students, educators, and the community.
- RESC 19, in collaboration with the Bilingual Education Network, is providing innovative approaches to satisfying the needs of bilingual teachers in Texas.
- RESC 19 provides training opportunities to teachers, counselors, and administrators involved in the gifted and talented program to help them meet state training requirements.
- The RESC 19 Head Start Program provides an exemplary program of health services to its students through community collaborations and staffing.
- RESC 19 offers a variety of specialized training sessions in classroom student behavior management.
- The placing of a full-time human resources position at the Head Start main location is an efficient and effective use of personnel.
- The RESC has established the School Zone (a retail shop for school supplies and materials for education related personnel) that reduces costs for both individuals and school districts.
- The process for controlling RESC 19 fixed assets provides efficient controls and is cost effective.
- The Head Start Program provides a service to students, parent volunteers, and program participants by purchasing a student accident insurance policy.

FINDINGS

- The Region 19 Board of Directors has not been involved in the development of the Region 19 strategic plan other than an examination of a draft executive summary.
- The Region 19 Board of Directors does not have standing committees, while such committees are often a means for developing appropriate board involvement in agency or organizational policy and planning development.
- No annual evaluation on RESC services and operations effectiveness is provided to the Regional Advisory Council (RAC); however, the RAC consults and advises the RESC board on matters concerning educational services and provides information to the executive director regarding school district needs.
- The RESC 19 Board of Directors has no written contract setting out the terms and conditions of legal services provided by the law firm representing the board. It is a standard practice of agencies and education organizations to have such documents.
- Member superintendents have concerns about communication and how complaints are resolved in the region resulting in uncertainty as to how these matters are handled.
- There is little coordination between facilities staff in the Head Start building and the main facility resulting in a lack of important data and information upon which to base future planning.
- RESC 19 has not developed a long-range plan including a facilities master plan that can be directly translated into immediate and long-term projects.
- Although opportunities exist, RESC 19 does not provide assistance to school districts with facilities planning, operations, maintenance and utility management, resulting in

potentially missing a key opportunity for providing and important service.

- RESC 19 has discussed planning for the development of a new parking garage; however, no actual analysis on parking lot utilization is complete.
- RESC 19 does not coordinate meeting space use with its facilities maintenance personnel resulting in the potential miscommunication of needs and unnecessary disruption of planned activities.
- RESC 19 does not have a formal training program for its facilities management and maintenance employees who are responsible for very large and complex facilities that include in excess of 670,000 square feet in multiple buildings, both owned and leased.
- Region 19 has not conducted any comparison studies for maintenance services to determine the most cost-effective maintenance delivery approach.
- RESC 19 has not conducted an energy or utility management audit, developed an energy management plan, nor developed a preventive maintenance program.
- RESC 19 does not provide energy awareness programs or services to its customers while the resources to provide these services exist with the RESC.
- RESC 19 does not market its services to the community.
- RESC 19 does not have an individual assigned to grant writing responsibilities on staff and may be missing opportunities to generate important funds for services and programs to schools and school districts.
- RESC 19 does not have a comprehensive system for evaluating program effectiveness resulting in a need for more specific data upon which to base important services and programs decisions.
- Human resources information on the Region 19 Web site is not comprehensive and could provide more detailed.
- RESC 19 program managers are not directly involved in the budget process other than the actual submission of requests.
- The fund balance in Region 19 for 2002-03 was excessive.
- The Business Office Procedures Manual for RESC 19 has not been updated since its adoption in 2001–02 resulting in outdated information.
- Region 19 member districts in are searching for ways to become more efficient and effective. The excess fund balance in RESC 19 could be used to provide performance audit support to member districts and identify means for reducing costs of operation.
- While appropriate training is included for RESC employees, there is no mandatory attendance rule.
- RESC 19 has pending litigation against United of Omaha Life Insurance that, if not resolved, will result in loss of revenue.
- While RESC 19 has sophisticated scheduling software, personnel are not fully trained in its use so as to obtain maximum benefits.
- RESC 19 has not conducted a systematic survey of member district technology needs nor identified areas that should be considered for additional assistance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 19-1: Involve the Region 19 Board of Directors in the development of the RESC strategic plan and establish procedures for the board's periodic review of the plan's implementation.** The implementation of this recommendation should ensure that all board members are involved in the strategic planning process and are prepared to share this information with other stakeholders. Additionally, involvement in the planning process ensures that the RESC executive staff has secured a broad range of input in its development. As this recommendation is implemented, the board of directors should adopt a procedure that ensures continued involvement of the board. A portion of each quarterly meeting agenda should address the status of the plan and related implementation processes. The process of updating the current board of directors should begin with the annual budget development and approval processes. Using the budget development, review, and approval process as a vehicle for achieving this provides the board members with an understanding of the relationship between the two documents.

- **Recommendation 19-2: Establish a board standing committee structure.** The implementation of this recommendation should lay the groundwork for developing Board of Directors infrastructure to deal with budget development, policy creation, strategic planning and other board role matters. One such other matter relates to reports from RESC staff and other stakeholders that some support for RESCs may be lacking because of a lack of public understanding of the RESC role in education. The need for implementation of this recommendation is further supported by the fact that in Texas, the Legislature prohibits education personnel from lobbying for legislative support and funding. This recommendation is founded on the premise that current RESCs and their boards are not actively promoting RESC values, nor do they effectively work with local school district boards to identify effective means of education the various publics. This recommendation should be implemented through the following steps of action:

  - the executive director should review the recommendation with the Region 19 Board of Directors;
  - once agreed upon, the board of directors should direct the executive director to prepare the necessary policy and procedures to guide committees' development and activity;
  - the executive director should take steps to integrate the board of directors' activity into the strategic planning process with careful attention to the Goal Four position statement; and
  - the chair of the Region 19 Board of Directors should appoint a three member committee assigned the task of implementing the recommendation—that is, preparing a plan for an RESC board external relations program integrated with the strategic plan initiative.

  Effective implementation of this recommendation should contribute to effective involvement of board members in their roles. The effective development of standing committees should lead to the establishment of a standing strategic planning committee, resources development committee, or other appropriate board groupings designed to support the RESC administration and deployment of services and programs.

- **Recommendation 19-3: Develop and administer an annual evaluation and report the results to the Region 19 Board of Directors as required by board policy.** RAC members should appoint a committee which will meet and develop an evaluation method and procedures for implementation which will meet the requirements of Board Policy BDF The implementation of this recommendation should result in providing the RAC with current information concerning the quality of services rendered, the effectiveness of RESC operations, and the appropriateness of program development efforts. The report can be developed by using existing data and information gathered through annual surveys of districts, TEA AEIS, and other documents and should not result in substantial additional staff efforts. Upon development the report should be provided to the executive director and board of directors for review and inclusion in the overall assessment of services and programs provided school districts and schools.

- **Recommendation 19-4: Develop and approve a written contract with the law firm representing the RESC 19 Board of Directors.** The executive director should negotiate with the law firm and establish the services to be performed and compensation to be paid. A contract containing the services to be performed and compensation to be paid should be taken to the board of directors for approval. An approved, written contract with the law firm representing the board should be maintained and updated annually. The contract should, minimally, contain the following provisions:

  - compensation terms for attorneys, paralegals, clerks, and other firm personnel services, including billing cycle;
  - conditions for reimbursement for expenses;
  - if a retainer is to be paid, the services to be included for the fixed fee;
  - procedures to be used by the firm if outside counsel is required; and
  - other provisions as deemed necessary.

- **Recommendation 19-5: Conduct an executive follow-up with client superintendents to ascertain the status of the RESC 19's ability to communicate with school superintendents and resolve complaints.** The implementation of this recommendation should result in clarifying the responses to statements relating to the effectiveness of RESC communications with all client superintendents. Additionally, it should result in establishing any difficulties that may exist in resolving conflicts with member school districts.

  This recommendation should be implemented through two means. The first should include a survey prepared by RESC 19, and administered anonymously to all superintendents and should structured so as to obtain a 100 percent response rate. Following the collection and assessment of these responses, and if the results indicate continuing communication/conflict resolution issues, the executive director should meet privately with each superintendent to discuss the matter and reach resolution. The implementation of this recommendation should be considered important to the need for maintaining overall trust and positive working relationships with all client districts.

- **Recommendation 19-6: Coordinate facilities operations and planning between the main building and the**

Head Start Program building. The implementation of this recommendation should result in consistent facilities planning, operations, and maintenance. Coordination between the two programs should also contribute information needed for the development and successful implementation of a facilities master plan (see Recommendation 19-2). Both facilities programs should have consistent annual goals and objectives and be budgeted appropriately to achieve them. Preparations for implementing this recommendation should commence immediately upon direction provided by the executive director. The first step should be to develop facility goals that are incorporated in board policy. The policy should detail the need for a facility master plan. The second step should result in the executive director in collaboration with the leadership team assigning primary responsibility for coordination to a designated staff member. This staff member should be provided specific directions regarding the ultimate expected outcomes along with a related timeline.

- **Recommendation 19-7: Develop a facilities master plan.** The implementation of this recommendation should result in a facilities master plan. A facilities master plan is used by an organization to plan for future facility needs and to plan for capital outlays for repairs and maintenance. Any plans to build new construction can be added to the plan. Upon development, this plan should be reviewed and approved by the board of directors. A key component in facilities planning is a facilities master plan that outlines all facilities construction and repair activities for a projected number of years, perhaps as far out as ten years. A comprehensive plan contains an assessment of existing facilities' condition and capacity, a projection of utilization and a list of facilities needs, including deferred maintenance. The needs list identifies new construction, improvements and repairs to existing facilities. The plan must prioritize projects and schedule them over the life of the plan, identify their costs, and identify a potential funding source for each project.

- **Recommendation 19-8: Create new service products to assist school districts with facilities assessment, planning, operations, maintenance, and utility management.** The implementation of this recommendation should result in RESC 19 identifying and offering additional services to school districts in its region. Facilities planning, operations, maintenance, and utility management are key sources of costs to school districts. Assistance in these areas could provide substantial savings to Region 19 and its clients. In implementing this recommendation, consideration should be given to identifying services that may be obtained from sources outside the RESC. For example, for utilities audits and management, contacts should be established with the pubic utilities provider. Also, arrangement should made with companies such as Johnson Controls and Honeywell International that offer system retrofits that are financed through savings as they occur. These and other actions should led to developing a series of facilities related services for school districts and schools as well as the RESC.

- **Recommendation 19-9: Identify utility management audit firms in the region and have Region 19 utility bills audited annually to identify savings.** The implementation of this recommendation should result

in conserving energy with resulting savings in expenditures. Utility audits for the service center and guidance to school districts on use of utility audits should produce much needed increased efficiency and economies for Region 19. Typically organizations can secure assistance with utility management audits from a variety of sources. The RESC should contact the local public utilities service provider for assistance. If the public utilities provider does not offer this service then the RESC should turn to the private sector providers such as Honeywell Corporation of Johnston Controls Corporation. Firms of this type usually offer the audit at no cost to the organization with optional retrofitting services paid for through identified savings as they occur.

- **Recommendation 19-10: Conduct parking lot utilization and capacity analysis as the initial step in justifying the need for a parking lot.** The implementation of this recommendation should result in assurances that proper planning has taken place. Once having completed the utilization study, RESC 19 can determine the feasibility of including fiscal resources in the next annual budget for parking lot construction. The RESC can avoid unnecessary planning and analysis protocol development by contacting RESC 2 and RESC 13 for information on how they conducted their needs assessment and related facility planning.

- **Recommendation 19-11: Implement a plan to include facilities and maintenance personnel in coordinating the use of meeting space and related services.** The implementation of this recommendation should result in formalizing procedures to ensure appropriate input from personnel assigned responsibilities for all aspects of the facility's use. A simple solution could be to train the maintenance supervisor in the use of the available event management software. This action allows the supervisor to identify all of the important steps and actions that are required to ensure a smoothly managed operation.

- **Recommendation 19-12: Provide a comprehensive training program for facilities and maintenance employees to improve their effectiveness and productivity.** Facilities managers should develop a training program for all staff. The program should have annual goals and objectives and should be budgeted to achieve them. The facilities manager, in conjunction with the Human Resources Department, should develop a training program curriculum, schedule, and budget. After the executive director reviews the training program, it should be submitted for board approval. Once approved by the board, the facilities manager should initiate the training program and provide an annual report of progress to the executive director and board. A best practices maintenance-training program should include the following subject areas:

  - time management;
  - professional skill development for each trade;
  - skills in area of preventative maintenance and problem solving;
  - effective work scheduling;
  - quality control;
  - personnel management strategies;
  - interdepartmental communication skills;
  - customer communication skills; and
  - work habits.

- **Recommendation 19-13: Conduct a cost-comparison study of selected**

maintenance services to determine the most cost-effective delivery method. Facilities managers should select several services performed by the maintenance personnel or outsourced to private contractors and conduct a cost comparison study of services. The study should provide data to assist in determining if in-house or private resources could provide the services more cost-effectively. Minimally, the study should consider:

- overall cost per square foot for services;
- the age and condition of facilities;
- both in-house and outsourced options for services;
- a breakdown of costs for materials, labor, and equipment; and
- overhead expenses including estimates for utilities, insurance, administration of services, and other factors.

- **Recommendation 19-14: Conduct an energy management audit, develop a strategic energy management plan, and develop a preventive maintenance program.** The implementation of this recommendation should result in an overall energy management audit, the development of a strategic energy management plan, and the development of a preventive maintenance program. A contract that includes the initial audit, the recommendations for a preventive maintenance plan, professional assistance in developing a strategic energy plan and the implementation of energy reduction tools should be handled as one comprehensive package. A national firm, AramarkServicemaster, Incorporated, has been a pioneer in the facilities maintenance and support industry and offers proposals to provide the type services recommended. Other firms such as Johnston Controls and Honeywell International are capable of providing portions of the services that should be included in accomplishing these actions. However, all of the recommended actions could be accomplished internally with existing personnel and by taking advantage of the initial step recommended in Recommendation 19-4 (using the services of the public utilities providers). Additionally, numerous guides to assist organizations with these type reviews are found on the Internet by using a search engine and entering the key phrases, *energy audit*, *energy management*, and *preventative maintenance*.

- **Recommendation 19-15: Involve school districts in energy conservation by developing programs for awareness and advocacy.** The implementation of this recommendation should result in RESC 19 developing an energy conservation program. To reinforce sound energy conservation practices, RESC 19 should send superintendents and principals monthly reports of energy use that compare to the same month of the previous year. The RESC should prepare an annual energy report for each school that could be submitted to their school board. RESC 19's facilities personnel could speak to the facilities personnel, custodians, and teachers at each campus at the start of each school year. Energy saving information could also be posted on the RESC's Web site. An energy awareness article could also be published in RESC 19's news bulletin or catalog to inform the staff about energy conservation measures. Checking door and window weather-stripping is an effective way to stop energy dollars from leaking through the cracks.

Additionally, outside air dampers, heating, ventilation and air conditioner filters should be checked regularly. Sound maintenance and operations procedures need to be in place to recoup savings associated with turning off lights in unoccupied areas, sensibly reducing equipment run times during the summer months, enforcing standard operation and maintenance practices for air conditioning equipment, and attending to caulking and weather-stripping problems to lower infiltration. The RESC executive director should submit a summary of activity to the RESC 19 Board of Directors annually.

- **Recommendation 19-16: Raise awareness of the RESC 19 services by creating a RESC 19 marketing strategic plan.** The implementation of this recommendation should assist the staff in efficiently marketing its services and training. A cross-section of professional and support staff should be involved in the development of the marketing plan. Other RESCs use staff such as field service agents and Title I specialists as key marketing staff due to their high exposure to clients. As marketing efforts are designed and implemented the RESC should ensure that the services being placed before the targeted audience are not in competition with the private sector unless there is clear evidence that costs are inappropriately high. RESC 19 personnel should contact the RESC 2 marketing representative who has developed a comprehensive marketing strategy related to use of facilities and other services and products offered by the center. Additionally, the RESC should carefully examine the RESC 2, 3, and 6 Web sites for additional ideas. The Internet is a repository of marketing strategies and sources for marketing plan development, many free and available to be downloaded. This can be accomplished by going to a search engine and inserting key words such as *marketing*, *marketing plans*, and *marketing strategies*.

- **Recommendation 19-17: Examine RESC 19 staffing levels to see if grant writer responsibilities could be created and assigned in order to increase grant opportunities for the RESC and member school districts.** The implementation of this recommendation should result in generating additional revenue for the RESC and its member school districts. These assigned responsibilities should focus primarily on writing grants for the RESC and school districts. The grant specialist should also work as a technical advisor and increase available RESC provided services to school districts.

- **Recommendation 19-18: Implement a comprehensive and systematic process for evaluating the quality and use of programs and service offerings.** The RESC leadership team should continue working with staff to design and implement data-driven methods of evaluating and improving program quality. Emphasis should be placed on what data are important to collect, analyze, and utilize for making better decisions. In addition to evaluating program quality, RESC staff should also engage in more in-depth analysis of program participation and usage. The event planning software system can facilitate this process. This will allow the service center to identify districts and schools that are not utilizing its services and increase outreach to those populations. RESC staff should consider reviewing the program assessments processes used by RESC 3. RESC 3 has a data-driven model to determine what programs or services are offered to member districts. Program personnel review all

sources of data pertaining to the service (needs assessments, program evaluations, workshop evaluations, committee evaluations, and input from participants). The proposed changes to the program are discussed with management, users, and other program personnel. Adjustments are made according to the indications specified by the users. Notification of changes is then sent to the customers.

- **Recommendation 19-19: Enhance the human resources Web page so that it is all inclusive of human resources services and benefits for RESC 19 employees.** All staff having human resources responsibilities should meet and collectively establish the components that would be included in human resources' Web page of the RESC's restructured Web site. They should then provide whatever assistance is needed to the person(s) assigned the responsibility for upgrading the RESC 19 Web site. The implementation of this recommendation should result in permitting potential employment applicants an effective and efficient means for completing and filing applications. By using the Web site in this manner, human resources personnel should receive some of the applications electronically, thus conserving time and improving overall human resources personnel efficiency. RESC 19 personnel should review in detail the human resource applications that are included on the RESC 3 (Victoria) Web site. The RESC 3 site is illustrative of an effective means of providing comprehensive information to employees and potential job applicants and permitting online completion and submission of forms. Personnel of RESC 3 have demonstrated a willingness to assist others in developing useful systems of activity based on their experiences.

- **Recommendation 19-20: Involve program managers more directly in budget process beyond the submission of budget requests.** The implementation of this recommendation should result in a greater involvement by program managers in the budget process. Program managers should be of assistance beyond submission of requests. Program managers have the necessary budget expertise to more directly predict over and under scenarios in their projections than other staff which will result in a more balanced actual to budget comparison.

- **Recommendation 19-21: Allocate expenditures to the undesignated fund balance for the General Fund and limit the fund balance to 20 percent.** The leadership team of the RESC should meet and prepare a solution to lower undesignated fund balance for the general fund to meet priority needs of the service center. There are several areas, specifically technology that could be addressed by the expenditure of undesignated fund balance in the General Fund and will not require an annual reoccurring expenditure commitment. A committee of program managers or a committee of the RESCs choice, could be of great assistance in determining priority of expenditures to decrease the balance to within the recommended 20 percent range or level.

- **Recommendation 19-22: Review and update the Business Office Procedures Manual annually.** The implementation of this recommendation should result in maintaining up-to-date procedures manual to ensure practices are current with existing requirements. It is necessary to incorporate needed changes on an ongoing basis to accomplish this task. The procedures

manual should be assigned to one of the business office staff members who routinely deletes obsolete provisions and amends new updates. As this occurs, all impacted employees should be advised of the new provisions and provided any needed training.

- **Recommendation 19-23: Consider using a portion of the unfunded designated fund balance to hire an independent audit team to help school districts identify where they can reduce costs.** The implementation of this recommendation should help several financially strapped districts. The field service representatives or executive director could call upon individual superintendents to establish specific needs. These school districts should welcome the assistance as the independent audit team assists in identifying cost reductions in programs and personnel. As the RESC begins planning to implement this recommendation, the executive director should contact RESC 6 personnel to determine how the RESC has organized their resources to assist member school districts. Information from RESC 6 could contribute to building a more effective service for RESC 19 school districts.

- **Recommendation 19-24: Require attendance of all employees at training sessions and add fixed assets and risk management to the topics.** All employees should be required to have knowledge about the areas that they will encounter even though it may not be their major responsibility. Implementation of this recommendation should provide safeguards that ensure that all employees have been properly informed with the most up-to-date information. Requirements for training should be implemented immediately upon review of this recommendation.

- **Recommendation 19-25: Immediately resolve the United of Omaha Life Insurance litigation.** The implementation of this recommendation should save the RESC money in the future and add to account reserves. The $768,565 demanded in this lawsuit represents a large percentage of all current RESC litigation that could be used to supplement the budget. The RESC 19 executive officer and Board of Directors should demand that attorneys representing both sides of the litigation convene to meet and develop a mutually agreed upon settlement, or push for an immediate hearing.

- **Recommendation 19-26: Train personnel to manipulate the click and learn software to obtain necessary reports and improve employee efficiency.** The implementation of this recommendation should result in increasing the capability of personnel to generate useful and needed reports. The first step in implementing this recommendation should be to determine the precise capabilities of the software and its applications. This should be followed by developing a list of services or needs that would create a more effective and efficient meeting planning and implementation process. The RESC should then contact the software developer to establish the needed training opportunities for assigned staff.

- **Recommendation 19-27: Survey the member districts and other potential users to determine technology needs.** The implementation of this recommendation should result in identifying and prioritizing the technology needs of the school districts for the purpose of expanding RESC services and products. RESC

19 should contact RESC 3 to secure copies of survey instruments and other assessment strategies as a guide to assist in developing a comprehensive evaluation of needs and to avoid duplicating work already completed by another RESC. Each school district should be encouraged to complete a comprehensive technology survey that is developed by the RESC technology and curriculum staff. Following the return and assessment of survey results each school district served by RESC 19 should meet with field service representatives to discuss the results and define the type of support the RESC could provide for them in the future that would enhance student achievement, increase operational efficiency, and reduce district costs.

DETAILED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

MIGRANT EDUCATION PROGRAM

For more than 15 years, RESC 19 has received numerous awards and recognition at the Annual State Migrant Conference in the area of Migrant Education Identification and Recruitment.

The success of the Migrant Education Program is due to a concentrated effort for coordinating identification and recruitment activities, mentoring of new staff members, providing cross training, providing technical assistance, setting region-wide goals, modeling effective techniques, planning, and recognizing that active versus passive recruitment pays off.

As a result of RESC 19's Migrant Education Program staff dedication, increased funding for the school districts and RESC 19 has occurred and additional services to migrant children and their families are available.

Accomplishment: RESC 19 Migrant Education Program has consistently met or exceeded its goals using successful processes recognized statewide.

ASSISTANCE OF LOW PERFORMING SCHOOLS

RESC 19 programs play an active role in identifying and providing assistance to low performing campuses.

Through its effectiveness and compliance service agent, RESC 19 coordinates and facilitates school evaluation processes, including review of the district education improvement committees, site-based decision-making processes, and review of special program indicators. Each instruction program area is responsible for monitoring its specific state accountability test scores. Once a district is identified as a low performing district, RESC 19 uses its field agents as the primary contact with the districts. Once the needs have been discussed with the school district, the field agent holds a planning session with the appropriate RESC 19 consultants to develop a remediation work plan.

Exhibit 19-3 indicates the Blue Ribbon, Recognized and Exemplary Schools that were low performing and improved with Region 19's assistance. .

Exhibit 19-3
Region 19
2003 Blue Ribbon, Recognized, and Exemplary Schools

School District	Number of Schools
Blue Ribbon School	
Silva Health Magnet School	1
Recognized Schools	
Anthony ISD	2
Burnham Wood Charter	1
Canutillo ISD	1
Clint ISD	7
Dell City ISD	2
El Paso ISD	30
Fabens ISD	1
San Elizario ISD	2
Socorro ISD	14
Ysleta ISD	32
Exemplary Schools	
Canutillo ISD	1
Clint ISD	1
El Paso ISD	5
Ysleta ISD	13

Source: Region 19 Web site, 2004.

Accomplishment: RESC 19 continues to successfully use a hands-on approach to assisting low performing school districts with field service agents and resource allocations.

COLLABORATION WITH COMMUNITY

RESC 19 maintains anextensive system of collaborative arrangements for education support activities throughout the community.

Exhibit 19-4 is a representative sample of collaborations RESC 19 has created. As can be seen, in excess of 29 such engagements exist. This count does not include special collaborative arrangements that the RESC has with school districts and individual schools.

Accomplishment: RESC 19 is taking advantage of collaborative opportunities to serve the needs of El Paso students, educators, and the community.

BILINGUAL EDUCATION

RESC 19 is satisfying the needs of bilingual teachers by developing texts that are aligned with TAKS that consider linguistics, psychology, and culture.

RESC 19 has developed a series of three Spanish TEKS/TAKS aligned teaching modules in the areas of reading, writing and mathematics (a fourth module in science is under development). These innovative teaching modules are grounded in real world problem solving activities that provide teachers with engaging strategies that promote high academic achievement for English learners. The training sessions for teachers are provided throughout the school semester through cluster training.

The development of these tailored materials represents the implementation of best practices in providing important curriculum and instructional support for an underrepresented ethic group.

Accomplishment: RESC 19, in collaboration with the Bilingual Education Network, is providing innovative approaches to satisfying the needs of bilingual teachers in Texas.

Exhibit 19-4
RESC 19 Program Collaborations
2004

Activity	Collaboration
Tech Prep Program	Department of Labor
Technology Challenge Grant	University of Texas – El Paso
Math Science Project	National Science Foundation
CATCH (Coordinated Approach to Child Health)	Early Childhood Intervention
WEBCAT (Web access test bank)	RESC 10
Safe and Drug Free Schools	School Districts
TAKS aligned Spanish Texts	Bilingual Education Network
Bilingual Leadership Council	Bilingual Program Directors from El Paso, New Mexico, Cd. Juarez, and UTEP.
Bilingual Secondary Professional Development Program	University of Texas – El Paso
Head Start Transition Advisory Committee	11 School Districts
Head Start	Early Childhood Intervention Special Education El Paso Health District Texas Tech Department of Health Texas Health Network Immunization Coalition El Paso Community College Child and Adult Care Food Program Cancer Society WIC Texas Department of Health Texas Extension Services Walk El Paso CATCH Mental Health Providers Child Crisis Family Support Center for Family Violence

Source: RESC 19 Program Catalog, 2004.

GIFTED AND TALENTED EDUCATION

RESC 19 offers a number of options to its customers to meet the training requirements related to gifted and talented education. The Gifted and Talented (G/T) and Advanced Placement Program promote and support the *Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted and Talented Students* through professional development and technical assistance.

The *Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students* provides a basis for program accountability for the gifted and talented. It outlines five areas of program performance including student assessment, program design, curriculum and instruction, professional development, and family-community involvement, and provides three levels of performance measures-acceptable, recognized and exemplary-to guide districts in program development.

During 2004, RESC 19 provided its customers with G/T training. **Exhibit 19-5** indicates the amount of training. The training, as is shown,

focuses on the state objectives and provides important support to personnel.

Accomplishment: RESC 19 provides training opportunities to teachers, counselors and administrators involved in the gifted and talented program to help them meet state training requirements.

HEAD START PROGRAM

The Region 19 Head Start Program provides exemplary health services.

Student health ultimately supports academic goals and objectives. An unhealthy child cannot perform well academically. Healthy children have fewer absences, are less likely to drop out and are better prepared to learn. Because no federal or state law requires schools to offer basic health services to the general student population, many districts do not have school nurses or school health programs. There is no dedicated funding for school nursing staff. Such funding comes from local property tax revenues or state and federal grants.

RESC 19 has chosen to use federal Head Start dollars, grants and in-kind services to provide health services to its community. RESC 19 Head Start Program works aggressively to provide health services to its participants and families, particularly those who would not have access to health care otherwise.

The Head Start Program and other federally-funded programs have allowed the RESC to forge partnerships with Texas Tech University and local health agencies and public and private health service organizations.

Department personnel serve in various community and professional organizations that provide health services and education to children in the community.

School health personnel provide episodic and emergency health care to ill or injured students. They assess student health to promote early referrals of health problems, and administer and monitor physician-prescribed medications in school when required. They assess and help manage the unique health needs of students with chronic physical problems like asthma, epilepsy and diabetes.

Accomplishment: The RESC 19 Head Start Program provides an exemplary program of health services to its students through community collaborations and staffing.

STUDENT BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

RESC 19 offers a variety of specialized training sessions in classroom student behavior management and discipline resulting in meeting survey results indicating a strong need for this training (87 percent of respondents requested such training).

From January 2004 through August 2004, and scheduled for the remainder of 2004–05 training opportunities were offered or will be available for teaching and administrative personnel. In 2003, 15 sessions were offered with over 560 participants. The 2004 training from January to early August has involved over 927 participants.

Exhibit 19-5
Gifted and Talented Training Sessions
2004

Date of Training Session	Topics Included
January 13	Counselor GT Training
January 14	Nature and Needs
January 27	Identification and Assessment
February 9	Using Technology with GT Students
February 16	Campus Planning for Site-Based Schools
February 17	Depth and Complexity in Curriculum for GT Students
February 18	Administrator GT
March 2	Differentiating the Curriculum
March 31	Social and Emotional Needs of GT Students
April 1	Differentiation
April 6	Creative Thinking Strategies for GT Students
May 17	Rigor, Alignment and other Considerations for Creating Effective Assessments
June 14	Nature and Needs
June 15	Identification and Assessment Workshop
June 16	Depth and Complexity in Curriculum for GT Students
June 17	Differentiating the Curriculums for GT Students
June 18	Creative Thinking Strategies for GT Students
June 21	Update Training for GT Teachers
June 24	Social and Emotional Needs of GT Students
June 25	Rising Writers

Source: G/T Field Agent, June 25, 2004.

Topics for training include:

- Girls and Boys Town Specialized Classroom Management;
- On-site Discipline Training;
- Custom Classroom/School Behavior Management;
- Dealing with Bullying;
- AD/HD for Elementary Teachers;
- District Behavior Network;
- Strategies and Best Practices for Interrupting Severe Behavior in the Classroom;
- CHAMPS – A Proactive and Positive Approach to Classroom Management;
- Region 19 Positive Behavior Support Conference;
- Texas Behavior Support Initiative (TBSI) Train the Trainers Modules;
- Functional Behavior Assessment and Behavior Intervention Planning;
- Foundations Institute Cycle 1;
- Common Sense Parenting; and
- nine other topics.

Best practices behavior management training programs include training and support for behavior specialists in school districts, training in instruction of students with behavior issues, individual student observation and recommendations, and other staff development opportunities in classroom management, crisis intervention, and cooperative discipline. Such training also includes topics of contemporary interests that may involve dealing with bullying, cult activity, gang behaviors, dealing with weapons and drugs.

Accomplishment: RESC 19 offers a variety of specialized training sessions in classroom student behavior management.

HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

The RESC 19 human resources management functions are performed by personnel assigned to the two RESC program locations. There are 141 employees assigned to the service center's main office and 731 employees assigned to the Head Start Center.

Two staff members share human resource responsibilities at the RESC's main office location. Because there are not a large number of assigned employees, these two staff members spend a portion of their time with human resources-related functions and additional time with risk management functions. A full-time human resources position is located at the Head Start main campus and is responsible for all human resources responsibilities for the 731 Head Start employees at that location. This assignment of HR personnel eliminates costly and inefficient use of human resources personnel time in traveling to and from the main office to the Head Start Center to perform human resources functions. In addition, this arrangement permits employees to resolve many human resources related issues on-site without traveling to the RESC's main headquarters.

Careful attention to the assignment of personnel, considering all factors such as travel time to remote locations, effective use of employee time, and assigning cross-department responsibilities to maximize use of employees' skills represents implementation of a best practice in personnel management.

Accomplishment: The placing of a full-time human resources position at the Head Start main location is an efficient and effective use of personnel.

RETAIL SHOP

RESC 19 operates an effective School Zone (retail shop), providing school products for all public, charter, and private schools, and individuals from both New Mexico and Texas resulting in meeting personnel educational products needs.

The Purchasing Department has contracted with Office Depot to provide a discount for products offered in the School Zone. MGT interviews with personnel and examination of documents revealed that the School Zone arrangement presents an opportunity to save purchasing materials' costs, RESC staff time, and school district employees' time that is ordinarily devoted to meeting the requests for these products.

Creating opportunities that increase the effectiveness and efficiency of personnel while meeting the needs of customers represents one of the cardinal principles of best practices.

Accomplishment: The RESC has established the School Zone (a retail shop for school supplies and materials for education related personnel) that reduces costs for both individuals and school districts.

FIXED ASSETS

RESC 19 has effective and efficient controls on fixed assets resulting in minimizing unaccounted for losses and replacement expenses.

The fixed assets are assigned to 35 different physical sites within the region creating a complex control situation. Recognizing this, five years ago the controls were strengthened on fixed asset management and a PC based program with scanners was implemented. Two employees were trained and assigned to manage the processes.

The purchasing process was reviewed and procedures consistent with needs for inventory control were developed and implemented. As a result purchase orders are prepared and reviewed to identify items with costs over $500 (the value set for identification – this is in compliance with Texas regulations). When the item is received, an inventory control number is assigned and an item description is entered in the system along with a locator that tracks the equipment by room.

A Web-based process is available for noting the disposition of assets so that assigned personnel can be held accountable for control. The online form is used for the transfer and/or deletion as well as the acquisition of fixed assets. Once completed, this form is forwarded to the fixed assets specialist for final accounting and record of ultimate disposition (transferred, surplused, salvaged, or other actions).

Accomplishment: The process for controlling RESC 19 fixed assets provides efficient controls and is cost-effective.

HEAD START STUDENT ACCIDENT POLICY

The Head Start Program provides a student accident policy that covers students, parent volunteers, and program participants resulting in indemnifying the RESC from potential liability.

The student accident policy is at no cost to the participants, volunteers and students as it is paid for by Head Start funds. The purchasing of this accident insurance policy serves to help indemnify the RESC and school districts against the direct cost of accidental injuries.

In an age of increasing litigious activity and with public organizations the recognized "deep pocket" for financial redress, this practice is seen as appropriate and exceptional.

Accomplishment: The Head Start Program provides a service to students, parent volunteers, and program participants by purchasing the student accident insurance policy.

DETAILED FINDINGS

STRATEGIC PLAN

The Region 19 Board of Directors has not been involved in the development of the Region 19 strategic plan other than an examination of a draft executive summary. Plans are to present the completely developed plan to the board of directors in August 2004.

Interviews with board members indicate that they have not been involved in the development of the strategic plan. The plan is developed internally by staff with periodic briefings presented to the board. RESC representatives indicate that the final plan will be presented to the board for review during their August 2004 scheduled meeting.

Typically, boards of control establish procedures for providing input and periodic review of major planning documents and related implementation processes.

RESC 19 should involve the Region 19 Board of Directors in the development of the RESC strategic plan and establish procedures for the board's periodic review of the plan's implementation. The implementation of this recommendation should ensure that all board members are involved in the strategic planning process and are prepared to share this information with other stakeholders. Additionally, involvement in the planning process ensures that the RESC executive staff has secured a broad range of input in its development.

As this recommendation is implemented, the board of directors should adopt a procedure that ensures continued involvement of the board. A portion of each quarterly meeting agenda should address the status of the plan and related implementation processes.

The process of updating the current board of directors should begin with the annual budget development and approval processes. Using the budget development, review, and approval process as a vehicle for achieving this provides the board members with an understanding of the relationship between the two documents.

BOARD STANDING COMMITTEES

The Region 19 Board of Directors does not have standing committees, while such committees are often a means for developing appropriate board involvement in agency or organizational policy and planning development.

The board of directors meets eight times per year for regularly scheduled meeting with other meetings called if the need arises. MGT consultants do not believe that the board needs to meet more often; however, greater board involvement in planning activity, services development, and essential RESC promotion activity among the region's districts and other stakeholders may well require more individual board member involvement. Board members are involved in assisting with training client school boards.

As previously noted, the RESC 19 Board of Directors has not been actively involved in the development and approval of essential planning processes. The board's role in this and fiscal matters has been limited in scope. Additionally, many personnel interviewed expressed concern that, other than the client stakeholders and possibly TEA personnel, few parties really understand the role and contributions of the RESC. This view is represented in Goal Four of the proposed strategic plan developed by all 20 RESCs.

MGT consultants have noted that in many effective organizations the involvement of the board of directors in carefully crafted committee work has contributed to overall effectiveness and been an effective tool for overcoming external barriers to success in many areas of concern. One of the areas of concern voiced by the executive director and other RESC personnel relates to strengthening relationships with external audiences (an area addressed by RESC 2 with the employment of a marketing person who has a key responsibility in marketing conferencing services).

RESC 19 should establish a standing committee structure. The implementation of this recommendation should lay the groundwork for developing Board of Directors infrastructure to deal with budget development, policy creation, strategic planning and other board role matters.

One such other matter relates to reports from RESC staff and other stakeholders that some support for RESCs may be lacking because of a lack of public understanding of the RESC role in education. The need for implementation of this recommendation is further supported by the fact that in Texas, the Legislature prohibits education personnel from lobbying for legislative support and funding. This recommendation is founded on the premise that current RESCs and their boards are not actively promoting RESC values, nor do they effectively work with local school district boards to identify effective means of education the various publics.

This recommendation should be implemented through the following steps of action:

- the executive director should review the recommendation with the Region 19 Board of Directors;
- once agreed upon, the board of directors should direct the executive director to prepare the necessary policy and procedures to guide committees' development and activity;
- the executive director should take steps to integrate the board of directors' activity into the strategic planning process with careful attention to the Goal Four position statement; and
- the chair of the Region 19 Board of Directors should appoint a three member committee assigned the task of implementing the recommendation—that is, preparing a plan for an RESC board external relations program integrated with the strategic plan initiative.

The effective implementation of this recommendation should contribute to effective involvement of board members in their roles.

The effective development of standing committees should lead to the establishment of a standing strategic planning committee, resources development committee, or other appropriate board groupings designed to

support the RESC administration and deployment of services and programs.

ANNUAL EVALUATION OF SERVICES

No annual evaluation on RESC services and operations effectiveness is provided to the Regional Advisory Council (RAC); however, the RAC consults and advises the RESC board on matters concerning educational services and provides information to the executive director regarding school district needs.

In Region 19, the RAC meets nine times a year. The RAC is comprised of the superintendent of schools from each district in Region 19, the president of El Paso Community College, and the Dean of Education of the University of Texas at El Paso.

Board Policy BDF requires the RAC to "conduct an annual evaluation and report to the Board on the quality of services rendered, the effectiveness of RESC operations, and the appropriateness of program development efforts."

Best practices provide that all board policies should be followed or, if inappropriate or without useful value, deleted. The practice of provide evaluative reports is important to making substantive policy determinations on programs (budget approval, etc.) and, therefore, is essential.

RESC 19 should develop and administer an annual evaluation and report the results to the Region 19 Board of Directors as required by board policy. RAC members should appoint a committee which will meet and develop an evaluation method and procedures for implementation which will meet the requirements of Board Policy BDF .

The implementation of this recommendation should result in providing the RAC with current information concerning the quality of services rendered, the effectiveness of RESC operations, and the appropriateness of program development efforts. The report can be developed by using existing data and information gathered through annual surveys of districts, TEA AEIS, and other documents and should not result in substantial additional staff efforts.

Upon development the report should be provided to the executive director and board of directors for review and inclusion in the overall assessment of services and programs provided school districts and schools.

LEGAL SERVICES CONTRACT

The RESC 19 Board of Directors has no written contract setting out the terms and conditions of legal services provided by the law firm representing the board whereas it is a standard practice of agencies and education organizations to have such documents.

The board is represented by a law firm which was obtained through a RFP process. Board Policy BDD requires that services to be performed by the law firm and reasonable compensation to be paid by the board shall be set forth in the contract between the board and the attorney or law firm. RESC personnel at a time following the on-site review indicated that plans for negotiations to establish a contract are underway.

Best practices dictate that written contracts for services should always be developed and approved by boards to avoid serious and costly misunderstandings.

RESC 19 should develop and approve a written contract with the law firm representing the RESC 19 Board of Directors. The executive director should negotiate with the law firm and establish the services to be performed and compensation to be paid. A contract containing the services to be performed and compensation to be paid should be taken to the board of directors for approval. An approved, written contract with the law firm representing the board should be maintained and updated annually.

The contract should, minimally, contain the following provisions:

- compensation terms for attorneys, paralegals, clerks, and other firm personnel services, including billing cycle;
- conditions for reimbursement for expenses;
- if a retainer is to be paid, the services to be included for the fixed fee;
- procedures to be used by the firm if outside counsel is required; and
- other provisions as deemed necessary.

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

Member superintendents have concerns about communication and how complaints are resolved in the region resulting in uncertainty as to how these matters are handled.

The survey of the 12 RESC 19 superintendents resulted in a 50 percent return rate (six responses). Survey results reveal a pattern of responses that suggest a need for executive follow-up.

Only 50 percent of the respondents (3) strongly agreed/agreed with the statement the RESC in our region is responsive to complaints while one (17 percent) strongly disagreed/disagreed with two respondents either not reporting or indicating they don't know. In addition, one superintendent stated that the channels of communication in the region are not adequate.

RESC representatives indicate that they do not know the source of this difficulty and that the RESC holds meetings with superintendents ten times during each year and meetings with department heads in technology, bilingual education, special education, and curriculum and instruction from six to ten times in each area. They believe complaints are resolved at the departmental level.

While the pattern of responses is inconclusive due to the low number of responses, negative responses warrant executive follow-up to determine if a real issue exists regarding the RESC's ability to communicate with school superintendents and resolve complaints.

Effective practices suggests that comprehensive follow-up on information that could be detrimental to providing services and maintaining effective relationships should be conducted promptly to prevent further misunderstandings.

RESC 19 should conduct an executive follow-up with client superintendents to ascertain the status of the RESC 19's ability to communicate with school superintendents and resolve complaints. The implementation of this recommendation should result in clarifying the responses to the statements relating to the effectiveness of RESC communications with all client superintendents. Additionally, it should result in establishing any difficulties that may exist in resolving conflicts with member school districts.

This recommendation should be implemented through two means. The first should include a survey prepared by RESC 19, and administered anonymously to all superintendents and should be structured so as to obtain a 100 percent response rate. Following the collection and assessment of these responses, and if the results indicate continuing communication/conflict resolution issues, the executive director should meet with each superintendent to discuss the matter and reach resolution.

The implementation of this recommendation should be considered important to the need for maintaining overall trust and positive working relationships with all client districts.

COORDINATION BETWEEN FACILITIES

There is little coordination between facilities staff in the Head Start building and the main facility resulting in a lack of important data and information upon which to base future planning.

There is a lack if information regarding individual building needs that is based on an identified series of criteria. Without this information it is impossible to develop and implement systematic improvements that are

effectively coordinated. This situation can lead to unnecessary duplication of expenditures.

The Head Start Program, which RESC 19 serves as the fiduciary agent, has recently constructed a new center and additions to the Head Start administration building. The Head Start administration building addition includes amenities such as open office space and state-of-the-art large meeting rooms that accommodate up to 3,000 people.

Although RESC 19 has facilities personnel and shares strategic mission with the Head Start Program, there is no coordination between the facilities management units. Under the umbrella of RESC 19, there are two property management units responsible for facilities use and management: main building and Head Start Program. The RESC 19 staff occupies the main building, excluding the Head Start Program, and consists of 142 personnel. The main building's property management responsibilities fall under the auspices of a facilities manager, five custodians, and three maintenance workers. The Head Start program facilities consist of one Head Start administration building and 38 child education facilities scattered throughout El Paso. The Head Start Program has 731 staff, including a building maintenance manager, six assistant managers, and 108 custodian/maintenance workers meeting the program's facilities and maintenance needs. Both the RESC main building and Head Start facilities have separate budget line items, staffing philosophies, policies, and procedures.

In very large organizations with facilities set apart best practices require a significant level of coordination of staff and other resources to ensure efficient and economical operations with responsibilities clearly assigned to prescribed positions.

RESC 19 should coordinate facilities operations and planning between the main building and Head Start Program building. The implementation of this recommendation should result in consistent facilities planning, operations, and maintenance. Coordination between the two programs should also contribute information needed for the development and successful implementation of a facilities master plan (see Recommendation B-2). Both facilities programs should have consistent annual goals and objectives and be budgeted appropriately to achieve them.

Preparations for implementing this recommendation should commence immediately upon direction provided by the executive director. The first step should be to develop facility goals that are incorporated in board policy. The policy should detail the need for a facility master plan. The second step should result in the executive director in collaboration with the leadership team assigning primary responsibility for coordination to a designated staff member. This staff member should be provided specific directions regarding the ultimate expected outcomes along with a related timeline.

FACILITIES MASTER PLAN

RESC 19 has not developed a long-range plan including a facilities master plan that can be directly translated into immediate, mid-term and long-term projects.

The lack of this master plan creates a series of difficulties including not having addressed long-term needs related to lease expirations and raising questions regarding long-term retrofitting of facilities to meet the rapidly changing demands of modern technology. RESC personnel report the instability of funds for capital purposes as a hindrance. While implementation of plans that may be developed for the Head Start facility are clearly dependent on funding availability (as are plans for other facilities, too), the planning function should still be carried out.

A number of planning processes and documents can be used to build and maintain facilities that meet the changing needs of a region. A facilities master plan is the result of these planning efforts and becomes the organization's policy statement for allocating resources and developing alternatives for

facility improvement. Facility master plans become increasingly important as a district's enrollment changes and facilities age.

The lack of a facilities master plan hinders planning for growth. A facilities master plan is based on verified existing data, a complete understanding of both facilities conditions, and the future implications of needs for the educational service center. An effective master plan includes an accurate inventory of each room, current internal room utilization, current external room utilization and assessments of all repairs, and renovations necessary for long-tem use.

Many large size organizations hire professionals to develop all or parts of the facilities master plan. However, RESC 19 has existing staff that can create a simple facilities master plan.

Best practices clearly require that the facilities planning function for organizations should be an integral portion of the overall planning initiatives. Creating a facilities master plan meets this requirement.

RESC 19 should develop a facilities master plan. The implementation of this recommendation should result in a facilities master plan. A facilities master plan is used by an organization to plan for future facility needs and to plan for capital outlays for repairs and maintenance. Any plans to build new construction can be added to the plan. Upon development, this plan should be reviewed and approved by the board of directors.

A key component in facilities planning is a facilities master plan that outlines all facilities construction and repair activities for a projected number of years, perhaps as far out as ten years.

A comprehensive plan contains an assessment of existing facilities' condition and capacity, a projection of utilization and a list of facilities needs, including deferred maintenance. The needs list identifies new construction, improvements and repairs to existing facilities. The plan must prioritize projects and schedule them over the life of the plan, identify their costs, and identify a potential funding source for each project.

FACILITIES PLANNING ASSISTANCE

Although opportunities exist, RESC 19 does not provide assistance to school districts with facilities planning, operations, maintenance and utility management resulting in potentially missing a key opportunity for providing and important service.

Regional service centers can serve as a valuable resource to school districts for services outside of instruction. For example, facilities personnel in the RESC can be commissioned to conduct facilities assessments for school districts, make recommendations, and serve as facilities advisors in areas such as construction or energy conservation. Additionally, the RESC Business Department may be able to provide important guidance in securing funding to meet identified needs.

An important function of the RESC concept is the identification of the needs of its members. This represents the implementation of a long-standing best practice.

RESC 19 should create new service products to assist school districts with facilities assessment, planning, operations, maintenance, and utility management. The implementation of this recommendation should result in RESC 19 identifying and offering additional services to school districts in its region. Facilities planning, operations, maintenance, and utility management are key sources of costs to school districts. Assistance in these areas could provide substantial savings to Region 19 and its clients.

In implementing this recommendation, consideration should be given to identifying services that may be obtained from sources outside the RESC. For example, for utilities audits and management, contacts should be

established with the pubic utilities provider. Also, arrangement should made with companies such as Johnson Controls and Honeywell International that offer system retrofits that are financed through savings as they occur. These and other actions should led to developing a series of facilities related services for school districts and schools as well as the RESC.

PARKING GARAGE

RESC 19 has discussed planning for the development of a new parking garage; however no actual analysis on parking lot utilization is complete.

The RESC provides on-site training and employs over 700 personnel (including Head Start and RESC services personnel) with existing parking facilities providing an inadequate quantity of parking spaces. Discussions are underway and a major multi-level garage system is under consideration. RESC 13 (Austin) has constructed such a parking garage and RESC 2 (Corpus Christi) has recently completed a study and is collaborating with city officials and others to make final decisions on parking space issues.

Before a large project such as a multi-level parking garage can be initiated, trends of parking lot utilization and capacity should be conducted by the facilities manager. Additionally, considerations are normally given to shared use with other public and private entities as a means to reducing costs. All of these actions reflect the effective practices that are included in the assessment and planning processes.

RESC 19 should conduct parking lot utilization and capacity analysis as the initial step in justifying the need for a parking lot. The implementation of this recommendation should result in assurances that proper planning has taken place. Once having completed the utilization study, RESC 19 can determine the feasibility of including fiscal resources in the next annual budget for parking lot construction.

The RESC can avoid unnecessary planning and analysis protocol development by contacting RESC 2 and RESC 13 for information on how they conducted their needs assessment and related facility planning.

MEETING SPACE USE

RESC 19 does not coordinate meeting space use with its facilities maintenance personnel resulting in the potential miscommunication of needs and unnecessary disruption of planned activities.

Although the service center uses software to coordinate the reservation of meeting space, there is no formal communication to the personnel who set up the space, provide security, and assure a comfortable environment. When the event coordinator needs a room set up, a phone call is made to maintenance personnel often one hour before the event. Additional planning steps should be implemented to ensure efficient workload and response time by maintenance personnel. This coordination should include ample set-up time and notification of any existing needs outside of normal business hours.

Best practices related to scheduling and use of facilities dictates effective coordination of all aspects of facility preparedness, security, and final clean-up and preparations for the next user. The scheduler software represents an excellent first step in this process, but further follow-up is required to ensure that use goes according to plan.

RESC 19 should implement a plan to include facilities and maintenance personnel in coordinating the use of meeting space and related services. The implementation of this recommendation should result in formalizing procedures to ensure appropriate input from personnel assigned responsibilities for all aspects of the facility's use. A simple solution could be to train the maintenance supervisor in the use of the available event management software. This action allows the supervisor to identify all of the important steps and actions that are required to ensure a smoothly managed operation.

TRAINING FOR FACILITIES EMPLOYEES

RESC 19 does not have a formal training program for its facilities management and maintenance employees who are responsible for very large and complex facilities that include in excess of 670,000 square feet in multiple buildings, both owned and leased.

The complexities of providing effective custodial and maintenance services in modern, technology equipped buildings require that assigned personnel be properly trained. Furthermore, simply meeting the requirement of training in the proper use of chemicals, handling other hazardous materials and equipment, and such issues as blood borne pathogens only meets minimal standards.

As the RESC implements the recommendation relating to utility audits, further training in that area will probably be necessary. Best practices indicate that training protocols typically include time management, professional skill development for each trade, effective work scheduling, quality control, personnel management strategies, interdepartmental communication skills, and other topics.

RESC 19 should provide a comprehensive training program for the facilities and maintenance employees to improve their effectiveness and productivity. Facilities managers should develop a training program for all staff. The program should have annual goals and objectives and should be budgeted to achieve them. The facilities manager, in conjunction with the Human Resources Department, should develop a training program curriculum, schedule, and budget. After the executive director reviews the training program, it should be submitted for board approval. Once approved by the board, the facilities manager should initiate the training program and provide an annual report of progress to the executive director and board.

A best practices maintenance-training program should include the following subject areas:

- time management;
- professional skill development for each trade;
- skills in area of preventative maintenance and problem solving;
- effective work scheduling;
- quality control;
- personnel management strategies;
- interdepartmental communication skills;
- customer communication skills; and
- work habits.

The training program would involve fees for seminars and trainers. The department should budget about $150 per staff member or $18,600 annually (124 staff x $150 = $18,600).

COST-EFFECTIVE MAINTENANCE SERVICES

Region 19 has not conducted any comparison studies for maintenance services to determine the most cost-effective maintenance delivery approach. Such a study results in providing data to guide decisions regarding procurement of some or all maintenance services.

RESC 19 main building facilities personnel contract with four private companies to perform maintenance-related services for the main building.

Exhibit 19-6 lists current services contracted out by the RESC.

The RESC does not have any information on file to assist in determining if the actual expenditures for maintenance represent the most efficient, cost-effective method for obtaining services.

Any study of maintenance services includes all district costs of performing the services to ensure an accurate comparison, including the costs of materials, labor, and overhead. Computations based on cost per square foot provide the most effective base for useful comparisons.

Exhibit 19-6
RESC 19 Contracted Maintenance Service Descriptions
2004

Contracted Maintenance Services Contract Description	Contract Amount
Maintenance and repairs for main building chiller	$19,560
Water treatment service	$3,575
Electrical – as needed	$42.06/hourly
Air handling – as needed	$45.00/hourly

Source: RESC 19 facilities division, July 2004.

RESC 19 should conduct a cost-comparison study of selected maintenance services to determine the most cost-effective delivery method. Facilities managers should select several services performed by the maintenance personnel or outsourced to private contractors and conduct a cost comparison study of services. The study should provide data to assist in determining if in-house or private resources could provide the services more cost-effectively.

Minimally, the study should consider:

- overall cost per square foot for services;
- the age and condition of facilities;
- both in-house and outsourced options for services;
- a breakdown of costs for materials, labor, and equipment; and
- overhead expenses including estimates for utilities, insurance, administration of services, and other factors.

ENERGY MANAGEMENT AUDIT

RESC 19 has not conducted an energy or utility management audit, developed an energy management plan, nor developed a preventive maintenance program. The lack of an energy review and plan and lack of a preventative maintenance program development results in the RESC potentially unnecessary expenditure of funds for energy use and failed equipment.

In practice, RESC 19 does not routinely review or analyze monthly utility information or make responsive changes In the absence of an energy/utility plan the RESC lacks direction on how to proceed once use data are yielded. In addition, without preventative maintenance plans expensive heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) and other equipment failures can occur prematurely and create unanticipated expenses.

RESC 19 has taken a piecemeal approach to energy management and maintenance, and lacks an overall plan to guide the center's efforts. The type of HVAC equipment and systems in RESC 19 facilities directly affect climate control and air quality. While conducting the review, there was no energy plan and no contract in place for water treatment for the cooling system and no scheduled maintenance for the air filtration system.

The facilities manager at the main building indicated that energy costs were not significant. He also indicated that air conditioning filters and other preventive maintenance replacements happened when a problem occurred.

Best and effective practices include a holistic approach to facilities and equipment upkeep that involves a data-driven approach.

RESC 19 should conduct an energy management audit, develop a strategic energy management plan, and develop a preventive maintenance program. The implementation of this recommendation should result in an overall energy management audit, the

development of a strategic energy management plan, and the development of a preventive maintenance program. A contract that includes the initial audit, the recommendations for a preventive maintenance plan, professional assistance in developing a strategic energy plan and the implementation of energy reduction tools should be handled as one comprehensive package.

A national firm, AramarkServicemaster, Incorporated, has been a pioneer in the facilities maintenance and support industry and offers proposals to provide the type services recommended. Other firms such as Johnston Controls and Honeywell International are capable of providing portions of the services that should be included in accomplishing these actions. However, all of the recommended actions could be accomplished internally with existing personnel and by taking advantage of the initial step recommended in Recommendation 19-9 (using the services of the public utilities providers).

Additionally, numerous guides to assist organizations with these type of reviews are found on the Internet by using a search engine and entering the key phrases, *energy audit*, *energy management*, and *preventative maintenance*.

ENERGY AWARENESS PROGRAMS

RESC 19 does not provide energy awareness programs or services to its customers while the resources to provide these services exist with the RESC.

RESC personnel report that they do not have a system of facility inspections to ensure that door and window weather-stripping is in place and not worn. Additionally, outside air dampers, heating, ventilation and air conditioner filters are not checked regularly. Systems or program designed to have occupants turn off lights and air conditioning systems in unoccupied areas, therefore, sensibly reducing equipment run times during the summer months are not developed and in use.

The bottom line for most energy management programs is getting the people who control the energy-using equipment to understand how they are involved in the overall conservation of energy. By developing policies and programs to promote student and staff participation in energy conservation, school districts can achieve energy savings. RESC 19 facilities personnel have not reviewed actual energy costs against budgeted amounts and they do not send a monthly report to each school.

Best practices involve the development and implementation of a comprehensive energy management and preventative maintenance programs that include a specific awareness program for all users.

RESC 19 should involve school districts in energy conservation by developing programs for awareness and advocacy. The implementation of this recommendation should result in RESC 19 developing an energy conservation program. To reinforce sound energy conservation practices, RESC 19 should send superintendents and principals monthly reports of energy use that compare to the same month of the previous year. The RESC should prepare an annual energy report for each school that could be submitted to their school board.

RESC 19's facilities personnel could speak to the facilities personnel, custodians, and teachers at each campus at the start of each school year. Energy saving information could also be posted on the RESC's Web site. An energy awareness article could also be published in RESC 19's news bulletin or catalog to inform the staff about energy conservation measures.

Checking door and window weather-stripping is an effective way to stop energy dollars from leaking through the cracks. Additionally, outside air dampers, heating, ventilation and air conditioner filters should be checked

regularly. Sound maintenance and operations procedures need to be in place to recoup savings associated with turning off lights in unoccupied areas, sensibly reducing equipment run times during the summer months, enforcing standard operation and maintenance practices for air conditioning equipment, and attending to caulking and weather-stripping problems to lower infiltration.

The RESC executive director should submit a summary of activity to the RESC 19 Board of Directors annually.

The recommendations can be accomplished with existing resources. Energy savings from campus conservation measures could result in significant savings to the districts, but cannot be estimated until the audits are completed.

MARKETING OF SERVICES

RESC 19 does not market its services to the community. However, the RESC showcased their services and products during a June 2004 Fiesta Conference.

Through its recent strategic planning process, RESC 19 has identified as one of its weaknesses the need for improved marketing of its services to the community. Although there are informal marketing sessions taking place, RESC 19 has not formalize their attempts by developing an overall program specifically designed to ensure that all potential clients are made aware of the program and services opportunities offered by the RESC. The RESC executive management is mindful of the difficulties that are encountered when private interests/enterprise believes it is competing with tax supported agencies for customers and as a result has taken a low-key marketing attitude.

Organizations have found that simply listing services and supplying those lists to potential clients or customers simply and is not that useful. Rather, best practices indicate that an aggressive, focused marketing plan approach is more likely to draw the attention of the potential market. Further, the practice indicates that the strategies must be based on a thorough evaluation of market (customer) needs and wants (with emphasis on the "wants").

RESC 19 should raise awareness of the RESC 19 services by creating a marketing strategic plan for the region. The implementation of this recommendation should assist the staff in efficiently marketing its services and training. A cross-section of professional and support staff should be involved in the development of the marketing plan. Other RESCs use staff such as field service agents and Title I specialists as key marketing staff due to their high exposure to clients. As marketing efforts are designed and implemented the RESC should ensure that the services being placed before the targeted audience are not in competition with the private sector unless there is clear evidence that costs are inappropriately high.

RESC 19 personnel should contact the RESC 2 marketing representative who has developed a comprehensive marketing strategy related to use of facilities and other services and products offered by the center. Additionally, the RESC should carefully examine the RESC 2, 3, and 6 Web sites for additional ideas.

The Internet is a repository of marketing strategies and sources for marketing plan development, many free and available to be downloaded. This can be accomplished by a search engine and inserting key words such as *marketing*, *marketing plans*, and *marketing strategies*.

GRANT WRITING

RESC 19 does not have an individual assigned for grant writing responsibilities on staff and may be missing opportunities to generate important funds for services and programs to schools and school districts.

The RESC does write proposals for grants through the various departments and has secured funds for special education, technology, and Head Start. However, RESC 19 has the potential to capitalize on additional

grant funding by designating a specialist to write grants for the center and assist the region's schools and districts in writing grants. In addition, grant writing and grant information workshops can be offered to Region 19 districts and internal coordination of grant writing and development can occur.

Other RESCs benefit from having a grant writer resulting in generating significant revenues for other programs and services.

RESC 2 (Corpus Christi) has a grant writer on staff and continuously pursues external funding. **Exhibit 19-7** shows that RESC 2 grant funds since 2000 total over $11 million.

Additionally, through this position RESC 2 maintains a grant resources component on its Web site with links to current grant opportunities affording member districts an easy and effective method for identifying potential resources.

This use of personnel to develop grants and provide additional revenues to support important client and RESC programs and services demonstrates the value of an institutionalized commitment to effective grant writing and related grant development services and is indicative of best practices.

RESC 19 should examine RESC 19 staffing levels to see if a grant writer responsibilities could be created and assigned in order to increase grant opportunities for the RESC and client school districts. The implementation of this recommendation should result in generating additional revenue for the RESC and its member school districts. These assigned responsibilities should focus primarily on writing grants for the RESC and school districts. The grant specialist should also work as a technical advisor and increase available RESC provided services to school districts.

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources by reassigning responsibilities and could result in increased revenue. As revenue is realized, the center can consider funding the assigned position out of administrative expenses entitlements associated with the grants.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

RESC 19 does not have a comprehensive system for evaluating program effectiveness resulting in a need for more specific data upon which to base important services and programs decisions.

The process used to determine which programs or services are to be offered districts is not consistent among programs units in Region 19. RESC 19 also has various methods of evaluating whether its services are delivered appropriately; however, there are no processes to make certain that the offerings are effective by using objective and measurable performance indicators.

Programs areas currently have different ways of evaluating whether they are meeting objectives. Some programs assess success by considering school accountability scores, others conduct customer surveys, and some consider session utilization and participation rates. In addition, some program customers complete annual surveys evaluating program quality. RESC 19 does not yet have a thorough data-driven, comprehensive system in place to ensure that all programs and services are continuously improving. Under the current system, program managers are responsible for developing their own evaluation criteria, and in some cases depend upon subjective measures such as their own impressions or opinions. The RESC recently established two new positions (database developer and planning, research, and evaluation specialist) to strengthen evaluation and assessment.

Exhibit 19-7
Grants Received with RESC 2 (Corpus Christi) as Fiscal Agent

Grant/Contract Name	Amount	Year	Source
Academic 2000	$5,823,272	1998–2002	Texas Education Agency
Quality Development of Childcare Services	400,000	2000	Workforce Development Board
TxBESS	300,000	2000	State Board for Educator Certification
TxBESS	235,574	2001	State Board for Educator Certification
Regional Fine Arts Summit Support	2,000	2001	Texas Commission on the Arts
Quality Development of Childcare Services	366,000	2001	Workforce Development Board
Regional ESC Innovative Grants Program	125,000	2001	Texas Education Agency
Quality Development	363,000	2002	Workforce Development Board
Regional ESC Innovative Grants Program	120,000	2002	Texas Education Agency
Rural Utilities Service Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grant Program	499,073	2002	U.S. Department of Agriculture
Teaching American History Grants	966,965	2002	U.S. Department of Education
Quality Development	383,110	2003	Workforce Development Board
Teaching American History Grants	965,650	2003	U.S. Department of Education
	258,640	2003	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Target	296,500	2004	Texas Education Agency
Target	292,482	2005	Texas Education Agency
Total Amount in Grants	$11,389,266		

Source: RESC 2, Business Department, 2004.

When the review team requested program utilization statistics, such as number of sessions and number of participants, data were made available in time, but the information was not readily available. This type of information should be reviewed often to indicate customer demand.

RESC 3 (Victoria) uses a system that represents best practice in the area of program assessment, and could serve as a model as Region 19 implements this recommendation.

RESC 19 should implement a comprehensive and systematic process for evaluating the quality and use of programs and service offerings. The RESC leadership team should continue working with staff to design and implement data-driven methods of evaluating and improving program quality. Emphasis should be placed on what data are important to collect, analyze, and utilize for making better decisions.

In addition to evaluating program quality, RESC staff should also engage in more in-depth analysis of program participation and usage. The event planning software system can facilitate this process. This will allow the service center to identify districts and schools that are not utilizing its services and increase outreach to those populations. RESC staff should consider reviewing the program assessments processes used by RESC 3. RESC 3 has a data-driven model to determine what programs or services are offered to member

districts. Program personnel review all sources of data pertaining to the service (needs assessments, program evaluations, workshop evaluations, committee evaluations, and input from participants). The proposed changes to the program are discussed with management, users, and other program personnel. Adjustments are made according to the indications specified by the users. Notification of changes is then sent to the customers.

Exhibit 19-8 is the RESC 3 Plan of Operation Framework.

HUMAN RESOURCES WEB SITE

Human Resources information on the Region 19 Web site is not comprehensive and could provide more detailed information and permit greater efficiencies in operation of the human resources functions.

Vacancies for RESC 19 employment positions are posted on the Web site, in the building, and sent to school districts; however, application information, employment application forms for vacancies, salary schedules and employee benefits and other information are not available. Potential applicants for employment must go to one of the two human resources offices to obtain and file necessary application forms and other information related to the employment processes. This walk-in traffic, particularly at the beginning of a school year creates an excessive workload on RESC human resources personnel.

Other RESCs have developed best practices for human resources by developing Web sites that permit the applicant to download applications and other forms. Some provide a means for completing and submitting the applications online.

RESC 19 should enhance the human resources Web page so that it is all inclusive of human resources services and benefits for RESC 19 employees. All staff having human resources responsibilities should meet and collectively establish the components that would be included in human resources' Web page of the RESC's restructured Web site. They should then provide whatever assistance is needed to the person(s) assigned the responsibility for upgrading the RESC 19 Web site. The implementation of this recommendation should result in permitting potential employment applicants an effective and efficient means for completing and filing applications. By using the Web site in this manner, human resources personnel should receive some of the applications electronically, thus conserving time and improving overall human resources personnel efficiency.

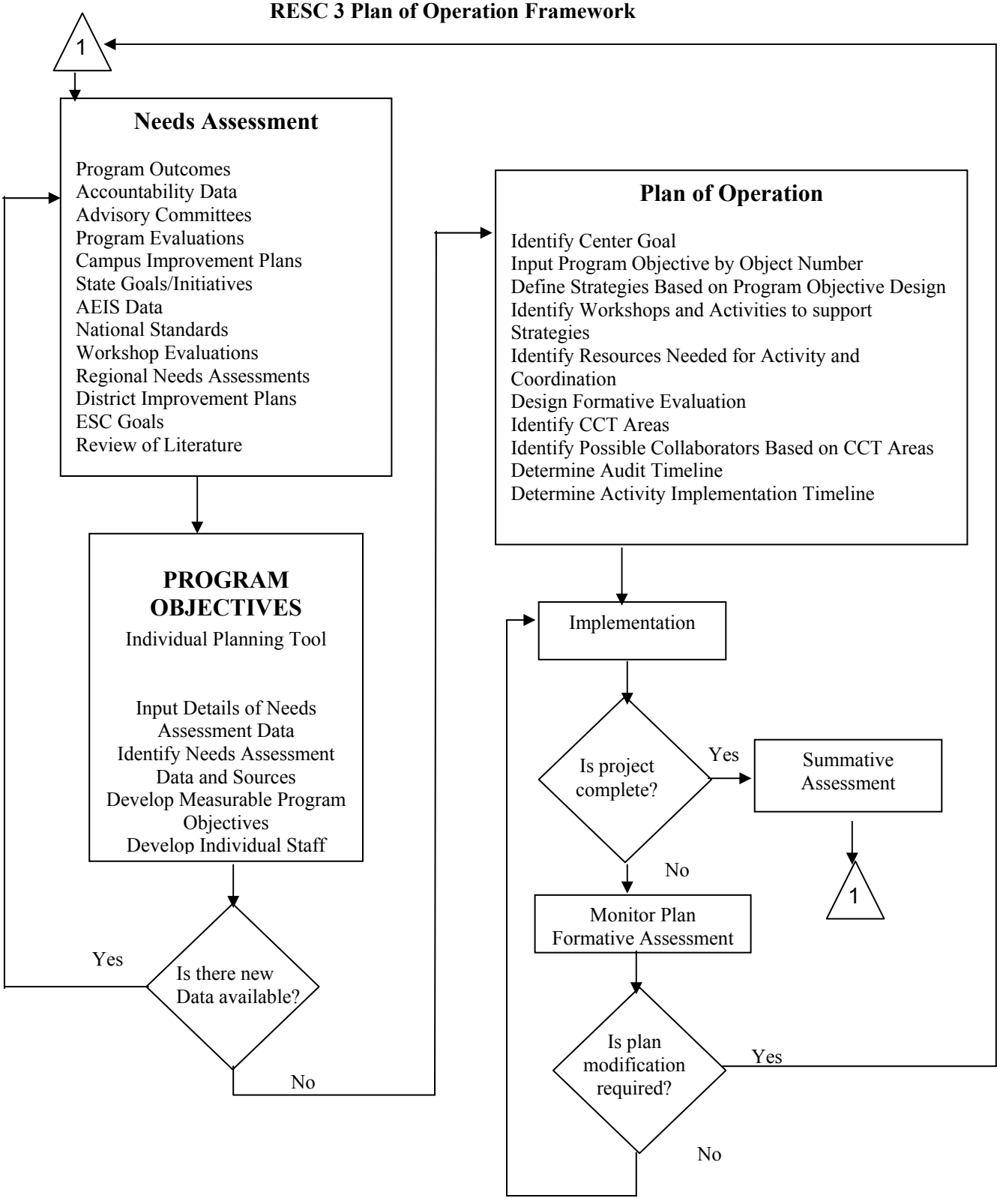
RESC 19 personnel should review in detail the human resource applications that are included on the RESC 3 (Victoria) Web site. The RESC 3 site is illustrative of an effective means of providing comprehensive information to employees and potential job applicants and permitting online completion and submission of forms. Personnel of RESC 3 have demonstrated a willingness to assist others in developing useful systems of activity based on their experiences.

BUDGET PROCESS

The program managers are not directly involved in the budget process other than the actual submission of requests.

The RESC annual budget development currently begins with a strategic plan (in draft form to be adopted in Summer 2004) that has specific budget requirements. Each budget manager develops the respective budget requests for the upcoming year (much of this is based upon the revenue anticipated for his/her program). These requests go to overall budget manager (associate executive director of Support Services) who reviews requests and determines fixed costs. The executive director is involved in the entire budget process and presents a preliminary budget to the board of directors in July and, subsequently for formal approval in August.

Exhibit 19-8
RESC 3 Plan of Operation Framework



Source: RESC 3 planning document, July 2004.

A review of actual expenditures versus budgeted funds for the 2001 through 2003 shows that revenues estimates, actual expenditures, and budgeted amounts vary significantly by as much as from 10 to 18 percent. This is a result of substantial instability in revenues. One means of more effectively dealing with this situation is to involve program managers more directly in budget development, including the creation of initial budget options that can be implemented should revenue shortfall or windfall occur.

Program managers need to be involved in budget requests to provide the necessary linkage between program planning and budgeting. Program managers are knowledgeable of program needs and directions, and the costs of providing services.

Best practices in organization management clearly indicate that the most appropriate decisions are typically made closest to the area impacted.

RESC 19 should involve program managers more directly in budget process beyond the submission of budget requests. The implementation of this recommendation should result in a greater involvement by program managers in the budget process. Program managers should be of assistance beyond submission of requests. Program managers have the necessary budget expertise to more directly predict over and under scenarios in their projections than other staff which will result in a more balanced actual to budget comparison.

FUND BALANCE

The fund balance in Region 19 for 2002-03 was excessive.

The fiscal audit for 2002-03 contained an undesignated fund balance for the general fund of $1,791,655, or about 37 percent of total general fund expenditures. The Strategic Plan 2004 – 2007 contains an objective to increase the fund balance by two percent each year over five years.

RESC personnel report that the increased fund balance is in response to vacillations in revenues and particularly a reflection of fears that major funding shortfalls will occur as was the instance for the prior year. The RESC eliminated nine positions for the current year and anticipates that threats of reduced textbook funds may materialize.

Best practices do require that organizations implement all possible measures to ensure fiscal stability and solvency. But prudence in their implementation provides that overreaction can result in an additional impact of level and quality of services and present the perception to funding authorities that funding is already at an excessive level.

RESC 19 should allocate expenditures to the undesignated fund balance for the General Fund and limit balance to 20 percent. The leadership team of the RESC should meet and prepare a solution to lower undesignated fund balance for the general fund to meet priority needs of the service center. There are several areas, specifically technology that could be addressed by the expenditure of undesignated fund balance in the General Fund and will not require an annual reoccurring expenditure commitment.

A committee of program managers or a committee of the RESCs choice, could be of great assistance in determining priority of expenditures to decrease the balance to within the recommended 20 percent range or level.

BUSINESS PROCEDURES MANUAL

The Business Office Procedures Manual for RESC 19 has not been updated since its adoption in 2001–02, resulting in outdated information.

The Business Office Procedures Manual follows the principles and policies adopted by the State Board of Education and contains official rules and minimum budgeting, auditing, and reporting requirements for independent school districts as well as regional service centers. This manual provides a working document for all employees to

ensure business policies and procedures are within state and local guidelines. Therefore, the impact of not updating could result in severe consequences and updating should occur as the RESC is notified of changes.

Effective practices dictate that all employees should be kept abreast of current trends and requirements in order to properly carryout their assigned responsibilities.

RESC 19 should review and update the Business Office Procedures Manual annually. The implementation of this recommendation should result in maintaining up-to-date procedures manual to ensure practices are current with existing requirements. It is necessary to incorporate needed changes on an ongoing basis to accomplish this task. The procedures manual should be assigned to one of the business office staff members who routinely deletes obsolete provisions and amends new updates. As this occurs, all impacted employees should be advised of the new provisions and provided any needed training.

USE OF FUND BALANCE

Member districts in Region 19 are searching for ways to become more efficient and effective. The excess fund balance in RESC 19 could be used to provide performance audit support to member districts and identify means for reducing costs of operation.

School districts throughout RESC 19 service area are experiencing difficult budget times which have led to personnel rift and loss of programs. Reductions in recent state funding allocations have caused many school districts throughout the state to eliminate or modify existing programs for students. The impact of these reductions in Region 19 has caused several school districts to focus on priorities for majority of students, which may create hardships on other student populations.

RESC 6 (Huntsville) has used RESC business personnel and field agents in roles to assist member districts in business affairs including identifying actions that would reduce costs or increase revenues. Additionally, RESC 6 has assembled teams to assist school districts in the preparation for state audits. This type assistance represents a best practice and meets the Texas Legislature's intent for RESC functions.

RESC 19 should consider using a portion of the unfunded designated fund balance to hire an independent audit team to help school districts identify where they can reduce costs. The implementation of this recommendation should help several financially strapped districts. The field service representatives or executive director could call upon individual superintendents to establish specific needs. These school districts should welcome the assistance as the independent audit team assists in identifying cost reductions in programs and personnel.

As the RESC begins planning to implement this recommendation, the executive director should contact RESC 6 personnel to determine how the RESC has organized their resources to assist member school districts. Information from RESC 6 could contribute to building a more effective service for RESC 19 school districts.

ATTENDANCE TRAINING SESSIONS

While appropriate training is included for RESC employees, there is no mandatory attendance rule. This can result in employees missing important safety information and other procedural matters well as not being up-to-date on skills needed.

The Strategic Plan notes:

> *"*Prepare a calendar of training sessions, and designate trainer, by department in the ESC for staff in the areas of:
>
> - contracts;
> - events management;
> - budget oversight;
> - purchasing; and
> - accounts payable/accounts receivable."

The list of training to be scheduled does not include procedures for handling fixed assets, safety matters, and other possible areas of need. Without up-to-date information and procedures to follow, errors may occur during implementation or carrying-out of federal, state or local regulations.

RESC 19 should require attendance of all employees at training sessions and add fixed assets and risk management to the topics. Employees should be required to have knowledge about the areas that they will encounter even though it may not be their major responsibility. Implementation of this recommendation should provide safeguards that ensure that all employees have been properly informed with the most up-to-date information. Requirements for training should be implemented immediately upon review of this recommendation.

PENDING LITIGATION

RESC 19 has pending litigation against United of Omaha Life Insurance that, if not resolved, will result in loss of revenue.

This matter involves substantial sums of funds and the declaratory judgment action arising out of alleged misrepresentations made by United of Omaha Life Insurance Company, concerning the funding levels for the RESCs self-funded health insurance plan. The RESC alleges a shortfall in funding levels in the amount of $768,565 as the result of United of Omaha's misrepresentations concerning funding levels. The RESC has made demands of United of Omaha for payment of this shortfall and exhausted all company based appeals processes including dealing with the insurance broker. RESC 19 attempted to mediate but were only offered a $20,000 settlement.

Through discovery, RESC 19 secured additional information leading to threatened litigation charging the insurance company with fraud. Since the on-site visit by MGT, the company has requested additional mediation.

RESC 19 should immediately resolve the United of Omaha Life Insurance litigation. The implementation of this recommendation should save the RESC money in the future and add to account reserves. The $768,565 demanded in this lawsuit represents a large percentage of all current RESC litigation that could be used to supplement the budget. The RESC 19 executive officer and Board of Directors should demand that attorneys representing both sides of the litigation convene to meet and develop a mutually agreed upon settlement, or push for an immediate hearing.

SCHEDULING SOFTWARE

While RESC 19 has sophisticated scheduling software, personnel are not fully trained in its use so as to obtain maximum benefits.

The RESC has software (Click and Learn) that permits sophisticated meeting (training sessions, and other meeting arrangements or needs) planning. The meeting planning software package includes such items as participant registration, assignment of participants to programs and rooms, costs determination, and sessions offered along with capacity and other requirements. Interviews with RESC personnel revealed concerns the availability of other applications for the software.

Although the software has many functions in its present state, there are other reports that could be valuable to the RESC and school districts if they were able to create them from the existing software (i.e., evaluation reports, attendance reports, and other type reports).

The use of scheduling software should reduce the time employees spend on manually creating reports. Several reports could be produced using the software that would facilitate the work of individuals and ease the manual manipulation to find results, such as participant attendance reports that could be sent to the supervisor or school district, reports for posting credits for required and optional professional development, and other matters.

Best practices suggest that each process and procedure used to accomplish tasks should be analyzed to seek the most efficient and economical means for implementation. Use of the planning software package is an effective step in instituting this practice.

RESC 19 should train personnel to manipulate the click and learn software to obtain necessary reports and improve employee efficiency. The implementation of this recommendation should result in increasing the capability of personnel to generate useful and needed reports.

The first step in implementing this recommendation should be to determine the precise capabilities of the software and its applications. This should be followed by developing a list of services or needs that would create a more effective and efficient meeting planning and implementation process. The RESC should then contact the software developer to establish the needed training opportunities for assigned staff.

TECHNOLOGY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

RESC 19 has not conducted a systematic survey of member district technology needs nor identified areas that should be considered for additional assistance.

RESC 19 serves diverse member districts and other agencies having different technology needs. RESC staff report that these needs are in numerous areas including the data processing areas of student and financial accounting, media services, A-V repair, internet services, student learning, and others.

The RESC is meeting some of these needs in some member districts. Presently, the RESC is providing Internet services to nine schools districts, two charter schools, the county of El Paso, and the El Paso library. Region Education Service Centers 18 and 19 have combined to provide NOVA net web based high school curriculum for credit recovery and some Advanced Placement courses. In addition, they have video streaming, networking services, and MIS partnership with San Elizario, media services, and teacher training.

RESC 3 (Victoria) has developed a systematic approach to determining the needs of its client districts and schools. RESC's approach represents a best practice and permits the RESC to budget to meet clients' needs.

RESC 19 should survey the member districts and other potential users to determine technology needs. The implementation of this recommendation should result in identifying and prioritizing the technology needs of the school districts for the purpose of expanding RESC services and products.

RESC 19 should contact RESC 3 to secure copies of survey instruments and other assessment strategies as a guide to assist in developing a comprehensive evaluation of needs and to avoid duplicating work already completed by another RESC.

Each school district should be encouraged to complete a comprehensive technology survey that is developed by the RESC technology and curriculum staff. Following the return and assessment of survey results each school district served by RESC 19 should meet with the field service representatives to discuss the results and define the type support the RESC could provide for them in the future that would enhance student achievement, increase operational efficiency, and reduce district costs.

FISCAL IMPACT

	Recommendation	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	5-Year (Costs) or Savings	One-Time (Costs) or Savings
19-12	Provide training for maintenance/operations staff.	$0	($18,600)	($18,600)	($18,600)	($18,600)	($74,400)	
	Total	**$0**	**($18,600)**	**($18,600)**	**($18,600)**	**($18,600)**	**($74,400)**	**$0**

CHAPTER 20:

SAN ANTONIO

CHAPTER 20

SAN ANTONIO

Located in San Antonio, Region 20 provides services that impact over 345,000 students and 34,000 educators in 50 public school districts, 26 charter schools, and 15 counties.

The Region 20 Educational Service Center operates one site located in San Antonio. This campus consists of three main buildings comprising 179,032 square feet on seven acres of land.

Education Service Center, Region 20 planning focuses on four primary areas. The areas include Student Performance, School District Economy and Efficiency, Improving Internal Capacity, and Fiscal Responsibility. To support the four primary areas Region 20 has established a mission and core beliefs:

Region 20's mission is "to serve the educational community."

Region 20's core beliefs are:

- Region 20 maximizes the development and utilization of resources (every product and every person).
- Region 20 supports district needs by providing exemplary services at competitive pricing.
- Region 20 provides timely support and effective communication critical to student success.
- Region 20 provides a forum for networking and collaborative, integrated services.

RESC 20 has formed a partnership with school districts to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of school operations. It responds to the needs of its partners by providing an array of programs in the areas of curriculum, instruction and assessment, administration, business support, certification and recruitment, health and safety, professional development, specialized services, and technology. Region 20 assists districts and schools with the implementation of statewide initiatives, and the interpretation of regulations and laws passed by the legislature, or the Texas Education Agency.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Region 20 demonstrates the effective use of a strategic planning process that requires the participation from key internal and external stakeholders.
- Region 20 effectively plans, funds, and constructs buildings to provide purposeful working and training environments.
- RESC 20 effectively uses available space and markets meeting space to outside groups.
- Region 20 effectively coordinates the *netVision 20* consortium to offer discounts for online and electronic resources to member districts.
- Region 20 provides effective online library resources to member districts through the Digital Knowledge Central service.
- Region 20 offers an exemplary *Navigating the Course of Change* Program, which provides administrators with preparation training on state standards and assessments.
- Region 20 provides effective leadership in accessing the general curriculum function in Texas.
- Region 20 has expanded its efforts in supporting statewide services for the deaf.
- Region 20 operates an effective program for Non-Educational Community-Based Support Services.
- Region 20 has partnered to create effective delivery of distance learning services for students and teachers.
- RESC 20 conducts annual salary surveys and other benchmarking activities to assist in developing and maintaining a competitive salary schedule.

- Region 20 effectively manages position elimination resulting from decreased state funding.
- Region 20 Business Center uses a billable hour concept to manage project budgets and maximize use of human resources.
- Region 20 Business Center effectively uses a monthly payroll cycle to pay salaried and hourly employees.
- Region 20 Business Center offers complete accounting services to charter schools at almost half the price of equivalent in-house services.
- Region 20 Food Co-op Program has created a savings of $177, 000 annually or 4.2 percent of the total purchase amount from 2002–03 by increasing the number of participants in the program.
- Regions 20 and 13 were successful in combining their cooperative programs to add greater value to school districts through an effectively managed cooperative program.
- Region 20 effectively plans for and keeps its assets of cash and cash equivalents safeguarded with its current investment strategies.
- Region 20 creates a safe work environment for all employees through its excellent safety programs..
- Region 20 manages its insurance coverage to consistently minimize its workers' compensation losses while providing complete coverage for the organization and employees.
- Region 20 Management Information Systems Group maintains exceptional technical support to school districts for computer maintenance and repairs.
- The Region 20 Management Information Systems Group provides exemplary services to the school districts by establishing and maintaining accurate and reliable systems with online help that meet the current demands of the school districts and other RESC requirements.

FINDINGS

- The board reviews the goals in the strategic plan, but does not approve the strategic plan (Region 20 calls it an integration plan).
- Several of the previous goals approved and currently being used by Region 20, and the goals in the recently approved strategic plan (with supporting action plans) do not have a direct correlation to the performance plan used to measure individual performance.
- The Region 20 board does not participate in training or development activities that would enhance its ability to lead.
- Of the total 179,032 square feet of available space in Region 20, 34,986 square feet (comprising two new floors) is not currently being used.
- RESC 20 does not have a formal facilities master plan that effectively details the future development and usage of its buildings.
- Region 20 participates in a successful national online education resource program.
- Since 2001, Region 20 has provided the Drug and Alcohol Testing and Bus Driver Physical Programs to give program assistance for drug and alcohol testing and assistance in conducting on-site Annual School Bus Driver Physical Examinations in accordance with current U.S. Department of Transportation and Federal Highway Administration regulations, as well as state regulations. The cooperative can be expanded.
- Region 20 does not have a standard method for offering post-training technical assistance to its training participants.
- The Region 20 Board of Directors lacks training in how to evaluate senior personnel and managing personnel issues that require action by the board.

- Region 20 business center staff members do not provide written commentary on fund balance activities to the board for budget submittals.
- Region 20 manages its purchasing process manually and not electronically.
- The current purchasing requisition modules (iTCCS and RSCCC) produced by the Region 20 IT team do not allow for users to receive an automatic notification for approving requisitions awaiting action.
- Region 20 is challenged with providing quality support for school district's software technology upgrades. Several larger districts are ahead of Region 20 RESC in their technology. Region 20 in some instances is not able to provide adequate support to those districts.
- Funding does not allow for duplication of equipment for full redundancy of systems.
- The iTCCS and RSCCC products run on different platforms and vary in the specific functionally and data access offered. While there is communication and sharing between the iTCCS and RSCCC staffs, the longer-term goal has to be a single product running on a single platform that would address the needs of all districts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 20-1: Improve the board's involvement in the planning and approval process of RESC 20's strategic plan.** This level of board involvement in the form of a work session around planning and budgeting would be an effective forum for discussing all critical areas of the strategic plan, and providing the board with earlier indicators of how the success of Region 20 will be evaluated. In addition, involving the board early in the strategic planning process will put board members in position to add value to the scope of some of the more global organizational goals.

- **Recommendation 20-2: Develop performance measures with objective targets and indicators that have a correlation to the action plans created for supporting the goals and objectives approved in the strategic plan.** The implementation of this recommendation will ensure that employees have a clear understanding of their roles, expectations from management, and responsibilities as they relate to the overall goals of the organization. This type of cross-functional planning will create an opportunity for strengthening cross-departmental relations, and improve employee performance through having defined targets and objective indicators that will be used for ensuring accountability.

- **Recommendation 20-3: Require board members to participate in annual training sessions, with a focus on such topics as governance, high-level strategic planning, performance review, leadership, and building cooperative relationships.** The board's participation in training will assist with building their knowledge about governance, how to ensure the appropriate strategic goals have been established, and provide a clear understanding of the most effective tools and methods for holding the executive director accountable.

- **Recommendation 20-4: Expand efforts to acquire additional parking areas and attract commercial clients into available space to facilitate the renovation of unfinished building space.** While there is significant competition in the commercial meeting/office space market, Region 20 has a unique opportunity. Most competitors in this

market carry a large amount of overhead related to debt on the property and must pass this cost onto the consumer. Region 20, however, carries no debt on the available space and can offer potential clients a cost savings. Although the location of the service center may limit the interest of some clients, a focused marketing campaign should be able to find a suitable client base. Additional revenue from this endeavor could be used to bring unfinished space into operational condition and to renovate space currently in use, as needed.

- **Recommendation 20-5: Develop a facilities plan for RESC 20.** A comprehensive facilities plan is an essential component to any educational agency, especially one that is experiencing programmatic and enrollment growth. Region 20 should take steps to create a formal facilities plan to guide future facilities decisions in the organization.

- **Recommendation 20-6: Expand the use of online courses through a collaborative with other Texas RESCs.** A shared teaching model using online format is an excellent method of building capacity throughout the state of Texas and providing course content to students in subject areas that may be difficult to staff. Often, such courses are not provided to students because there is no funding for the position or no qualified teachers. The STAR project is an effective model for bringing these courses to all districts in Texas. As evidenced by the small number of students using the STAR model nationwide, there is great potential for the expansion of this program, especially in the rural areas of Texas. Region 20 should explore all avenues to expand its online course delivery to other parts of the state.

- **Recommendation 20-7: Expand the marketing of on-site bus driver physicals statewide.** The current program is working exceptionally well and provides a valuable service to school districts. In addition, the program is profitable, making approximately one dollar per examination for the service of arranging the doctor's visit to the school district. Additional marketing of this service will likely result in increased participation in the program and increased revenue to Region 20.

- **Recommendation 20-8: Establish a Listserv for training participants to provide follow-up technical assistance following workshops and professional development activities at Region 20.** By implementing this recommendation, Region 20 should provide feedback and follow-up technical assistance using various technology-based systems already available.

- **Recommendation 20-9: Provide training in performance evaluation to the Board of Directors.** The Human Resources Services component is equipped to provide comprehensive training to board members in all areas of performance evaluation, to include:

  - goal setting;
  - performance criteria development;
  - outcome-based evaluation; and
  - job performance measurement.

  The implementation of this recommendation will ensure that all board members are knowledgeable and proficient in conducting performance evaluations and will facilitate a more comprehensive and effective executive director evaluation process.

- **Recommendation 20-10: Develop a written commentary and a trend analysis to support the year-end final budget, which is presented to the board of directors.** The implementation of this recommendation gives Region 20 an opportunity to document the fund balance sooner than accounting at year end. Region 20 is able to produce a financial reporting package to the board including written commentaries of fund balance activities.

- **Recommendation 20-11: Activate the requisition routing system in iTCCS and use the system from the point of creating a requisition, receiving approvals, issuing a purchase order, to receiving good(s).** Region 20's implementation of a complete requisition purchasing system will improve inefficiencies including the time it takes to process a requisition, the ability for approvers to receive automatic notification, minimization of the risk of a requisition being misplaced, and electronically receiving purchases against the original order.

- **Recommendation 20-12: Complete the testing of the purchasing requisition notification feature for iTCCS and begin testing of the same feature for RSCCC.** Implementing this feature will allow customers to receive a message that notifies them that a requisition is awaiting their approval and potentially provide a reminder if the requisition is not approved in three business days. This recommendation will save customers time and the experience of having to be inconvenienced.

- **Recommendation 20-13: Establish a reserve in the General Fund to enhance Windows XP software technology upgrades in RESC 20.** The current decrease in funds will make it increasingly more difficult to maintain financial viability. Therefore, determining an appropriate fund balance is a critical factor for the RESCs. The fund balance should include new technology and product development funds to allow RESCs to remain competitive in the market with products and services.

- **Recommendation 20-14: Establish a reserve in the General Fund to plan for equipment expansion.** The current decrease in funds will make it increasingly more difficult to maintain financial viability. Therefore, determining an appropriate fund balance is a critical factor for the RESCs. The fund balance should include new technology and product development funds to allow the RESCs to remain competitive in the market with products and services.

- **Recommendation 20-15: Collaborate closely with other regional centers to create one scalable product for release of next generation products.** The implementation of this recommendation by Region 20 will foster cross functional communication among regional service centers, make it easier to service all school districts, minimize reliance on specific personnel within regional service centers, and increase productivity and product support. The challenges faced by regional service centers will require more focus on identifying resources for training, business process reengineering, specialized IT capability with the RESC, and commitment from top management.

DETAILED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

STRATEGIC PLANNING

Region 20, under the leadership of the executive director, is using an effective collaborative strategic planning process that

includes key internal and external stakeholders. The process includes participation and input from an advisory council made up of superintendents and managers from all levels within Region 20.

The planning process used by Region 20 prior to 2003-2004 was driven at the Division Level. Performance objectives and the action plans that support those objectives were developed and implemented within RESC divisions and individual workgroups. The effectiveness of this process has been highly dependent on the level of commitment to the process by individual divisions and workgroups. In some cases, plans were tied to employee evaluation goals, which hold employees accountable for the completion of activities in the action plan. The primary weaknesses of this process were that no central centerwide planning took place annually, and while input from school personnel was gathered through a variety of activities or surveys, no school personnel actually took part in the formal planning process. Region 20 has improved this process.

The goals, objectives, and measurements from the current strategic planning process (see **20-1**) will go into effect in the 2004-2005 fiscal period. In addition, **Exhibit 20-1** includes the Balanced Score Card key performance indicators outlined in bullets.

Primary changes in the planning process (**see Exhibit 20-2**) that will be most evident when compared to past practices include the addition of the centerwide planning components, and the make-up of planning teams. The planning team for the centerwide planning was made up of the executive director, associates, component directors, selected coordinators, and members or member designees from the Superintendents' Regional Advisory Executive Committee.

Supervisors and managers from Region 20 participate in completing the goals and objectives as well as develop the framework for action plans that creates the following benefits:

- team building and buy-in from key external stakeholders;
- establishing clearly defined goals and steps for accomplishing the organization's mission; and
- identifying who is responsible for supporting each defined step.

MGT found in some other regions that the strategic planning process did not reflect input from all divisions, did not include feedback from external stakeholders, and boards were not up-to-date on their region's strategic plan; however, the value in this type of best practice approach is recognized in Region 20.

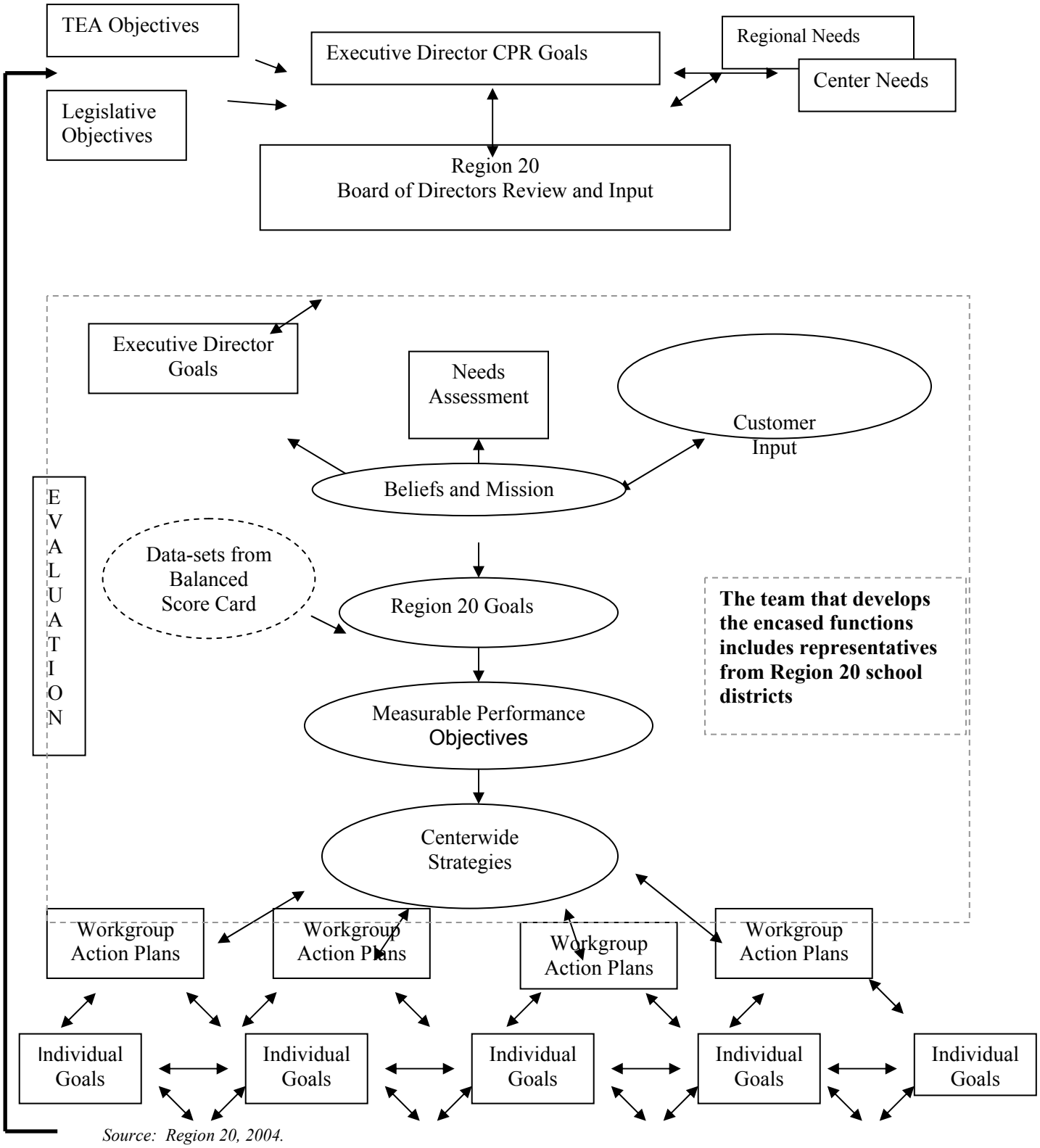
Accomplishment: Region 20 demonstrates the effective use of a strategic planning process that requires the participation from key internal and external stakeholders.

Exhibit 20-1
Region 20 Integrated Planning
Evaluation Measures for 2004-2005

1 Building Capacity	2 Fiscal Responsibility	3 Economy and Efficiency	4 Student Performance
Objective 1.1 To build a highly qualified, diverse, and effective workforce • Annual turnovers number of hours employees attend training • Diversity **Objective 1.2** To model effective use of integrated technologies, as measured by: • Percent of professional & technical staff delivering and facilitating through distance learning • Percent of workshops that utilize instructional technology • Number of Web site hits **Objective 1.3** To cultivate an increasing number of educational partnerships • Percent of districts participating on advisory committees • Number of partnerships Target grants	**Objective 2.1** For 2004-2005, maintain total service value and pricing structures at or below the average of similar service providers (sum of ESC services is less than or equal to the sum of competitive services). • Amount of revenue from SSAs, Co-ops, and Contracted Services • Cost comparison of sample products/services **Objective 2.2** Promote the value of ESC services to both local and state level decision makers. • Number of individuals trained • Training evaluation rating • Number of students served • Number of parents served • Number of parents served • AEIS percent of improvement – charter schools • AEIS percent of improvement – districts • Number of partnerships • Number of new services provided	**Objective 3.1** Increase the capability of and participation in cooperative and shared agreements to meet the ever changing operational needs of LEAs by 2004-05 academic year. • Percent of districts and charter schools participating in an SSA or CA • Amount of SSA (includes Co-ops), CS **Objective 3.2** Develop a plan by August 2005 for implementing a fully integrated information management system. • Completed plan • Texas Star Chart	**Objective 4.1** All students and teachers in the ESC Region 20 will meet or exceed state and federal accountability standards by end of 2005 reporting period. • Percent of High Performing • Percent of Highly Qualified Teachers • AEIS Completion Rate • Number of Individuals Trained • AEIS percent Improvement for Charter Schools • AEIS percent Improvement for Districts • AEIS Closing the Gap • Percent Campuses Meeting AYP • Percent Districts >=Acceptable FIRST rating **Objective 4.2** All groups, students, and Educators in Region 20, will increase the utilization and implementation of technology. • Number of Web site Hits • Percent of Workshops Utilizing Instructional Technology

Source: Region 20, 2004.

Exhibit 20-2
Region 20 ESC Planning Process



Source: Region 20, 2004.

FACILITIES PLANNING

Over 75 percent of the students served in Region 20 reside in the San Antonio area. This situation places pressure on RESC 20 to provide meeting and training space in a community where contracted space is at a premium. A review of construction project files shows that during the past five years, Region 20 completed a new conference center addition that dramatically increased available training space as well as space to house growing program areas. During on-site interviews, staff reflected that the addition has afforded more office space, storage space, and training locations for delivering services to districts. This addition eliminated the need for leased office and training space, eliminated the need to secure hotel meeting rooms, and eliminated the need for leased storage space.

Additionally, the new space has allowed Region 20 to bring in new program areas to improve the self-sufficiency of the organization. In 2003, the service center responded to a request for bids from TEA and was selected as the new location for the TEA Braille and Large Print Text Depository. This contracted service brings needed revenue into Region 20 and allows the service center to provide another critical service to the school districts of Texas.

Perhaps most important, all of the facilities operated by Region 20 have been self-funded and carry no outstanding debt. This conservative fiscal philosophy has allowed Region 20 to expand without compromising the financial stability of the organization.

Accomplishment: Region 20 effectively plans, funds, and constructs buildings to provide purposeful working and training environments.

SPACE UTILIZATION

Region 20 effectively markets and uses available space. As a result of a 2003 reorganization and consolidation, 144,046 square feet of the total 179,032 square feet of available space located at the service center is currently occupied. The remaining unoccupied 40,000 square is composed of two unfinished floors. Region 20 implemented a centerwide reorganization in 2003 that consolidated the previous total of five operational divisions into three, which has freed up additional space for training. The service center operates 18 meeting/training rooms for the many programmatic services provided by Region 20. A review of meeting/training room occupancy rates for 2003-04 showed that Region 20 is utilizing these spaces at a favorable average of approximately 68 percent compared to industry standards.

For example, the Society for College and University Planning (SCUP) benchmark for classroom usage is set at 30 percent, based on 45 available hours per week. Region 20's 68 percent usage rate far exceeds the benchmark set for adult education facilities. In addition, training schedules reviewed by MGT consultants revealed that these rooms are used effectively during typical business hours and also are used heavily during evening and weekend hours.

RESC 20 offers a total of 18 meeting rooms, including 15 multi-purpose conference rooms, and three technology labs, to meet the needs of the educational community, as well as outside organizations. Meeting facilities offer a full range of audiovisual and multimedia capabilities.

RESC 20 has developed a Web site to promote and market the use of its meeting space to outside organizations. The site includes information about individual meeting rooms, including:

- room location;
- room capacity/configuration;
- room charges; and
- photographs of the individual rooms.

The Web site also provides a link that allows interested parties to request room rental information. **Exhibit 20-3** shows the Web page format. The Web site has produced a small percentage of additional commercial usage and Region 20 staff are optimistic that

Exhibit 20-3
RESC 20 Online Room Rental Request Form
2004

Room Rental Information Request

First Name: **Last Name:**

Title:

Company:

Address:

City: **State:** **Zip Code:**

Phone: **Fax:**

Special Details: (i.e. meeting date, time, number of people...)

This box will hold up to 100 characters of type.

Please send me more information (**mail/fax**) about meeting space availability.

Yes No

Please contact me by **phone** about meeting space availability.

Yes No

Source: Region 20 Web site, 2004.

this effort will result in additional commercial business in the future.

Accomplishment: RESC 20 effectively uses available space and markets meeting space to outside groups.

DISCOUNTS FOR MEMBER DISTRICTS

Region 20's executive committee initiated and leads a community network consortium, pooling resources with other partners to offer online and electronic resources designed to enhance curriculum and professional development. Member districts across south Texas belong to the community network consortium, *netVision20,* to acquire these online and electronic resources at discounted prices as compared with commercial offerings.

netVision20 is a community network consortium to improve learning, expand resources, offer equity of access, and promote efficiency. This consortium, led by the Region 20 Executive Committee, collaborates with other service center partners to fulfill Region 20's vision of data, video and voice network connecting every regional school, district office, university, college, library, and other institutions and agencies across south Texas through high-speed access through the Internet, email, video conferencing, distance learning, mainframe applications, and other data management and telecommunication services.

Membership in the *netVision20* consortium offers many discounts for online and electronic resources designed to enhance

curriculum and offer professional development activities. Student courses, enrichment, and training are delivered to districts through satellite, Internet, and videoconferencing. One unique feature of *netVision20* is the Curriculum Using Technology (CUT) Institute. This provides teachers with training on a variety of programs and also shows them how to incorporate technology into everyday teaching. The focus of the CUT Institute is the integration of technology into the math and science curriculum using a problem-based learning approach.

The primary contribution by Region 20 in providing these services is in meeting the requirements of changing technology and communications. The *netVision20* technical staff maintains crucial connectivity required for access to Region 20 mainframe applications and data management services and solutions. Hub routers and switches connecting districts to Region 20 services are supported and maintained as part of *netVision20.*

Exhibit 20-4 provides a schedule of the technical support fees to *netVision* 20.

Accomplishment: Region 20 effectively coordinates the *netVision 20* consortium to offer discounts for online and electronic resources to member districts.

Exhibit 20-4
Region 20
***netVision20* Technical Support Fees**
2004–05

Members	Non-Members
1–9 days purchased • 3–5 day service- $400 • Next day service- $450	1–9 days purchased • 3–5 day service- $550 • Next day service- $600
10 or more days purchased • 3–5 day service- $350 • Next day service- $400	10 or more days purchased • 3–5 day service- $500 • Next day service- $550

Source: Region 20 ESC Web site, 2004.

ONLINE LIBRARY RESOURCES

Digital Knowledge Central (DKC) is a virtual library for educators, students, and their families across the state of Texas that is developed and coordinated by Region 20. During the 2003-04 school year, enrollment in DKC reached more than 1.4 million students on more than 2,400 campuses across the state. In addition to quality online resources, DKC offers technical assistance, curriculum integration ideas, and professional development opportunities through participating regional service centers in Texas.

This service has experienced rapid expansion due to its popularity among Texas school districts. Digital Knowledge Central replaced previous digital library services discontinued by the Texas Department of Education in 2002 and filled a void left by the demise of that program. Additionally, Region 20 staff reported a high level of internal and external satisfaction with the service.

Accomplishment: Region 20 provides effective online library resources to member districts through the Digital Knowledge Central service.

ADMINISTRATOR TRAINING

Region 20 has addressed priority needs for Texas district principals, assistant principals, and central office staff by developing a training academy for its school administrators titled *Navigating the Course of Change.* This is a statewide initiative and each region receives a complete set of training materials. Implementing the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and preparing for the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) are three-year priorities for Texas principals. The Texas Education Agency and Regional Education Service Centers host annual leadership academies and several follow-up sessions to focus on the following questions from school leaders:

- What do I need to know about the TEKS and TAKS?
- What is going to change or be implemented?
- When will it happen?
- What do I need to do to get ready?
- What resources are available for my use?
- How will I know we're making appropriate progress?
- How do I take care of myself and my staff as we orchestrate these changes?

Region 20's training academy is separated into 10 sessions, each focusing on different topics relevant to addressing the TEKS and TAKS. A review of academy materials revealed a high-quality curriculum supported by:

- CD-based materials;
- Web-based resources; and
- relevant supplemental materials.

One of the unique components of this training program is the original "side-by-side" materials developed by Region 20 staff to aid school administrators in addressing TEKS and TAKS. These materials were originally available via Web page for administrators to access, but are currently available through CDs. This Web page provides a side-by-side view of questions released from the spring 2001 and spring 2002 TAAS tests as well as information and sample test items from the TAKS Information Booklets. The side-by-sides enables administrators to:

- easily compare which TEKS were tested in one or both years;
- see the change in method of testing any given TEKS from one year to the next; and
- assess the change in rigor of the test and individual test questions from one year to the next.

Exhibit 20-5 provides an example of side-by-side materials.

Accomplishment: Region 20 offers an exemplary *Navigating the Course of Change* Program, which provides administrators with preparation training on state standards and assessments.

Exhibit 20-5
Side-by-Side Materials
2004

TAKS Math Objective 1
Demonstrate an understanding of numbers, operations, and quantitative reasoning.

3.1.A use place value to read, write (in symbols and words), and describe the value of whole numbers through 999,999

TAAS Spring 2001

4. What does the 3 in the number 273,049 represent? Mark your answer.

2%	A	3 tens
5%	B	3 hundreds
88%	C	3 thousands **
5%	D	3 ten thousands

3.1.B use place value to compare and order whole numbers through 9,999

TAKS Information Booklet: For Your Information page 11

At third grade students should be able to sequence numbers or words associated with the numbers when ordering a list of numbers (for example, listing the names of children in order from greatest to least based on their height.)

At third grade students should be able to work with comparisons using pictorial models, word phrases (*is less than, is equal to,* etc.), or symbols (>, <, =).

TAAS Spring 2001

19. Which number is between 258 and 324? Mark your answer.

258		324

2%	A	225
4%	B	249
88%	C	317 **
6%	D	359

TAKS Math Objective 1
Demonstrate an understanding of numbers, operations, and quantitative reasoning.

3.1.A use place value to read, write (in symbols and words), and describe the value of whole numbers through 999,999

TAAS Spring 2002

13. Which number is the same as sixteen thousand, four hundred thirty-two? Mark your answer.

A	16,400,032
B	1,640,032
C	160,432
D	16,432 **

3.1.B use place value to compare and order whole numbers through 9,999

TAAS Spring 2002

16. Lloyd and his brother counted the number of insects they saw this afternoon in their backyard. The chart shows the number of insects they counted.

Insects in Backyard

Insect	Number of Insects
Ants	45
Ladybug	29
Grasshopper	36
Bee	42

Which list shows the number of insects in order from **least** to **greatest**? Mark your answer.

A	45	42	36	29
B	29	36	42	45 **
C	42	45	36	29
D	29	36	45	42

Source: Region 20 ESC, 2004

GENERAL CURRICULUM

Region 20 provides effective leadership in accessing the General Curriculum (formerly the Least Restrictive Environment) statewide function in conjunction with the Texas Education Agency. The responsibilities of this function include:

- leading and facilitating a 20-region network, which will include, but not be limited to, the coordination of an ongoing state-level needs assessment process, setting state priorities, development of a network plan and the materials, products and activities related to the achievement of the plan;
- serving as the first point of contact for education service centers by responding to correspondence and telephone calls requesting information;
- providing information and guidance when requested by the agency in regard to technical assistance documents, legislative requests, and the DEC Reference Guide;
- performing all the responsibilities as detailed in the TEA/ESC agreement; and
- evaluating the effectiveness of all-statewide activities, services, and technical assistance and the use of the funds.

Accomplishment: Region 20 is commended for providing effective leadership in accessing the general curriculum function in Texas.

SERVICES FOR THE DEAF

Region 20 collaborates with the Texas Education Agency through the decentralization of Regional Offices of Services for the Deaf. Region 20 provides statewide leadership, training, technical assistance and specific projects related to the education and achievement of students who are deaf or hard of hearing. As a result of Region 20 providing these services, students throughout the state of Texas who are hard of hearing receive needed services to promote educational success.

The responsibilities of this function include:

- coordinating and communicating with Regional Day School Programs;
- identifying regional, multi-regional, and statewide needs;
- developing a statewide master plan that includes state-level priorities, a plan for providing training, technical assistance activities, and support including:
  - developing student communication and competence;
  - providing access to the general education curriculum;
  - developing literacy;
  - providing and using technology;
  - offering educational interpreter training and development;
  - addressing the shortage of certified teachers and interpreters for deaf students;
  - providing opportunities for parental involvement to assist Texas school districts in providing appropriate educational services to students who are deaf or hard of hearing;
  - networking with local ECI and Regional Day School Programs for the Deaf (RDSPD), and districts to help facilitate coordination between ECI providers and district staff who provide educational services to infants and toddlers who have an auditory impairment;
  - participating in two statewide Regional Coordinating Committee meetings per school year with RDSPD supervisors and TEA Services for the Deaf staff participating in regularly scheduled coordination activities (i.e., TETN meetings) between ESC deaf staff and TEA staff performing all the responsibilities

as detailed in the TEA/HSC agreement; and
- evaluating the effectiveness of all statewide activities, services, technical assistance and use of funds for these activities.

Since 2002, Region 20 has increased both the number of professionals serving this program as well as the scope of services offered.

Accomplishment: Region 20 has expanded its efforts in supporting statewide services for the deaf.

COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES

Region 20 operates a grant program through the Texas Education Agency for Non-Educational Community-Based Support Services. The center developed an application for using TEA's format including the identified required elements.

In support of this effort, Region 20:

- conducts an interagency training on the application process;
- assists districts/special education programs in preparing funding applications;
- coordinates with Community Resource Coordination Groups and Mental Health and Mental Retardation Authorities in the region;
- serves students with disabilities who would remain in or would have to be placed in residential facilities primarily for educational reasons without the provision of non-educational community-based support services; and
- ensures through program reviews that recipients are aware of program requirements and that funds are expended only for eligible services for eligible students.

Through this effort, school districts and community-based programs are benefiting by receiving needed assistance in acquiring funding and providing non-educational support services to the students of Texas.

Accomplishment: Region 20 operates an effective program for Non-Educational Community-Based Support Services.

DISTANCE LEARNING PARTNERSHIP

Region 20 partners with the TEA as well as the states of New York, Illinois, Montana, Maryland, Michigan, Virginia, and Wisconsin to deliver Project SMART (Summer Migrants Accessing Resources through Technology). The purpose of Project SMART is to increase educational opportunities for migrant students through interactive satellite distance learning technology. Classes are offered at the following levels: PreK-K, grades 1-2, grades 3-5, and Middle School science. Instructional objectives are directly related to the TAKS in reading, writing, and math. To address NCLB requirements, Project SMART curriculum incorporates a research-based balanced literacy approach taught by highly-qualified teachers.

Region 20 develops the curriculum and the programming is broadcast via satellite, DISH-TV, Time Warner Cable (San Antonio), KMBH (PBS in the Valley), and on cable in Houston. In addition to providing the curriculum and instruction, Region 20 provides training for the teacher partner trainers at the other service centers via TETN and also training for the Region 20 area teachers.

Region 20 also produced 20 hours of professional development programming on video for the 2003-04 school year. The content was developed and presented by Region 20 curriculum specialists and the programs were produced by the video production department. Topics for this year included:

- Achieving Success with At-Risk Students
- Achieving Student Success in Reading Literacy

- Achieving Student Success in Math Literacy
- The Paraprofessional's Guide for Achieving Success

During the first two quarters of 2003–04, 326 teachers received certificates as a result of this program.

Accomplishment: Region 20 has partnered to create effective delivery of distance learning services for students and teachers.

SALARY SURVEY

Region 20 has developed and uses annual salary surveys to maintain and keep current its uniform salary system.

The executive director provides for the development and implementation of a uniform salary system that is designed to ensure that service center salaries are competitive with the local labor rates. The Human Resources Services component director conducts salary market surveys annually to facilitate a Benchmark Review for the purpose of setting Region 20 ESC salaries. **Exhibit 20-6** is a representation of one of the surveys used by Region 20.

Salary surveys are sent to appropriate:

- adult basic education programs;
- education service centers; and
- Texas school districts.

In addition to salary surveys, Region 20 collects salary information from sources including:

- the *Salaries and Benefits in Texas Public Schools Administrative/Professional Report* published annually by the Texas Association of School Boards;
- PEIMS data;
- the *San Antonio Area Wage and Benefit Survey,* conducted by Werling Associates, Inc; and
- *The National Compensation Survey for Dallas/Ft. Worth* published by the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The development of the salary schedule includes a benchmark cycle that ensures that benchmark salaries will be validated/revised each year. Inability to recruit for a grade or a specific position may justify benchmarking more frequently. The Board of Directors approves the salary schedule and receives information regarding the impact of specific salary recommendations.

As dictated by the benchmarking process, a 15 percent maximum increase in individual Region 20 salaries may be provided using grade and/or sub-step movement for salaries below market value. When salaries are 15 percent or more below the market value, more than one year may be required to adjust salaries at full market value. A minimum increase may also be provided using Sub-Steps when salaries are less than 10 percent above the market value. When salaries are 10 percent or more above the market value, no increase is provided. During 2003-2004 due to the uncertainty of funding Region 20's board froze salaries.

Accomplishment: RESC 20 conducts annual salary surveys and other benchmarking activities to assist in developing and maintaining a competitive salary schedule.

Exhibit 20-6
Adult Basic/Community Education Wage Survey
For 2004–05 Salary Schedule
2003–04

Education Service Center, Region 20 invites you to participate in a wage survey of Adult Basic Education positions. In return, you will be provided with a complimentary copy of the survey results.

The Center follows the Department of Justice guidelines concerning the confidentiality and reporting of wage data. All reported data is confidential and will not be released or otherwise disclosed to other organizations.

Thank you in advance for your interest and timely cooperation in faxing the one page results before Friday, April 16, 2004.

Organizational Information
Wage Data – (Please Refer To Instructions On Page 2.)

Job Number	Position	# of Employees	Actual Hourly Wage			Hourly Wage	
			Low	Avg.	High	Min	Max
ADULT BASIC EDUCATION POSITIONS							
1501	Adult Basic Education, Teacher Aid						
1502	Adult Basic Education, Instructor						
1503	Adult Basic Education, Supervisor						

Instructions

Job Number and Position Title

Position descriptions identify the typical job duties and responsibilities of survey positions. Please use both the position titles and descriptions to assist you in matching your organization's positions to the survey positions. The education, experience, and status should be considered typical entry levels for purposes of matching survey jobs with organizational jobs. At least 80% of the duties described should be performed by the incumbent(s) for the position to be considered an appropriate match.

- **ABE Aide**

  Serves as an aide and clerk at the assigned Local Education Agency (LEA). Assists in providing the appropriate level of instruction for adult students. Assists in student recruitment, registration, orientation, assessment and placement as needed.

  Experience: Two years experience in educational programs or related field, preferred.

  Education: Minimum of a high school diploma or a GED Certificate.

  Status: Nonexempt

Exhibit 20-6 (continued)
Adult Basic/Community Education
Wage Survey
For 2004–05 Salary Schedule
2003–04

- **ABE Instructor**

  Conducts appropriate level of instruction for adult students in the areas of basic education (BE), English as a Second Language (ESL), General Educational Development (GED), and Citizenship Preparation (CP) as established by ESC-20 and TEA.

  Experience: Teaching ability in ABE or GED content areas. Knowledge of adult student characteristics.

  Education: Bachelor's degree or equivalent

  Status: Exempt (Nonexempt/hourly)

- **ABE Supervisor**

  Directly supervises the student and staff activities at the designated local education agency (LEA). Provides the leadership to implement the appropriate level of program instruction for all eligible adult students. Works directly with designated instructors and teacher aides to implement program procedures.

  Experience: Three years teaching experience in adult education or related field. Supervisory experience desirable.

  Education: Bachelor's degree or equivalent.

Status: ***Exempt (Nonexempt/hourly)***

Number of Employees

Enter the actual number of employees in this position.

Actual Wages

Please convert your wage data to hourly wages. Report all wage data as of January 1, 2004. If there is only one incumbent in the job, report the data as the average wage.

Low: Enter the lowest hourly wage (minimum) that is currently being paid to someone in this position.

Average: Enter the actual, arithmetic average hourly wage that is paid to employees in this position.

High: Enter the highest hourly wage (maximum) that is currently being paid to someone in this position.

HOURLY WAGE- ESTABLISHED PAY RANGE

Enter the pay ranges from your organization's hourly pay structure for the position.

Minimum: Enter the minimum wage from your organization's pay range for the position.

Maximum: Enter the maximum wage from your organization's pay range for the position.

Source: RESC 20, Human Resources Department, 2004.

REDUCTION IN WORKFORCE

Region 20 has effectively managed a large reduction in its workforce. State funding cuts resulted in the elimination of over 60 positions in Region 20 in 2003. During the period when information on proposed cuts was being provided to the service centers, Region 20 Human Resources staff and other senior staff took steps to update all service center employees on the new information as well as how it could potentially impact their employment situation. The Human Resources staff developed a process by which all employees were advised on how position elimination decisions would be made and how employees would be informed if their position was to be impacted. In addition, the Human Resources Department created information packets for all employees whose positions were eliminated explaining entitlements and benefits, as well as other important transition information to add employees.

As a result of this process, Region 20 did not receive any notifications of grievance from the over 60 terminations. Interviews with Region 20 staff supported the idea that processes developed to manage this difficult situation within Region 20 facilitated a positive outcome.

Accomplishment: Region 20 effectively manages position elimination resulting from decreased state funding.

MANAGING PROJECT BUDGETS

To be more efficient in managing project budgets, Region 20 has adopted a billable hour process for allocating staff time and cost.

This process is called the TAS (Time Accounting and Billable Pool System). This is a customized system where a professional staff member who does work for a particular project records the project time through the automated system. The hourly bill rate for each professional job classification is established on an annual basis. Support staff members do not have individual bill rate; instead, their cost is allocated as overhead cost for various job classifications when determining the professional staff bill rates.

This methodology provides greater flexibility to move staff between programs as needed. It also reduces the administrative burden for a program by reducing the potential number of budget amendments.

In addition, TAS tracks the service and time spent at districts. The application allows for report generation that shows the district administrators who, where, and what services were provide to district staff during the year. RESC 20 and the districts use the historical information to allow the center to determine needs at the districts and to plan appropriate services.

Accomplishment: Region 20 Business Center uses a billable hour concept to manage project budgets and maximize use of human resources.

PAYROLL CYCLE

Region 20 handles its payroll efficiently. The payroll cycle is run monthly for all professional and non-professional employees. This is cost avoidance for RESC 20 because there is no separate payroll run for non-professional employees only.

Region 20 has incorporated an exception process into the payroll cycle. On an exceptional basis only, the Business Center can offer emergency advances based on earned-to-date hours for the month. If a non-professional employee worked the first 15 business days of the month and needs a cash advance, they are eligible to receive the advance only on the portions of funds associated with hours worked. Funds cannot be advanced on unearned hours because salaries are attached to public funds.

Accomplishment: The Region 20 Business Center effectively uses a monthly payroll cycle to pay salaried and hourly employees.

CHARTER SCHOOLS

Region 20 is preparing to offer complete accounting services to charter schools.

The initial contact to the school districts took place approximately six months ago. Southwest Preparatory Academy and Light House Charter Schools contacted Region 20 to inquire about accounting services that can be offered. Region 20 surveyed the charter schools by a questionnaire to find out the cost of having business services done in-house. The estimated cost of these services to be completed in-house or on-site at the charter schools is listed in **Exhibit 20-7**. These charter schools are both in the Region 20 district, but currently are being provided services by another region and private vendor. The charter schools have decided they want to align themselves with a service provider within their regions; therefore, Region 20 has been selected. The charter schools will be reviewing the services that Region 20 can provide with their board of directors, respectively, for final approval at the next scheduled board meetings held in July.

Southwest Preparatory Academy is using QuickBooks for their accounting software package and Light House charter school is receiving support from Region 4. The charter schools are the targeted schools where these services will be initially offered by Region 20 because of the limited staff on-site to complete such administrative tasks. Southwest Preparatory Academy has approximately 225 students while Light House has between 100-200 students. Region 20 will act as the charter schools controller and be responsible for all accounting services.

One of the main reasons why the services of Region 20 were solicited by the charter schools is PEIMS reporting issues. Southwest Preparatory Academy faced difficulties with utilizing the QuickBooks software package because the software does not interface with reporting information into the PEIMS system. QuickBooks is not compatible with PEIMS and the data have to be manipulated to get the information in the correct PEIMS format. Southwest Preparatory Academy staff has to manually enter those data into the PEIMS system because there is no interface for QuickBooks; therefore, this creates duplication of effort and is very time consuming.

The cost of these services as a package will be based on a monthly fee for enrollment outlined in **Exhibit 20-7**. Services to be offered include budget process, payroll support, accounts payable, general ledger entries, internal audit preparations, review of policies and procedures, and bank reconciliation. These services will also be available as individual services for a fee.

The fee schedule for various levels of enrollment is as follows in **Exhibit 20-7:**

Exhibit 20-7
Region 20
Levels of Enrollment
Regular Monthly Charges

Student Enrollment	Monthly Fee
0–100	$1,925
101–200	$2,425
201–300	$3,175
301–500	$3,675
501–1000	$4,675
1000–2500	$5,175
2500 +	$5,675

Source: Region 20, 2004.

The fee will be recalculated at the beginning of each school year based upon actual enrollment at the end of the first six-week attendance period of the school year. The monthly payment is due and payable on the last day of each month and is to be received in the office of Region 20 at 1314 Hines Avenue, San Antonio, TX 78208 by the due date.

Region 20 is currently in the process of hiring a full-time accountant to handle the accounting services to be rendered to Southwest Preparatory Academy and Light House charter schools. This full-time accountant will handle 3 to 4 charter schools' accounting services.

The Business Center will use the RSCCC accounting package to maintain the accounting services offered as well as the existing on-site support staff of RSCCC programmers. According to RESC 20 business services associate director, a typical charter school initially will see a cost saving of over $35,200 per year based on the reductions in the infrastructure shown in **Exhibit 20-8. Exhibit 20-8** presents the cost of accounting services for a typical charter school.

Exhibit 20-8
Typical Charter School
In-House Accounting Services Costs

Business Manager	Accounts Payable Clerk	Software	Software Support	Materials	IT Support Staff (25% Of Time)	Total Cost
$35,000	$24,000	$2,500	$2,500	$3,000	$12,500	$79,500

Source: Region 20 Business Office, 2004.

The RESC Cooperative supports and offers these services for an estimated cost of $44,300. The estimated cost of $44,300 is composed of $5,000 for a one time fee for RSCCC software, $1,200 for a maintenance fee, which includes all regulatory changes to software as required by state and federal laws, and $38,100 annual fee for service that is based on $3,175 per month for 12 months and student enrollment of 201-300 students (reference **Exhibit 20-7** for student enrollment level). The total accounting service cost of $79,500 less the estimated cost for in-house services of $44,300 therefore, is a total cost savings of $35,200 annually (44 percent savings) to a typical charter school.

Accomplishment: Region 20 Business Center offers complete accounting services to charter schools at almost half the price of equivalent in-house services.

FOOD CO-OP PROGRAM

The food cooperative program has created an opportunity for school districts to leverage their spending power.

The data in **Exhibit 20-9** reflects results of like items, which were purchased by the Food Service Purchasing Co-op over a two-year period. During 2002–03, there were 50 public, private and charter schools participating in the Purchasing Co-op. This number increased to 60 public, private and charter schools during the 2003-2004 school year.

While several products did increase in price even though quantities and participation increased in the 2003–04 school year, the increase in the number of participants helped to create an overall savings. This is due to market conditions, demand and crop production. Kellogg's brand cereal in particular has increased in pricing for several years. The marketing campaigns have increased the demand and they are able to capture the demand and increase pricing.

Accomplishment: The Region 20 Food Co-op Program has created a savings of $177, 000 annually or 4.2 percent of the total purchase amount from 2002–03 by increasing the number of participants in the program.

Exhibit 20-9
Region 20 Food Purchasing Co-op Program
2002–03 Versus 2003–04

Period	Purchase Amount	Number of Participants	Commodity
2002-2003	$4,023,000	50	Food
2003-2004	$4,200,000	60	Food

Source: Region 20, 2004.

INTERREGION COOPERATIVE

Region 20 and Region 13 combined their cooperative programs to create the 2013 Co-op. The combining of both Region 20 and 13 cooperative programs is designed to increase their purchasing leverage and power. Region 20 primarily manages and administers the 2013 Co-op.

Region 13 Co-op consisted of approximately 29 public school districts, charter schools and state schools. A price comparison was created at the request of several districts, which were members of the Central Texas Co-op that were interested in comparing pricing. Many of the districts in this co-op are currently participating with the 2013 Co-op in the commodity processing area. Due to the commodity pass through option, which 2013 offers to districts that receive some of their processed commodities, districts were interested to see if joining the 2013 Purchasing Co-operative could further lower their food cost. Results of this comparison savings were identified based on comparing like food items and quantities (reference **Exhibit 20-10**).

Exhibit 20-10
2013 Food Purchasing Co-op program
2002–03 Versus 2003–04

Region	Daily Purchase Amount	Number of Participants	Commodity
San Antonio (20)	$14,564	60	Food
Austin (13)	$17,065	29	Food

Source: Region 20, 2004.

The result of this comparison shows that the Central Texas Purchasing Co-op could save a minimum of $457,683 annually or 14 percent of their food cost by joining the 2013 Co-op. As a result, additional school districts from Regions 20 and 13 have joined and actively participate in the 2013 Co-op.
Outlined in **Exhibit 20-11** is an example of the type of administrative cost savings that may be recognized above and beyond savings created through leveraging spending power per school district.

Accomplishment: Regions 20 and 13 were successful in combining their cooperative programs to add greater value to school districts through an effectively managed cooperative program.

Exhibit 20-11
Estimated Administrative Cost Savings/Avoidance Per District

Administrative Cost Factor	Small Bid	Medium Bid	Large Bid
Estimated cost of newspaper advertisement per bid	$200	$200	$200
Estimate cost of paper, mailing, copying etc.	$100	$200	$300
Estimate number of man-hours to complete bid	31 hours	88 hours	117 hours

Source: Region 20, 2004.

CASH MANAGEMENT

Region 20 Education Service Center has effective and efficient investment strategies for its cash and cash equivalents investments. Region 20 invests cash and cash equivalents in Texpool, which is an AAA rated pool completely invested in government securities and certificates of deposits. The investment strategy is based on safety, liquidity, and yield. The average cash and cash equivalents invested monthly is approximately $12.5 million.

The Business Center's responsibilities are to manage the investments by monitoring the bank checking account and pledge securities daily. Sound cash management principles must be established in order to maintain the right amount of cash for daily operation and investing cash surplus amounts at a higher rate to yield the highest aggregate return. Region 20 has a threshold of about $1 million that is always left in the account to cover standard operating expenses and compensating balances. This $1 million threshold is negotiable with the bank at anytime if the interest rate goes up. Region 20 can adjust this threshold amount accordingly. Region 20 needs to maintain a balance of $1 million in order to not get accessed a monthly bank charge on balances that fall below the $1 million threshold. Region 20 performs monthly cash flow analysis on how they are going to spend the money. Region 20 invests in government securities or certificates of deposit that on average are held for 120 days; however, the maximum that they can invest in government securities or certificates of deposits is one year. A policy was established with the bank in 2002 that any funds over that $1 million threshold will be automatically pulled out of the account for 24 hours and invested in a government security fund to potentially earn a higher yield.

The goal of Region 20 is to minimize risk. Another way Region 20 minimizes risk is by purchasing certificate of deposit investments. Certificates of deposit are relatively low risk that can be easily converted into cash.

Accomplishment: Region 20 effectively plans for and keeps its assets of cash and cash equivalents safeguarded with its current investment strategies.

SAFETY PROGRAMS

Region 20 Human Resource Services has excellent safety programs in place to create a safe work environment for all employees.

The Human Resource Services has the primary responsibility for ensuring that centerwide safety issues are addressed and that the center stresses with all staff that safety is everyone's responsibility. A letter from the executive director is provided to every new employee and is placed inside their safety manual.

Region 20 associate directors, operations managers, maintenance and operations and directors each have all the center staff phone numbers, cell numbers, office locations, and emergency contacts. The switchboard operator

is able to change phone message recordings from off-site to meet unpredictable, emergency needs. Information regarding facility closures is also posted on the RESC Internet site when needed for staff and workshop participants viewing. Radio and television channels also carry this information.

Region 20 has an online safety-related handbooks, documents and policies and procedures. These are reviewed with new employees. Safety information Internet links and articles are placed in the RESC weekly newsletter, REPORT, on an ongoing basis.

First aid kits are in numerous locations in each building and location postings are in each building's lunchroom. Safety posters and fire extinguishers are also posted. Radio, flashlights, siren emergency items are distributed throughout the center. Fire drills are conducted; fire blankets available. MDS sheets are available in Living Science and staff awareness of appropriate use of chemicals. Videos, brown bag events and on-site safety demos are used to share the best safety tips. In addition, Region 20 scheduled a Health and Safety Fair on-site in 2004-05.

Surveys are conducted on an as-needed basis. All new employees are provided an ergonomic worksheet to complete and review with their supervisor to determine if ergonomic worksite needs are met. Region 20 ensures timely action is taken and information shared if suspicious packages are delivered on-site. The center has moved the mail room to minimize potential exposure if hazardous materials were to be found.

Accomplishment: Region 20 creates a safe work environment for all employees through its excellent safety programs.

INSURANCE COVERAGE

Region 20 has had minimal insurance claims reported over the last four years.

Region 20 purchases property, casualty, and liability insurance through TASB's risk management pool through an Inter-local agreement. Region 20 has been purchasing insurance through TASB's risk management pool since 1974. The risk management pool is a multi-regional insurance cooperative.

Region 20 uses TASB as a resource for safety materials such as safety manuals, videos, poster, and consulting services. The Human Resource department works with Region 20 supervisors based on needs and provides safety tips in the campus newsletter via the center's intranet.

The center is under the fully funded insurance plan. The reason Region 20 chose to use the fully insured program is:

- It establishes a fixed cost for the center, which allows for accurate budgeting and minimizes financial risk to the center.
- TASB will service all claims incurred for the life of those claims with no additional administrative charges should Region 20 decide to change insurers in the future.
- Analysis of past claims indicates that Region 20 has both high and low years. However, while the center might have initial savings by using risk sharing programs, the long-term cost of these programs balances out.
- Risk sharing programs minimizes the administrative requirements for the center. TASB currently assumes any additional administrative duties that generally the center would handle.

This cooperative is responsible for obtaining the best-valued voluntary insurance benefits and risk management insurance to its participating members.

Region 20's loss history analysis under TASB's risk management pool for the last four years by occupation is shown in **Exhibit 20-12**.

As can be seen in the exhibit, Region 20 had incurred and paid 19 claims in the amount of $1,343. This dollar amount is well below the minimum deductible established by Region 20.

Exhibit 20-12
Region 20 Loss History Analysis by Occupation

Occupation Description	Fund Year	Frequency of Occurrence	Number of Claims	Claim Amount
Professional/Clerical/Administrator	**2003**	**100%**	**19**	**$1,343**
Professional/Clerical/Administration	2002	81.48%	22	$36,207
All Other	2002	7.41%	2	$6,474
Custodial	2002	7.41%	2	$134
Building Maintenance	2002	3.70%	1	$0
Professional/Clerical/Administration	2001	91.67%	33	$27,511
Building Maintenance	2001	5.56%	2	$6,926
All Other	2001	2.78%	1	$0
Professional/Clerical/ Administration	2000	87.80%	36	$145,310
Driver & Vehicle Maintenance	2000	7.32%	3	$4,104
All Other	2000	4.88%	2	$2,012

Source: Region 20, 2004.

Accomplishment: Region 20 manages its insurance coverage to consistently minimize its workers' compensation losses while providing complete coverage for the organization and employees.

TECHNICAL SUPPORT TO SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Region 20 successfully implemented a Dell Premier Access Provider program to provide technical support to the school districts on computer maintenance.

Through the Dell Premier Access Program, Region 20 has certified three Technical Support Specialists to serve as Dell Technicians. To become a Dell Premier Access Provider, there is a $1,500 annual fee and $179 per technician/per year to maintain certification. To receive certification as Dell Technicians, the staff was required to take and pass five tests. They can perform all warranty repairs for Dell desktops, workstations, laptops and servers. This service has been expanded to offer support services to the school districts. The districts sign a vendor selection agreement at no cost to the district and Dell pays Region 20 $50 per computer serviced. Currently, Region 20 is providing Dell Warranty support for 620 computers (220 district computers and nearly 400 RESC computers).

This entrepreneur spirit has created $11,000 in revenues for the Region 20 Business Center and also increased exposure of districts using the computer support services offered through the region.

Accomplishment: The Region 20 Management Information Systems Group provides technical support to school districts for computer maintenance and repairs.

MIS SERVICES

Region 20 maintains accurate and reliable systems for support to school districts and other RESCs that use Region 20 in-house applications.

The Texas Computer Cooperative (TCC) is a software development cooperative formed by RESCs. The TCC, which has been evolving over 36 years, has management and oversight responsibilities for two separate cooperatives that develop administrative software for Texas schools. The TCC Management Committee consists of representative RESC executive directors and school district superintendents.

The two cooperatives within the TCC are the Internet-based Texas Computer Cooperative Software (iTCCS) and the Regional Service Center Computer Cooperative (RSCCC). While the two cooperatives operate on

different platforms, focus on different audiences, and vary somewhat in specific functionality offered, both provide school districts with highly integrated administrative software addressing student information needs, business office functions, and PEIMS reporting. Neither cooperative receives any state funding, with costs being covered by fee-for-service plans paid by participating school districts and RESCs.

RESC 20 serves as the fiscal agent for both cooperatives. All staff and equipment used to develop the software and to provide the services are housed in San Antonio. In addition, each participating RESC has interface staff that work directly with school districts to provide training and support.

The iTCCS cooperative consists of 10 RESCs. The applications are Web-based with district data residing on an enterprise server located at RESC 20. The products are primarily tailored to the needs of larger school districts (current users include districts with an average daily attendance of over 70,000). There are 43 members including school districts and RESCs that use some portion of the iTCCS system with over 12,000 district employees accessing applications through thin client Web browsers. The iTCCS staff is experienced in working with administrative software for schools, with an average of 11.5 years working at RESC 20.

The RSCCC cooperative consists of 19 RESCs; however, there are districts in all 20 RESC regions that use RSCCC. The applications are designed as client-server applications to be run on district-wide networks. The districts using the RSCCC are generally smaller (those with average daily attendance under 14,000), although there are some larger districts (ADA 20,000 – 30,000) that use the RSCCC PEIMS application. There are 721 school districts that use some portion of the RSCCC system, with over 6,000 end users. The RSCCC staff is experienced in working with administrative software for schools, with an average of eight years working at RESC 20.

The iTCCS product, geared for larger school districts, has additional functionality that the RSCCC product does not. This includes such capabilities as a Position Management module within Human Resources and a Warehouse application. However, both systems are characterized by a high level of functionality that has been tailored to the Texas school environment. The design of the systems has been based on a three decades long relationship with Texas schools.

Exhibit 20-13 shows a list of iTCCS and RSCCC applications. Each product also has a PEIMS reporting application that extracts and maintains business and student data for reporting to the Texas Education Agency (TEA) according to the PEIMS data standards.

Exhibit 20-13
iTCCS and RSCCC Application Comparison

Student	Business
Attendance Course Scheduling Discipline Management Grade Reporting Graduation Plan (iTCCS only; Planned for RSCCC) Historical (iTCCS only; Planned for RSCCC) Registration (Student Enrollment) Special Education Student Health Test Scores (iTCCS only; Planned for RSCCC) Federal Lunch Application System (iTCCS only)	Accounts Receivable (iTCCS only; Planned RSCCC) Asset Management (Fixed Assets) Budget Cafeteria (iTCCS only) Finance Human Resources (iTCCS has Position Management) Requisition Tax Collections / Appraisals (iTCCS only) Warehouse (iTCCS only) Work Order (iTCCS only)

Source: Region 20, 2004

Some of the functional characteristics of both the iTCCS and RSCCC software include:

- **Texas-based**: Product development has focused solely on Texas schools. The software is geared to what information and processes are required of Texas schools both for their daily operations and for reporting to state and federal agencies. For example, the student health applications produce the screening and immunization reports districts are required to provide to the Texas Department of Health. Any application changes needed because of changes to reporting requirements, such as those in the Financial Resource Guide and the Attendance Handbook, are included in new releases of the software at no additional charge to the districts.

- **PEIMS Compliance**: The systems are designed to help ensure the accurate and efficient reporting of PEIMS information. Data do not have to be collected manually, nor manipulated through crosswalks for PEIMS reporting. PEIMS edits are built into the software to ensure data accuracy at the point of entry. Districts are less subject to on-site audits due to the accuracy of the data being submitted to the state. Since the data are district-based, iTCCS and RSCCC users do not have to spend time consolidating and reconciling data like districts that have purchased campus-based systems do.

- **Data Access and Accuracy**: The systems are designed around relational databases that are ODBC compliant. As a result, users can access data through other ODBC compliant software (e.g. ACCESS, EXCEL, Crystal Reports, etc.). This provides the users a higher level of data access. In addition, the RSCCC contains an ease of use user-created reports feature. The databases are designed as real time systems, meaning that data entered into the applications are recorded instantly. This translates into more accurate data for queries and reporting. The databases have been normalized, meaning that, since the data are entered only once and stored only once, the districts realize a cost savings in staff time and data are more accurate.

- **Feature Rich, Integrated Systems**: All applications are "feature rich" meaning they are designed around the ways districts perform school business, thereby providing greater staff efficiency. This includes providing hundreds of standard reports that support the daily operation, data analysis, and state reporting needs of the districts. The iTCCS and RSCCC stock reports translate into huge savings in staffing costs and replication of effort among districts in the state. Further, unlike many vendors marketing products in the state, these products offer student, business and PEIMS applications on a common integrated database. With this integrated database and applications, districts can support combining employee human resource information with student information to respond to NCLB reporting requirements.

- **Web Access**: The iTCCS product currently is accessed through the Web browser on the user workstation. The RSCCC is currently modifying its programs to allow Web browser access through Citrix. This will be operational in the 2004–05 school years. Giving districts the option of running the RSCCC in either a client-server environment or through the Web allows them the choice of local control or an ASP solution.

The strengths and best practices of the iTCCS and RSCCC cooperatives are listed below:

- There is a close working relationship among the RESCs in the cooperatives. Phone, email, and written communication occur on a daily basis. The iTCCS and RSCCC staffs serve as expert resources to the RESC consultants who work directly with the school districts. They also provide the RESC consultants training (both over TETN and face-to-face) and documentation related to the operation of and modifications to the products.

- The RESC employees provide support in identifying needed program changes, prioritizing those changes, and developing program specifications. The statewide committees representing the districts and RESCs ensure that the direction of future product development is client driven. Further, there are cooperative efforts with staff across RESCs to conduct presentations of the products to potential clients and to share product related materials.

- There is a close working relationship between the iTCCS and RSCCC staff. This includes sharing information on review of federal and state laws, and on programming specifications. Joint meetings are held when developing new functionality so that both groups can benefit from each other's experience.

- Employees at each RESC provide direct support to the districts, including training and problem resolution. Districts benefit by being able to form close working relationships with the RESC support staff. They receive support when they need it, including after normal work hours, weekends, and when districts face some kind of emergency.

- RESC training of districts is not just in the use of the software, but also includes training on state requirements such as PEIMS, the Financial Accounting Resource Guide, and the Student Attendance Accounting Handbook. The RESC employees train districts in the interpretation of such state mandates and how they should be addressed through the software. This training addresses an ongoing need because of the turnover of district staff, especially for staff dealing with student information.

- In addition to their years of experience working with administrative software for schools, the iTCCS and RSCCC staff maintains daily contact with the RESC consultants around the state, have frequent direct contact with the districts, and work with third-party vendors. Combined with their working relationship with TEA, both cooperatives are very knowledgeable about how districts operate and are able to anticipate changes in district needs.

- The iTCCS and RSCCC systems are extremely cost-effective. When compared to similar products available to schools, it is not uncommon to find that those products are more expensive than iTCCS or RSCCC. Further, given the number of districts in the cooperatives, it is possible to have cost savings passed along to the districts. For example:

  - **Sybase Database Licenses**: The RSCCC cooperative has an agreement with Sybase to purchase the database software used at each district at one-fifth its retail price.

  - **Electronic Check Signatures**: This year, the RSCCC added a feature that allows districts to use electronic check signatures for their checks. This feature was passed along to districts at

no additional charge. This saved districts from having to use third-party hardware and software needed for electronic signatures, saving close to $1 million statewide.

- **Cognos Web Portal**: iTCCS purchased a Cognos Web portal. This value added product allows iTCCS districts the functionality of a point and click report writer (Impromptu) and a multi-dimensional analysis tool (PowerPlay) that both access iTCCS data. The server and software reside at RESC-20, and iTCCS staff developed the multi-dimensional cubes used by these products. For example, The TAAS/TAKS cubes link test scores with teacher class rosters and allow district and campus administrators, as well as teachers, to analyze the test results through a variety of measures down to the item level. The cooperative purchase of this powerful business intelligence, query, reporting and analysis tool has alleviated the need for districts to make this type of investment individually, resulting in a significant savings at both the RESC and district levels.

- The Region 20 Management Information Systems Group also provides online help to school districts through an effective checklist that allows the user to review and evaluate a business process and check for data accuracy before executing a system command.

The overall oversight of the cooperatives comes from the TCC Management Committee. This is composed of RESC executive directors and school district superintendents. This oversight includes approval of cooperative budgets and setting prices for the cooperative services. This is another reason that the cost for these services has been kept so reasonable.

Accomplishment: The Region 20 Management Information Systems Group provides exemplary services to member districts by establishing and maintaining accurate and reliable systems meet the demands of the member districts and also meet RESC requirements.

DETAILED FINDINGS

BOARD INVOLVEMENT IN PLANNING

The board reviews the goals in the strategic plan, but does not approve the strategic plan (Region 20 calls it an integration plan).

By the board not approving the strategic plan, there is no opportunity for the board to evaluate the objectives and key performance indicators that will be used for measuring successes and identifying challenges within Region 20. In addition, the board at Region 20 is not involved in the strategic planning process. As a result of board members' lack of involvement in the planning or approval process, many of the board members were not familiar with the defined goals or objectives within the recently adopted strategic plan. The board's increased involvement will improve their knowledge about the goals, objectives, and key performance measures that will be used to support the organization's defined mission.

RESC 20 should improve the board's involvement in the planning and approval process of RESC 20's strategic plan. This level of board involvement in the form of a work session around planning and budgeting would be a an effective forum for discussing all critical areas of the strategic plan, and providing the board with earlier indicators of how the success of Region 20 will be evaluated. In addition, involving the board early in the strategic planning process will put board members in a position to add value to the scope of some of the more global organizational goals.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Several of the previous goals approved and currently being used by Region 20, and the goals in the recently approved strategic plan (with supporting action plans) do not have a direct correlation to the performance plan used to measure individual performance.

In addition, in many of the performance plans evaluated there were no clear defined targets or measurements.

The following are a few examples of some the current measurements in senior managers' performance evaluations:

- provide documentation of activities that lead to an increase in customer satisfaction;
- provide documentation of activities that lead to an increase in employee satisfaction;
- examine options of cooperative purchasing programs between Region 20 and other regions;
- continue to expand and implement divisional connections; and
- contribute to positive and productive center, division and component relations that will enhance attainment of vision, mission, and goals.

Each of the referenced measurements used for measuring performance by some of the senior managers at Region 20 do not include an objective target or a defined performance indicator. It is considered a best practice to use defined targets and objective indicators, which are measurable, when applicable.

Region 20 is in the process of transitioning from a departmental goal driven system to organizational strategic driven system. Region 20 is planning to incorporate the current strategic plan into the performance planning process in the Fall of 2004. The transition by Region 20 to use the recently approved strategic plan for driving employee performance will close the gap in how employees will be held accountable as a team or individual individually in correlation to the strategic plan.

RESC 20 should develop performance measures with objective targets and indicators that have a correlation to the action plans created for supporting the goals and objectives approved in the strategic plan. The implementation of this recommendation will ensure that employees have a clear understanding of their roles, expectations from management, and responsibilities as they relate to the overall goals of the organization. This type of cross-functional planning will create an opportunity for strengthening cross-departmental relations, and improve employee performance through having defined targets and objective indicators that will be used for ensuring accountability.

BOARD MEMBER TRAINING

The Region 20 board does not participate in training or development activities that would enhance their ability to lead.

Currently, the selective board members attend AESA, TAESC, and TASB-TESA conferences. There is no plan for Region 20 board members to attend training on strategic planning, conducting performance evaluations, or board governance. Training for board members is essential to providing the necessary knowledge and skills required for leading an RESC. Several board members were not familiar with the process for evaluating the performance of the executive director or the criteria that had been established to measure the actual performance.

RESC 20 should require board members to participate in annual training sessions, with a focus on such topics as governance, high-level strategic planning, performance review, leadership, and building cooperative relationships. The board's participation in training will assist with building their knowledge about governance, how to ensure that the appropriate strategic goals have been established, and provide a clear understanding of the most effective tools and methods for holding the executive director accountable.

PARKING SPACES AND COMMERCIAL CLIENTS

Of the total 179,032 square feet of available space in Region 20, 34,986 square feet (comprising two new floors) is not currently being used. This space was planned for future development when the facility was built in 2002.

The space is presently unfinished and Region 20 facilities staff estimate the cost of bringing these floors into operational condition to be approximately $2 million that is currently not in the budget. In addition to the challenges of cost, RESC 20 does not currently have adequate parking to support the opening of new training sessions. Attempts have been made in previous years to purchase eleven lots adjacent to the service center campus for parking, but the service center has yet to be fully successful in this attempt. However, if the homes can be purchased in the future, the city of San Antonio has agreed to give Region 20 control of the streets surrounding the campus to facilitate greater security of the area. Region 20 has purchased two of the eleven lots that will be used for parking and is negotiation for the remaining nine.

Data review and interviews with RESC 20 staff support the idea that the center is experiencing increasing demand for training services from school districts within the region, especially with the decrease in capacity at the Texas Education Agency. With the current meeting space being used at approximately 68 percent of total available hours, the center is being limited in its ability to expand programs and training schedules. As a result, staff indicate that programmatic needs, especially in space needed for technology lab-based training, are not being met.

In spite of the challenges to expansion, Region 20 has made contact with a private meeting space vendor in an attempt to secure new clients to support the completion of the unfinished floors. This attempt has not yet been successful; however, interviews with Region 20 staff indicate that there is a desire to expand into the commercial meeting space market to bring in additional revenue. The expectation is that commercial clients will help fund renovations that will be needed to serve Region 20 education clients in the future.

RESC 20 should expand efforts to acquire additional parking areas and attract commercial clients into available space to facilitate the renovation of unfinished building space. While there is significant competition in the commercial meeting/office space market, Region 20 has a unique opportunity. Most competitors in this market carry a large amount of overhead related to debt on the property and must pass this cost on to the consumer. Region 20, however, carries no debt on the available space and can offer potential clients a cost savings. Although the location of the service center may limit the interest of some clients, a focused marketing campaign should be able to find a suitable client base.

Additional revenue from this endeavor could be used to bring unfinished space into operational condition and to renovate space currently in use, as needed.

There are many possible options to the further marketing commercial space for Region 20. Whether the center decides to focus on providing space for individual meetings, or opts to seek a more tenant-based business model, or combines the two approaches will have some impact on any potential costs. It is likely, however, that this recommendation could be implemented without any out-of-pocket costs.

FACILITIES MASTER PLAN

RESC 20 does not have a formal facilities master plan that effectively details the future development and usage of its buildings. The center does have a formal facilities needs assessment that details current facilities issues, but staff does not convert the identified needs into a formal plan that can be benchmarked, monitored, and evaluated.

This situation creates an inherent gap in overall centerwide planning and creates the potential that programmatic planning will not align with current or future facilities configuration and condition.

Exhibit 20-14 serves as a guideline for the comprehensive development of an effective facilities plan that will guide Region 20 in managing centerwide growth and maintaining an effective level of facilities use and quality.

Exhibit 20-15 shows a diagram of how the above nine components fit together to establish a highly detailed and specific evaluation of an organization's capital needs and a time-phased implementation plan.

The overall process provides the level of detail necessary to make sound, efficient facility improvement decisions and to justify those decisions to those responsible for funding, such as the executive director, the Board of Directors, or state officials. The current absence of a detailed master plan creates the potential for facilities decisions to be made outside of the core mission of Region 20. Interviews revealed that Region 20 senior staff are aware that this is an area of vulnerability, but have not had the opportunity to solidify a formal facilities plan.

RESC 20 should develop a facilities plan for RESC 20. A comprehensive facilities plan is an essential component to any educational agency, especially one that is experiencing programmatic and enrollment growth. Region 20 should take steps to create a formal facilities plan to guide future facilities decisions in the organization.

ONLINE EDUCATION RESOURCE PROGRAM

Region 20 participates in a successful national online education resource program. An opportunity exists to expand this program to reach more Texas students in need of this service.

Region 20 partners with Western Illinois University (WIU) and the United States Distance Learning Consortium (USDLC) to deliver the STAR Project, a national online educational resource. In this effort, Region 20 developed online courses and provides the teacher of record, help desk support, and toll free number support for approximately 30 schools in six states. As of the Fall 2003 session, STAR was serving approximately 100 students. Many of these students are not in the state of Texas, and staff interviews indicate that there are many students throughout the state who would benefit from this service.

STAR delivered five online high school courses for 2003-04:

- Spanish 3
- Latin 3
- French 3
- IPC
- World Geography

Region 20 staff indicated a strong desire to use this delivery system in new ways as well as the need to expand the program.

RESC 20 should expand the use of online courses through a collaborative with other Texas RESCs. A shared teaching model using online format is an excellent method of building capacity throughout the state of Texas and providing course content to students in subject areas that may be difficult to staff. Often, such courses are not provided to students because there is no funding for the position or no qualified teachers. The STAR project is an effective model for bringing these courses to all districts in Texas.

As evidenced by the small number of students using the STAR model nationwide, there is great potential for the expansion of this program, especially in the rural areas of Texas. Region 20 should explore all avenues to expand its online course delivery to other parts of the state.

Exhibit 20-14
Components of an Effective Facilities Planning and Budgeting System

The addition of new facilities or renovating older buildings requires a detailed evaluation of needs and the development of a specific facilities plan. To be effective, facility evaluations and plans must be detailed, specific, efficient, and defensible.

To be detailed, specific, efficient, and defensible, the evaluation and plans must include the following components:

1. **Development of reliable projections of future enrollments.** Once constructed, a building is likely to be in place for at least 30 to 40 years. It is critical that reliable enrollment projections be established for each program for at least 10 years into the future.

2. **Development of reliable projections of future educational programs.** Educational programs are not the same and different programs require different types and amounts of space. It is essential that reliable projections of future programs and their enrollments be established. It is also important to establish guidelines for space that can be easily adapted as program change.

3. **Establishment and use of facility planning guidelines.** Establishment of facility planning guidelines tailored to the centers unique needs is critical to ensure that an adequate amount of the right type of space is built.

4. **Determination of the current inventory of each type of space for each program area.** Once future need for each type of space is known, it is essential to know the current inventory of each type of space for each program area. The inventory data should be accurate, up-to-date, easily updated, and in the same format as the needs data.

5. **Comparison of current inventory to need for each type of space.** Offices do not make good classrooms and vice versa. It is critical that the amount of each type of space in each building and for each program be compared to the current inventory to identify shortages and overages. Shortages can often be solved by remodeling areas with overages (e.g. converting excess training room space to solve a shortage of computer lab space). Further, comparisons of the total amount of current space to the total amount of space needed shows which areas have shortages of space and which have surpluses.

6. **An evaluation of the condition of current facilities.** Because maintenance has often been deferred, the repair and renovation of existing facilities represent major needs in most education agencies. Thus, a systematic and reliable assessment of the condition of existing facilities is a very critical component of facilities planning. The evaluations should include not only an evaluation of the condition of current building components but also improvements needed to meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements, all safety codes, updates to accommodate new technology, and changes to make the space suitable for the program being housed.

7. **Development of a highly efficient, comprehensive, and long-range facilities plan.** After the development of detailed enrollment projections, specific facility guidelines, estimates of the amounts of each type of space needed, comparisons of needs to current inventories, and measures of the condition of each facility, the next essential component is the development of a specific facilities plan that includes some or all of the following:

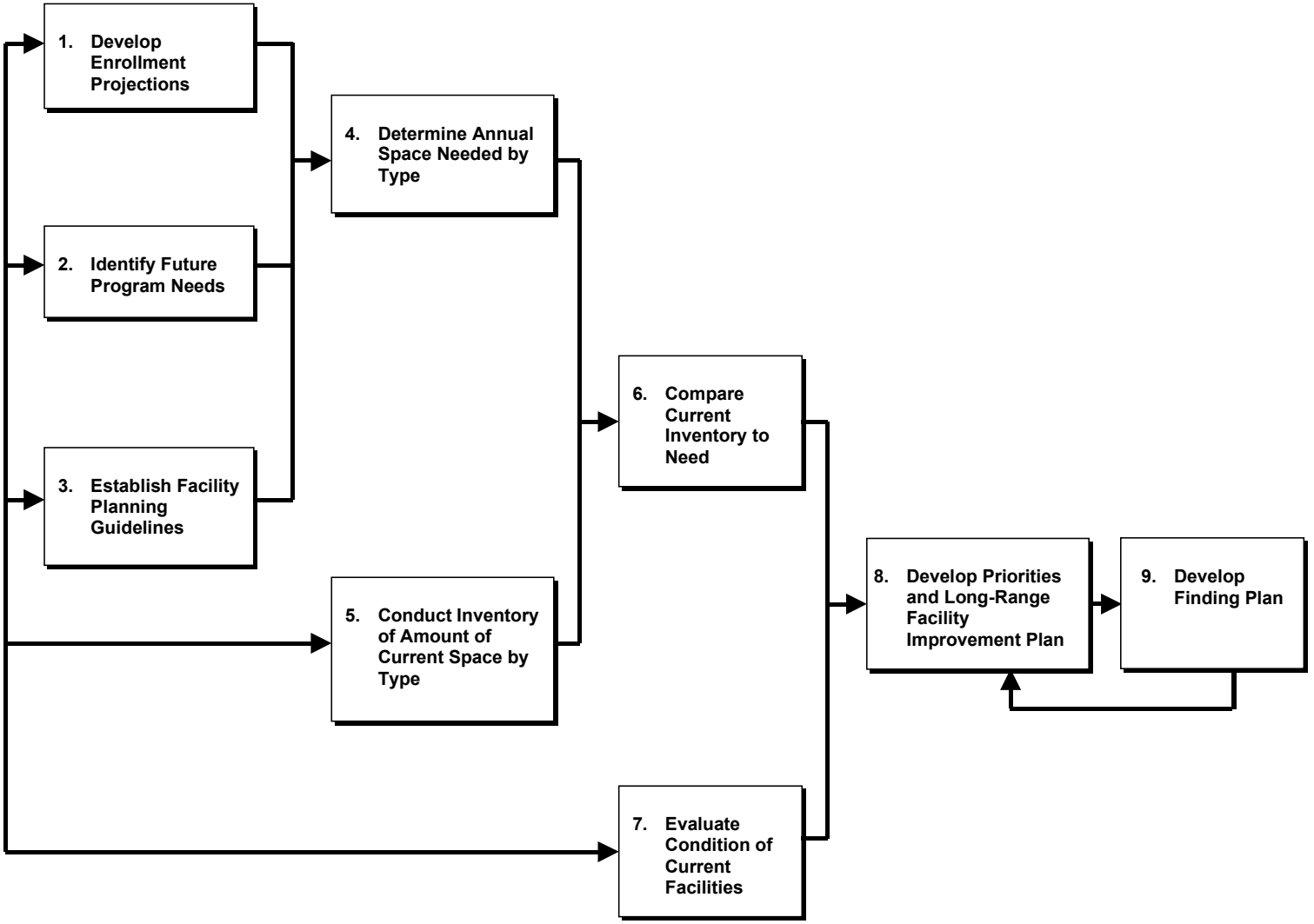
   - renovations of older buildings;
   - remodeling of some buildings or spaces;
   - addition of space to some buildings;
   - closing some buildings;
   - building new buildings;
   - changing facility utilization practices;
   - estimating the cost for each building and space.

8. **Development of a funding plan.** The final component involves the development of a funding plan that may include funds from any or all of the following sources:

   - sale or lease of existing properties;
   - allocations from operating funds/reserves;
   - state capital funds (if available);
   - lease back/purchase from private developers;
   - federal funds (where available); and
   - other.

Source: Created by MGT, 2004.

Exhibit 20-15
Diagram of Overall Facilities Evaluation and Planning Process



Source: Created by MGT, 2004.

The actual cost of implementing such a recommendation varies greatly with the size of expansion and the methods of marketing and delivery chosen. However, it is suggested that Region 20 seek outside funding in the forms of private assistance and grant funds. The potential impact on service delivery statewide is great, and this should be a primary selling point when seeking seed funds.

BUS DRIVER PHYSICALS

Since 2001, Region 20 has provided the Drug and Alcohol Testing and Bus Driver Physical programs to give program assistance for drug and alcohol testing and assistance in conducting on-site Annual School Bus Driver Physical Examinations in accordance with current U.S. Department of Transportation and Federal Highway Administration regulations, as well as state regulations. The cooperative currently has member school districts in Region 20, Region 10, and Region 13, and the membership is growing each year. This program needs to be expanded.

Drug and alcohol testing and bus driver physicals are required of all Texas bus drivers by the Texas Department of Public Safety. Both the testing and the physicals are conducted by Region 20 contractors at the school district location, which reduces that time and expense required for the districts to obtain these services. By using this service, school districts do not have to pay for driver travel time and expenses to and from off-site testing locations.

School districts that participate in the cooperative also save on the cost of the tests and physicals due to the size and collective buying power of the cooperative. A market survey conducted by Region 20 showed that typical drug tests costs between $39 and $42 compared to $37 in the cooperative. Alcohol tests typically cost $18 to $19, compared to $16 in the cooperative. For bus diver physicals, school districts in Texas usually pay from $35 to $75 per physical for off-site services. The cooperative cost per physical is $33. As a result, average school district savings for both of these services were calculated to be approximately 11 to 15 percent.

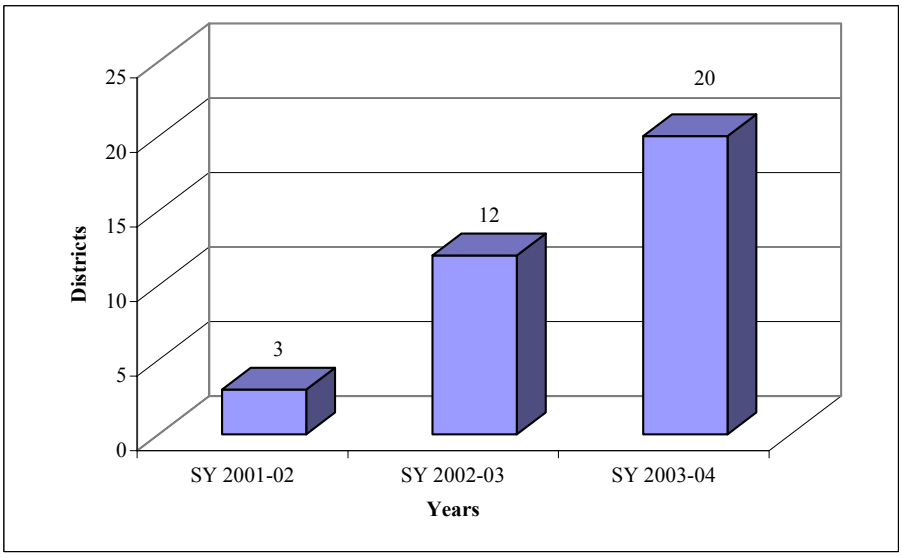
Exhibit 20-16 details the number of districts participating in this program and **Exhibit 20-17** provides the number of physicals conducted per year. In the last complete year (2002-03), the program served 12 school districts and performed approximately 68 annual physicals per district on average (820/12).

RESC 20 should expand the marketing of on-site bus driver physicals statewide. The current program is working exceptionally well and provides a valuable service to school districts. In addition, the program is profitable, making approximately one dollar per examination for the service of arranging the doctor's visit to the school district. Additional marketing of this service will likely result in increased participation in the program and increased revenue to Region 20.

Although a definite fiscal impact from program expansion cannot be determined, an estimated revenue increase can be developed using recent program participation figures. In the last complete year, the program served 12 school districts and performed approximately 68 annual physicals per district on average (820/12). If, through focused marketing, the program could expand to 100 school districts (which is a very conservative estimate of less that 10 percent of the total school districts in Texas) the program could expect to contract for approximately 6,800 bus driver physicals. In addition to the one dollar per physical profit ($6,800, an increase of $5,904 over the 2002–03), the average administrative cost (currently approximately one dollar) as well as the actual cost paid to the medical professionals would likely decrease, based on volume.

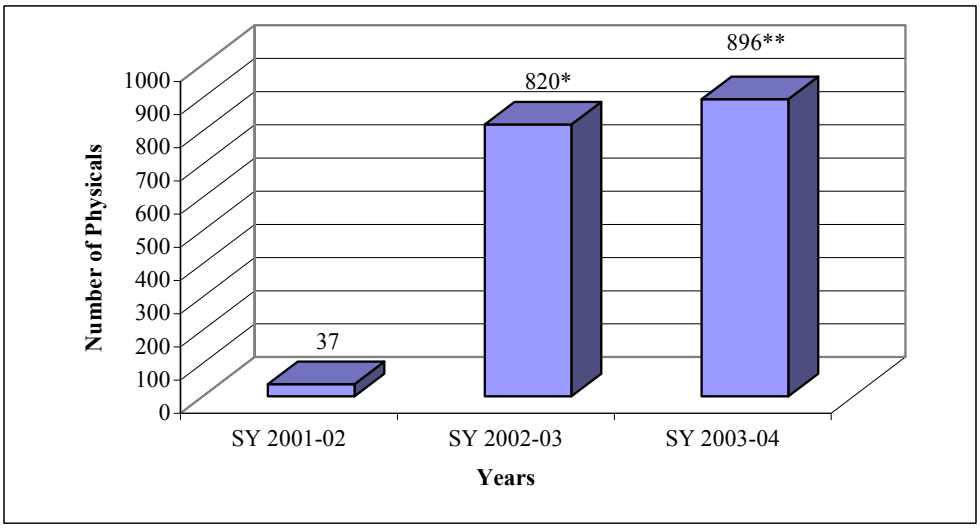
The total revenue increase based on the hypothetical scenario above would equal $3,604 per year; however, it is likely that Region 20 could attract a much larger portion of Texas school districts and realize corresponding increases in revenue.

Exhibit 20-16
Number of Participating Districts
2001–04



Source: Region 20 ESC, 2004

Exhibit 20-17
Number of Physicals Performed



Source: Region 20 ESC, 2004.
**last complete year*
***year to date*

LISTSERV

Region 20 does not have a standard method for offering post-training technical assistance to its training participants. After training, workshop participants provide feedback regarding the information they were presented. Participants provide feedback about the medium through which the workshop was designed (i.e., distance learning, PowerPoint presentation, handouts, interactive, technology-based, etc.), workshop content and additional information or technical assistance they would like to receive. However, onsite

interviews revealed that participants are welcome to email workshop facilitators with questions and concerns following attendance. As a result, Region 20 has difficulty tracking which post-training questions have been answered or ensuring that all requests have been addressed**.** Due to the extreme distance between many of the member districts served by Region 20, several region employees indicated a willingness to provide feedback using various technology-based systems. Region 20 is expanding the iLearning registration service to provide for online evaluations for follow-up on services rendered by staff. This will provide a method for offering post-training technical assistance to our clients and ensure that all questions and requests by clients have been addressed.

The inability to effectively track and monitor the need for follow-up technical assistance makes it impossible to ensure that the content provided in training sessions is used appropriately and will provide positive impact on student achievement.

RESC 20 should establish a Listserv for training participants to provide follow-up technical assistance following workshops and professional development activities at Region 20. By implementing this recommendation, Region 20 should provide feedback and follow-up technical assistance using various technology-based systems already available.

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION TRAINING

The Region 20 Board of Directors lacks training in how to evaluate senior personnel and managing personnel issues that require action by the board. These issues include responsibility over the hiring, termination, and performance evaluation of the executive director and other service center personnel.

Board members are charged with periodically reviewing the job performance of the executive director to meet state compliance requirements as well as facilitating employment decisions regarding the executive director position. Board members also are responsible for personnel issues that turn into legal issues.

While the TASB policies have been reviewed with board members, interviews with board members revealed that some may have never had any experience with or training in performance evaluation in their professional careers, or otherwise. This circumstance raises doubts regarding the comprehensive nature of these performance evaluations, and the potential accuracy of such evaluations. While there have, to date, been no lawsuits resulting from this lack of training, Region 20 should insulate itself from the vulnerability and potential liability resulting from this situation.

RESC 20 should provide training in performance evaluation to the board of directors. The human resources services component is equipped to provide comprehensive training to board members in all areas of performance evaluation, to include:

- goal setting;
- performance criteria development;
- outcome-based evaluation; and
- job performance measurement.

The implementation of this recommendation will ensure that all board members are knowledgeable and proficient in conducting performance evaluations and will facilitate a more comprehensive and effective executive director evaluation process.

BUDGET TREND ANALYSIS

Region 20 business center staff members do not provide written commentary on fund balance activities to the board for budget submittals.

Region 20 executive staff consists of the three division directors and an executive director who meets every two weeks for general and topical discussions related to center business. Standing items on the agenda are budgets, personnel, and program operations. During the budget and program discussions, the administrative staff review program needs and

fund balance uses. Over the past several years, the needs and uses of fund balance have revolved around three major areas: facilities, technology, and program development/improvement.

Ideas are brought forward in the discussion and the administrative staff requests a staff member or group of staff members to analyze the need in both cost and benefit. Recently, two proposals were presented to administrative staff. The administrative staff reviews and either recommends changes, rejects, or accept the proposal. If the proposal is for an immediate need, the administrative staff may recommend immediate use of fund balance dollars. If it is not for an immediate need and more long-term in nature, the item is presented to the board at its next meeting.

At the June meeting, the board receives a preliminary budget of current and next year financial statements. This package includes a review of projected fund balance uses and recommendations by management. At the August meeting, the board discusses and reviews fund balance sources and needs as well as revisions to the proposed budget. At this meeting, the board approves the final current year's budget and proposed next year's budget including all estimated designations and reserves of fund balance.

The current process may be improved by adding written commentary to the year-end final budget and next year's proposed budget documents. The financial analysis of the center's fund is documented on an annual basis in the audited financial statements; however, the timing of when the annual audited documents are published falls after these standard reviews. According to industry standards, it is best practice to include written commentary as part of the financial reporting package on the conditions of the operations to the stakeholders prior to the preparation of yearend audited financial statements.

RESC 20 should develop a written commentary and a trend analysis to support the year-end final budget, which is presented to the board of directors. The implementation of this recommendation gives Region 20 an opportunity to document the fund balance sooner than accounting at year end. Region 20 is able to produce a financial reporting package to the board including written commentaries of fund balance activities.

MANUAL PURCHASING PROCESS

Region 20 manages its purchasing process manually.

Employees wanting to purchase a good or service will interface directly with an administrative contact within their department to manually fill out a requisition and submit it for required approvals. Once approvals are manually received, the purchasing process is completed. Once a good is received at Region 20, it is received through a warehouse and the forwarded to the requesting customer. Region 20's warehouse has to manually look up the paper work for receiving goods.

Region 20's purchasing organization has not transitioned to an automated purchasing system earlier due to waiting for a Web version to become available by their IT Department. In the last six months, Region 20's IT Department has rolled out a Web version in an updated business package (iTCCS) to support all purchasing activity from submitting a requisition, receiving approvals, issuing a purchase order, to receiving good(s). The requisition module should be activated and used to improve inefficiencies. While it is understood, Region 20 is in the process of implementing this module by the end of September. If it can be implemented sooner than planned there are immediate advantages that can be recognized.

RESC 20 should activate the requisition routing system in iTCCS and use the system from the point of creating a requisition, receiving approvals, issuing a purchase order, to receiving good(s). Region 20's implementation of a complete requisition purchasing system will improve inefficiencies including the time it takes to process a requisition, the ability for approvers to receive

automatic notification, minimization of the risk of a requisition being misplaced, and electronically receiving purchases against the original order.

PURCHASING REQUISITION MODULES

The current purchasing requisition modules (iTCCS and RSCCC) produced by the Region 20 IT team do not allow for users to receive an automatic notification for approving requisitions that awaiting action. As a result, system users log on constantly in order to identify if a requisition is awaiting their approval. Currently at least twelve regions have access to RSCCC and four have access to iTCCS. Users including regions and school districts have provided feedback on the value this feature would add.

The missing notification features for these requisition modules are available through software for purchase at estimated costs of $25,000 (iTCCS) and $15,000 (RSCCC), respectively. Region 20 is in the process of testing a software package that provided this feature for iTCCS and plans to test a similar feature from a different software package in RSCCC before the end of 2004.

RESC should complete the testing of the purchasing requisition notification feature for iTCCS and begin testing of the same feature for RSCCC as soon as possible. Implementing this feature will allow customers to receive a message that notifies them that a requisition is awaiting their approval and potentially provide a reminder if the requisition is not approved in three business days. This recommendation will save customers time and the experience of having to be inconvenienced.

The fiscal impact for purchasing the necessary software, testing, and implementation is less than $25,000 for iTCCS system and less than $15,000 for the RSCCC system.

SUPPORT FOR SOFTWARE UPGRADES

Region 20 is challenged with providing quality support for school districts' software technology upgrades. Several larger districts are ahead of Region 20 RESC in their technology. Region 20 in some instances is not able to provide adequate support to those districts.

Region 20 has funded equipment and software upgrades from many different funding sources. The iTCCS and RSCCC cooperatives have reserved over $1 million for equipment upgrades and software development. The Netvision20 cooperative has $250,000 in reserves for equipment replacement. Software/hardware upgrades are also budgeted each year from the general fund.

Region 20, however, has not globally upgraded all workstations to Windows XP. This activity is planned for fall 2004. This situation puts the RESC at a disadvantage and runs the risk of servicing the school districts until upgrade occurs. To address this, individual licenses were purchased so that staff could obtain the knowledge and skills to provide the needed support following their training. Also, all test platforms and many production platforms to support clients were upgraded last year.

RESC 20 should establish a reserve in the General Fund to enhance Windows XP software technology upgrades in RESC 20. The current decrease in funds will make it increasingly more difficult to maintain financial viability. Therefore, determining an appropriate fund balance is a critical factor for the RESCs. The fund balance should include new technology and product development funds to allow RESCs to remain competitive in the market with products and services.

EQUIPMENT EXPANSION

Funding does not allow for duplication of equipment for full redundancy of systems. In the event that a device fails, maintenance agreements are in place to return the device to service.

Depending on which device is affected, return to service can be 4 – 24 hours. However, replacement parts and support can be obtained at a cost.

The benefits of a redundant system would be to have more processing power through parallel operations, which could allow load balancing to occur without downtime. The impact of a failure could result in loss of productivity and/or data during the period of an outage.

RESC 20 should establish a reserve in the General Fund to plan for equipment expansion. The current decrease in funds will make it increasingly more difficult to maintain financial viability. Therefore, determining an appropriate fund balance is a critical factor for the RESCs. The fund balance should include new technology and product development funds to allow the RESCs to remain competitive in the market with products and services.

NEXT GENERATION PRODUCTS

The iTCCS and RSCCC products run on different platforms and vary in the specific functionally and data access offered. This is due to the histories of how these products were developed and to the type of district each product targets. While there is communication and sharing between the iTCCS and RSCCC staffs, the longer-term goal has to be a single product running on a single platform that would address the needs of all districts. To that end, a business plan is being developed that builds around the over 30 years of experience the TCC has in school administrative software.

The expected results would be to design a product that will meet the needs of the large and small school districts, respectively. Developing one integrated product will create an economy of scale for all regional education service centers and school districts. The combined goals of the RESCs should be to educate the school districts in understanding the advantages, benefits, functionality, compliance and cost-efficiencies of one scalable product.

RESC 20 should collaborate closely with other regional centers to create one scalable product for release of next generation products. The implementation of this recommendation by Region 20 will foster cross functional communication among regional service centers, make it easier to service all school districts, minimize reliance on specific personnel within regional service centers, and increase productivity and product support. The challenges faced by regional service centers will require more focus on identifying resources for training, business process reengineering, specialized IT capability with the RESCs, and commitment from top management.

FISCAL IMPACT

Recommendation		2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	5-Year (Costs) or Savings	One-Time (Costs) or Savings
20-6	Expand the on-site Bus Driver Physical Program.	$0	$5,904	$5,904	$5,904	$5,904	$23,616	
20-11	Purchase automation feature.	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	($40,000)
	Total	**$0**	**$5,904**	**$5,904**	**$5,904**	**$5,904**	**$23,616**	**($40,000)**

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A:

SURVEY RESULTS OF INDIVIDUAL SCHOOL DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENTS

MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW OF THE TEXAS REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS
RESC I

SURVEY OF SCHOOL DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENTS
N = 42

PART B: GENERAL PERCEPTIONS ABOUT SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS (RESCs).

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. Our district frequently utilizes services provided by our RESC.	98/3
2. The services provided by our RESC are critical to the success of our district's programs and operations.	90/0
3. Many of the current RESC services to districts could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by TEA.	7/73
4. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by other sources such as universities or private vendors.	10/79
5. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by allocating the dollars to districts and allowing them to purchase services from the most appropriate sources.	24/67
6. Many of the current RESC services to districts duplicate services provided by TEA.	12/76
7. Many of the services offered by RESCs around the state are critical to the success of many districts.	95/0
8. The RESC in our region is highly efficient and effective.	90/5
9. The RESC role in providing services to districts should be expanded.	71/7
10. The RESC in our region is highly responsive to the service needs of our district.	90/5
11. The RESC in our region provides quality services.	90/0
12. There are adequate channels of communication with the RESC in our region.	88/2
13. The RESC in our region is responsive to complaints.	83/0
14. The RESC in our region is responsive to requests for services.	88/0
15. The RESC in our region listens and tries to meet the needs of the school district.	88/0

PART C: ACCOUNTABILITY

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. TEA should hold each RESC responsible for student performance in all districts within its region.	38/40
2. Each RESC should hold each district in its region responsible for student performance within the district.	52/31
3. Each district Board/Superintendent should hold each school within the district responsible for student performance within the school.	95/2
4. Under the concept of site-based management, only the districts and each school in the district should be held accountable for student performance; the RESCs and TEA should provide services upon demand but not be held accountable.	56/29
5. Each RESC should be held accountable by the districts for providing needed services but not for student performance.	64/21
6. Under the current governance structure, the RESCs are primarily accountable to: ■ the districts within each region	58/16
■ the Commissioner of Education	80/7
■ both the districts and the Commissioner of Education	74/8

PART E: STATEWIDE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. In order to effectively execute its responsibilities, the TEA needs regional offices.	71/15
2. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to provide services to districts.	98/0
3. The RESCs should become more directly linked with TEA and subject to TEA regulations.	31/40
4. The RESCs should be totally independent of TEA.	21/50
5. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to enforce TEA rules and regulations.	38/40
6. The current number of RESC Board members should be expanded to include representatives from more districts.	30/33
7. The current number of 20 RESCs should be: ■ expanded	27/31
■ left as is	71/3
■ reduced	5/50
8. The current policy of having RESC directors appointed by local boards subject to approval by the Commissioner of Education is highly effective.	62/5
9. All RESCs should be abolished.	0/88

PART F: GOVERNANCE AND FUNDING

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. The current method of funding the RESCs to provide services to districts and allowing each RESC to charge the districts for other services is highly effective in meeting the needs of the districts.	64/17
2. All funds for services to districts should be allocated to the districts and allow each district to purchase those services it needs from TEA, a RESC, or other sources.	33/43
3. We understand the governance and oversight structure of the RESC in our region.	81/2
4. There are appropriate levels of oversight for the RESC in our region.	73/8
5. The RESC in our region is adequately funded.	12/60
6. RESCs should continue to be funded by the state.	86/5
7. The amount charged to our district by the RESCs is appropriate for the quality and amount of services provided.	62/21
8. Our district has the funding to purchase the services it needs from a RESC.	53/28

PART G: SPECIFIC SERVICES

STATEMENT	(S+VS)/(D+SD)
SUPPORT FOR REGULAR EDUCATION PROGRAMS 1. Reading and Language Arts	90/2
2. Mathematics	90/3
3. Social Studies	80/5
4. Science	88/3
SUPPORT FOR SPECIAL POPULATION PROGRAMS 5. Special Education	98/0
6. At-risk and compensatory education	88/5
7. Bilingual Education and ESL	90/8
8. Advanced academics (gifted and talented, AP)	79/5
RESC TRAINING 9. Training and assistance for campus planning	78/5
10. PDAS training and support	78/0
11. Training and support for Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)	80/0
12. Training and support for aligning the curriculum and instruction with TEKS	80/5
13. Leadership training and development programs and services	88/0
14. Training and assistance to help improve student performance	83/2
15. Training and assistance in using new teaching methods and strategies	76/5
16. Training and assistance in the use of technology	85/2
17. Training and assistance in discipline management and conflict resolution	80/2

PART G: SPECIFIC SERVICES (CONT'D)

STATEMENT	(S+VS)/(D+SD)
18. School board training services	93/0
19. Teacher Certification	93/0
20. Professional/Para-Professional Certifications	80/0
RESC SERVICES 21. Computer network and telecommunication services	78/5
22. Purchasing cooperatives	90/0
23. Services and support for PEIMS	88/0
24. On-line/Distance Learning classes	63/0
25. On-site technical assistance	76/2
26. Video Conferencing	73/0
RESC SERVICES, CONTINUED 27. Lending Library	78/2
28. Best Practices Information	76/5
29. Organizational Links	76/5
30. Demonstrations and Equipment	68/2

PART H: GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. How would you rate the facilities of the RESC in your region? **(Check [✓] one).**

Exceptional	62%
Above average	21
Adequate	17
Needs improvement	0

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MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW OF THE TEXAS REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS RESC II

SURVEY OF SCHOOL DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENTS N = 16

PART B: GENERAL PERCEPTIONS ABOUT SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS (RESCs).

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. Our district frequently utilizes services provided by our RESC.	94/0
2. The services provided by our RESC are critical to the success of our district's programs and operations.	81/0
3. Many of the current RESC services to districts could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by TEA.	25/69
4. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by other sources such as universities or private vendors.	19/69
5. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by allocating the dollars to districts and allowing them to purchase services from the most appropriate sources.	13/63
6. Many of the current RESC services to districts duplicate services provided by TEA.	13/63
7. Many of the services offered by RESCs around the state are critical to the success of many districts.	88/0
8. The RESC in our region is highly efficient and effective.	75/13
9. The RESC role in providing services to districts should be expanded.	69/6
10. The RESC in our region is highly responsive to the service needs of our district.	75/13
11. The RESC in our region provides quality services.	75/0
12. There are adequate channels of communication with the RESC in our region.	75/0
13. The RESC in our region is responsive to complaints.	75/0
14. The RESC in our region is responsive to requests for services.	88/6
15. The RESC in our region listens and tries to meet the needs of the school district.	88/6

PART C: ACCOUNTABILITY

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. TEA should hold each RESC responsible for student performance in all districts within its region.	50/31
2. Each RESC should hold each district in its region responsible for student performance within the district.	38/31
3. Each district Board/Superintendent should hold each school within the district responsible for student performance within the school.	94/0
4. Under the concept of site-based management, only the districts and each school in the district should be held accountable for student performance; the RESCs and TEA should provide services upon demand but not be held accountable.	50/31
5. Each RESC should be held accountable by the districts for providing needed services but not for student performance.	69/13
6. Under the current governance structure, the RESCs are primarily accountable to: ■ the districts within each region	55/9
■ the Commissioner of Education	58/0
■ both the districts and the Commissioner of Education	73/7

PART E: STATEWIDE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. In order to effectively execute its responsibilities, the TEA needs regional offices.	50/38
2. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to provide services to districts.	94/0
3. The RESCs should become more directly linked with TEA and subject to TEA regulations.	69/13
4. The RESCs should be totally independent of TEA.	13/63
5. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to enforce TEA rules and regulations.	38/44
6. The current number of RESC Board members should be expanded to include representatives from more districts.	38/38
7. The current number of 20 RESCs should be: ■ expanded	30/40
■ left as is	77/0
■ reduced	33/56
8. The current policy of having RESC directors appointed by local boards subject to approval by the Commissioner of Education is highly effective.	56/13
9. All RESCs should be abolished.	6/81

PART F: GOVERNANCE AND FUNDING

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. The current method of funding the RESCs to provide services to districts and allowing each RESC to charge the districts for other services is highly effective in meeting the needs of the districts.	50/25
2. All funds for services to districts should be allocated to the districts and allow each district to purchase those services it needs from TEA, a RESC, or other sources.	19/56
3. We understand the governance and oversight structure of the RESC in our region.	69/6
4. There are appropriate levels of oversight for the RESC in our region.	69/6
5. The RESC in our region is adequately funded.	6/56
6. RESCs should continue to be funded by the state.	81/0
7. The amount charged to our district by the RESCs is appropriate for the quality and amount of services provided.	56/25
8. Our district has the funding to purchase the services it needs from a RESC.	38/50

PART G: SPECIFIC SERVICES

STATEMENT	(S+VS)/(D+SD)
SUPPORT FOR REGULAR EDUCATION PROGRAMS 1. Reading and Language Arts	75/13
2. Mathematics	75/6
3. Social Studies	75/0
4. Science	69/6
SUPPORT FOR SPECIAL POPULATION PROGRAMS 5. Special Education	93/0
6. At-risk and compensatory education	75/6
7. Bilingual Education and ESL	75/6
8. Advanced academics (gifted and talented, AP)	56/6
RESC TRAINING 9. Training and assistance for campus planning	63/13
10. PDAS training and support	93/0
11. Training and support for Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)	63/6
12. Training and support for aligning the curriculum and instruction with TEKS	69/6
13. Leadership training and development programs and services	75/0
14. Training and assistance to help improve student performance	69/13
15. Training and assistance in using new teaching methods and strategies	63/6
16. Training and assistance in the use of technology	75/6
17. Training and assistance in discipline management and conflict resolution	56/6
18. School board training services	81/6

PART G: SPECIFIC SERVICES (CONT'D)

STATEMENT	(S+VS)/(D+SD)
19. Teacher Certification	75/13
20. Professional/Para-Professional Certifications	81/6
RESC SERVICES 21. Computer network and telecommunication services	63/19
22. Purchasing cooperatives	75/6
23. Services and support for PEIMS	75/19
24. On-line/Distance Learning classes	38/19
25. On-site technical assistance	63/13
26. Video Conferencing	50/13
RESC SERVICES, CONTINUED 27. Lending Library	75/0
28. Best Practices Information	63/6
29. Organizational Links	56/13
30. Demonstrations and Equipment	63/13

PART H: GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. How would you rate the facilities of the RESC in your region? **(Check [✓] one).**

Exceptional	44%
Above average	33
Adequate	0
Needs improvement	20

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MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW OF THE TEXAS REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS
RESC III

SURVEY OF SCHOOL DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENTS
N= 21

PART B: GENERAL PERCEPTIONS ABOUT SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS (RESCs).

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. Our district frequently utilizes services provided by our RESC.	100/0
2. The services provided by our RESC are critical to the success of our district's programs and operations.	100/0
3. Many of the current RESC services to districts could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by TEA.	5/95
4. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by other sources such as universities or private vendors.	0/95
5. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by allocating the dollars to districts and allowing them to purchase services from the most appropriate sources.	5/81
6. Many of the current RESC services to districts duplicate services provided by TEA.	0/100
7. Many of the services offered by RESCs around the state are critical to the success of many districts.	100/0
8. The RESC in our region is highly efficient and effective.	100/0
9. The RESC role in providing services to districts should be expanded.	67/10
10. The RESC in our region is highly responsive to the service needs of our district.	100/0
11. The RESC in our region provides quality services.	100/0
12. There are adequate channels of communication with the RESC in our region.	95/0
13. The RESC in our region is responsive to complaints.	100/0
14. The RESC in our region is responsive to requests for services.	100/0
15. The RESC in our region listens and tries to meet the needs of the school district.	100/0

PART C: ACCOUNTABILITY

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. TEA should hold each RESC responsible for student performance in all districts within its region.	33/52
2. Each RESC should hold each district in its region responsible for student performance within the district.	38/48
3. Each district Board/Superintendent should hold each school within the district responsible for student performance within the school.	100/0
4. Under the concept of site-based management, only the districts and each school in the district should be held accountable for student performance; the RESCs and TEA should provide services upon demand but not be held accountable.	60/30
5. Each RESC should be held accountable by the districts for providing needed services but not for student performance.	67/19
6. Under the current governance structure, the RESCs are primarily accountable to: ■ the districts within each region	80/13
■ the Commissioner of Education	80/7
■ both the districts and the Commissioner of Education	76/12

PART E: STATEWIDE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. In order to effectively execute its responsibilities, the TEA needs regional offices.	48/43
2. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to provide services to districts.	76/5
3. The RESCs should become more directly linked with TEA and subject to TEA regulations.	14/62
4. The RESCs should be totally independent of TEA.	20/60
5. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to enforce TEA rules and regulations.	29/62
6. The current number of RESC Board members should be expanded to include representatives from more districts.	10/55
7. The current number of 20 RESCs should be: ■ expanded	14/36
■ left as is	80/0
■ reduced	0/77
8. The current policy of having RESC directors appointed by local boards subject to approval by the Commissioner of Education is highly effective.	76/10
9. All RESCs should be abolished.	0/100

PART F: GOVERNANCE AND FUNDING

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. The current method of funding the RESCs to provide services to districts and allowing each RESC to charge the districts for other services is highly effective in meeting the needs of the districts.	62/38
2. All funds for services to districts should be allocated to the districts and allow each district to purchase those services it needs from TEA, a RESC, or other sources.	14/52
3. We understand the governance and oversight structure of the RESC in our region.	86/5
4. There are appropriate levels of oversight for the RESC in our region.	71/14
5. The RESC in our region is adequately funded.	19/71
6. RESCs should continue to be funded by the state.	90/0
7. The amount charged to our district by the RESCs is appropriate for the quality and amount of services provided.	90/0
8. Our district has the funding to purchase the services it needs from a RESC.	38/48

PART G: SPECIFIC SERVICES

STATEMENT	(S+VS)/(D+SD)
SUPPORT FOR REGULAR EDUCATION PROGRAMS 1. Reading and Language Arts	100/0
2. Mathematics	95/5
3. Social Studies	90/0
4. Science	90/5
SUPPORT FOR SPECIAL POPULATION PROGRAMS 5. Special Education	95/5
6. At-risk and compensatory education	95/0
7. Bilingual Education and ESL	100/0
8. Advanced academics (gifted and talented, AP)	95/0
RESC TRAINING 9. Training and assistance for campus planning	95/0
10. PDAS training and support	90/0
11. Training and support for Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)	90/0
12. Training and support for aligning the curriculum and instruction with TEKS	86/0
13. Leadership training and development programs and services	100/0
14. Training and assistance to help improve student performance	95/0
15. Training and assistance in using new teaching methods and strategies	90/0
16. Training and assistance in the use of technology	95/0
17. Training and assistance in discipline management and conflict resolution	81/0
18. School board training services	90/0

PART G: SPECIFIC SERVICES (CONT'D)

STATEMENT	(S+VS)/(D+SD)
19. Teacher Certification	95/0
20. Professional/Para-Professional Certifications	100/0
RESC SERVICES 21. Computer network and telecommunication services	90/5
22. Purchasing cooperatives	86/0
23. Services and support for PEIMS	86/5
24. On-line/Distance Learning classes	71/5
25. On-site technical assistance	81/10
26. Video Conferencing	86/0
RESC SERVICES, CONTINUED 27. Lending Library	95/0
28. Best Practices Information	81/0
29. Organizational Links	71/0
30. Demonstrations and Equipment	86/0

PART H: GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. How would you rate the facilities of the RESC in your region? **(Check [✓] one).**

Exceptional	62%
Above average	19
Adequate	5
Needs improvement	14

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MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW OF THE TEXAS REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS RESC IV

SURVEY OF SCHOOL DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENTS n = 33

PART B: GENERAL PERCEPTIONS ABOUT SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS (RESCs).

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. Our district frequently utilizes services provided by our RESC.	91/6
2. The services provided by our RESC are critical to the success of our district's programs and operations.	91/6
3. Many of the current RESC services to districts could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by TEA.	15/76
4. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by other sources such as universities or private vendors.	9/82
5. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by allocating the dollars to districts and allowing them to purchase services from the most appropriate sources.	18/76
6. Many of the current RESC services to districts duplicate services provided by TEA.	9/88
7. Many of the services offered by RESCs around the state are critical to the success of many districts.	91/6
8. The RESC in our region is highly efficient and effective.	88/6
9. The RESC role in providing services to districts should be expanded.	75/16
10. The RESC in our region is highly responsive to the service needs of our district.	85/12
11. The RESC in our region provides quality services.	91/6
12. There are adequate channels of communication with the RESC in our region.	94/3
13. The RESC in our region is responsive to complaints.	82/3
14. The RESC in our region is responsive to requests for services.	94/0
15. The RESC in our region listens and tries to meet the needs of the school district.	91/0

PART C: ACCOUNTABILITY

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. TEA should hold each RESC responsible for student performance in all districts within its region.	42/45
2. Each RESC should hold each district in its region responsible for student performance within the district.	27/58
3. Each district Board/Superintendent should hold each school within the district responsible for student performance within the school.	94/3
4. Under the concept of site-based management, only the districts and each school in the district should be held accountable for student performance; the RESCs and TEA should provide services upon demand but not be held accountable.	40/50
5. Each RESC should be held accountable by the districts for providing needed services but not for student performance.	67/24
6. Under the current governance structure, the RESCs are primarily accountable to: ■ the districts within each region	72/20
■ the Commissioner of Education	73/19
■ both the districts and the Commissioner of Education	81/9

PART E: STATEWIDE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. In order to effectively execute its responsibilities, the TEA needs regional offices.	61/33
2. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to provide services to districts.	76/18
3. The RESCs should become more directly linked with TEA and subject to TEA regulations.	26/42
4. The RESCs should be totally independent of TEA.	19/59
5. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to enforce TEA rules and regulations.	30/58
6. The current number of RESC Board members should be expanded to include representatives from more districts.	18/48
7. The current number of 20 RESCs should be: ■ expanded	4/63
■ left as is	87/0
■ reduced	8/68
8. The current policy of having RESC directors appointed by local boards subject to approval by the Commissioner of Education is highly effective.	61/12
9. All RESCs should be abolished.	6/85

PART F: GOVERNANCE AND FUNDING

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. The current method of funding the RESCs to provide services to districts and allowing each RESC to charge the districts for other services is highly effective in meeting the needs of the districts.	50/41
2. All funds for services to districts should be allocated to the districts and allow each district to purchase those services it needs from TEA, a RESC, or other sources.	27/58
3. We understand the governance and oversight structure of the RESC in our region.	88/0
4. There are appropriate levels of oversight for the RESC in our region.	76/9
5. The RESC in our region is adequately funded.	3/73
6. RESCs should continue to be funded by the state.	88/6
7. The amount charged to our district by the RESCs is appropriate for the quality and amount of services provided.	82/15
8. Our district has the funding to purchase the services it needs from a RESC.	33/58

PART G: SPECIFIC SERVICES

STATEMENT	(S+VS)/(D+SD)
SUPPORT FOR REGULAR EDUCATION PROGRAMS 1. Reading and Language Arts	94/6
2. Mathematics	94/6
3. Social Studies	90/6
4. Science	90/6
SUPPORT FOR SPECIAL POPULATION PROGRAMS 5. Special Education	100/0
6. At-risk and compensatory education	94/6
7. Bilingual Education and ESL	87/6
8. Advanced academics (gifted and talented, AP)	90/3
RESC TRAINING 9. Training and assistance for campus planning	74/3
10. PDAS training and support	80/0
11. Training and support for Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)	90/3
12. Training and support for aligning the curriculum and instruction with TEKS	90/3
13. Leadership training and development programs and services	81/6
14. Training and assistance to help improve student performance	90/6
15. Training and assistance in using new teaching methods and strategies	90/0
16. Training and assistance in the use of technology	87/0
17. Training and assistance in discipline management and conflict resolution	81/3
18. School board training services	78/9

PART G: SPECIFIC SERVICES (CONT'D)

STATEMENT	(S+VS)/(D+SD)
19. Teacher Certification	100/0
20. Professional/Para-Professional Certifications	81/3
RESC SERVICES 21. Computer network and telecommunication services	66/6
22. Purchasing cooperatives	94/0
23. Services and support for PEIMS	91/3
24. On-line/Distance Learning classes	63/6
25. On-site technical assistance	65/6
26. Video Conferencing	69/6
RESC SERVICES, CONTINUED 27. Lending Library	78/6
28. Best Practices Information	91/3
29. Organizational Links	81/6
30. Demonstrations and Equipment	78/3

PART H: GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. How would you rate the facilities of the RESC in your region? **(Check [✓] one).**

Exceptional	75%
Above average	19
Adequate	3
Needs improvement	3

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MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW OF THE TEXAS REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS RESC V

SURVEY OF SCHOOL DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENTS N = 15

PART B: GENERAL PERCEPTIONS ABOUT SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS (RESCs).

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. Our district frequently utilizes services provided by our RESC.	93/7
2. The services provided by our RESC are critical to the success of our district's programs and operations.	86/7
3. Many of the current RESC services to districts could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by TEA.	13/80
4. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by other sources such as universities or private vendors.	0/87
5. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by allocating the dollars to districts and allowing them to purchase services from the most appropriate sources.	13/73
6. Many of the current RESC services to districts duplicate services provided by TEA.	7/80
7. Many of the services offered by RESCs around the state are critical to the success of many districts.	80/7
8. The RESC in our region is highly efficient and effective.	93/7
9. The RESC role in providing services to districts should be expanded.	73/13
10. The RESC in our region is highly responsive to the service needs of our district.	87/7
11. The RESC in our region provides quality services.	93/7
12. There are adequate channels of communication with the RESC in our region.	100/0
13. The RESC in our region is responsive to complaints.	93/0
14. The RESC in our region is responsive to requests for services.	93/7
15. The RESC in our region listens and tries to meet the needs of the school district.	93/0

PART C: ACCOUNTABILITY

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. TEA should hold each RESC responsible for student performance in all districts within its region.	33/33
2. Each RESC should hold each district in its region responsible for student performance within the district.	33/33
3. Each district Board/Superintendent should hold each school within the district responsible for student performance within the school.	93/0
4. Under the concept of site-based management, only the districts and each school in the district should be held accountable for student performance; the RESCs and TEA should provide services upon demand but not be held accountable.	53/20
5. Each RESC should be held accountable by the districts for providing needed services but not for student performance.	73/20
6. Under the current governance structure, the RESCs are primarily accountable to: ■ the districts within each region	71/14
■ the Commissioner of Education	71/0
■ both the districts and the Commissioner of Education	87/7

PART E: STATEWIDE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. In order to effectively execute its responsibilities, the TEA needs regional offices.	73/27
2. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to provide services to districts.	87/13
3. The RESCs should become more directly linked with TEA and subject to TEA regulations.	33/33
4. The RESCs should be totally independent of TEA.	27/47
5. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to enforce TEA rules and regulations.	36/50
6. The current number of RESC Board members should be expanded to include representatives from more districts.	33/20
7. The current number of 20 RESCs should be: ■ expanded	13/25
■ left as is	80/7
■ reduced	0/50
8. The current policy of having RESC directors appointed by local boards subject to approval by the Commissioner of Education is highly effective.	80/0
9. All RESCs should be abolished.	0/93

PART F: GOVERNANCE AND FUNDING

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. The current method of funding the RESCs to provide services to districts and allowing each RESC to charge the districts for other services is highly effective in meeting the needs of the districts.	57/29
2. All funds for services to districts should be allocated to the districts and allow each district to purchase those services it needs from TEA, a RESC, or other sources.	33/60
3. We understand the governance and oversight structure of the RESC in our region.	80/7
4. There are appropriate levels of oversight for the RESC in our region.	73/0
5. The RESC in our region is adequately funded.	7/67
6. RESCs should continue to be funded by the state.	86/7
7. The amount charged to our district by the RESCs is appropriate for the quality and amount of services provided.	67/13
8. Our district has the funding to purchase the services it needs from a RESC.	27/47

PART G: SPECIFIC SERVICES

STATEMENT	(S+VS)/(D+SD)
SUPPORT FOR REGULAR EDUCATION PROGRAMS 1. Reading and Language Arts	80/13
2. Mathematics	80/13
3. Social Studies	80/7
4. Science	87/7
SUPPORT FOR SPECIAL POPULATION PROGRAMS 5. Special Education	87/7
6. At-risk and compensatory education	73/13
7. Bilingual Education and ESL	80/13
8. Advanced academics (gifted and talented, AP)	80/7
RESC TRAINING 9. Training and assistance for campus planning	86/7
10. PDAS training and support	93/7
11. Training and support for Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)	87/0
12. Training and support for aligning the curriculum and instruction with TEKS	87/7
13. Leadership training and development programs and services	87/13
14. Training and assistance to help improve student performance	86/7
15. Training and assistance in using new teaching methods and strategies	80/7
16. Training and assistance in the use of technology	87/0
17. Training and assistance in discipline management and conflict resolution	60/13
18. School board training services	87/0

PART G: SPECIFIC SERVICES (CONT'D)

STATEMENT	(S+VS)/(D+SD)
19. Teacher Certification	60/13
20. Professional/Para-Professional Certifications	67/7
RESC SERVICES 21. Computer network and telecommunication services	80/0
22. Purchasing cooperatives	80/7
23. Services and support for PEIMS	93/7
24. On-line/Distance Learning classes	67/0
25. On-site technical assistance	87/0
26. Video Conferencing	67/0
RESC SERVICES, CONTINUED 27. Lending Library	80/0
28. Best Practices Information	67/13
29. Organizational Links	67/7
30. Demonstrations and Equipment	53/20

PART H: GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. How would you rate the facilities of the RESC in your region? **(Check [✓] one).**

Exceptional	27%
Above average	53
Adequate	20
Needs improvement	0

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MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW OF THE TEXAS REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS RESC VI

SURVEY OF SCHOOL DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENTS N = 33

PART B: GENERAL PERCEPTIONS ABOUT SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS (RESCs).

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. Our district frequently utilizes services provided by our RESC.	100/0
2. The services provided by our RESC are critical to the success of our district's programs and operations.	100/0
3. Many of the current RESC services to districts could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by TEA.	0/94
4. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by other sources such as universities or private vendors.	0/97
5. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by allocating the dollars to districts and allowing them to purchase services from the most appropriate sources.	3/88
6. Many of the current RESC services to districts duplicate services provided by TEA.	0/94
7. Many of the services offered by RESCs around the state are critical to the success of many districts.	100/0
8. The RESC in our region is highly efficient and effective.	100/0
9. The RESC role in providing services to districts should be expanded.	70/6
10. The RESC in our region is highly responsive to the service needs of our district.	100/0
11. The RESC in our region provides quality services.	100/0
12. There are adequate channels of communication with the RESC in our region.	100/0
13. The RESC in our region is responsive to complaints.	100/0
14. The RESC in our region is responsive to requests for services.	100/0
15. The RESC in our region listens and tries to meet the needs of the school district.	100/0

PART C: ACCOUNTABILITY

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. TEA should hold each RESC responsible for student performance in all districts within its region.	24/58
2. Each RESC should hold each district in its region responsible for student performance within the district.	34/53
3. Each district Board/Superintendent should hold each school within the district responsible for student performance within the school.	97/0
4. Under the concept of site-based management, only the districts and each school in the district should be held accountable for student performance; the RESCs and TEA should provide services upon demand but not be held accountable.	66/19
5. Each RESC should be held accountable by the districts for providing needed services but not for student performance.	72/19
6. Under the current governance structure, the RESCs are primarily accountable to: ■ the districts within each region	100/0
■ the Commissioner of Education	84/5
■ both the districts and the Commissioner of Education	90/3

PART E: STATEWIDE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. In order to effectively execute its responsibilities, the TEA needs regional offices.	33/52
2. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to provide services to districts.	73/15
3. The RESCs should become more directly linked with TEA and subject to TEA regulations.	31/31
4. The RESCs should be totally independent of TEA.	19/47
5. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to enforce TEA rules and regulations.	33/45
6. The current number of RESC Board members should be expanded to include representatives from more districts.	9/63
7. The current number of 20 RESCs should be: ■ expanded	17/44
■ left as is	81/3
■ reduced	0/69
8. The current policy of having RESC directors appointed by local boards subject to approval by the Commissioner of Education is highly effective.	88/0
9. All RESCs should be abolished.	0/100

PART F: GOVERNANCE AND FUNDING

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. The current method of funding the RESCs to provide services to districts and allowing each RESC to charge the districts for other services is highly effective in meeting the needs of the districts.	70/9
2. All funds for services to districts should be allocated to the districts and allow each district to purchase those services it needs from TEA, a RESC, or other sources.	30/48
3. We understand the governance and oversight structure of the RESC in our region.	91/0
4. There are appropriate levels of oversight for the RESC in our region.	94/0
5. The RESC in our region is adequately funded.	9/58
6. RESCs should continue to be funded by the state.	100/0
7. The amount charged to our district by the RESCs is appropriate for the quality and amount of services provided.	85/3
8. Our district has the funding to purchase the services it needs from a RESC.	33/48

PART G: SPECIFIC SERVICES

STATEMENT	(S+VS)/(D+SD)
SUPPORT FOR REGULAR EDUCATION PROGRAMS 1. Reading and Language Arts	94/0
2. Mathematics	94/0
3. Social Studies	91/0
4. Science	97/0
SUPPORT FOR SPECIAL POPULATION PROGRAMS 5. Special Education	94/0
6. At-risk and compensatory education	91/0
7. Bilingual Education and ESL	91/3
8. Advanced academics (gifted and talented, AP)	88/3
RESC TRAINING 9. Training and assistance for campus planning	88/0
10. PDAS training and support	97/0
11. Training and support for Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)	94/0
12. Training and support for aligning the curriculum and instruction with TEKS	91/0
13. Leadership training and development programs and services	97/0
14. Training and assistance to help improve student performance	88/3
15. Training and assistance in using new teaching methods and strategies	94/0
16. Training and assistance in the use of technology	91/0
17. Training and assistance in discipline management and conflict resolution	88/0
18. School board training services	100/0

PART G: SPECIFIC SERVICES (CONT'D)

STATEMENT	(S+VS)/(D+SD)
19. Teacher Certification	100/0
20. Professional/Para-Professional Certifications	97/0
RESC SERVICES 21. Computer network and telecommunication services	82/0
22. Purchasing cooperatives	88/0
23. Services and support for PEIMS	91/0
24. On-line/Distance Learning classes	67/0
25. On-site technical assistance	76/0
26. Video Conferencing	73/0
RESC SERVICES, CONTINUED 27. Lending Library	67/0
28. Best Practices Information	91/0
29. Organizational Links	88/0
30. Demonstrations and Equipment	82/3

PART H: GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. How would you rate the facilities of the RESC in your region? **(Check [✓] one).**

Exceptional	85%
Above average	9
Adequate	6
Needs improvement	0

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MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW OF THE TEXAS REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS RESC VII

SURVEY OF SCHOOL DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENTS N = 56

PART B: GENERAL PERCEPTIONS ABOUT SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS (RESCs).

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. Our district frequently utilizes services provided by our RESC.	98/0
2. The services provided by our RESC are critical to the success of our district's programs and operations.	93/4
3. Many of the current RESC services to districts could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by TEA.	14/70
4. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by other sources such as universities or private vendors.	11/80
5. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by allocating the dollars to districts and allowing them to purchase services from the most appropriate sources.	14/71
6. Many of the current RESC services to districts duplicate services provided by TEA.	7/86
7. Many of the services offered by RESCs around the state are critical to the success of many districts.	93/4
8. The RESC in our region is highly efficient and effective.	84/5
9. The RESC role in providing services to districts should be expanded.	63/11
10. The RESC in our region is highly responsive to the service needs of our district.	89/4
11. The RESC in our region provides quality services.	91/4
12. There are adequate channels of communication with the RESC in our region.	89/7
13. The RESC in our region is responsive to complaints.	84/5
14. The RESC in our region is responsive to requests for services.	93/5
15. The RESC in our region listens and tries to meet the needs of the school district.	89/4

PART C: ACCOUNTABILITY

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. TEA should hold each RESC responsible for student performance in all districts within its region.	25/55
2. Each RESC should hold each district in its region responsible for student performance within the district.	25/59
3. Each district Board/Superintendent should hold each school within the district responsible for student performance within the school.	98/2
4. Under the concept of site-based management, only the districts and each school in the district should be held accountable for student performance; the RESCs and TEA should provide services upon demand but not be held accountable.	55/16
5. Each RESC should be held accountable by the districts for providing needed services but not for student performance.	70/14
6. Under the current governance structure, the RESCs are primarily accountable to: ■ the districts within each region	75/11
■ the Commissioner of Education	73/3
■ both the districts and the Commissioner of Education	81/6

PART E: STATEWIDE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. In order to effectively execute its responsibilities, the TEA needs regional offices.	50/34
2. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to provide services to districts.	86/4
3. The RESCs should become more directly linked with TEA and subject to TEA regulations.	39/16
4. The RESCs should be totally independent of TEA.	5/66
5. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to enforce TEA rules and regulations.	35/38
6. The current number of RESC Board members should be expanded to include representatives from more districts.	11/48
7. The current number of 20 RESCs should be: ■ expanded	19/52
■ left as is	73/6
■ reduced	11/71
8. The current policy of having RESC directors appointed by local boards subject to approval by the Commissioner of Education is highly effective.	51/15
9. All RESCs should be abolished.	4/94

PART F: GOVERNANCE AND FUNDING

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. The current method of funding the RESCs to provide services to districts and allowing each RESC to charge the districts for other services is highly effective in meeting the needs of the districts.	46/30
2. All funds for services to districts should be allocated to the districts and allow each district to purchase those services it needs from TEA, a RESC, or other sources.	48/38
3. We understand the governance and oversight structure of the RESC in our region.	79/14
4. There are appropriate levels of oversight for the RESC in our region.	67/4
5. The RESC in our region is adequately funded.	13/59
6. RESCs should continue to be funded by the state.	87/4
7. The amount charged to our district by the RESCs is appropriate for the quality and amount of services provided.	65/25
8. Our district has the funding to purchase the services it needs from a RESC.	42/45

PART G: SPECIFIC SERVICES

STATEMENT	(S+VS)/(D+SD)
SUPPORT FOR REGULAR EDUCATION PROGRAMS 1. Reading and Language Arts	89/4
2. Mathematics	89/2
3. Social Studies	84/7
4. Science	84/7
SUPPORT FOR SPECIAL POPULATION PROGRAMS 5. Special Education	82/9
6. At-risk and compensatory education	88/7
7. Bilingual Education and ESL	75/11
8. Advanced academics (gifted and talented, AP)	73/13
RESC TRAINING 9. Training and assistance for campus planning	86/9
10. PDAS training and support	91/2
11. Training and support for Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)	88/4
12. Training and support for aligning the curriculum and instruction with TEKS	79/9
13. Leadership training and development programs and services	86/5
14. Training and assistance to help improve student performance	84/4
15. Training and assistance in using new teaching methods and strategies	82/9
16. Training and assistance in the use of technology	63/14
17. Training and assistance in discipline management and conflict resolution	69/9

PART G: SPECIFIC SERVICES (CONT'D)

STATEMENT	(S+VS)/(D+SD)
18. School board training services	85/4
19. Teacher Certification	86/2
20. Professional/Para-Professional Certifications	89/4
RESC SERVICES 21. Computer network and telecommunication services	50/20
22. Purchasing cooperatives	86/2
23. Services and support for PEIMS	79/11
24. On-line/Distance Learning classes	32/20
25. On-site technical assistance	43/20
26. Video Conferencing	36/14
RESC SERVICES, CONTINUED 27. Lending Library	57/2
28. Best Practices Information	73/7
29. Organizational Links	71/5
30. Demonstrations and Equipment	59/4

PART H: GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. How would you rate the facilities of the RESC in your region? **(Check [✓] one).**

Exceptional	60%
Above average	35
Adequate	4
Needs improvement	2

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MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW OF THE TEXAS REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS
RESC VIII

SURVEY OF SCHOOL DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENTS
N = 26

PART B: GENERAL PERCEPTIONS ABOUT SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS (RESCs).

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. Our district frequently utilizes services provided by our RESC.	100/0
2. The services provided by our RESC are critical to the success of our district's programs and operations.	100/0
3. Many of the current RESC services to districts could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by TEA.	4/92
4. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by other sources such as universities or private vendors.	0/100
5. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by allocating the dollars to districts and allowing them to purchase services from the most appropriate sources.	4/85
6. Many of the current RESC services to districts duplicate services provided by TEA.	0/100
7. Many of the services offered by RESCs around the state are critical to the success of many districts.	100/0
8. The RESC in our region is highly efficient and effective.	100/0
9. The RESC role in providing services to districts should be expanded.	80/0
10. The RESC in our region is highly responsive to the service needs of our district.	100/0
11. The RESC in our region provides quality services.	100/0
12. There are adequate channels of communication with the RESC in our region.	100/0
13. The RESC in our region is responsive to complaints.	100/0
14. The RESC in our region is responsive to requests for services.	96/0
15. The RESC in our region listens and tries to meet the needs of the school district.	100/0

PART C: ACCOUNTABILITY

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. TEA should hold each RESC responsible for student performance in all districts within its region.	38/35
2. Each RESC should hold each district in its region responsible for student performance within the district.	50/35
3. Each district Board/Superintendent should hold each school within the district responsible for student performance within the school.	92/4
4. Under the concept of site-based management, only the districts and each school in the district should be held accountable for student performance; the RESCs and TEA should provide services upon demand but not be held accountable.	62/27
5. Each RESC should be held accountable by the districts for providing needed services but not for student performance.	73/19
6. Under the current governance structure, the RESCs are primarily accountable to: ■ the districts within each region	87/7
■ the Commissioner of Education	79/0
■ both the districts and the Commissioner of Education	84/4

PART E: STATEWIDE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. In order to effectively execute its responsibilities, the TEA needs regional offices.	58/23
2. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to provide services to districts.	88/4
3. The RESCs should become more directly linked with TEA and subject to TEA regulations.	35/27
4. The RESCs should be totally independent of TEA.	23/46
5. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to enforce TEA rules and regulations.	42/46
6. The current number of RESC Board members should be expanded to include representatives from more districts.	23/27
7. The current number of 20 RESCs should be: ■ expanded	8/33
■ left as is	79/8
■ reduced	8/42
8. The current policy of having RESC directors appointed by local boards subject to approval by the Commissioner of Education is highly effective.	84/4
9. All RESCs should be abolished.	0/100

PART F: GOVERNANCE AND FUNDING

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. The current method of funding the RESCs to provide services to districts and allowing each RESC to charge the districts for other services is highly effective in meeting the needs of the districts.	88/8
2. All funds for services to districts should be allocated to the districts and allow each district to purchase those services it needs from TEA, a RESC, or other sources.	46/38
3. We understand the governance and oversight structure of the RESC in our region.	85/4
4. There are appropriate levels of oversight for the RESC in our region.	77/8
5. The RESC in our region is adequately funded.	4/65
6. RESCs should continue to be funded by the state.	100/0
7. The amount charged to our district by the RESCs is appropriate for the quality and amount of services provided.	88/4
8. Our district has the funding to purchase the services it needs from a RESC.	35/58

PART G: SPECIFIC SERVICES

STATEMENT	(S+VS)/(D+SD)
SUPPORT FOR REGULAR EDUCATION PROGRAMS 1. Reading and Language Arts	100/0
2. Mathematics	92/4
3. Social Studies	96/4
4. Science	92/4
SUPPORT FOR SPECIAL POPULATION PROGRAMS 5. Special Education	96/0
6. At-risk and compensatory education	96/0
7. Bilingual Education and ESL	96/0
8. Advanced academics (gifted and talented, AP)	92/0
RESC TRAINING 9. Training and assistance for campus planning	96/4
10. PDAS training and support	100/0
11. Training and support for Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)	100/0
12. Training and support for aligning the curriculum and instruction with TEKS	96/4
13. Leadership training and development programs and services	100/0
14. Training and assistance to help improve student performance	92/0
15. Training and assistance in using new teaching methods and strategies	88/0
16. Training and assistance in the use of technology	92/0
17. Training and assistance in discipline management and conflict resolution	81/4

PART G: SPECIFIC SERVICES (CONT'D)

STATEMENT	(S+VS)/(D+SD)
18. School board training services	96/0
19. Teacher Certification	69/8
20. Professional/Para-Professional Certifications	92/4
RESC SERVICES 21. Computer network and telecommunication services	96/0
22. Purchasing cooperatives	96/0
23. Services and support for PEIMS	100/0
24. On-line/Distance Learning classes	62/15
25. On-site technical assistance	88/4
26. Video Conferencing	58/8
RESC SERVICES, CONTINUED 27. Lending Library	88/4
28. Best Practices Information	84/4
29. Organizational Links	96/0
30. Demonstrations and Equipment	80/8

PART H: GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. How would you rate the facilities of the RESC in your region? **(Check [✓] one).**

Exceptional	72%
Above average	28
Adequate	0
Needs improvement	0

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MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW OF THE TEXAS REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS RESC IX

SURVEY OF SCHOOL DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENTS N = 21

PART B: GENERAL PERCEPTIONS ABOUT SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS (RESCs).

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. Our district frequently utilizes services provided by our RESC.	100/0
2. The services provided by our RESC are critical to the success of our district's programs and operations.	100/0
3. Many of the current RESC services to districts could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by TEA.	0/95
4. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by other sources such as universities or private vendors.	0/100
5. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by allocating the dollars to districts and allowing them to purchase services from the most appropriate sources.	0/100
6. Many of the current RESC services to districts duplicate services provided by TEA.	0/100
7. Many of the services offered by RESCs around the state are critical to the success of many districts.	100/0
8. The RESC in our region is highly efficient and effective.	100/0
9. The RESC role in providing services to districts should be expanded.	76/0
10. The RESC in our region is highly responsive to the service needs of our district.	100/0
11. The RESC in our region provides quality services.	100/0
12. There are adequate channels of communication with the RESC in our region.	100/0
13. The RESC in our region is responsive to complaints.	100/0
14. The RESC in our region is responsive to requests for services.	100/0
15. The RESC in our region listens and tries to meet the needs of the school district.	100/0

PART C: ACCOUNTABILITY

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. TEA should hold each RESC responsible for student performance in all districts within its region.	48/38
2. Each RESC should hold each district in its region responsible for student performance within the district.	48/43
3. Each district Board/Superintendent should hold each school within the district responsible for student performance within the school.	100/0
4. Under the concept of site-based management, only the districts and each school in the district should be held accountable for student performance; the RESCs and TEA should provide services upon demand but not be held accountable.	55/30
5. Each RESC should be held accountable by the districts for providing needed services but not for student performance.	67/24
6. Under the current governance structure, the RESCs are primarily accountable to: ■ the districts within each region	71/21
■ the Commissioner of Education	86/0
■ both the districts and the Commissioner of Education	81/10

PART E: STATEWIDE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. In order to effectively execute its responsibilities, the TEA needs regional offices.	52/38
2. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to provide services to districts.	86/5
3. The RESCs should become more directly linked with TEA and subject to TEA regulations.	29/33
4. The RESCs should be totally independent of TEA.	24/52
5. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to enforce TEA rules and regulations.	38/43
6. The current number of RESC Board members should be expanded to include representatives from more districts.	0/57
7. The current number of 20 RESCs should be: ■ expanded	8/50
■ left as is	90/0
■ reduced	0/82
8. The current policy of having RESC directors appointed by local boards subject to approval by the Commissioner of Education is highly effective.	81/5
9. All RESCs should be abolished.	0/100

PART F: GOVERNANCE AND FUNDING

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. The current method of funding the RESCs to provide services to districts and allowing each RESC to charge the districts for other services is highly effective in meeting the needs of the districts.	90/5
2. All funds for services to districts should be allocated to the districts and allow each district to purchase those services it needs from TEA, a RESC, or other sources.	19/71
3. We understand the governance and oversight structure of the RESC in our region.	95/0
4. There are appropriate levels of oversight for the RESC in our region.	90/0
5. The RESC in our region is adequately funded.	10/67
6. RESCs should continue to be funded by the state.	100/0
7. The amount charged to our district by the RESCs is appropriate for the quality and amount of services provided.	90/5
8. Our district has the funding to purchase the services it needs from a RESC.	38/57

PART G: SPECIFIC SERVICES

STATEMENT	(S+VS)/(D+SD)
SUPPORT FOR REGULAR EDUCATION PROGRAMS 1. Reading and Language Arts	100/0
2. Mathematics	100/0
3. Social Studies	100/0
4. Science	100/0
SUPPORT FOR SPECIAL POPULATION PROGRAMS 5. Special Education	100/0
6. At-risk and compensatory education	100/0
7. Bilingual Education and ESL	90/5
8. Advanced academics (gifted and talented, AP)	100/0
RESC TRAINING 9. Training and assistance for campus planning	100/0
10. PDAS training and support	100/0
11. Training and support for Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)	100/0
12. Training and support for aligning the curriculum and instruction with TEKS	100/0
13. Leadership training and development programs and services	100/0
14. Training and assistance to help improve student performance	100/0
15. Training and assistance in using new teaching methods and strategies	95/0
16. Training and assistance in the use of technology	90/0

PART G: SPECIFIC SERVICES (CONT'D)

STATEMENT	(S+VS)/(D+SD)
17. Training and assistance in discipline management and conflict resolution	100/0
18. School board training services	100/0
19. Teacher Certification	90/0
20. Professional/Para-Professional Certifications	100/0
RESC SERVICES 21. Computer network and telecommunication services	90/0
22. Purchasing cooperatives	90/5
23. Services and support for PEIMS	95/0
24. On-line/Distance Learning classes	95/0
25. On-site technical assistance	81/10
26. Video Conferencing	95/0
RESC SERVICES, CONTINUED 27. Lending Library	95/0
28. Best Practices Information	90/0
29. Organizational Links	95/0
30. Demonstrations and Equipment	100/0

PART H: GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. How would you rate the facilities of the RESC in your region? **(Check [✓] one).**

Exceptional	76%
Above average	14
Adequate	10
Needs improvement	0

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MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW OF THE TEXAS REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS
RESC X

SURVEY OF SCHOOL DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENTS
N = 53

PART B: GENERAL PERCEPTIONS ABOUT SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS (RESCs).

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. Our district frequently utilizes services provided by our RESC.	98/2
2. The services provided by our RESC are critical to the success of our district's programs and operations.	96/2
3. Many of the current RESC services to districts could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by TEA.	15/77
4. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by other sources such as universities or private vendors.	8/81
5. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by allocating the dollars to districts and allowing them to purchase services from the most appropriate sources.	21/64
6. Many of the current RESC services to districts duplicate services provided by TEA.	2/91
7. Many of the services offered by RESCs around the state are critical to the success of many districts.	98/0
8. The RESC in our region is highly efficient and effective.	92/4
9. The RESC role in providing services to districts should be expanded.	58/9
10. The RESC in our region is highly responsive to the service needs of our district.	92/4
11. The RESC in our region provides quality services.	98/2
12. There are adequate channels of communication with the RESC in our region.	98/2
13. The RESC in our region is responsive to complaints.	94/0
14. The RESC in our region is responsive to requests for services.	92/2
15. The RESC in our region listens and tries to meet the needs of the school district.	98/0

PART C: ACCOUNTABILITY

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. TEA should hold each RESC responsible for student performance in all districts within its region.	36/47
2. Each RESC should hold each district in its region responsible for student performance within the district.	28/60
3. Each district Board/Superintendent should hold each school within the district responsible for student performance within the school.	100/0
4. Under the concept of site-based management, only the districts and each school in the district should be held accountable for student performance; the RESCs and TEA should provide services upon demand but not be held accountable.	64/25
5. Each RESC should be held accountable by the districts for providing needed services but not for student performance.	74/19
6. Under the current governance structure, the RESCs are primarily accountable to: ■ the districts within each region	70/14
■ the Commissioner of Education	73/11
■ both the districts and the Commissioner of Education	78/4

PART E: STATEWIDE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. In order to effectively execute its responsibilities, the TEA needs regional offices.	55/40
2. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to provide services to districts.	79/13
3. The RESCs should become more directly linked with TEA and subject to TEA regulations.	42/36
4. The RESCs should be totally independent of TEA.	21/63
5. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to enforce TEA rules and regulations.	30/62
6. The current number of RESC Board members should be expanded to include representatives from more districts.	28/42
7. The current number of 20 RESCs should be: ■ expanded	26/55
■ left as is	79/4
■ reduced	4/72
8. The current policy of having RESC directors appointed by local boards subject to approval by the Commissioner of Education is highly effective.	58/31
9. All RESCs should be abolished.	0/94

PART F: GOVERNANCE AND FUNDING

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. The current method of funding the RESCs to provide services to districts and allowing each RESC to charge the districts for other services is highly effective in meeting the needs of the districts.	77/9
2. All funds for services to districts should be allocated to the districts and allow each district to purchase those services it needs from TEA, a RESC, or other sources.	32/45
3. We understand the governance and oversight structure of the RESC in our region.	81/4
4. There are appropriate levels of oversight for the RESC in our region.	72/4
5. The RESC in our region is adequately funded.	25/53
6. RESCs should continue to be funded by the state.	91/0
7. The amount charged to our district by the RESCs is appropriate for the quality and amount of services provided.	83/4
8. Our district has the funding to purchase the services it needs from a RESC.	44/46

PART G: SPECIFIC SERVICES

STATEMENT	(S+VS)/(D+SD)
SUPPORT FOR REGULAR EDUCATION PROGRAMS 1. Reading and Language Arts	94/2
2. Mathematics	87/4
3. Social Studies	90/4
4. Science	87/6
SUPPORT FOR SPECIAL POPULATION PROGRAMS 5. Special Education	92/4
6. At-risk and compensatory education	87/6
7. Bilingual Education and ESL	87/4
8. Advanced academics (gifted and talented, AP)	89/6
RESC TRAINING 9. Training and assistance for campus planning	82/6
10. PDAS training and support	98/0
11. Training and support for Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)	92/2
12. Training and support for aligning the curriculum and instruction with TEKS	87/4
13. Leadership training and development programs and services	91/6
14. Training and assistance to help improve student performance	87/9
15. Training and assistance in using new teaching methods and strategies	87/8
16. Training and assistance in the use of technology	89/8
17. Training and assistance in discipline management and conflict resolution	81/4

PART G: SPECIFIC SERVICES (CONT'D)

STATEMENT	(S+VS)/(D+SD)
18. School board training services	89/6
19. Teacher Certification	87/6
20. Professional/Para-Professional Certifications	85/2
RESC SERVICES 21. Computer network and telecommunication services	91/4
22. Purchasing cooperatives	91/0
23. Services and support for PEIMS	92/2
24. On-line/Distance Learning classes	79/0
25. On-site technical assistance	81/2
26. Video Conferencing	89/2
RESC SERVICES, CONTINUED 27. Lending Library	60/0
28. Best Practices Information	71/6
29. Organizational Links	78/2
30. Demonstrations and Equipment	75/2

PART H: GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. How would you rate the facilities of the RESC in your region? **(Check [✓] one).**

Exceptional	59%
Above average	32
Adequate	9
Needs improvement	0

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MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW OF THE TEXAS REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS RESC XI

SURVEY OF SCHOOL DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENTS N = 52

PART B: GENERAL PERCEPTIONS ABOUT SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS (RESCs).

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. Our district frequently utilizes services provided by our RESC.	98/0
2. The services provided by our RESC are critical to the success of our district's programs and operations.	94/0
3. Many of the current RESC services to districts could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by TEA.	6/73
4. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by other sources such as universities or private vendors.	2/88
5. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by allocating the dollars to districts and allowing them to purchase services from the most appropriate sources.	10/73
6. Many of the current RESC services to districts duplicate services provided by TEA.	4/85
7. Many of the services offered by RESCs around the state are critical to the success of many districts.	96/0
8. The RESC in our region is highly efficient and effective.	88/2
9. The RESC role in providing services to districts should be expanded.	69/6
10. The RESC in our region is highly responsive to the service needs of our district.	87/6
11. The RESC in our region provides quality services.	90/2
12. There are adequate channels of communication with the RESC in our region.	88/6
13. The RESC in our region is responsive to complaints.	79/6
14. The RESC in our region is responsive to requests for services.	85/4
15. The RESC in our region listens and tries to meet the needs of the school district.	90/6

PART C: ACCOUNTABILITY

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. TEA should hold each RESC responsible for student performance in all districts within its region.	31/50
2. Each RESC should hold each district in its region responsible for student performance within the district.	37/47
3. Each district Board/Superintendent should hold each school within the district responsible for student performance within the school.	94/0
4. Under the concept of site-based management, only the districts and each school in the district should be held accountable for student performance; the RESCs and TEA should provide services upon demand but not be held accountable.	48/35
5. Each RESC should be held accountable by the districts for providing needed services but not for student performance.	69/20
6. Under the current governance structure, the RESCs are primarily accountable to: ■ the districts within each region	62/24
■ the Commissioner of Education	72/5
■ both the districts and the Commissioner of Education	73/6

PART E: STATEWIDE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. In order to effectively execute its responsibilities, the TEA needs regional offices.	59/33
2. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to provide services to districts.	94/4
3. The RESCs should become more directly linked with TEA and subject to TEA regulations.	38/27
4. The RESCs should be totally independent of TEA.	10/76
5. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to enforce TEA rules and regulations.	38/46
6. The current number of RESC Board members should be expanded to include representatives from more districts.	29/35
7. The current number of 20 RESCs should be: ■ expanded	17/60
■ left as is	88/0
■ reduced	0/85
8. The current policy of having RESC directors appointed by local boards subject to approval by the Commissioner of Education is highly effective.	65/10
9. All RESCs should be abolished.	0/98

PART F: GOVERNANCE AND FUNDING

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. The current method of funding the RESCs to provide services to districts and allowing each RESC to charge the districts for other services is highly effective in meeting the needs of the districts.	41/47
2. All funds for services to districts should be allocated to the districts and allow each district to purchase those services it needs from TEA, a RESC, or other sources.	31/56
3. We understand the governance and oversight structure of the RESC in our region.	79/12
4. There are appropriate levels of oversight for the RESC in our region.	78/8
5. The RESC in our region is adequately funded.	4/78
6. RESCs should continue to be funded by the state.	94/4
7. The amount charged to our district by the RESCs is appropriate for the quality and amount of services provided.	63/29
8. Our district has the funding to purchase the services it needs from a RESC.	33/58

PART G: SPECIFIC SERVICES

STATEMENT	(S+VS)/(D+SD)
SUPPORT FOR REGULAR EDUCATION PROGRAMS 1. Reading and Language Arts	90/4
2. Mathematics	80/8
3. Social Studies	76/8
4. Science	71/10
SUPPORT FOR SPECIAL POPULATION PROGRAMS 5. Special Education	84/2
6. At-risk and compensatory education	86/6
7. Bilingual Education and ESL	82/8
8. Advanced academics (gifted and talented, AP)	67/12
RESC TRAINING 9. Training and assistance for campus planning	69/10
10. PDAS training and support	86/2
11. Training and support for Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)	80/4
12. Training and support for aligning the curriculum and instruction with TEKS	73/4
13. Leadership training and development programs and services	86/6
14. Training and assistance to help improve student performance	76/10
15. Training and assistance in using new teaching methods and strategies	73/6
16. Training and assistance in the use of technology	86/2
17. Training and assistance in discipline management and conflict resolution	65/4

PART G: SPECIFIC SERVICES (CONT'D)

STATEMENT	(S+VS)/(D+SD)
18. School board training services	90/4
19. Teacher Certification	76/6
20. Professional/Para-Professional Certifications	67/6
RESC SERVICES 21. Computer network and telecommunication services	80/8
22. Purchasing cooperatives	71/2
23. Services and support for PEIMS	94/2
24. On-line/Distance Learning classes	70/6
25. On-site technical assistance	73/6
26. Video Conferencing	76/2
RESC SERVICES, CONTINUED 27. Lending Library	51/2
28. Best Practices Information	73/4
29. Organizational Links	73/4
30. Demonstrations and Equipment	69/6

PART H: GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. How would you rate the facilities of the RESC in your region? **(Check [✓] one).**

Exceptional	63%
Above average	28
Adequate	10
Needs improvement	0

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MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW OF THE TEXAS REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS RESC XII

SURVEY OF SCHOOL DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENTS N = 34

PART B: GENERAL PERCEPTIONS ABOUT SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS (RESCs).

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. Our district frequently utilizes services provided by our RESC.	88/9
2. The services provided by our RESC are critical to the success of our district's programs and operations.	85/6
3. Many of the current RESC services to districts could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by TEA.	6/85
4. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by other sources such as universities or private vendors.	6/91
5. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by allocating the dollars to districts and allowing them to purchase services from the most appropriate sources.	18/62
6. Many of the current RESC services to districts duplicate services provided by TEA.	3/82
7. Many of the services offered by RESCs around the state are critical to the success of many districts.	82/6
8. The RESC in our region is highly efficient and effective.	85/6
9. The RESC role in providing services to districts should be expanded.	71/15
10. The RESC in our region is highly responsive to the service needs of our district.	88/6
11. The RESC in our region provides quality services.	91/6
12. There are adequate channels of communication with the RESC in our region.	94/6
13. The RESC in our region is responsive to complaints.	88/9
14. The RESC in our region is responsive to requests for services.	94/3
15. The RESC in our region listens and tries to meet the needs of the school district.	91/6

PART C: ACCOUNTABILITY

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. TEA should hold each RESC responsible for student performance in all districts within its region.	15/59
2. Each RESC should hold each district in its region responsible for student performance within the district.	15/62
3. Each district Board/Superintendent should hold each school within the district responsible for student performance within the school.	100/0
4. Under the concept of site-based management, only the districts and each school in the district should be held accountable for student performance; the RESCs and TEA should provide services upon demand but not be held accountable.	50/29
5. Each RESC should be held accountable by the districts for providing needed services but not for student performance.	68/24
6. Under the current governance structure, the RESCs are primarily accountable to: ■ the districts within each region	45/25
■ the Commissioner of Education	77/0
■ both the districts and the Commissioner of Education	59/10

PART E: STATEWIDE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. In order to effectively execute its responsibilities, the TEA needs regional offices.	41/47
2. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to provide services to districts.	79/15
3. The RESCs should become more directly linked with TEA and subject to TEA regulations.	35/32
4. The RESCs should be totally independent of TEA.	9/68
5. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to enforce TEA rules and regulations.	18/68
6. The current number of RESC Board members should be expanded to include representatives from more districts.	15/35
7. The current number of 20 RESCs should be: ■ expanded	17/65
■ left as is	77/7
■ reduced	11/63
8. The current policy of having RESC directors appointed by local boards subject to approval by the Commissioner of Education is highly effective.	71/12
9. All RESCs should be abolished.	6/91

PART F: GOVERNANCE AND FUNDING

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. The current method of funding the RESCs to provide services to districts and allowing each RESC to charge the districts for other services is highly effective in meeting the needs of the districts.	62/35
2. All funds for services to districts should be allocated to the districts and allow each district to purchase those services it needs from TEA, a RESC, or other sources.	44/38
3. We understand the governance and oversight structure of the RESC in our region.	91/0
4. There are appropriate levels of oversight for the RESC in our region.	71/9
5. The RESC in our region is adequately funded.	12/71
6. RESCs should continue to be funded by the state.	79/12
7. The amount charged to our district by the RESCs is appropriate for the quality and amount of services provided.	76/21
8. Our district has the funding to purchase the services it needs from a RESC.	32/59

PART G: SPECIFIC SERVICES

STATEMENT	(S+VS)/(D+SD)
SUPPORT FOR REGULAR EDUCATION PROGRAMS 1. Reading and Language Arts	88/3
2. Mathematics	85/9
3. Social Studies	88/6
4. Science	85/6
SUPPORT FOR SPECIAL POPULATION PROGRAMS 5. Special Education	79/3
6. At-risk and compensatory education	79/9
7. Bilingual Education and ESL	79/9
8. Advanced academics (gifted and talented, AP)	82/9
RESC TRAINING 9. Training and assistance for campus planning	85/9
10. PDAS training and support	79/3
11. Training and support for Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)	88/3
12. Training and support for aligning the curriculum and instruction with TEKS	85/9
13. Leadership training and development programs and services	88/6
14. Training and assistance to help improve student performance	82/6
15. Training and assistance in using new teaching methods and strategies	91/6
16. Training and assistance in the use of technology	85/3
17. Training and assistance in discipline management and conflict resolution	74/9

PART G: SPECIFIC SERVICES (CONT'D)

STATEMENT	(S+VS)/(D+SD)
18. School board training services	85/6
19. Teacher Certification	88/9
20. Professional/Para-Professional Certifications	79/9
RESC SERVICES 21. Computer network and telecommunication services	82/6
22. Purchasing cooperatives	59/6
23. Services and support for PEIMS	94/3
24. On-line/Distance Learning classes	44/12
25. On-site technical assistance	62/15
26. Video Conferencing	44/9
RESC SERVICES, CONTINUED 27. Lending Library	64/6
28. Best Practices Information	79/6
29. Organizational Links	79/6
30. Demonstrations and Equipment	82/6

PART H: GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. How would you rate the facilities of the RESC in your region? **(Check [✓] one).**

Exceptional	67%
Above average	27
Adequate	6
Needs improvement	0

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MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW OF THE TEXAS REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS RESC XIII

SURVEY OF SCHOOL DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENTS N = 33

PART B: GENERAL PERCEPTIONS ABOUT SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS (RESCs).

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. Our district frequently utilizes services provided by our RESC.	100/0
2. The services provided by our RESC are critical to the success of our district's programs and operations.	100/0
3. Many of the current RESC services to districts could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by TEA.	3/90
4. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by other sources such as universities or private vendors.	3/87
5. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by allocating the dollars to districts and allowing them to purchase services from the most appropriate sources.	3/83
6. Many of the current RESC services to districts duplicate services provided by TEA.	0/93
7. Many of the services offered by RESCs around the state are critical to the success of many districts.	100/0
8. The RESC in our region is highly efficient and effective.	97/0
9. The RESC role in providing services to districts should be expanded.	77/7
10. The RESC in our region is highly responsive to the service needs of our district.	100/0
11. The RESC in our region provides quality services.	100/0
12. There are adequate channels of communication with the RESC in our region.	97/0
13. The RESC in our region is responsive to complaints.	97/0
14. The RESC in our region is responsive to requests for services.	100/0
15. The RESC in our region listens and tries to meet the needs of the school district.	100/0

PART C: ACCOUNTABILITY

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. TEA should hold each RESC responsible for student performance in all districts within its region.	34/55
2. Each RESC should hold each district in its region responsible for student performance within the district.	28/66
3. Each district Board/Superintendent should hold each school within the district responsible for student performance within the school.	90/7
4. Under the concept of site-based management, only the districts and each school in the district should be held accountable for student performance; the RESCs and TEA should provide services upon demand but not be held accountable.	62/28
5. Each RESC should be held accountable by the districts for providing needed services but not for student performance.	69/21
6. Under the current governance structure, the RESCs are primarily accountable to: ■ the districts within each region	80/5
■ the Commissioner of Education	79/0
■ both the districts and the Commissioner of Education	93/0

PART E: STATEWIDE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. In order to effectively execute its responsibilities, the TEA needs regional offices.	41/45
2. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to provide services to districts.	86/3
3. The RESCs should become more directly linked with TEA and subject to TEA regulations.	17/45
4. The RESCs should be totally independent of TEA.	31/45
5. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to enforce TEA rules and regulations.	22/59
6. The current number of RESC Board members should be expanded to include representatives from more districts.	21/52
7. The current number of 20 RESCs should be: ■ expanded	7/86
■ left as is	83/3
■ reduced	0/93
8. The current policy of having RESC directors appointed by local boards subject to approval by the Commissioner of Education is highly effective.	69/10
9. All RESCs should be abolished.	3/97

PART F: GOVERNANCE AND FUNDING

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. The current method of funding the RESCs to provide services to districts and allowing each RESC to charge the districts for other services is highly effective in meeting the needs of the districts.	72/10
2. All funds for services to districts should be allocated to the districts and allow each district to purchase those services it needs from TEA, a RESC, or other sources.	38/41
3. We understand the governance and oversight structure of the RESC in our region.	82/7
4. There are appropriate levels of oversight for the RESC in our region.	79/10
5. The RESC in our region is adequately funded.	17/45
6. RESCs should continue to be funded by the state.	90/0
7. The amount charged to our district by the RESCs is appropriate for the quality and amount of services provided.	90/10
8. Our district has the funding to purchase the services it needs from a RESC.	52/48

PART G: SPECIFIC SERVICES

STATEMENT	(S+VS)/(D+SD)
SUPPORT FOR REGULAR EDUCATION PROGRAMS 1. Reading and Language Arts	90/0
2. Mathematics	87/3
3. Social Studies	90/0
4. Science	87/7
SUPPORT FOR SPECIAL POPULATION PROGRAMS 5. Special Education	90/0
6. At-risk and compensatory education	87/3
7. Bilingual Education and ESL	73/10
8. Advanced academics (gifted and talented, AP)	79/3
RESC TRAINING 9. Training and assistance for campus planning	87/3
10. PDAS training and support	83/0
11. Training and support for Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)	90/0
12. Training and support for aligning the curriculum and instruction with TEKS	83/0
13. Leadership training and development programs and services	93/0
14. Training and assistance to help improve student performance	90/7
15. Training and assistance in using new teaching methods and strategies	87/7
16. Training and assistance in the use of technology	87/3
17. Training and assistance in discipline management and conflict resolution	80/7

PART G: SPECIFIC SERVICES (CONT'D)

STATEMENT	(S+VS)/(D+SD)
18. School board training services	100/0
19. Teacher Certification	93/0
20. Professional/Para-Professional Certifications	93/0
RESC SERVICES 21. Computer network and telecommunication services	87/3
22. Purchasing cooperatives	87/3
23. Services and support for PEIMS	93/3
24. On-line/Distance Learning classes	70/10
25. On-site technical assistance	87/3
26. Video Conferencing	73/0
RESC SERVICES, CONTINUED 27. Lending Library	80/0
28. Best Practices Information	87/3
29. Organizational Links	87/0
30. Demonstrations and Equipment	83/0

PART H: GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. How would you rate the facilities of the RESC in your region? **(Check [✓] one).**

Exceptional	83%
Above average	17
Adequate	0
Needs improvement	0

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MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW OF THE TEXAS REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS RESC XIV

SURVEY OF SCHOOL DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENTS N = 27

PART B: GENERAL PERCEPTIONS ABOUT SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS (RESCs).

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. Our district frequently utilizes services provided by our RESC.	100/0
2. The services provided by our RESC are critical to the success of our district's programs and operations.	100/0
3. Many of the current RESC services to districts could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by TEA.	4/96
4. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by other sources such as universities or private vendors.	4/96
5. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by allocating the dollars to districts and allowing them to purchase services from the most appropriate sources.	4/93
6. Many of the current RESC services to districts duplicate services provided by TEA.	4/96
7. Many of the services offered by RESCs around the state are critical to the success of many districts.	100/0
8. The RESC in our region is highly efficient and effective.	100/0
9. The RESC role in providing services to districts should be expanded.	79/0
10. The RESC in our region is highly responsive to the service needs of our district.	100/0
11. The RESC in our region provides quality services.	100/0
12. There are adequate channels of communication with the RESC in our region.	100/0
13. The RESC in our region is responsive to complaints.	100/0
14. The RESC in our region is responsive to requests for services.	100/0
15. The RESC in our region listens and tries to meet the needs of the school district.	100/0

PART C: ACCOUNTABILITY

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. TEA should hold each RESC responsible for student performance in all districts within its region.	25/39
2. Each RESC should hold each district in its region responsible for student performance within the district.	39/50
3. Each district Board/Superintendent should hold each school within the district responsible for student performance within the school.	100/0
4. Under the concept of site-based management, only the districts and each school in the district should be held accountable for student performance; the RESCs and TEA should provide services upon demand but not be held accountable.	68/18
5. Each RESC should be held accountable by the districts for providing needed services but not for student performance.	86/11
6. Under the current governance structure, the RESCs are primarily accountable to: ■ the districts within each region	84/0
■ the Commissioner of Education	84/5
■ both the districts and the Commissioner of Education	96/0

PART E: STATEWIDE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. In order to effectively execute its responsibilities, the TEA needs regional offices.	39/43
2. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to provide services to districts.	86/7
3. The RESCs should become more directly linked with TEA and subject to TEA regulations.	14/50
4. The RESCs should be totally independent of TEA.	25/54
5. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to enforce TEA rules and regulations.	32/46
6. The current number of RESC Board members should be expanded to include representatives from more districts.	22/33
7. The current number of 20 RESCs should be: ■ expanded	0/65
■ left as is	88/0
■ reduced	6/78
8. The current policy of having RESC directors appointed by local boards subject to approval by the Commissioner of Education is highly effective.	71/4
9. All RESCs should be abolished.	0/96

PART F: GOVERNANCE AND FUNDING

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. The current method of funding the RESCs to provide services to districts and allowing each RESC to charge the districts for other services is highly effective in meeting the needs of the districts.	75/4
2. All funds for services to districts should be allocated to the districts and allow each district to purchase those services it needs from TEA, a RESC, or other sources.	25/46
3. We understand the governance and oversight structure of the RESC in our region.	82/7
4. There are appropriate levels of oversight for the RESC in our region.	86/4
5. The RESC in our region is adequately funded.	21/54
6. RESCs should continue to be funded by the state.	100/0
7. The amount charged to our district by the RESCs is appropriate for the quality and amount of services provided.	96/4
8. Our district has the funding to purchase the services it needs from a RESC.	29/61

PART G: SPECIFIC SERVICES

STATEMENT	(S+VS)/(D+SD)
SUPPORT FOR REGULAR EDUCATION PROGRAMS 1. Reading and Language Arts	100/0
2. Mathematics	100/0
3. Social Studies	96/0
4. Science	100/0
SUPPORT FOR SPECIAL POPULATION PROGRAMS 5. Special Education	100/0
6. At-risk and compensatory education	100/0
7. Bilingual Education and ESL	100/0
8. Advanced academics (gifted and talented, AP)	88/4
RESC TRAINING 9. Training and assistance for campus planning	96/0
10. PDAS training and support	100/0
11. Training and support for Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)	100/0
12. Training and support for aligning the curriculum and instruction with TEKS	100/0
13. Leadership training and development programs and services	96/0
14. Training and assistance to help improve student performance	100/0
15. Training and assistance in using new teaching methods and strategies	93/0
16. Training and assistance in the use of technology	100/0
17. Training and assistance in discipline management and conflict resolution	93/0

PART G: SPECIFIC SERVICES (CONT'D)

STATEMENT	(S+VS)/(D+SD)
18. School board training services	96/0
19. Teacher Certification	96/4
20. Professional/Para-Professional Certifications	93/4
RESC SERVICES 21. Computer network and telecommunication services	96/0
22. Purchasing cooperatives	96/0
23. Services and support for PEIMS	96/0
24. On-line/Distance Learning classes	100/0
25. On-site technical assistance	100/0
26. Video Conferencing	89/0
RESC SERVICES, CONTINUED 27. Lending Library	96/4
28. Best Practices Information	96/0
29. Organizational Links	96/0
30. Demonstrations and Equipment	100/0

PART H: GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. How would you rate the facilities of the RESC in your region? **(Check [?] one).**

Exceptional	78%
Above average	22
Adequate	0
Needs improvement	0

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MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW OF THE TEXAS REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS
RESC XV

SURVEY OF SCHOOL DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENTS
N = 23

PART B: GENERAL PERCEPTIONS ABOUT SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS (RESCs).

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. Our district frequently utilizes services provided by our RESC.	100/0
2. The services provided by our RESC are critical to the success of our district's programs and operations.	100/0
3. Many of the current RESC services to districts could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by TEA.	0/90
4. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by other sources such as universities or private vendors.	5/90
5. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by allocating the dollars to districts and allowing them to purchase services from the most appropriate sources.	0/100
6. Many of the current RESC services to districts duplicate services provided by TEA.	0/100
7. Many of the services offered by RESCs around the state are critical to the success of many districts.	100/0
8. The RESC in our region is highly efficient and effective.	100/0
9. The RESC role in providing services to districts should be expanded.	58/16
10. The RESC in our region is highly responsive to the service needs of our district.	95/0
11. The RESC in our region provides quality services.	100/0
12. There are adequate channels of communication with the RESC in our region.	100/0
13. The RESC in our region is responsive to complaints.	100/0
14. The RESC in our region is responsive to requests for services.	100/0
15. The RESC in our region listens and tries to meet the needs of the school district.	100/0

PART C: ACCOUNTABILITY

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. TEA should hold each RESC responsible for student performance in all districts within its region.	30/40
2. Each RESC should hold each district in its region responsible for student performance within the district.	32/42
3. Each district Board/Superintendent should hold each school within the district responsible for student performance within the school.	95/0
4. Under the concept of site-based management, only the districts and each school in the district should be held accountable for student performance; the RESCs and TEA should provide services upon demand but not be held accountable.	79/16
5. Each RESC should be held accountable by the districts for providing needed services but not for student performance.	84/11
6. Under the current governance structure, the RESCs are primarily accountable to: ■ the districts within each region	83/6
■ the Commissioner of Education	63/0
■ both the districts and the Commissioner of Education	58/5

PART E: STATEWIDE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. In order to effectively execute its responsibilities, the TEA needs regional offices.	53/32
2. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to provide services to districts.	89/0
3. The RESCs should become more directly linked with TEA and subject to TEA regulations.	21/53
4. The RESCs should be totally independent of TEA.	11/53
5. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to enforce TEA rules and regulations.	21/63
6. The current number of RESC Board members should be expanded to include representatives from more districts.	5/79
7. The current number of 20 RESCs should be: ■ expanded	10/80
■ left as is	83/0
■ reduced	0/78
8. The current policy of having RESC directors appointed by local boards subject to approval by the Commissioner of Education is highly effective.	67/0
9. All RESCs should be abolished.	0/100

PART F: GOVERNANCE AND FUNDING

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. The current method of funding the RESCs to provide services to districts and allowing each RESC to charge the districts for other services is highly effective in meeting the needs of the districts.	89/5
2. All funds for services to districts should be allocated to the districts and allow each district to purchase those services it needs from TEA, a RESC, or other sources.	26/58
3. We understand the governance and oversight structure of the RESC in our region.	68/5
4. There are appropriate levels of oversight for the RESC in our region.	74/0
5. The RESC in our region is adequately funded.	21/42
6. RESCs should continue to be funded by the state.	95/0
7. The amount charged to our district by the RESCs is appropriate for the quality and amount of services provided.	95/0
8. Our district has the funding to purchase the services it needs from a RESC.	37/47

PART G: SPECIFIC SERVICES

STATEMENT	(S+VS)/(D+SD)
SUPPORT FOR REGULAR EDUCATION PROGRAMS 1. Reading and Language Arts	94/0
2. Mathematics	100/0
3. Social Studies	100/0
4. Science	100/0
SUPPORT FOR SPECIAL POPULATION PROGRAMS 5. Special Education	95/0
6. At-risk and compensatory education	100/0
7. Bilingual Education and ESL	89/0
8. Advanced academics (gifted and talented, AP)	95/0
RESC TRAINING 9. Training and assistance for campus planning	89/0
10. PDAS training and support	89/0
11. Training and support for Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)	100/0
12. Training and support for aligning the curriculum and instruction with TEKS	100/0
13. Leadership training and development programs and services	100/0
14. Training and assistance to help improve student performance	100/0
15. Training and assistance in using new teaching methods and strategies	100/0
16. Training and assistance in the use of technology	100/0
17. Training and assistance in discipline management and conflict resolution	100/0

PART G: SPECIFIC SERVICES (CONT'D)

STATEMENT	(S+VS)/(D+SD)
18. School board training services	95/0
19. Teacher Certification	79/0
20. Professional/Para-Professional Certifications	95/0
RESC SERVICES 21. Computer network and telecommunication services	100/0
22. Purchasing cooperatives	79/0
23. Services and support for PEIMS	100/0
24. On-line/Distance Learning classes	89/0
25. On-site technical assistance	100/0
26. Video Conferencing	89/0
RESC SERVICES, CONTINUED 27. Lending Library	74/0
28. Best Practices Information	89/0
29. Organizational Links	89/0
30. Demonstrations and Equipment	95/0

PART H: GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. How would you rate the facilities of the RESC in your region? **(Check [✓] one).**

Exceptional	100%
Above average	0
Adequate	0
Needs improvement	0

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MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW OF THE TEXAS REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS
RESC XVI

SURVEY OF SCHOOL DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENTS
N = 36

PART B: GENERAL PERCEPTIONS ABOUT SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS (RESCs).

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. Our district frequently utilizes services provided by our RESC.	100/0
2. The services provided by our RESC are critical to the success of our district's programs and operations.	95/5
3. Many of the current RESC services to districts could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by TEA.	3/89
4. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by other sources such as universities or private vendors.	0/97
5. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by allocating the dollars to districts and allowing them to purchase services from the most appropriate sources.	3/87
6. Many of the current RESC services to districts duplicate services provided by TEA.	3/95
7. Many of the services offered by RESCs around the state are critical to the success of many districts.	97/0
8. The RESC in our region is highly efficient and effective.	100/0
9. The RESC role in providing services to districts should be expanded.	68/3
10. The RESC in our region is highly responsive to the service needs of our district.	100/0
11. The RESC in our region provides quality services.	100/0
12. There are adequate channels of communication with the RESC in our region.	100/0
13. The RESC in our region is responsive to complaints.	95/0
14. The RESC in our region is responsive to requests for services.	97/0
15. The RESC in our region listens and tries to meet the needs of the school district.	95/0

PART C: ACCOUNTABILITY

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. TEA should hold each RESC responsible for student performance in all districts within its region.	29/55
2. Each RESC should hold each district in its region responsible for student performance within the district.	42/47
3. Each district Board/Superintendent should hold each school within the district responsible for student performance within the school.	100/0
4. Under the concept of site-based management, only the districts and each school in the district should be held accountable for student performance; the RESCs and TEA should provide services upon demand but not be held accountable.	61/24
5. Each RESC should be held accountable by the districts for providing needed services but not for student performance.	74/8
6. Under the current governance structure, the RESCs are primarily accountable to: ■ the districts within each region	70/15
■ the Commissioner of Education	73/4
■ both the districts and the Commissioner of Education	75/6

PART E: STATEWIDE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. In order to effectively execute its responsibilities, the TEA needs regional offices.	42/53
2. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to provide services to districts.	82/16
3. The RESCs should become more directly linked with TEA and subject to TEA regulations.	23/46
4. The RESCs should be totally independent of TEA.	25/61
5. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to enforce TEA rules and regulations.	32/51
6. The current number of RESC Board members should be expanded to include representatives from more districts.	8/53
7. The current number of 20 RESCs should be: ■ expanded	4/71
■ left as is	91/0
■ reduced	4/71
8. The current policy of having RESC directors appointed by local boards subject to approval by the Commissioner of Education is highly effective.	87/3
9. All RESCs should be abolished.	0/100

PART F: GOVERNANCE AND FUNDING

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. The current method of funding the RESCs to provide services to districts and allowing each RESC to charge the districts for other services is highly effective in meeting the needs of the districts.	97/0
2. All funds for services to districts should be allocated to the districts and allow each district to purchase those services it needs from TEA, a RESC, or other sources.	29/58
3. We understand the governance and oversight structure of the RESC in our region.	89/0
4. There are appropriate levels of oversight for the RESC in our region.	92/3
5. The RESC in our region is adequately funded.	24/53
6. RESCs should continue to be funded by the state.	97/0
7. The amount charged to our district by the RESCs is appropriate for the quality and amount of services provided.	95/3
8. Our district has the funding to purchase the services it needs from a RESC.	53/45

PART G: SPECIFIC SERVICES

STATEMENT	(S+VS)/(D+SD)
SUPPORT FOR REGULAR EDUCATION PROGRAMS 1. Reading and Language Arts	100/0
2. Mathematics	95/0
3. Social Studies	92/3
4. Science	92/0
SUPPORT FOR SPECIAL POPULATION PROGRAMS 5. Special Education	95/0
6. At-risk and compensatory education	95/0
7. Bilingual Education and ESL	84/3
8. Advanced academics (gifted and talented, AP)	84/11
RESC TRAINING 9. Training and assistance for campus planning	95/0
10. PDAS training and support	100/0
11. Training and support for Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)	100/0
12. Training and support for aligning the curriculum and instruction with TEKS	95/0
13. Leadership training and development programs and services	97/0
14. Training and assistance to help improve student performance	100/0
15. Training and assistance in using new teaching methods and strategies	92/0
16. Training and assistance in the use of technology	92/0
17. Training and assistance in discipline management and conflict resolution	84/3

PART G: SPECIFIC SERVICES (CONT'D)

STATEMENT	(S+VS)/(D+SD)
18. School board training services	97/3
19. Teacher Certification	68/11
20. Professional/Para-Professional Certifications	89/3
RESC SERVICES 21. Computer network and telecommunication services	95/0
22. Purchasing cooperatives	95/0
23. Services and support for PEIMS	97/0
24. On-line/Distance Learning classes	68/3
25. On-site technical assistance	92/0
26. Video Conferencing	79/0
RESC SERVICES, CONTINUED 27. Lending Library	73/0
28. Best Practices Information	86/3
29. Organizational Links	86/0
30. Demonstrations and Equipment	86/0

PART H: GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. How would you rate the facilities of the RESC in your region? **(Check [✓] one).**

Exceptional	95%
Above average	5
Adequate	0
Needs improvement	0

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MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW OF THE TEXAS REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS RESC XVII

SURVEY OF SCHOOL DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENTS N = 40

PART B: GENERAL PERCEPTIONS ABOUT SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS (RESCs).

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. Our district frequently utilizes services provided by our RESC.	98/2
2. The services provided by our RESC are critical to the success of our district's programs and operations.	93/2
3. Many of the current RESC services to districts could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by TEA.	5/85
4. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by other sources such as universities or private vendors.	0/95
5. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by allocating the dollars to districts and allowing them to purchase services from the most appropriate sources.	12/81
6. Many of the current RESC services to districts duplicate services provided by TEA.	5/95
7. Many of the services offered by RESCs around the state are critical to the success of many districts.	98/0
8. The RESC in our region is highly efficient and effective.	95/2
9. The RESC role in providing services to districts should be expanded.	56/14
10. The RESC in our region is highly responsive to the service needs of our district.	91/5
11. The RESC in our region provides quality services.	95/0
12. There are adequate channels of communication with the RESC in our region.	93/5
13. The RESC in our region is responsive to complaints.	88/7
14. The RESC in our region is responsive to requests for services.	100/0
15. The RESC in our region listens and tries to meet the needs of the school district.	95/0

PART C: ACCOUNTABILITY

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. TEA should hold each RESC responsible for student performance in all districts within its region.	21/58
2. Each RESC should hold each district in its region responsible for student performance within the district.	12/67
3. Each district Board/Superintendent should hold each school within the district responsible for student performance within the school.	100/0
4. Under the concept of site-based management, only the districts and each school in the district should be held accountable for student performance; the RESCs and TEA should provide services upon demand but not be held accountable.	74/21
5. Each RESC should be held accountable by the districts for providing needed services but not for student performance.	88/2
6. Under the current governance structure, the RESCs are primarily accountable to: ■ the districts within each region	78/13
■ the Commissioner of Education	83/7
■ both the districts and the Commissioner of Education	82/13

PART E: STATEWIDE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. In order to effectively execute its responsibilities, the TEA needs regional offices.	40/51
2. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to provide services to districts.	74/26
3. The RESCs should become more directly linked with TEA and subject to TEA regulations.	21/53
4. The RESCs should be totally independent of TEA.	28/53
5. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to enforce TEA rules and regulations.	26/67
6. The current number of RESC Board members should be expanded to include representatives from more districts.	23/47
7. The current number of 20 RESCs should be: ■ expanded	4/63
■ left as is	90/2
■ reduced	4/75
8. The current policy of having RESC directors appointed by local boards subject to approval by the Commissioner of Education is highly effective.	69/12
9. All RESCs should be abolished.	2/95

PART F: GOVERNANCE AND FUNDING

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. The current method of funding the RESCs to provide services to districts and allowing each RESC to charge the districts for other services is highly effective in meeting the needs of the districts.	84/9
2. All funds for services to districts should be allocated to the districts and allow each district to purchase those services it needs from TEA, a RESC, or other sources.	40/47
3. We understand the governance and oversight structure of the RESC in our region.	81/7
4. There are appropriate levels of oversight for the RESC in our region.	84/5
5. The RESC in our region is adequately funded.	42/37
6. RESCs should continue to be funded by the state.	98/0
7. The amount charged to our district by the RESCs is appropriate for the quality and amount of services provided.	84/12
8. Our district has the funding to purchase the services it needs from a RESC.	42/49

PART G: SPECIFIC SERVICES

STATEMENT	(S+VS)/(D+SD)
SUPPORT FOR REGULAR EDUCATION PROGRAMS 1. Reading and Language Arts	93/0
2. Mathematics	88/0
3. Social Studies	91/0
4. Science	88/2
SUPPORT FOR SPECIAL POPULATION PROGRAMS 5. Special Education	86/5
6. At-risk and compensatory education	93/0
7. Bilingual Education and ESL	84/2
8. Advanced academics (gifted and talented, AP)	83/5
RESC TRAINING 9. Training and assistance for campus planning	91/0
10. PDAS training and support	98/0
11. Training and support for Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)	88/0
12. Training and support for aligning the curriculum and instruction with TEKS	88/0
13. Leadership training and development programs and services	93/0
14. Training and assistance to help improve student performance	86/2
15. Training and assistance in using new teaching methods and strategies	81/5
16. Training and assistance in the use of technology	79/5
17. Training and assistance in discipline management and conflict resolution	79/0

PART G: SPECIFIC SERVICES (CONT'D)

STATEMENT	(S+VS)/(D+SD)
18. School board training services	93/0
19. Teacher Certification	71/14
20. Professional/Para-Professional Certifications	84/7
RESC SERVICES 21. Computer network and telecommunication services	77/12
22. Purchasing cooperatives	70/12
23. Services and support for PEIMS	98/0
24. On-line/Distance Learning classes	72/0
25. On-site technical assistance	77/0
26. Video Conferencing	81/2
RESC SERVICES, CONTINUED 27. Lending Library	60/5
28. Best Practices Information	72/5
29. Organizational Links	79/0
30. Demonstrations and Equipment	70/5

PART H: GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. How would you rate the facilities of the RESC in your region? **(Check [✓] one).**

Exceptional	84%
Above average	16
Adequate	0
Needs improvement	0

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MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW OF THE TEXAS REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS RESC XVIII

SURVEY OF SCHOOL DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENTS N = 13

PART B: GENERAL PERCEPTIONS ABOUT SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS (RESCs).

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. Our district frequently utilizes services provided by our RESC.	100/0
2. The services provided by our RESC are critical to the success of our district's programs and operations.	90/0
3. Many of the current RESC services to districts could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by TEA.	10/90
4. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by other sources such as universities or private vendors.	0/90
5. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by allocating the dollars to districts and allowing them to purchase services from the most appropriate sources.	10/90
6. Many of the current RESC services to districts duplicate services provided by TEA.	10/90
7. Many of the services offered by RESCs around the state are critical to the success of many districts.	100/0
8. The RESC in our region is highly efficient and effective.	70/10
9. The RESC role in providing services to districts should be expanded.	90/10
10. The RESC in our region is highly responsive to the service needs of our district.	90/0
11. The RESC in our region provides quality services.	80/0
12. There are adequate channels of communication with the RESC in our region.	90/0
13. The RESC in our region is responsive to complaints.	90/0
14. The RESC in our region is responsive to requests for services.	90/0
15. The RESC in our region listens and tries to meet the needs of the school district.	100/0

PART C: ACCOUNTABILITY

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. TEA should hold each RESC responsible for student performance in all districts within its region.	20/60
2. Each RESC should hold each district in its region responsible for student performance within the district.	20/60
3. Each district Board/Superintendent should hold each school within the district responsible for student performance within the school.	100/0
4. Under the concept of site-based management, only the districts and each school in the district should be held accountable for student performance; the RESCs and TEA should provide services upon demand but not be held accountable.	60/30
5. Each RESC should be held accountable by the districts for providing needed services but not for student performance.	70/20
6. Under the current governance structure, the RESCs are primarily accountable to: ■ the districts within each region	63/25
■ the Commissioner of Education	67/22
■ both the districts and the Commissioner of Education	100/0

PART E: STATEWIDE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. In order to effectively execute its responsibilities, the TEA needs regional offices.	30/60
2. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to provide services to districts.	60/30
3. The RESCs should become more directly linked with TEA and subject to TEA regulations.	40/40
4. The RESCs should be totally independent of TEA.	20/80
5. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to enforce TEA rules and regulations.	0/90
6. The current number of RESC Board members should be expanded to include representatives from more districts.	20/50
7. The current number of 20 RESCs should be: ■ expanded	14/57
■ left as is	100/0
■ reduced	14/86
8. The current policy of having RESC directors appointed by local boards subject to approval by the Commissioner of Education is highly effective.	60/20
9. All RESCs should be abolished.	0/100

PART F: GOVERNANCE AND FUNDING

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. The current method of funding the RESCs to provide services to districts and allowing each RESC to charge the districts for other services is highly effective in meeting the needs of the districts.	50/40
2. All funds for services to districts should be allocated to the districts and allow each district to purchase those services it needs from TEA, a RESC, or other sources.	40/60
3. We understand the governance and oversight structure of the RESC in our region.	80/20
4. There are appropriate levels of oversight for the RESC in our region.	80/10
5. The RESC in our region is adequately funded.	0/100
6. RESCs should continue to be funded by the state.	80/10
7. The amount charged to our district by the RESCs is appropriate for the quality and amount of services provided.	50/30
8. Our district has the funding to purchase the services it needs from a RESC.	40/60

PART G: SPECIFIC SERVICES

STATEMENT	(S+VS)/(D+SD)
SUPPORT FOR REGULAR EDUCATION PROGRAMS 1. Reading and Language Arts	90/0
2. Mathematics	60/30
3. Social Studies	80/0
4. Science	60/30
SUPPORT FOR SPECIAL POPULATION PROGRAMS 5. Special Education	90/0
6. At-risk and compensatory education	70/10
7. Bilingual Education and ESL	80/10
8. Advanced academics (gifted and talented, AP)	70/10
RESC TRAINING 9. Training and assistance for campus planning	60/0
10. PDAS training and support	80/0
11. Training and support for Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)	70/10
12. Training and support for aligning the curriculum and instruction with TEKS	80/0
13. Leadership training and development programs and services	90/0
14. Training and assistance to help improve student performance	70/10
15. Training and assistance in using new teaching methods and strategies	60/10
16. Training and assistance in the use of technology	50/40
17. Training and assistance in discipline management and conflict resolution	60/10
18. School board training services	70/10

PART G: SPECIFIC SERVICES (CONT'D)

STATEMENT	(S+VS)/(D+SD)
19. Teacher Certification	80/0
20. Professional/Para-Professional Certifications	80/0
RESC SERVICES 21. Computer network and telecommunication services	60/40
22. Purchasing cooperatives	80/0
23. Services and support for PEIMS	80/20
24. On-line/Distance Learning classes	60/20
25. On-site technical assistance	70/10
26. Video Conferencing	56/22
RESC SERVICES, CONTINUED 27. Lending Library	60/0
28. Best Practices Information	40/10
29. Organizational Links	40/10
30. Demonstrations and Equipment	40/10

PART H: GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. How would you rate the facilities of the RESC in your region? **(Check [✓] one).**

Exceptional	30%
Above average	20
Adequate	50
Needs improvement	0

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MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW OF THE TEXAS REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS RESC XIX

SURVEY OF SCHOOL DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENTS N = 6

PART B: GENERAL PERCEPTIONS ABOUT SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS (RESCs).

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. Our district frequently utilizes services provided by our RESC.	100/0
2. The services provided by our RESC are critical to the success of our district's programs and operations.	67/0
3. Many of the current RESC services to districts could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by TEA.	0/100
4. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by other sources such as universities or private vendors.	0/83
5. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by allocating the dollars to districts and allowing them to purchase services from the most appropriate sources.	33/67
6. Many of the current RESC services to districts duplicate services provided by TEA.	17/83
7. Many of the services offered by RESCs around the state are critical to the success of many districts.	83/0
8. The RESC in our region is highly efficient and effective.	83/0
9. The RESC role in providing services to districts should be expanded.	83/0
10. The RESC in our region is highly responsive to the service needs of our district.	83/0
11. The RESC in our region provides quality services.	83/0
12. There are adequate channels of communication with the RESC in our region.	83/17
13. The RESC in our region is responsive to complaints.	50/17
14. The RESC in our region is responsive to requests for services.	83/0
15. The RESC in our region listens and tries to meet the needs of the school district.	83/0

PART C: ACCOUNTABILITY

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. TEA should hold each RESC responsible for student performance in all districts within its region.	50/33
2. Each RESC should hold each district in its region responsible for student performance within the district.	50/50
3. Each district Board/Superintendent should hold each school within the district responsible for student performance within the school.	100/0
4. Under the concept of site-based management, only the districts and each school in the district should be held accountable for student performance; the RESCs and TEA should provide services upon demand but not be held accountable.	67/33
5. Each RESC should be held accountable by the districts for providing needed services but not for student performance.	67/33
6. Under the current governance structure, the RESCs are primarily accountable to: ■ the districts within each region	33/67
■ the Commissioner of Education	100/0
■ both the districts and the Commissioner of Education	33/50

PART E: STATEWIDE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. In order to effectively execute its responsibilities, the TEA needs regional offices.	50/33
2. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to provide services to districts.	100/0
3. The RESCs should become more directly linked with TEA and subject to TEA regulations.	50/17
4. The RESCs should be totally independent of TEA.	0/67
5. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to enforce TEA rules and regulations.	33/50
6. The current number of RESC Board members should be expanded to include representatives from more districts.	33/50
7. The current number of 20 RESCs should be: ■ expanded	40/40
■ left as is	67/17
■ reduced	0/80
8. The current policy of having RESC directors appointed by local boards subject to approval by the Commissioner of Education is highly effective.	83/17
9. All RESCs should be abolished.	0/83

PART F: GOVERNANCE AND FUNDING

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. The current method of funding the RESCs to provide services to districts and allowing each RESC to charge the districts for other services is highly effective in meeting the needs of the districts.	50/33
2. All funds for services to districts should be allocated to the districts and allow each district to purchase those services it needs from TEA, a RESC, or other sources.	50/33
3. We understand the governance and oversight structure of the RESC in our region.	83/0
4. There are appropriate levels of oversight for the RESC in our region.	83/17
5. The RESC in our region is adequately funded.	0/83
6. RESCs should continue to be funded by the state.	100/0
7. The amount charged to our district by the RESCs is appropriate for the quality and amount of services provided.	67/17
8. Our district has the funding to purchase the services it needs from a RESC.	17/83

PART G: SPECIFIC SERVICES

STATEMENT	(S+VS)/(D+SD)
SUPPORT FOR REGULAR EDUCATION PROGRAMS 1. Reading and Language Arts	83/0
2. Mathematics	67/17
3. Social Studies	67/0
4. Science	67/17
SUPPORT FOR SPECIAL POPULATION PROGRAMS 5. Special Education	83/17
6. At-risk and compensatory education	67/33
7. Bilingual Education and ESL	67/17
8. Advanced academics (gifted and talented, AP)	50/33
RESC TRAINING 9. Training and assistance for campus planning	67/17
10. PDAS training and support	83/17
11. Training and support for Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)	67/0
12. Training and support for aligning the curriculum and instruction with TEKS	67/17
13. Leadership training and development programs and services	83/0
14. Training and assistance to help improve student performance	67/17
15. Training and assistance in using new teaching methods and strategies	67/17
16. Training and assistance in the use of technology	67/17
17. Training and assistance in discipline management and conflict resolution	67/17

PART G: SPECIFIC SERVICES (CONT'D)

STATEMENT	(S+VS)/(D+SD)
18. School board training services	83/17
19. Teacher Certification	80/0
20. Professional/Para-Professional Certifications	80/0
RESC SERVICES 21. Computer network and telecommunication services	67/33
22. Purchasing cooperatives	83/0
23. Services and support for PEIMS	67/17
24. On-line/Distance Learning classes	33/17
25. On-site technical assistance	67/17
26. Video Conferencing	67/0
RESC SERVICES, CONTINUED 27. Lending Library	33/0
28. Best Practices Information	67/0
29. Organizational Links	50/0
30. Demonstrations and Equipment	50/17

PART H: GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. How would you rate the facilities of the RESC in your region? **(Check [✓] one).**

Exceptional	50%
Above average	33
Adequate	17
Needs improvement	0

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MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW OF THE TEXAS REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS
RESC XX

SURVEY OF SCHOOL DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENTS
N = 25

PART B: GENERAL PERCEPTIONS ABOUT SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS (RESCs).

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. Our district frequently utilizes services provided by our RESC.	100/0
2. The services provided by our RESC are critical to the success of our district's programs and operations.	100/0
3. Many of the current RESC services to districts could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by TEA.	7/89
4. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by other sources such as universities or private vendors.	7/89
5. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by allocating the dollars to districts and allowing them to purchase services from the most appropriate sources.	14/79
6. Many of the current RESC services to districts duplicate services provided by TEA.	0/93
7. Many of the services offered by RESCs around the state are critical to the success of many districts.	100/0
8. The RESC in our region is highly efficient and effective.	96/0
9. The RESC role in providing services to districts should be expanded.	79/0
10. The RESC in our region is highly responsive to the service needs of our district.	100/0
11. The RESC in our region provides quality services.	100/0
12. There are adequate channels of communication with the RESC in our region.	100/0
13. The RESC in our region is responsive to complaints.	100/0
14. The RESC in our region is responsive to requests for services.	100/0
15. The RESC in our region listens and tries to meet the needs of the school district.	100/0

PART C: ACCOUNTABILITY

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. TEA should hold each RESC responsible for student performance in all districts within its region.	11/57
2. Each RESC should hold each district in its region responsible for student performance within the district.	18/64
3. Each district Board/Superintendent should hold each school within the district responsible for student performance within the school.	96/0
4. Under the concept of site-based management, only the districts and each school in the district should be held accountable for student performance; the RESCs and TEA should provide services upon demand but not be held accountable.	56/26
5. Each RESC should be held accountable by the districts for providing needed services but not for student performance.	92/4
6. Under the current governance structure, the RESCs are primarily accountable to: ■ the districts within each region	78/6
■ the Commissioner of Education	79/5
■ both the districts and the Commissioner of Education	81/4

PART E: STATEWIDE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. In order to effectively execute its responsibilities, the TEA needs regional offices.	43/43
2. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to provide services to districts.	89/7
3. The RESCs should become more directly linked with TEA and subject to TEA regulations.	26/48
4. The RESCs should be totally independent of TEA.	19/48
5. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to enforce TEA rules and regulations.	25/50
6. The current number of RESC Board members should be expanded to include representatives from more districts.	25/43
7. The current number of 20 RESCs should be: ■ expanded	33/44
■ left as is	72/4
■ reduced	7/67
8. The current policy of having RESC directors appointed by local boards subject to approval by the Commissioner of Education is highly effective.	64/7
9. All RESCs should be abolished.	0/100

PART F: GOVERNANCE AND FUNDING

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. The current method of funding the RESCs to provide services to districts and allowing each RESC to charge the districts for other services is highly effective in meeting the needs of the districts.	57/32
2. All funds for services to districts should be allocated to the districts and allow each district to purchase those services it needs from TEA, a RESC, or other sources.	32/43
3. We understand the governance and oversight structure of the RESC in our region.	71/11
4. There are appropriate levels of oversight for the RESC in our region.	71/0
5. The RESC in our region is adequately funded.	7/71
6. RESCs should continue to be funded by the state.	96/0
7. The amount charged to our district by the RESCs is appropriate for the quality and amount of services provided.	71/14
8. Our district has the funding to purchase the services it needs from a RESC.	32/57

PART G: SPECIFIC SERVICES

STATEMENT	(S+VS)/(D+SD)
SUPPORT FOR REGULAR EDUCATION PROGRAMS 1. Reading and Language Arts	89/0
2. Mathematics	86/4
3. Social Studies	82/4
4. Science	85/4
SUPPORT FOR SPECIAL POPULATION PROGRAMS 5. Special Education	93/4
6. At-risk and compensatory education	96/0
7. Bilingual Education and ESL	93/4
8. Advanced academics (gifted and talented, AP)	86/0
RESC TRAINING 9. Training and assistance for campus planning	82/4
10. PDAS training and support	89/4
11. Training and support for Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)	96/0
12. Training and support for aligning the curriculum and instruction with TEKS	93/4
13. Leadership training and development programs and services	96/4
14. Training and assistance to help improve student performance	86/4
15. Training and assistance in using new teaching methods and strategies	89/4
16. Training and assistance in the use of technology	93/4
17. Training and assistance in discipline management and conflict resolution	75/0

PART G: SPECIFIC SERVICES (CONT'D)

STATEMENT	(S+VS)/(D+SD)
18. School board training services	82/7
19. Teacher Certification	86/4
20. Professional/Para-Professional Certifications	86/4
RESC SERVICES 21. Computer network and telecommunication services	89/4
22. Purchasing cooperatives	89/4
23. Services and support for PEIMS	93/4
24. On-line/Distance Learning classes	64/0
25. On-site technical assistance	75/0
26. Video Conferencing	68/0
RESC SERVICES, CONTINUED 27. Lending Library	79/0
28. Best Practices Information	89/0
29. Organizational Links	86/0
30. Demonstrations and Equipment	64/0

PART H: GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. How would you rate the facilities of the RESC in your region? **(Check [✓] one).**

Exceptional	61%
Above average	32
Adequate	7
Needs improvement	0

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MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW OF THE TEXAS REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS "OTHERS"

SURVEY OF SCHOOL DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENTS N = 11

The data in these tables are compiled from surveys on which the RESC number was left blank or was illegible or there was more than one RESC number indicated.

PART B: GENERAL PERCEPTIONS ABOUT SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS (RESCs).

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. Our district frequently utilizes services provided by our RESC.	100/0
2. The services provided by our RESC are critical to the success of our district's programs and operations.	90/10
3. Many of the current RESC services to districts could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by TEA.	18/73
4. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by other sources such as universities or private vendors.	27/64
5. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by allocating the dollars to districts and allowing them to purchase services from the most appropriate sources.	9/73
6. Many of the current RESC services to districts duplicate services provided by TEA.	27/73
7. Many of the services offered by RESCs around the state are critical to the success of many districts.	91/9
8. The RESC in our region is highly efficient and effective.	91/9
9. The RESC role in providing services to districts should be expanded.	55/27
10. The RESC in our region is highly responsive to the service needs of our district.	82/18
11. The RESC in our region provides quality services.	91/9
12. There are adequate channels of communication with the RESC in our region.	82/18
13. The RESC in our region is responsive to complaints.	73/27
14. The RESC in our region is responsive to requests for services.	80/10
15. The RESC in our region listens and tries to meet the needs of the school district.	82/18

PART C: ACCOUNTABILITY

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. TEA should hold each RESC responsible for student performance in all districts within its region.	18/55
2. Each RESC should hold each district in its region responsible for student performance within the district.	36/45
3. Each district Board/Superintendent should hold each school within the district responsible for student performance within the school.	91/0
4. Under the concept of site-based management, only the districts and each school in the district should be held accountable for student performance; the RESCs and TEA should provide services upon demand but not be held accountable.	64/18
5. Each RESC should be held accountable by the districts for providing needed services but not for student performance.	73/9
6. Under the current governance structure, the RESCs are primarily accountable to: ■ the districts within each region	63/25
■ the Commissioner of Education	75/0
■ both the districts and the Commissioner of Education	64/9

PART E: STATEWIDE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. In order to effectively execute its responsibilities, the TEA needs regional offices.	64/18
2. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to provide services to districts.	64/18
3. The RESCs should become more directly linked with TEA and subject to TEA regulations.	45/9
4. The RESCs should be totally independent of TEA.	18/64
5. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to enforce TEA rules and regulations.	45/55
6. The current number of RESC Board members should be expanded to include representatives from more districts.	27/18
7. The current number of 20 RESCs should be: ■ expanded	33/50
■ left as is	70/0
■ reduced	0/33
8. The current policy of having RESC directors appointed by local boards subject to approval by the Commissioner of Education is highly effective.	64/9
9. All RESCs should be abolished.	9/91

PART F: GOVERNANCE AND FUNDING

STATEMENT	(SA+A)/(D+SD)
1. The current method of funding the RESCs to provide services to districts and allowing each RESC to charge the districts for other services is highly effective in meeting the needs of the districts.	64/27
2. All funds for services to districts should be allocated to the districts and allow each district to purchase those services it needs from TEA, a RESC, or other sources.	27/27
3. We understand the governance and oversight structure of the RESC in our region.	73/9
4. There are appropriate levels of oversight for the RESC in our region.	82/9
5. The RESC in our region is adequately funded.	18/36
6. RESCs should continue to be funded by the state.	91/9
7. The amount charged to our district by the RESCs is appropriate for the quality and amount of services provided.	64/27
8. Our district has the funding to purchase the services it needs from a RESC.	64/36

PART G: SPECIFIC SERVICES

STATEMENT	(S+VS)/(D+SD)
SUPPORT FOR REGULAR EDUCATION PROGRAMS 1. Reading and Language Arts	73/9
2. Mathematics	73/9
3. Social Studies	73/9
4. Science	73/9
SUPPORT FOR SPECIAL POPULATION PROGRAMS 5. Special Education	91/9
6. At-risk and compensatory education	82/9
7. Bilingual Education and ESL	82/9
8. Advanced academics (gifted and talented, AP)	73/18
RESC TRAINING 9. Training and assistance for campus planning	73/18
10. PDAS training and support	64/9
11. Training and support for Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)	82/9
12. Training and support for aligning the curriculum and instruction with TEKS	73/9
13. Leadership training and development programs and services	82/9
14. Training and assistance to help improve student performance	82/9
15. Training and assistance in using new teaching methods and strategies	64/9
16. Training and assistance in the use of technology	82/18
17. Training and assistance in discipline management and conflict resolution	55/18

PART G: SPECIFIC SERVICES (CONT'D)

STATEMENT	(S+VS)/(D+SD)
18. School board training services	73/18
19. Teacher Certification	82/0
20. Professional/Para-Professional Certifications	82/0
RESC SERVICES 21. Computer network and telecommunication services	82/9
22. Purchasing cooperatives	55/9
23. Services and support for PEIMS	82/9
24. On-line/Distance Learning classes	64/9
25. On-site technical assistance	64/0
26. Video Conferencing	64/9
RESC SERVICES, CONTINUED 27. Lending Library	36/0
28. Best Practices Information	55/18
29. Organizational Links	64/9
30. Demonstrations and Equipment	45/9

PART H: GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. How would you rate the facilities of the RESC in your region? **(Check [✓] one).**

Exceptional	73%
Above average	0
Adequate	27
Needs improvement	0

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APPENDIX B:

SURVEYS RESULTS OF INDIVIDUAL RESC EMPLOYEES

MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW OF THE TEXAS REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS
RESC I

SURVEY OF REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTER EMPLOYEES
N = 24

PART A: GENERAL PERCEPTIONS ABOUT SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS (RESCs).

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. Most districts in our region frequently utilize services used by our RESC.	100/0
2. The services provided by our RESC are critical to the success of our districts' programs and operations.	100/0
3. Many of the current RESC services to districts could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by TEA.	4/92
4. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by other sources such as universities or private vendors.	0/100
5. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by allocating the dollars to districts and allowing them to purchase services from the most appropriate sources.	0/100
6. Many of the current RESC services to districts duplicate services provided by TEA.	0/100
7. Many of the services offered by RESCs around the state are critical to the success of many districts.	92/0
8. Our RESC is highly efficient and effective.	100/0
9. The RESC role in providing services to districts should be expanded.	100/0
10. Our RESC is highly responsive to the service needs of member districts.	100/0
11. Our RESC provides quality services.	100/0
12. There are adequate channels of communication with school districts in our region.	96/4
13. Our RESC is responsive to complaints.	100/0
14. Our RESC is responsive to requests for services.	100/0
15. Our RESC listens and tries to meet the needs of the school districts.	100/0

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART B: ACCOUNTABILITY

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. TEA should hold each RESC responsible for student performance in all districts within its region.	46/29
2. Each RESC should hold each district in its region responsible for student performance within the district.	67/17
3. Each district Board/Superintendent should hold each school within the district responsible for student performance within the school.	100/0
4. Under the concept of site-based management, only the district and each school in the district should be held accountable for student performance; the RESCs and TEA should provide services on demand but not be held accountable.	33/50
5. Each RESC should be held accountable by the districts for providing needed services but not for student performance.	50/29
6. Under the current governance structure, the RESCs are accountable primarily to: ■ the districts within each region	92/8
■ the Commissioner of Education	93/7
■ both the districts and the Commissioner of Education	95/5

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART D: STATEWIDE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. In order to effectively execute its responsibilities, the TEA needs regional offices.	96/4
2. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to provide services to districts.	96/4
3. The RESCs should become more directly linked with TEA and subject to TEA regulations.	30/26
4. The RESCs should be totally independent of TEA.	4/65
5. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to enforce TEA rules and regulations.	21/58
6a. The current number of RESC Board members is appropriate.	67/4
6b. The current number of RESC Board members should be expanded to include representatives from more districts.	8/46
7. The current number of 20 RESCs should be: ■ expanded	0/81
■ left as is	91/0
■ reduced	7/80
8. The current policy of having RESC directors appointed by local boards subject to approval by the Commissioner of Education is highly effective.	88/0
9. All RESCs should be abolished.	0/100

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART E: GOVERNANCE AND FUNDING

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. The current method of funding the RESCs to provide services to districts and allowing each RESC to charge the districts for other services is highly effective in meeting the needs of the districts.	100/0
2. All funds for services to districts should be allocated to the districts and allow each district to purchase those services that it needs from TEA, a RESC, or other sources.	4/75
3. School districts understand the governance and oversight structure of our RESC.	67/17
4. There are appropriate levels of oversight for our RESC.	87/0
5. Our RESC is adequately funded.	13/67
6. RESCs should continue to be funded by the state.	100/0
7. The amount charged to each district by our RESC is appropriate for the quality and amount of services provided.	83/8
8. Districts have the funding to purchase the services they need from our RESC.	46/46

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART F: SPECIFIC SERVICES

STATEMENT	(%VS+S)/(%D+SD)*
SUPPORT FOR REGULAR EDUCATION PROGRAMS 1. Reading and Language Arts	100/0
2. Mathematics	86/5
3. Social Studies	82/5
4. Science	82/5
SUPPORT FOR SPECIAL POPULATION PROGRAMS 5. Special Education	100/0
6. At-risk and compensatory education	95/0
7. Bilingual Education and ESL	100/0
8. Advanced academics (gifted and talented, AP)	100/0
RESC TRAINING 9. Training and assistance for campus planning	95/0
10. PDAS training and support	100/0
11. Training and support for Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)	100/0
12. Training and support for aligning the curriculum and instruction with TEKS	100/0
13. Leadership training and development programs and services	100/0
14. Training and assistance to help improve student performance	100/0
15. Training and assistance in using new teaching methods and strategies	100/0
16. Training and assistance in the use of technology	100/0
17. Training and assistance in discipline management and conflict resolution	91/0

PART F: SPECIFIC SERVICES (CONT'D)

STATEMENT	(%VS+S)/(%D+SD)*
18. School board training services	96/0
19. Teacher certification	100/0
20. Professional/Para-Professional certifications	91/0
RESC SERVICES 21. Computer network and telecommunication services	96/0
22. Purchasing cooperatives	96/0
23. Services and support for PEIMS	96/0
24. On-line/Distance Learning classes	91/0
25. On-site technical assistance	100/0
26. Video Conferencing	96/0
27. Lending Library	73/0
28. Best Practices Information	100/0
29. Organizational Links	100/0
30. Demonstrations and Equipment	86/0

* Percent responding *Very Satisfied* or *Satisfied* / Percent responding *Dissatisfied* or *Strongly Dissatisfied.*

PART G: WORK ENVIRONMENT

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. I find my RESC to be an exciting, challenging place to work.	100/0
2. RESC officials enforce high work standards.	96/4
3. RESC employees who do not meet expected work standards are disciplined.	75/13
4. I feel that I have the authority to adequately perform my job responsibilities.	96/4
5. I have an up to date and comprehensive job description.	100/0
6. I have adequate facilities in which to conduct my work.	91/4
7. I have adequate equipment and computer support to conduct my work.	92/4
8. No one knows or cares about the amount or quality of work that I perform.	4/92
9. I am very satisfied with my job.	96/0
10. I plan to continue my career in my RESC.	96/0
11. I am actively looking for a job outside of my RESC.	4/88
12. Salary levels at my RESC are competitive.	96/0
13. I feel that my work is appreciated by my supervisor(s).	96/0
14. I feel that I am an integral part of the RESC team.	92/0

PART G: WORK ENVIRONMENT (CONT'D)

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
15. I feel that there is no future for me at the RESC.	4/88
16. My salary level is adequate for my level of work and experience.	88/8
17. Most administrative practices in the RESC are highly effective and efficient.	88/4
18. Administrative decisions are made promptly and decisively.	88/8
19. My RESC administrators are easily accessible and open to input.	88/4
20. Major bottlenecks exist in many administrative processes which cause unnecessary time delays.	13/78
21. My RESC has too many layers of administrators.	17/71
22. Most of RESC administrative processes (e.g., purchasing, travel requests, leave applications, personnel, etc.) are highly efficient and responsive.	79/8

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART H: GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. How would you rate your RESC facilities **(Check [✓] one).**

Exceptional	50%
Above average	46
Adequate	4
Needs improvement	0

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MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW OF THE TEXAS REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS
RESC II

SURVEY OF REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTER EMPLOYEES
N = 29

PART A: GENERAL PERCEPTIONS ABOUT SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS (RESCs).

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. Most districts in our region frequently utilize services used by our RESC.	100/0
2. The services provided by our RESC are critical to the success of our districts' programs and operations.	100/0
3. Many of the current RESC services to districts could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by TEA.	0/93
4. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by other sources such as universities or private vendors.	0/100
5. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by allocating the dollars to districts and allowing them to purchase services from the most appropriate sources.	0/97
6. Many of the current RESC services to districts duplicate services provided by TEA.	0/97
7. Many of the services offered by RESCs around the state are critical to the success of many districts.	97/0
8. Our RESC is highly efficient and effective.	100/0
9. The RESC role in providing services to districts should be expanded.	86/0
10. Our RESC is highly responsive to the service needs of member districts.	100/0
11. Our RESC provides quality services.	100/0
12. There are adequate channels of communication with school districts in our region.	96/4
13. Our RESC is responsive to complaints.	100/0
14. Our RESC is responsive to requests for services.	100/0
15. Our RESC listens and tries to meet the needs of the school districts.	100/0

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART B: ACCOUNTABILITY

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. TEA should hold each RESC responsible for student performance in all districts within its region.	41/41
2. Each RESC should hold each district in its region responsible for student performance within the district.	45/28
3. Each district Board/Superintendent should hold each school within the district responsible for student performance within the school.	90/3
4. Under the concept of site-based management, only the district and each school in the district should be held accountable for student performance; the RESCs and TEA should provide services on demand but not be held accountable.	52/34
5. Each RESC should be held accountable by the districts for providing needed services but not for student performance.	71/21
6. Under the current governance structure, the RESCs are accountable primarily to: ■ the districts within each region	74/16
■ the Commissioner of Education	86/9
■ both the districts and the Commissioner of Education	88/4

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART D: STATEWIDE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. In order to effectively execute its responsibilities, the TEA needs regional offices.	48/48
2. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to provide services to districts.	90/0
3. The RESCs should become more directly linked with TEA and subject to TEA regulations.	7/52
4. The RESCs should be totally independent of TEA.	24/48
5. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to enforce TEA rules and regulations.	14/61
6a. The current number of RESC Board members is appropriate.	79/0
6b. The current number of RESC Board members should be expanded to include representatives from more districts.	0/45
7. The current number of 20 RESCs should be: ■ expanded	16/53
■ left as is	79/7
■ reduced	0/74
8. The current policy of having RESC directors appointed by local boards subject to approval by the Commissioner of Education is highly effective.	93/0
9. All RESCs should be abolished.	0/100

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART E: GOVERNANCE AND FUNDING

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. The current method of funding the RESCs to provide services to districts and allowing each RESC to charge the districts for other services is highly effective in meeting the needs of the districts.	72/17
2. All funds for services to districts should be allocated to the districts and allow each district to purchase those services that it needs from TEA, a RESC, or other sources.	7/86
3. School districts understand the governance and oversight structure of our RESC.	52/38
4. There are appropriate levels of oversight for our RESC.	79/7
5. Our RESC is adequately funded.	7/83
6. RESCs should continue to be funded by the state.	89/0
7. The amount charged to each district by our RESC is appropriate for the quality and amount of services provided.	79/10
8. Districts have the funding to purchase the services they need from our RESC.	14/48

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART F: SPECIFIC SERVICES

STATEMENT	(%VS+S)/(%D+SD)*
SUPPORT FOR REGULAR EDUCATION PROGRAMS 1. Reading and Language Arts	100/0
2. Mathematics	96/0
3. Social Studies	100/0
4. Science	100/0
SUPPORT FOR SPECIAL POPULATION PROGRAMS 5. Special Education	100/0
6. At-risk and compensatory education	88/0
7. Bilingual Education and ESL	96/0
8. Advanced academics (gifted and talented, AP)	100/0
RESC TRAINING 9. Training and assistance for campus planning	92/0
10. PDAS training and support	96/0
11. Training and support for Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)	100/0
12. Training and support for aligning the curriculum and instruction with TEKS	100/0
13. Leadership training and development programs and services	96/0
14. Training and assistance to help improve student performance	96/0
15. Training and assistance in using new teaching methods and strategies	96/0
16. Training and assistance in the use of technology	100/0
17. Training and assistance in discipline management and conflict resolution	88/0

PART F: SPECIFIC SERVICES (CONT'D)

STATEMENT	(%VS+S)/(%D+SD)*
18. School board training services	88/0
19. Teacher certification	100/0
20. Professional/Para-Professional certifications	63/4
RESC SERVICES 21. Computer network and telecommunication services	89/4
22. Purchasing cooperatives	89/4
23. Services and support for PEIMS	85/4
24. On-line/Distance Learning classes	78/0
25. On-site technical assistance	89/4
26. Video Conferencing	88/0
27. Lending Library	67/0
28. Best Practices Information	81/0
29. Organizational Links	72/0
30. Demonstrations and Equipment	76/0

* Percent responding *Very Satisfied* or *Satisfied* / Percent responding *Dissatisfied* or *Strongly Dissatisfied.*

PART G: WORK ENVIRONMENT

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. I find my RESC to be an exciting, challenging place to work.	100/0
2. RESC officials enforce high work standards.	93/4
3. RESC employees who do not meet expected work standards are disciplined.	70/7
4. I feel that I have the authority to adequately perform my job responsibilities.	100/0
5. I have an up to date and comprehensive job description.	93/4
6. I have adequate facilities in which to conduct my work.	100/0
7. I have adequate equipment and computer support to conduct my work.	100/0
8. No one knows or cares about the amount or quality of work that I perform.	7/93
9. I am very satisfied with my job.	100/0
10. I plan to continue my career in my RESC.	89/0
11. I am actively looking for a job outside of my RESC.	4/93
12. Salary levels at my RESC are competitive.	57/21
13. I feel that my work is appreciated by my supervisor(s).	89/4
14. I feel that I am an integral part of the RESC team.	96/0

PART G: WORK ENVIRONMENT (CONT'D)

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
15. I feel that there is no future for me at the RESC.	7/89
16. My salary level is adequate for my level of work and experience.	68/14
17. Most administrative practices in the RESC are highly effective and efficient.	86/7
18. Administrative decisions are made promptly and decisively.	79/14
19. My RESC administrators are easily accessible and open to input.	85/7
20. Major bottlenecks exist in many administrative processes which cause unnecessary time delays.	21/75
21. My RESC has too many layers of administrators.	4/82
22. Most of RESC administrative processes (e.g., purchasing, travel requests, leave applications, personnel, etc.) are highly efficient and responsive.	82/11

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART H: GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. How would you rate your RESC facilities **(Check [✓] one).**

Exceptional	75%
Above average	25
Adequate	0
Needs improvement	0

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MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW OF THE TEXAS REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS
RESC III

SURVEY OF REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTER EMPLOYEES
N = 26

PART A: GENERAL PERCEPTIONS ABOUT SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS (RESCs).

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. Most districts in our region frequently utilize services used by our RESC.	100/0
2. The services provided by our RESC are critical to the success of our districts' programs and operations.	96/4
3. Many of the current RESC services to districts could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by TEA.	0/96
4. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by other sources such as universities or private vendors.	4/88
5. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by allocating the dollars to districts and allowing them to purchase services from the most appropriate sources.	8/85
6. Many of the current RESC services to districts duplicate services provided by TEA.	0/96
7. Many of the services offered by RESCs around the state are critical to the success of many districts.	96/4
8. Our RESC is highly efficient and effective.	88/4
9. The RESC role in providing services to districts should be expanded.	69/4
10. Our RESC is highly responsive to the service needs of member districts.	96/4
11. Our RESC provides quality services.	96/0
12. There are adequate channels of communication with school districts in our region.	88/4
13. Our RESC is responsive to complaints.	100/0
14. Our RESC is responsive to requests for services.	100/0
15. Our RESC listens and tries to meet the needs of the school districts.	100/0

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART B: ACCOUNTABILITY

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. TEA should hold each RESC responsible for student performance in all districts within its region.	35/46
2. Each RESC should hold each district in its region responsible for student performance within the district.	38/42
3. Each district Board/Superintendent should hold each school within the district responsible for student performance within the school.	100/0
4. Under the concept of site-based management, only the district and each school in the district should be held accountable for student performance; the RESCs and TEA should provide services on demand but not be held accountable.	46/19
5. Each RESC should be held accountable by the districts for providing needed services but not for student performance.	58/19
6. Under the current governance structure, the RESCs are accountable primarily to: ■ the districts within each region	71/7
■ the Commissioner of Education	71/7
■ both the districts and the Commissioner of Education	88/4

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART D: STATEWIDE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. In order to effectively execute its responsibilities, the TEA needs regional offices.	44/44
2. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to provide services to districts.	92/0
3. The RESCs should become more directly linked with TEA and subject to TEA regulations.	35/42
4. The RESCs should be totally independent of TEA.	8/69
5. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to enforce TEA rules and regulations.	23/50
6a. The current number of RESC Board members is appropriate.	50/4
6b. The current number of RESC Board members should be expanded to include representatives from more districts.	12/35
7. The current number of 20 RESCs should be: ■ expanded	9/64
■ left as is	84/0
■ reduced	8/67
8. The current policy of having RESC directors appointed by local boards subject to approval by the Commissioner of Education is highly effective.	50/4
9. All RESCs should be abolished.	0/96

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART E: GOVERNANCE AND FUNDING

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. The current method of funding the RESCs to provide services to districts and allowing each RESC to charge the districts for other services is highly effective in meeting the needs of the districts.	73/4
2. All funds for services to districts should be allocated to the districts and allow each district to purchase those services that it needs from TEA, a RESC, or other sources.	8/85
3. School districts understand the governance and oversight structure of our RESC.	62/19
4. There are appropriate levels of oversight for our RESC.	58/0
5. Our RESC is adequately funded.	48/28
6. RESCs should continue to be funded by the state.	92/0
7. The amount charged to each district by our RESC is appropriate for the quality and amount of services provided.	88/8
8. Districts have the funding to purchase the services they need from our RESC.	46/23

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART F: SPECIFIC SERVICES

STATEMENT	(%VS+S)/(%D+SD)*
SUPPORT FOR REGULAR EDUCATION PROGRAMS 1. Reading and Language Arts	92/0
2. Mathematics	92/0
3. Social Studies	92/0
4. Science	92/0
SUPPORT FOR SPECIAL POPULATION PROGRAMS 5. Special Education	96/0
6. At-risk and compensatory education	96/0
7. Bilingual Education and ESL	92/0
8. Advanced academics (gifted and talented, AP)	88/0
RESC TRAINING 9. Training and assistance for campus planning	92/0
10. PDAS training and support	92/0
11. Training and support for Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)	96/0
12. Training and support for aligning the curriculum and instruction with TEKS	92/4
13. Leadership training and development programs and services	92/4
14. Training and assistance to help improve student performance	91/4
15. Training and assistance in using new teaching methods and strategies	92/0
16. Training and assistance in the use of technology	92/4
17. Training and assistance in discipline management and conflict resolution	92/4

PART F: SPECIFIC SERVICES (CONT'D)

STATEMENT	(%VS+S)/(%D+SD)*
18. School board training services	92/0
19. Teacher certification	88/0
20. Professional/Para-Professional certifications	92/0
RESC SERVICES 21. Computer network and telecommunication services	92/0
22. Purchasing cooperatives	84/0
23. Services and support for PEIMS	92/0
24. On-line/Distance Learning classes	84/0
25. On-site technical assistance	92/0
26. Video Conferencing	84/4
27. Lending Library	64/4
28. Best Practices Information	76/0
29. Organizational Links	64/0
30. Demonstrations and Equipment	68/0

* Percent responding *Very Satisfied* or *Satisfied* / Percent responding *Dissatisfied* or *Strongly Dissatisfied.*

PART G: WORK ENVIRONMENT

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. I find my RESC to be an exciting, challenging place to work.	92/4
2. RESC officials enforce high work standards.	96/4
3. RESC employees who do not meet expected work standards are disciplined.	52/8
4. I feel that I have the authority to adequately perform my job responsibilities.	96/4
5. I have an up to date and comprehensive job description.	88/8
6. I have adequate facilities in which to conduct my work.	76/16
7. I have adequate equipment and computer support to conduct my work.	96/0
8. No one knows or cares about the amount or quality of work that I perform.	12/88
9. I am very satisfied with my job.	88/8
10. I plan to continue my career in my RESC.	76/4
11. I am actively looking for a job outside of my RESC.	8/72
12. Salary levels at my RESC are competitive.	28/60
13. I feel that my work is appreciated by my supervisor(s).	80/16
14. I feel that I am an integral part of the RESC team.	88/4

PART G: WORK ENVIRONMENT (CONT'D)

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
15. I feel that there is no future for me at the RESC.	8/92
16. My salary level is adequate for my level of work and experience.	24/60
17. Most administrative practices in the RESC are highly effective and efficient.	76/12
18. Administrative decisions are made promptly and decisively.	68/12
19. My RESC administrators are easily accessible and open to input.	76/16
20. Major bottlenecks exist in many administrative processes which cause unnecessary time delays.	20/72
21. My RESC has too many layers of administrators.	4/76
22. Most of RESC administrative processes (e.g., purchasing, travel requests, leave applications, personnel, etc.) are highly efficient and responsive.	68/16

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART H: GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. How would you rate your RESC facilities **(Check [✓] one).**

Exceptional	4%
Above average	19
Adequate	58
Needs improvement	19

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MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW OF THE TEXAS REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS RESC IV

SURVEY OF REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTER EMPLOYEES N = 31

PART A: GENERAL PERCEPTIONS ABOUT SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS (RESCs).

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. Most districts in our region frequently utilize services used by our RESC.	100/0
2. The services provided by our RESC are critical to the success of our districts' programs and operations.	100/0
3. Many of the current RESC services to districts could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by TEA.	0/97
4. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by other sources such as universities or private vendors.	0/100
5. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by allocating the dollars to districts and allowing them to purchase services from the most appropriate sources.	16/74
6. Many of the current RESC services to districts duplicate services provided by TEA.	0/97
7. Many of the services offered by RESCs around the state are critical to the success of many districts.	100/0
8. Our RESC is highly efficient and effective.	100/0
9. The RESC role in providing services to districts should be expanded.	93/0
10. Our RESC is highly responsive to the service needs of member districts.	100/0
11. Our RESC provides quality services.	100/0
12. There are adequate channels of communication with school districts in our region.	100/0
13. Our RESC is responsive to complaints.	100/0
14. Our RESC is responsive to requests for services.	100/0
15. Our RESC listens and tries to meet the needs of the school districts.	100/0

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART B: ACCOUNTABILITY

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. TEA should hold each RESC responsible for student performance in all districts within its region.	55/31
2. Each RESC should hold each district in its region responsible for student performance within the district.	23/57
3. Each district Board/Superintendent should hold each school within the district responsible for student performance within the school.	97/0
4. Under the concept of site-based management, only the district and each school in the district should be held accountable for student performance; the RESCs and TEA should provide services on demand but not be held accountable.	28/52
5. Each RESC should be held accountable by the districts for providing needed services but not for student performance.	47/40
6. Under the current governance structure, the RESCs are accountable primarily to: ■ the districts within each region	94/6
■ the Commissioner of Education	89/5
■ both the districts and the Commissioner of Education	100/0

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART D: STATEWIDE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. In order to effectively execute its responsibilities, the TEA needs regional offices.	65/26
2. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to provide services to districts.	90/10
3. The RESCs should become more directly linked with TEA and subject to TEA regulations.	16/68
4. The RESCs should be totally independent of TEA.	6/61
5. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to enforce TEA rules and regulations.	13/74
6a. The current number of RESC Board members is appropriate.	71/0
6b. The current number of RESC Board members should be expanded to include representatives from more districts.	3/52
7. The current number of 20 RESCs should be: ■ expanded	10/81
■ left as is	80/3
■ reduced	5/73
8. The current policy of having RESC directors appointed by local boards subject to approval by the Commissioner of Education is highly effective.	81/0
9. All RESCs should be abolished.	0/100

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART E: GOVERNANCE AND FUNDING

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. The current method of funding the RESCs to provide services to districts and allowing each RESC to charge the districts for other services is highly effective in meeting the needs of the districts.	68/29
2. All funds for services to districts should be allocated to the districts and allow each district to purchase those services that it needs from TEA, a RESC, or other sources.	26/65
3. School districts understand the governance and oversight structure of our RESC.	65/19
4. There are appropriate levels of oversight for our RESC.	87/3
5. Our RESC is adequately funded.	16/68
6. RESCs should continue to be funded by the state.	83/10
7. The amount charged to each district by our RESC is appropriate for the quality and amount of services provided.	84/0
8. Districts have the funding to purchase the services they need from our RESC.	52/39

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART F: SPECIFIC SERVICES

STATEMENT	(%VS+S)/(%D+SD)*
SUPPORT FOR REGULAR EDUCATION PROGRAMS 1. Reading and Language Arts	94/0
2. Mathematics	97/0
3. Social Studies	97/0
4. Science	97/0
SUPPORT FOR SPECIAL POPULATION PROGRAMS 5. Special Education	90/0
6. At-risk and compensatory education	87/0
7. Bilingual Education and ESL	93/0
8. Advanced academics (gifted and talented, AP)	97/0
RESC TRAINING 9. Training and assistance for campus planning	87/0
10. PDAS training and support	93/0
11. Training and support for Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)	97/0
12. Training and support for aligning the curriculum and instruction with TEKS	93/0
13. Leadership training and development programs and services	87/0
14. Training and assistance to help improve student performance	97/0
15. Training and assistance in using new teaching methods and strategies	90/0
16. Training and assistance in the use of technology	94/0
17. Training and assistance in discipline management and conflict resolution	83/0

PART F: SPECIFIC SERVICES (CONT'D)

STATEMENT	(%VS+S)/(%D+SD)*
18. School board training services	87/0
19. Teacher certification	93/0
20. Professional/Para-Professional certifications	86/0
RESC SERVICES 21. Computer network and telecommunication services	87/3
22. Purchasing cooperatives	94/0
23. Services and support for PEIMS	90/0
24. On-line/Distance Learning classes	90/0
25. On-site technical assistance	93/0
26. Video Conferencing	94/3
27. Lending Library	87/0
28. Best Practices Information	87/0
29. Organizational Links	89/0
30. Demonstrations and Equipment	83/0

* Percent responding *Very Satisfied* or *Satisfied* / Percent responding *Dissatisfied* or *Strongly Dissatisfied.*

PART G: WORK ENVIRONMENT

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. I find my RESC to be an exciting, challenging place to work.	100/0
2. RESC officials enforce high work standards.	100/0
3. RESC employees who do not meet expected work standards are disciplined.	94/0
4. I feel that I have the authority to adequately perform my job responsibilities.	100/0
5. I have an up to date and comprehensive job description.	87/6
6. I have adequate facilities in which to conduct my work.	97/3
7. I have adequate equipment and computer support to conduct my work.	100/0
8. No one knows or cares about the amount or quality of work that I perform.	0/100
9. I am very satisfied with my job.	100/0
10. I plan to continue my career in my RESC.	100/0
11. I am actively looking for a job outside of my RESC.	3/97
12. Salary levels at my RESC are competitive.	61/23
13. I feel that my work is appreciated by my supervisor(s).	100/0
14. I feel that I am an integral part of the RESC team.	94/3

PART G: WORK ENVIRONMENT (CONT'D)

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
15. I feel that there is no future for me at the RESC.	0/94
16. My salary level is adequate for my level of work and experience.	65/19
17. Most administrative practices in the RESC are highly effective and efficient.	81/6
18. Administrative decisions are made promptly and decisively.	74/6
19. My RESC administrators are easily accessible and open to input.	97/0
20. Major bottlenecks exist in many administrative processes which cause unnecessary time delays.	19/71
21. My RESC has too many layers of administrators.	6/71
22. Most of RESC administrative processes (e.g., purchasing, travel requests, leave applications, personnel, etc.) are highly efficient and responsive.	97/3

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART H: GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. How would you rate your RESC facilities **(Check [✓] one).**

Exceptional	77%
Above average	19
Adequate	3
Needs improvement	0

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MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW OF THE TEXAS REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS
RESC V

SURVEY OF REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTER EMPLOYEES
N = 16

PART A: GENERAL PERCEPTIONS ABOUT SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS (RESCs).

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. Most districts in our region frequently utilize services used by our RESC.	100/0
2. The services provided by our RESC are critical to the success of our districts' programs and operations.	100/0
3. Many of the current RESC services to districts could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by TEA.	0/87
4. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by other sources such as universities or private vendors.	0/100
5. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by allocating the dollars to districts and allowing them to purchase services from the most appropriate sources.	0/94
6. Many of the current RESC services to districts duplicate services provided by TEA.	0/94
7. Many of the services offered by RESCs around the state are critical to the success of many districts.	94/0
8. Our RESC is highly efficient and effective.	94/0
9. The RESC role in providing services to districts should be expanded.	81/6
10. Our RESC is highly responsive to the service needs of member districts.	100/0
11. Our RESC provides quality services.	100/0
12. There are adequate channels of communication with school districts in our region.	100/0
13. Our RESC is responsive to complaints.	100/0
14. Our RESC is responsive to requests for services.	100/0
15. Our RESC listens and tries to meet the needs of the school districts.	100/0

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART B: ACCOUNTABILITY

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. TEA should hold each RESC responsible for student performance in all districts within its region.	19/63
2. Each RESC should hold each district in its region responsible for student performance within the district.	38/38
3. Each district Board/Superintendent should hold each school within the district responsible for student performance within the school.	88/0
4. Under the concept of site-based management, only the district and each school in the district should be held accountable for student performance; the RESCs and TEA should provide services on demand but not be held accountable.	80/13
5. Each RESC should be held accountable by the districts for providing needed services but not for student performance.	88/0
6. Under the current governance structure, the RESCs are accountable primarily to: ■ the districts within each region	90/10
■ the Commissioner of Education	100/0
■ both the districts and the Commissioner of Education	100/0

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART D: STATEWIDE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. In order to effectively execute its responsibilities, the TEA needs regional offices.	75/13
2. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to provide services to districts.	88/0
3. The RESCs should become more directly linked with TEA and subject to TEA regulations.	25/38
4. The RESCs should be totally independent of TEA.	0/67
5. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to enforce TEA rules and regulations.	13/60
6a. The current number of RESC Board members is appropriate.	56/0
6b. The current number of RESC Board members should be expanded to include representatives from more districts.	0/40
7. The current number of 20 RESCs should be: ■ expanded	10/50
■ left as is	86/7
■ reduced	0/70
8. The current policy of having RESC directors appointed by local boards subject to approval by the Commissioner of Education is highly effective.	67/13
9. All RESCs should be abolished.	0/100

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART E: GOVERNANCE AND FUNDING

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. The current method of funding the RESCs to provide services to districts and allowing each RESC to charge the districts for other services is highly effective in meeting the needs of the districts.	80/7
2. All funds for services to districts should be allocated to the districts and allow each district to purchase those services that it needs from TEA, a RESC, or other sources.	13/80
3. School districts understand the governance and oversight structure of our RESC.	38/13
4. There are appropriate levels of oversight for our RESC.	63/0
5. Our RESC is adequately funded.	19/63
6. RESCs should continue to be funded by the state.	93/0
7. The amount charged to each district by our RESC is appropriate for the quality and amount of services provided.	63/19
8. Districts have the funding to purchase the services they need from our RESC.	27/33

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART F: SPECIFIC SERVICES

STATEMENT	(%VS+S)/(%D+SD)*
SUPPORT FOR REGULAR EDUCATION PROGRAMS 1. Reading and Language Arts	86/0
2. Mathematics	86/0
3. Social Studies	57/7
4. Science	71/0
SUPPORT FOR SPECIAL POPULATION PROGRAMS 5. Special Education	100/0
6. At-risk and compensatory education	93/0
7. Bilingual Education and ESL	73/7
8. Advanced academics (gifted and talented, AP)	88/0
RESC TRAINING 9. Training and assistance for campus planning	94/0
10. PDAS training and support	81/0
11. Training and support for Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)	88/0
12. Training and support for aligning the curriculum and instruction with TEKS	94/0
13. Leadership training and development programs and services	69/0
14. Training and assistance to help improve student performance	94/0
15. Training and assistance in using new teaching methods and strategies	88/0
16. Training and assistance in the use of technology	93/0
17. Training and assistance in discipline management and conflict resolution	94/0

PART F: SPECIFIC SERVICES (CONT'D_

STATEMENT	(%VS+S)/(%D+SD)*
18. School board training services	69/0
19. Teacher certification	60/0
20. Professional/Para-Professional certifications	94/0
RESC SERVICES 21. Computer network and telecommunication services	87/0
22. Purchasing cooperatives	75/0
23. Services and support for PEIMS	88/0
24. On-line/Distance Learning classes	80/0
25. On-site technical assistance	94/0
26. Video Conferencing	73/0
27. Lending Library	75/0
28. Best Practices Information	88/0
29. Organizational Links	75/0
30. Demonstrations and Equipment	93/0

* Percent responding *Very Satisfied* or *Satisfied* / Percent responding *Dissatisfied* or *Strongly Dissatisfied.*

PART G: WORK ENVIRONMENT

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. I find my RESC to be an exciting, challenging place to work.	100/0
2. RESC officials enforce high work standards.	88/6
3. RESC employees who do not meet expected work standards are disciplined.	38/25
4. I feel that I have the authority to adequately perform my job responsibilities.	100/0
5. I have an up to date and comprehensive job description.	100/0
6. I have adequate facilities in which to conduct my work.	94/6
7. I have adequate equipment and computer support to conduct my work.	81/13
8. No one knows or cares about the amount or quality of work that I perform.	0/88
9. I am very satisfied with my job.	100/0
10. I plan to continue my career in my RESC.	100/0
11. I am actively looking for a job outside of my RESC.	0/100
12. Salary levels at my RESC are competitive.	31/56
13. I feel that my work is appreciated by my supervisor(s).	88/6
14. I feel that I am an integral part of the RESC team.	88/6

PART G: WORK ENVIRONMENT (CONT'D)

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
15. I feel that there is no future for me at the RESC.	0/100
16. My salary level is adequate for my level of work and experience.	31/63
17. Most administrative practices in the RESC are highly effective and efficient.	69/19
18. Administrative decisions are made promptly and decisively.	63/19
19. My RESC administrators are easily accessible and open to input.	88/6
20. Major bottlenecks exist in many administrative processes which cause unnecessary time delays.	19/69
21. My RESC has too many layers of administrators.	19/75
22. Most of RESC administrative processes (e.g., purchasing, travel requests, leave applications, personnel, etc.) are highly efficient and responsive.	67/7

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART H: GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. How would you rate your RESC facilities **(Check [✓] one).**

Exceptional	25%
Above average	50
Adequate	25
Needs improvement	0

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MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW OF THE TEXAS REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS RESC VI

SURVEY OF REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTER EMPLOYEES N = 32

PART A: GENERAL PERCEPTIONS ABOUT SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS (RESCs).

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. Most districts in our region frequently utilize services used by our RESC.	97/0
2. The services provided by our RESC are critical to the success of our districts' programs and operations.	100/0
3. Many of the current RESC services to districts could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by TEA.	0/100
4. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by other sources such as universities or private vendors.	0/97
5. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by allocating the dollars to districts and allowing them to purchase services from the most appropriate sources.	0/97
6. Many of the current RESC services to districts duplicate services provided by TEA.	0/91
7. Many of the services offered by RESCs around the state are critical to the success of many districts.	100/0
8. Our RESC is highly efficient and effective.	100/0
9. The RESC role in providing services to districts should be expanded.	65/0
10. Our RESC is highly responsive to the service needs of member districts.	100/0
11. Our RESC provides quality services.	100/0
12. There are adequate channels of communication with school districts in our region.	100/0
13. Our RESC is responsive to complaints.	100/0
14. Our RESC is responsive to requests for services.	100/0
15. Our RESC listens and tries to meet the needs of the school districts.	100/0

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART B: ACCOUNTABILITY

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. TEA should hold each RESC responsible for student performance in all districts within its region.	31/53
2. Each RESC should hold each district in its region responsible for student performance within the district.	50/38
3. Each district Board/Superintendent should hold each school within the district responsible for student performance within the school.	94/3
4. Under the concept of site-based management, only the district and each school in the district should be held accountable for student performance; the RESCs and TEA should provide services on demand but not be held accountable.	75/13
5. Each RESC should be held accountable by the districts for providing needed services but not for student performance.	78/22
6. Under the current governance structure, the RESCs are accountable primarily to: ■ the districts within each region	88/4
■ the Commissioner of Education	79/13
■ both the districts and the Commissioner of Education	84/10

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART D: STATEWIDE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. In order to effectively execute its responsibilities, the TEA needs regional offices.	47/47
2. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to provide services to districts.	94/3
3. The RESCs should become more directly linked with TEA and subject to TEA regulations.	16/63
4. The RESCs should be totally independent of TEA.	25/63
5. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to enforce TEA rules and regulations.	31/56
6a. The current number of RESC Board members is appropriate.	63/3
6b. The current number of RESC Board members should be expanded to include representatives from more districts.	6/44
7. The current number of 20 RESCs should be: ■ expanded	4/83
■ left as is	87/3
■ reduced	10/76
8. The current policy of having RESC directors appointed by local boards subject to approval by the Commissioner of Education is highly effective.	94/0
9. All RESCs should be abolished.	0/100

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART E: GOVERNANCE AND FUNDING

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. The current method of funding the RESCs to provide services to districts and allowing each RESC to charge the districts for other services is highly effective in meeting the needs of the districts.	81/13
2. All funds for services to districts should be allocated to the districts and allow each district to purchase those services that it needs from TEA, a RESC, or other sources.	13/81
3. School districts understand the governance and oversight structure of our RESC.	56/16
4. There are appropriate levels of oversight for our RESC.	69/3
5. Our RESC is adequately funded.	22/63
6. RESCs should continue to be funded by the state.	100/0
7. The amount charged to each district by our RESC is appropriate for the quality and amount of services provided.	91/0
8. Districts have the funding to purchase the services they need from our RESC.	28/47

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART F: SPECIFIC SERVICES

STATEMENT	(%VS+S)/(%D+SD)*
SUPPORT FOR REGULAR EDUCATION PROGRAMS 1. Reading and Language Arts	89/0
2. Mathematics	89/0
3. Social Studies	89/0
4. Science	88/0
SUPPORT FOR SPECIAL POPULATION PROGRAMS 5. Special Education	89/0
6. At-risk and compensatory education	82/0
7. Bilingual Education and ESL	89/0
8. Advanced academics (gifted and talented, AP)	89/0
RESC TRAINING 9. Training and assistance for campus planning	96/0
10. PDAS training and support	89/0
11. Training and support for Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)	89/0
12. Training and support for aligning the curriculum and instruction with TEKS	89/0
13. Leadership training and development programs and services	96/0
14. Training and assistance to help improve student performance	93/0
15. Training and assistance in using new teaching methods and strategies	93/0
16. Training and assistance in the use of technology	96/0
17. Training and assistance in discipline management and conflict resolution	93/0

PART F: SPECIFIC SERVICES (CONT'D)

STATEMENT	(%VS+S)/(%D+SD)*
18. School board training services	89/0
19. Teacher certification	89/0
20. Professional/Para-Professional certifications	86/0
RESC SERVICES 21. Computer network and telecommunication services	93/0
22. Purchasing cooperatives	82/0
23. Services and support for PEIMS	93/3
24. On-line/Distance Learning classes	93/0
25. On-site technical assistance	100/0
26. Video Conferencing	96/0
27. Lending Library	89/0
28. Best Practices Information	86/0
29. Organizational Links	79/0
30. Demonstrations and Equipment	86/0

* Percent responding *Very Satisfied* or *Satisfied* / Percent responding *Dissatisfied* or *Strongly Dissatisfied.*

PART G: WORK ENVIRONMENT

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. I find my RESC to be an exciting, challenging place to work.	100/0
2. RESC officials enforce high work standards.	100/0
3. RESC employees who do not meet expected work standards are disciplined.	72/7
4. I feel that I have the authority to adequately perform my job responsibilities.	100/0
5. I have an up to date and comprehensive job description.	97/3
6. I have adequate facilities in which to conduct my work.	100/0
7. I have adequate equipment and computer support to conduct my work.	100/0
8. No one knows or cares about the amount or quality of work that I perform.	7/93
9. I am very satisfied with my job.	100/0
10. I plan to continue my career in my RESC.	100/0
11. I am actively looking for a job outside of my RESC.	10/86
12. Salary levels at my RESC are competitive.	62/38
13. I feel that my work is appreciated by my supervisor(s).	97/3
14. I feel that I am an integral part of the RESC team.	100/0

PART G: WORK ENVIRONMENT (CONT'D)

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
15. I feel that there is no future for me at the RESC.	3/93
16. My salary level is adequate for my level of work and experience.	62/38
17. Most administrative practices in the RESC are highly effective and efficient.	93/0
18. Administrative decisions are made promptly and decisively.	90/3
19. My RESC administrators are easily accessible and open to input.	97/0
20. Major bottlenecks exist in many administrative processes which cause unnecessary time delays.	7/90
21. My RESC has too many layers of administrators.	3/97
22. Most of RESC administrative processes (e.g., purchasing, travel requests, leave applications, personnel, etc.) are highly efficient and responsive.	93/3

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART H: GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. How would you rate your RESC facilities **(Check [✓] one).**

Exceptional	81%
Above average	13
Adequate	6
Needs improvement	

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MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW OF THE TEXAS REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS RESC VII

SURVEY OF REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTER EMPLOYEES N = 28

PART A: GENERAL PERCEPTIONS ABOUT SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS (RESCs).

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. Most districts in our region frequently utilize services used by our RESC.	100/0
2. The services provided by our RESC are critical to the success of our districts' programs and operations.	100/0
3. Many of the current RESC services to districts could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by TEA.	7/93
4. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by other sources such as universities or private vendors.	0/96
5. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by allocating the dollars to districts and allowing them to purchase services from the most appropriate sources.	0/100
6. Many of the current RESC services to districts duplicate services provided by TEA.	0/100
7. Many of the services offered by RESCs around the state are critical to the success of many districts.	96/0
8. Our RESC is highly efficient and effective.	93/4
9. The RESC role in providing services to districts should be expanded.	75/7
10. Our RESC is highly responsive to the service needs of member districts.	96/0
11. Our RESC provides quality services.	96/0
12. There are adequate channels of communication with school districts in our region.	96/0
13. Our RESC is responsive to complaints.	96/0
14. Our RESC is responsive to requests for services.	100/0
15. Our RESC listens and tries to meet the needs of the school districts.	100/0

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART B: ACCOUNTABILITY

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. TEA should hold each RESC responsible for student performance in all districts within its region.	32/57
2. Each RESC should hold each district in its region responsible for student performance within the district.	32/54
3. Each district Board/Superintendent should hold each school within the district responsible for student performance within the school.	96/0
4. Under the concept of site-based management, only the district and each school in the district should be held accountable for student performance; the RESCs and TEA should provide services on demand but not be held accountable.	61/32
5. Each RESC should be held accountable by the districts for providing needed services but not for student performance.	57/39
6. Under the current governance structure, the RESCs are accountable primarily to: ■ the districts within each region	78/11
■ the Commissioner of Education	67/22
■ both the districts and the Commissioner of Education	86/7

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART D: STATEWIDE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. In order to effectively execute its responsibilities, the TEA needs regional offices.	33/59
2. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to provide services to districts.	100/0
3. The RESCs should become more directly linked with TEA and subject to TEA regulations.	52/30
4. The RESCs should be totally independent of TEA.	4/86
5. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to enforce TEA rules and regulations.	7/82
6a. The current number of RESC Board members is appropriate.	75/0
6b. The current number of RESC Board members should be expanded to include representatives from more districts.	0/75
7. The current number of 20 RESCs should be: ■ expanded	0/88
■ left as is	96/0
■ reduced	0/100
8. The current policy of having RESC directors appointed by local boards subject to approval by the Commissioner of Education is highly effective.	81/0
9. All RESCs should be abolished.	0/100

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART E: GOVERNANCE AND FUNDING

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. The current method of funding the RESCs to provide services to districts and allowing each RESC to charge the districts for other services is highly effective in meeting the needs of the districts.	75/18
2. All funds for services to districts should be allocated to the districts and allow each district to purchase those services that it needs from TEA, a RESC, or other sources.	7/86
3. School districts understand the governance and oversight structure of our RESC.	61/29
4. There are appropriate levels of oversight for our RESC.	78/0
5. Our RESC is adequately funded.	4/89
6. RESCs should continue to be funded by the state.	100/0
7. The amount charged to each district by our RESC is appropriate for the quality and amount of services provided.	85/4
8. Districts have the funding to purchase the services they need from our RESC.	32/36

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree*

PART F: SPECIFIC SERVICES

STATEMENT	(%VS+S)/(%D+SD)*
SUPPORT FOR REGULAR EDUCATION PROGRAMS 1. Reading and Language Arts	86/4
2. Mathematics	93/0
3. Social Studies	86/0
4. Science	89/0
SUPPORT FOR SPECIAL POPULATION PROGRAMS 5. Special Education	96/0
6. At-risk and compensatory education	93/0
7. Bilingual Education and ESL	82/0
8. Advanced academics (gifted and talented, AP)	86/0
RESC TRAINING 9. Training and assistance for campus planning	82/0
10. PDAS training and support	86/0
11. Training and support for Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)	96/0
12. Training and support for aligning the curriculum and instruction with TEKS	96/0
13. Leadership training and development programs and services	93/0
14. Training and assistance to help improve student performance	93/0
15. Training and assistance in using new teaching methods and strategies	93/0
16. Training and assistance in the use of technology	93/0
17. Training and assistance in discipline management and conflict resolution	86/0

PART F: SPECIFIC SERVICES (CONT'D)

STATEMENT	(%VS+S)/(%D+SD)*
18. School board training services	86/0
19. Teacher certification	89/0
20. Professional/Para-Professional certifications	89/0
RESC SERVICES 21. Computer network and telecommunication services	86/4
22. Purchasing cooperatives	89/0
23. Services and support for PEIMS	85/0
24. On-line/Distance Learning classes	89/0
25. On-site technical assistance	93/0
26. Video Conferencing	93/0
27. Lending Library	82/0
28. Best Practices Information	86/0
29. Organizational Links	82/0
30. Demonstrations and Equipment	82/0

* Percent responding *Very Satisfied* or *Satisfied* / Percent responding *Dissatisfied* or *Strongly Dissatisfied.*

PART G: WORK ENVIRONMENT

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. I find my RESC to be an exciting, challenging place to work.	89/11
2. RESC officials enforce high work standards.	93/0
3. RESC employees who do not meet expected work standards are disciplined.	79/0
4. I feel that I have the authority to adequately perform my job responsibilities.	93/7
5. I have an up to date and comprehensive job description.	96/0
6. I have adequate facilities in which to conduct my work.	89/0
7. I have adequate equipment and computer support to conduct my work.	93/4
8. No one knows or cares about the amount or quality of work that I perform.	0/93
9. I am very satisfied with my job.	93/4
10. I plan to continue my career in my RESC.	89/4
11. I am actively looking for a job outside of my RESC.	11/86
12. Salary levels at my RESC are competitive.	32/21
13. I feel that my work is appreciated by my supervisor(s).	93/7
14. I feel that I am an integral part of the RESC team.	93/4

PART G: WORK ENVIRONMENT (CONT'D)

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
15. I feel that there is no future for me at the RESC.	4/86
16. My salary level is adequate for my level of work and experience.	64/14
17. Most administrative practices in the RESC are highly effective and efficient.	86/11
18. Administrative decisions are made promptly and decisively.	82/11
19. My RESC administrators are easily accessible and open to input.	86/14
20. Major bottlenecks exist in many administrative processes which cause unnecessary time delays.	18/71
21. My RESC has too many layers of administrators.	4/86
22. Most of RESC administrative processes (e.g., purchasing, travel requests, leave applications, personnel, etc.) are highly efficient and responsive.	89/4

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART H: GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. How would you rate your RESC facilities **(Check [✓] one).**

Exceptional	81%
Above average	15
Adequate	4
Needs improvement	0

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MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW OF THE TEXAS REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS
RESC VIII

SURVEY OF REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTER EMPLOYEES
N = 41

PART A: GENERAL PERCEPTIONS ABOUT SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS (RESCs).

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. Most districts in our region frequently utilize services used by our RESC.	100/0
2. The services provided by our RESC are critical to the success of our districts' programs and operations.	100/0
3. Many of the current RESC services to districts could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by TEA.	0/95
4. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by other sources such as universities or private vendors.	0/98
5. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by allocating the dollars to districts and allowing them to purchase services from the most appropriate sources.	0/95
6. Many of the current RESC services to districts duplicate services provided by TEA.	0/93
7. Many of the services offered by RESCs around the state are critical to the success of many districts.	100/0
8. Our RESC is highly efficient and effective.	100/0
9. The RESC role in providing services to districts should be expanded.	78/3
10. Our RESC is highly responsive to the service needs of member districts.	100/0
11. Our RESC provides quality services.	100/0
12. There are adequate channels of communication with school districts in our region.	100/0
13. Our RESC is responsive to complaints.	98/0
14. Our RESC is responsive to requests for services.	100/0
15. Our RESC listens and tries to meet the needs of the school districts.	100/0

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART B: ACCOUNTABILITY

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. TEA should hold each RESC responsible for student performance in all districts within its region.	24/51
2. Each RESC should hold each district in its region responsible for student performance within the district.	56/34
3. Each district Board/Superintendent should hold each school within the district responsible for student performance within the school.	90/0
4. Under the concept of site-based management, only the district and each school in the district should be held accountable for student performance; the RESCs and TEA should provide services on demand but not be held accountable.	51/34
5. Each RESC should be held accountable by the districts for providing needed services but not for student performance.	63/23
6. Under the current governance structure, the RESCs are accountable primarily to: ■ the districts within each region	81/8
■ the Commissioner of Education	77/8
■ both the districts and the Commissioner of Education	95/0

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART D: STATEWIDE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. In order to effectively execute its responsibilities, the TEA needs regional offices.	59/27
2. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to provide services to districts.	90/0
3. The RESCs should become more directly linked with TEA and subject to TEA regulations.	20/44
4. The RESCs should be totally independent of TEA.	23/65
5. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to enforce TEA rules and regulations.	39/44
6a. The current number of RESC Board members is appropriate.	90/2
6b. The current number of RESC Board members should be expanded to include representatives from more districts.	8/59
7. The current number of 20 RESCs should be: ■ expanded	4/61
■ left as is	98/0
■ reduced	4/79
8. The current policy of having RESC directors appointed by local boards subject to approval by the Commissioner of Education is highly effective.	88/2
9. All RESCs should be abolished.	0/95

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART E: GOVERNANCE AND FUNDING

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. The current method of funding the RESCs to provide services to districts and allowing each RESC to charge the districts for other services is highly effective in meeting the needs of the districts.	80/10
2. All funds for services to districts should be allocated to the districts and allow each district to purchase those services that it needs from TEA, a RESC, or other sources.	7/88
3. School districts understand the governance and oversight structure of our RESC.	60/18
4. There are appropriate levels of oversight for our RESC.	74/10
5. Our RESC is adequately funded.	18/55
6. RESCs should continue to be funded by the state.	95/2
7. The amount charged to each district by our RESC is appropriate for the quality and amount of services provided.	66/22
8. Districts have the funding to purchase the services they need from our RESC.	43/40

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART F: SPECIFIC SERVICES

STATEMENT	(%VS+S)/(%D+SD)*
SUPPORT FOR REGULAR EDUCATION PROGRAMS 1. Reading and Language Arts	90/0
2. Mathematics	93/0
3. Social Studies	90/0
4. Science	93/0
SUPPORT FOR SPECIAL POPULATION PROGRAMS 5. Special Education	90/0
6. At-risk and compensatory education	90/0
7. Bilingual Education and ESL	93/0
8. Advanced academics (gifted and talented, AP)	90/0
RESC TRAINING 9. Training and assistance for campus planning	90/0
10. PDAS training and support	90/0
11. Training and support for Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)	93/0
12. Training and support for aligning the curriculum and instruction with TEKS	93/0
13. Leadership training and development programs and services	90/0
14. Training and assistance to help improve student performance	93/0
15. Training and assistance in using new teaching methods and strategies	90/0
16. Training and assistance in the use of technology	88/0
17. Training and assistance in discipline management and conflict resolution	90/0

PART F: SPECIFIC SERVICES (CONT'D)

STATEMENT	(%VS+S)/(%D+SD)*
18. School board training services	93/0
19. Teacher certification	76/0
20. Professional/Para-Professional certifications	85/0
RESC SERVICES 21. Computer network and telecommunication services	93/0
22. Purchasing cooperatives	95/0
23. Services and support for PEIMS	93/0
24. On-line/Distance Learning classes	90/0
25. On-site technical assistance	93/0
26. Video Conferencing	93/0
27. Lending Library	80/0
28. Best Practices Information	88/0
29. Organizational Links	95/0
30. Demonstrations and Equipment	85/10

* Percent responding *Very Satisfied* or *Satisfied* / Percent responding *Dissatisfied* or *Strongly Dissatisfied.*

PART G: WORK ENVIRONMENT

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. I find my RESC to be an exciting, challenging place to work.	100/0
2. RESC officials enforce high work standards.	100/0
3. RESC employees who do not meet expected work standards are disciplined.	85/3
4. I feel that I have the authority to adequately perform my job responsibilities.	100/0
5. I have an up to date and comprehensive job description.	100/0
6. I have adequate facilities in which to conduct my work.	95/5
7. I have adequate equipment and computer support to conduct my work.	100/0
8. No one knows or cares about the amount or quality of work that I perform.	2/98
9. I am very satisfied with my job.	100/0
10. I plan to continue my career in my RESC.	95/2
11. I am actively looking for a job outside of my RESC.	0/98
12. Salary levels at my RESC are competitive.	73/15
13. I feel that my work is appreciated by my supervisor(s).	100/0
14. I feel that I am an integral part of the RESC team.	100/0

PART G: WORK ENVIRONMENT (CONT'D)

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
15. I feel that there is no future for me at the RESC.	2/95
16. My salary level is adequate for my level of work and experience.	83/15
17. Most administrative practices in the RESC are highly effective and efficient.	95/0
18. Administrative decisions are made promptly and decisively.	98/0
19. My RESC administrators are easily accessible and open to input.	100/0
20. Major bottlenecks exist in many administrative processes which cause unnecessary time delays.	5/95
21. My RESC has too many layers of administrators.	5/95
22. Most of RESC administrative processes (e.g., purchasing, travel requests, leave applications, personnel, etc.) are highly efficient and responsive.	100/0

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART H: GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. How would you rate your RESC facilities **(Check [✓] one).**

Exceptional	63%
Above average	30
Adequate	8
Needs improvement	0

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MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW OF THE TEXAS REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS
RESC IX

SURVEY OF REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTER EMPLOYEES
N = 27

PART A: GENERAL PERCEPTIONS ABOUT SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS (RESCs).

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. Most districts in our region frequently utilize services used by our RESC.	100/0
2. The services provided by our RESC are critical to the success of our districts' programs and operations.	100/0
3. Many of the current RESC services to districts could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by TEA.	0/96
4. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by other sources such as universities or private vendors.	0/100
5. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by allocating the dollars to districts and allowing them to purchase services from the most appropriate sources.	0/96
6. Many of the current RESC services to districts duplicate services provided by TEA.	0/100
7. Many of the services offered by RESCs around the state are critical to the success of many districts.	96/0
8. Our RESC is highly efficient and effective.	100/0
9. The RESC role in providing services to districts should be expanded.	56/0
10. Our RESC is highly responsive to the service needs of member districts.	100/0
11. Our RESC provides quality services.	100/0
12. There are adequate channels of communication with school districts in our region.	100/0
13. Our RESC is responsive to complaints.	96/0
14. Our RESC is responsive to requests for services.	100/0
15. Our RESC listens and tries to meet the needs of the school districts.	100/0

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART B: ACCOUNTABILITY

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. TEA should hold each RESC responsible for student performance in all districts within its region.	22/59
2. Each RESC should hold each district in its region responsible for student performance within the district.	30/41
3. Each district Board/Superintendent should hold each school within the district responsible for student performance within the school.	96/4
4. Under the concept of site-based management, only the district and each school in the district should be held accountable for student performance; the RESCs and TEA should provide services on demand but not be held accountable.	70/19
5. Each RESC should be held accountable by the districts for providing needed services but not for student performance.	81/11
6. Under the current governance structure, the RESCs are accountable primarily to: ■ the districts within each region	46/38
■ the Commissioner of Education	74/21
■ both the districts and the Commissioner of Education	89/0

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART D: STATEWIDE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. In order to effectively execute its responsibilities, the TEA needs regional offices.	70/22
2. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to provide services to districts.	100/0
3. The RESCs should become more directly linked with TEA and subject to TEA regulations.	12/54
4. The RESCs should be totally independent of TEA.	4/74
5. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to enforce TEA rules and regulations.	4/73
6a. The current number of RESC Board members is appropriate.	85/0
6b. The current number of RESC Board members should be expanded to include representatives from more districts.	0/48
7. The current number of 20 RESCs should be: ■ expanded	12/53
■ left as is	96/0
■ reduced	0/87
8. The current policy of having RESC directors appointed by local boards subject to approval by the Commissioner of Education is highly effective.	78/7
9. All RESCs should be abolished.	0/100

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART E: GOVERNANCE AND FUNDING

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. The current method of funding the RESCs to provide services to districts and allowing each RESC to charge the districts for other services is highly effective in meeting the needs of the districts.	89/4
2. All funds for services to districts should be allocated to the districts and allow each district to purchase those services that it needs from TEA, a RESC, or other sources.	0/89
3. School districts understand the governance and oversight structure of our RESC.	73/8
4. There are appropriate levels of oversight for our RESC.	85/0
5. Our RESC is adequately funded.	48/33
6. RESCs should continue to be funded by the state.	96/4
7. The amount charged to each district by our RESC is appropriate for the quality and amount of services provided.	96/0
8. Districts have the funding to purchase the services they need from our RESC.	44/33

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART F: SPECIFIC SERVICES

STATEMENT	(%VS+S)/(%D+SD)*
SUPPORT FOR REGULAR EDUCATION PROGRAMS 1. Reading and Language Arts	85/0
2. Mathematics	78/0
3. Social Studies	85/0
4. Science	81/0
SUPPORT FOR SPECIAL POPULATION PROGRAMS 5. Special Education	85/0
6. At-risk and compensatory education	85/0
7. Bilingual Education and ESL	85/0
8. Advanced academics (gifted and talented, AP)	85/0
RESC TRAINING 9. Training and assistance for campus planning	81/0
10. PDAS training and support	89/0
11. Training and support for Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)	85/0
12. Training and support for aligning the curriculum and instruction with TEKS	85/0
13. Leadership training and development programs and services	85/0
14. Training and assistance to help improve student performance	85/0
15. Training and assistance in using new teaching methods and strategies	85/0
16. Training and assistance in the use of technology	93/0
17. Training and assistance in discipline management and conflict resolution	78/0

PART F: SPECIFIC SERVICES (CONT'D)

STATEMENT	(%VS+S)/(%D+SD)*
18. School board training services	85/0
19. Teacher certification	59/0
20. Professional/Para-Professional certifications	85/0
RESC SERVICES 21. Computer network and telecommunication services	92/0
22. Purchasing cooperatives	89/0
23. Services and support for PEIMS	85/0
24. On-line/Distance Learning classes	96/0
25. On-site technical assistance	96/0
26. Video Conferencing	81/0
27. Lending Library	81/0
28. Best Practices Information	85/0
29. Organizational Links	89/0
30. Demonstrations and Equipment	96/0

* Percent responding *Very Satisfied* or *Satisfied* / Percent responding *Dissatisfied* or *Strongly Dissatisfied.*

PART G: WORK ENVIRONMENT

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. I find my RESC to be an exciting, challenging place to work.	100/0
2. RESC officials enforce high work standards.	100/0
3. RESC employees who do not meet expected work standards are disciplined.	93/0
4. I feel that I have the authority to adequately perform my job responsibilities.	100/0
5. I have an up to date and comprehensive job description.	100/0
6. I have adequate facilities in which to conduct my work.	96/4
7. I have adequate equipment and computer support to conduct my work.	96/4
8. No one knows or cares about the amount or quality of work that I perform.	4/96
9. I am very satisfied with my job.	100/0
10. I plan to continue my career in my RESC.	96/4
11. I am actively looking for a job outside of my RESC.	4/96
12. Salary levels at my RESC are competitive.	74/19
13. I feel that my work is appreciated by my supervisor(s).	100/0
14. I feel that I am an integral part of the RESC team.	96/4

PART G: WORK ENVIRONMENT (CONT'D)

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
15. I feel that there is no future for me at the RESC.	4/96
16. My salary level is adequate for my level of work and experience.	78/22
17. Most administrative practices in the RESC are highly effective and efficient.	96/4
18. Administrative decisions are made promptly and decisively.	96/4
19. My RESC administrators are easily accessible and open to input.	93/4
20. Major bottlenecks exist in many administrative processes which cause unnecessary time delays.	0/93
21. My RESC has too many layers of administrators.	0/89
22. Most of RESC administrative processes (e.g., purchasing, travel requests, leave applications, personnel, etc.) are highly efficient and responsive.	93/4

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART H: GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. How would you rate your RESC facilities **(Check [✓] one).**

Exceptional	59%
Above average	37
Adequate	4
Needs improvement	0

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MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW OF THE TEXAS REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS
RESC X

SURVEY OF REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTER EMPLOYEES
N = 34

PART A: GENERAL PERCEPTIONS ABOUT SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS (RESCs).

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. Most districts in our region frequently utilize services used by our RESC.	100/0
2. The services provided by our RESC are critical to the success of our districts' programs and operations.	100/0
3. Many of the current RESC services to districts could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by TEA.	0/94
4. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by other sources such as universities or private vendors.	0/97
5. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by allocating the dollars to districts and allowing them to purchase services from the most appropriate sources.	3/94
6. Many of the current RESC services to districts duplicate services provided by TEA.	0/97
7. Many of the services offered by RESCs around the state are critical to the success of many districts.	94/0
8. Our RESC is highly efficient and effective.	100/0
9. The RESC role in providing services to districts should be expanded.	91/3
10. Our RESC is highly responsive to the service needs of member districts.	100/0
11. Our RESC provides quality services.	100/0
12. There are adequate channels of communication with school districts in our region.	94/6
13. Our RESC is responsive to complaints.	97/0
14. Our RESC is responsive to requests for services.	100/0
15. Our RESC listens and tries to meet the needs of the school districts.	100/0

*Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART B: ACCOUNTABILITY

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. TEA should hold each RESC responsible for student performance in all districts within its region.	31/50
2. Each RESC should hold each district in its region responsible for student performance within the district.	36/39
3. Each district Board/Superintendent should hold each school within the district responsible for student performance within the school.	88/6
4. Under the concept of site-based management, only the district and each school in the district should be held accountable for student performance; the RESCs and TEA should provide services on demand but not be held accountable.	61/24
5. Each RESC should be held accountable by the districts for providing needed services but not for student performance.	70/18
6. Under the current governance structure, the RESCs are accountable primarily to: ■ the districts within each region	76/14
■ the Commissioner of Education	70/4
■ both the districts and the Commissioner of Education	74/6

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART D: STATEWIDE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. In order to effectively execute its responsibilities, the TEA needs regional offices.	59/25
2. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to provide services to districts.	91/6
3. The RESCs should become more directly linked with TEA and subject to TEA regulations.	25/47
4. The RESCs should be totally independent of TEA.	13/66
5. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to enforce TEA rules and regulations.	29/52
6a. The current number of RESC Board members is appropriate.	52/9
6b. The current number of RESC Board members should be expanded to include representatives from more districts.	18/18
7. The current number of 20 RESCs should be: ■ expanded	11/54
■ left as is	83/0
■ reduced	0/75
8. The current policy of having RESC directors appointed by local boards subject to approval by the Commissioner of Education is highly effective.	41/25
9. All RESCs should be abolished.	0/100

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART E: GOVERNANCE AND FUNDING

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. The current method of funding the RESCs to provide services to districts and allowing each RESC to charge the districts for other services is highly effective in meeting the needs of the districts.	70/15
2. All funds for services to districts should be allocated to the districts and allow each district to purchase those services that it needs from TEA, a RESC, or other sources.	9/82
3. School districts understand the governance and oversight structure of our RESC.	50/22
4. There are appropriate levels of oversight for our RESC.	82/3
5. Our RESC is adequately funded.	18/61
6. RESCs should continue to be funded by the state.	91/3
7. The amount charged to each district by our RESC is appropriate for the quality and amount of services provided.	64/18
8. Districts have the funding to purchase the services they need from our RESC.	47/25

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART F: SPECIFIC SERVICES

STATEMENT	(%VS+S)/(%D+SD)*
SUPPORT FOR REGULAR EDUCATION PROGRAMS 1. Reading and Language Arts	85/3
2. Mathematics	85/3
3. Social Studies	76/3
4. Science	74/3
SUPPORT FOR SPECIAL POPULATION PROGRAMS 5. Special Education	82/3
6. At-risk and compensatory education	74/0
7. Bilingual Education and ESL	82/0
8. Advanced academics (gifted and talented, AP)	79/3
RESC TRAINING 9. Training and assistance for campus planning	76/0
10. PDAS training and support	85/0
11. Training and support for Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)	88/0
12. Training and support for aligning the curriculum and instruction with TEKS	91/0
13. Leadership training and development programs and services	82/0
14. Training and assistance to help improve student performance	88/0
15. Training and assistance in using new teaching methods and strategies	88/0
16. Training and assistance in the use of technology	84/0
17. Training and assistance in discipline management and conflict resolution	76/0

PART F: SPECIFIC SERVICES (CONT'D)

STATEMENT	(%VS+S)/(%D+SD)*
18. School board training services	64/0
19. Teacher certification	82/0
20. Professional/Para-Professional certifications	76/3
RESC SERVICES 21. Computer network and telecommunication services	88/0
22. Purchasing cooperatives	88/0
23. Services and support for PEIMS	85/3
24. On-line/Distance Learning classes	79/3
25. On-site technical assistance	88/0
26. Video Conferencing	91/0
27. Lending Library	27/6
28. Best Practices Information	85/0
29. Organizational Links	67/0
30. Demonstrations and Equipment	70/0

* Percent responding *Very Satisfied* or *Satisfied* / Percent responding *Dissatisfied* or *Strongly Dissatisfied.*

PART G: WORK ENVIRONMENT

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. I find my RESC to be an exciting, challenging place to work.	94/3
2. RESC officials enforce high work standards.	97/0
3. RESC employees who do not meet expected work standards are disciplined.	65/6
4. I feel that I have the authority to adequately perform my job responsibilities.	94/0
5. I have an up to date and comprehensive job description.	100/0
6. I have adequate facilities in which to conduct my work.	100/0
7. I have adequate equipment and computer support to conduct my work.	100/0
8. No one knows or cares about the amount or quality of work that I perform.	0/100
9. I am very satisfied with my job.	91/6
10. I plan to continue my career in my RESC.	91/6
11. I am actively looking for a job outside of my RESC.	6/88
12. Salary levels at my RESC are competitive.	74/15
13. I feel that my work is appreciated by my supervisor(s).	100/0
14. I feel that I am an integral part of the RESC team.	97/0

PART G: WORK ENVIRONMENT (CONT'D)

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
15. I feel that there is no future for me at the RESC.	6/88
16. My salary level is adequate for my level of work and experience.	65/21
17. Most administrative practices in the RESC are highly effective and efficient.	79/6
18. Administrative decisions are made promptly and decisively.	91/6
19. My RESC administrators are easily accessible and open to input.	94/6
20. Major bottlenecks exist in many administrative processes which cause unnecessary time delays.	3/82
21. My RESC has too many layers of administrators.	12/76
22. Most of RESC administrative processes (e.g., purchasing, travel requests, leave applications, personnel, etc.) are highly efficient and responsive.	82/6

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART H: GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. How would you rate your RESC facilities **(Check [✓] one).**

Exceptional	56%
Above average	35
Adequate	6
Needs improvement	3

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MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW OF THE TEXAS REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS RESC XI

SURVEY OF REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTER EMPLOYEES N = 28

PART A: GENERAL PERCEPTIONS ABOUT SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS (RESCs).

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. Most districts in our region frequently utilize services used by our RESC.	96/4
2. The services provided by our RESC are critical to the success of our districts' programs and operations.	96/4
3. Many of the current RESC services to districts could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by TEA.	0/89
4. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by other sources such as universities or private vendors.	0/96
5. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by allocating the dollars to districts and allowing them to purchase services from the most appropriate sources.	4/89
6. Many of the current RESC services to districts duplicate services provided by TEA.	0/96
7. Many of the services offered by RESCs around the state are critical to the success of many districts.	100/0
8. Our RESC is highly efficient and effective.	93/7
9. The RESC role in providing services to districts should be expanded.	68/4
10. Our RESC is highly responsive to the service needs of member districts.	96/4
11. Our RESC provides quality services.	100/0
12. There are adequate channels of communication with school districts in our region.	82/7
13. Our RESC is responsive to complaints.	93/0
14. Our RESC is responsive to requests for services.	96/0
15. Our RESC listens and tries to meet the needs of the school districts.	96/0

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART B: ACCOUNTABILITY

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. TEA should hold each RESC responsible for student performance in all districts within its region.	36/39
2. Each RESC should hold each district in its region responsible for student performance within the district.	29/46
3. Each district Board/Superintendent should hold each school within the district responsible for student performance within the school.	79/0
4. Under the concept of site-based management, only the district and each school in the district should be held accountable for student performance; the RESCs and TEA should provide services on demand but not be held accountable.	50/36
5. Each RESC should be held accountable by the districts for providing needed services but not for student performance.	54/36
6. Under the current governance structure, the RESCs are accountable primarily to: ■ the districts within each region	87/7
■ the Commissioner of Education	81/6
■ both the districts and the Commissioner of Education	96/0

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART D: STATEWIDE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. In order to effectively execute its responsibilities, the TEA needs regional offices.	44/41
2. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to provide services to districts.	93/0
3. The RESCs should become more directly linked with TEA and subject to TEA regulations.	41/30
4. The RESCs should be totally independent of TEA.	0/81
5. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to enforce TEA rules and regulations.	25/64
6a. The current number of RESC Board members is appropriate.	50/0
6b. The current number of RESC Board members should be expanded to include representatives from more districts.	7/43
7. The current number of 20 RESCs should be: ■ expanded	31/46
■ left as is	84/0
■ reduced	17/67
8. The current policy of having RESC directors appointed by local boards subject to approval by the Commissioner of Education is highly effective.	54/14
9. All RESCs should be abolished.	0/100

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART E: GOVERNANCE AND FUNDING

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. The current method of funding the RESCs to provide services to districts and allowing each RESC to charge the districts for other services is highly effective in meeting the needs of the districts.	50/43
2. All funds for services to districts should be allocated to the districts and allow each district to purchase those services that it needs from TEA, a RESC, or other sources.	4/85
3. School districts understand the governance and oversight structure of our RESC.	32/43
4. There are appropriate levels of oversight for our RESC.	56/7
5. Our RESC is adequately funded.	4/93
6. RESCs should continue to be funded by the state.	89/0
7. The amount charged to each district by our RESC is appropriate for the quality and amount of services provided.	71/14
8. Districts have the funding to purchase the services they need from our RESC.	32/46

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART F: SPECIFIC SERVICES

STATEMENT	(%VS+S)/(%D+SD)*
SUPPORT FOR REGULAR EDUCATION PROGRAMS 1. Reading and Language Arts	96/0
2. Mathematics	96/0
3. Social Studies	96/0
4. Science	96/0
SUPPORT FOR SPECIAL POPULATION PROGRAMS 5. Special Education	100/0
6. At-risk and compensatory education	96/0
7. Bilingual Education and ESL	93/7
8. Advanced academics (gifted and talented, AP)	86/7
RESC TRAINING 9. Training and assistance for campus planning	82/11
10. PDAS training and support	86/0
11. Training and support for Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)	100/0
12. Training and support for aligning the curriculum and instruction with TEKS	89/7
13. Leadership training and development programs and services	86/7
14. Training and assistance to help improve student performance	89/0
15. Training and assistance in using new teaching methods and strategies	96/0
16. Training and assistance in the use of technology	93/0
17. Training and assistance in discipline management and conflict resolution	96/0

PART F: SPECIFIC SERVICES (CONT'D)

STATEMENT	(%VS+S)/(%D+SD)*
18. School board training services	79/0
19. Teacher certification	96/0
20. Professional/Para-Professional certifications	81/0
RESC SERVICES 21. Computer network and telecommunication services	86/4
22. Purchasing cooperatives	68/4
23. Services and support for PEIMS	89/0
24. On-line/Distance Learning classes	89/0
25. On-site technical assistance	89/0
26. Video Conferencing	93/0
27. Lending Library	79/4
28. Best Practices Information	86/0
29. Organizational Links	70/0
30. Demonstrations and Equipment	75/7

* Percent responding *Very Satisfied* or *Satisfied* / Percent responding *Dissatisfied* or *Strongly Dissatisfied.*

PART G: WORK ENVIRONMENT

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. I find my RESC to be an exciting, challenging place to work.	93/0
2. RESC officials enforce high work standards.	86/7
3. RESC employees who do not meet expected work standards are disciplined.	64/14
4. I feel that I have the authority to adequately perform my job responsibilities.	85/11
5. I have an up to date and comprehensive job description.	93/4
6. I have adequate facilities in which to conduct my work.	96/4
7. I have adequate equipment and computer support to conduct my work.	96/0
8. No one knows or cares about the amount or quality of work that I perform.	7/89
9. I am very satisfied with my job.	89/7
10. I plan to continue my career in my RESC.	89/0
11. I am actively looking for a job outside of my RESC.	11/89
12. Salary levels at my RESC are competitive.	46/46
13. I feel that my work is appreciated by my supervisor(s).	93/7
14. I feel that I am an integral part of the RESC team.	86/14

PART G: WORK ENVIRONMENT (CONT'D)

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
15. I feel that there is no future for me at the RESC.	7/89
16. My salary level is adequate for my level of work and experience.	39/46
17. Most administrative practices in the RESC are highly effective and efficient.	82/11
18. Administrative decisions are made promptly and decisively.	68/21
19. My RESC administrators are easily accessible and open to input.	82/18
20. Major bottlenecks exist in many administrative processes which cause unnecessary time delays.	22/63
21. My RESC has too many layers of administrators.	18/71
22. Most of RESC administrative processes (e.g., purchasing, travel requests, leave applications, personnel, etc.) are highly efficient and responsive.	78/19

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART H: GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. How would you rate your RESC facilities **(Check [✓] one).**

Exceptional	68%
Above average	32
Adequate	0
Needs improvement	0

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MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW OF THE TEXAS REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS RESC XII

SURVEY OF REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTER EMPLOYEES
N = 38

PART A: GENERAL PERCEPTIONS ABOUT SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS (RESCs).

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. Most districts in our region frequently utilize services used by our RESC.	92/5
2. The services provided by our RESC are critical to the success of our districts' programs and operations.	92/0
3. Many of the current RESC services to districts could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by TEA.	3/92
4. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by other sources such as universities or private vendors.	0/95
5. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by allocating the dollars to districts and allowing them to purchase services from the most appropriate sources.	0/87
6. Many of the current RESC services to districts duplicate services provided by TEA.	0/95
7. Many of the services offered by RESCs around the state are critical to the success of many districts.	89/0
8. Our RESC is highly efficient and effective.	92/3
9. The RESC role in providing services to districts should be expanded.	92/0
10. Our RESC is highly responsive to the service needs of member districts.	95/3
11. Our RESC provides quality services.	97/0
12. There are adequate channels of communication with school districts in our region.	89/5
13. Our RESC is responsive to complaints.	97/0
14. Our RESC is responsive to requests for services.	97/0
15. Our RESC listens and tries to meet the needs of the school districts.	100/0

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART B: ACCOUNTABILITY

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. TEA should hold each RESC responsible for student performance in all districts within its region.	13/74
2. Each RESC should hold each district in its region responsible for student performance within the district.	45/42
3. Each district Board/Superintendent should hold each school within the district responsible for student performance within the school.	92/5
4. Under the concept of site-based management, only the district and each school in the district should be held accountable for student performance; the RESCs and TEA should provide services on demand but not be held accountable.	63/16
5. Each RESC should be held accountable by the districts for providing needed services but not for student performance.	79/11
6. Under the current governance structure, the RESCs are accountable primarily to: ■ the districts within each region	72/8
■ the Commissioner of Education	77/4
■ both the districts and the Commissioner of Education	84/0

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART D: STATEWIDE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. In order to effectively execute its responsibilities, the TEA needs regional offices.	43/43
2. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to provide services to districts.	92/3
3. The RESCs should become more directly linked with TEA and subject to TEA regulations.	22/46
4. The RESCs should be totally independent of TEA.	21/68
5. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to enforce TEA rules and regulations.	37/42
6a. The current number of RESC Board members is appropriate.	74/0
6b. The current number of RESC Board members should be expanded to include representatives from more districts.	11/45
7. The current number of 20 RESCs should be: ■ expanded	20/56
■ left as is	76/3
■ reduced	4/79
8. The current policy of having RESC directors appointed by local boards subject to approval by the Commissioner of Education is highly effective.	74/5
9. All RESCs should be abolished.	0/100

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART E: GOVERNANCE AND FUNDING

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. The current method of funding the RESCs to provide services to districts and allowing each RESC to charge the districts for other services is highly effective in meeting the needs of the districts.	74/13
2. All funds for services to districts should be allocated to the districts and allow each district to purchase those services that it needs from TEA, a RESC, or other sources.	5/82
3. School districts understand the governance and oversight structure of our RESC.	55/24
4. There are appropriate levels of oversight for our RESC.	69/3
5. Our RESC is adequately funded.	14/78
6. RESCs should continue to be funded by the state.	97/0
7. The amount charged to each district by our RESC is appropriate for the quality and amount of services provided.	65/16
8. Districts have the funding to purchase the services they need from our RESC.	42/42

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART F: SPECIFIC SERVICES

STATEMENT	(%VS+S)/(%D+SD)*
SUPPORT FOR REGULAR EDUCATION PROGRAMS	95/3
1. Reading and Language Arts	
2. Mathematics	95/3
3. Social Studies	95/3
4. Science	97/3
SUPPORT FOR SPECIAL POPULATION PROGRAMS	95/3
5. Special Education	
6. At-risk and compensatory education	92/3
7. Bilingual Education and ESL	92/3
8. Advanced academics (gifted and talented, AP)	94/3
RESC TRAINING	94/0
9. Training and assistance for campus planning	
10. PDAS training and support	97/3
11. Training and support for Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)	97/3
12. Training and support for aligning the curriculum and instruction with TEKS	97/3
13. Leadership training and development programs and services	95/3
14. Training and assistance to help improve student performance	97/3
15. Training and assistance in using new teaching methods and strategies	97/3
16. Training and assistance in the use of technology	97/3
17. Training and assistance in discipline management and conflict resolution	92/3

PART F: SPECIFIC SERVICES (CONT'D)

STATEMENT	(%VS+S)/(%D+SD)*
18. School board training services	92/0
19. Teacher certification	97/3
20. Professional/Para-Professional certifications	100/0
RESC SERVICES 21. Computer network and telecommunication services	97/0
22. Purchasing cooperatives	81/0
23. Services and support for PEIMS	92/0
24. On-line/Distance Learning classes	86/0
25. On-site technical assistance	95/0
26. Video Conferencing	86/0
27. Lending Library	81/0
28. Best Practices Information	89/0
29. Organizational Links	86/3
30. Demonstrations and Equipment	92/0

* Percent responding *Very Satisfied* or *Satisfied* / Percent responding *Dissatisfied* or *Strongly Dissatisfied.*

PART G: WORK ENVIRONMENT

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. I find my RESC to be an exciting, challenging place to work.	92/5
2. RESC officials enforce high work standards.	89/5
3. RESC employees who do not meet expected work standards are disciplined.	68/16
4. I feel that I have the authority to adequately perform my job responsibilities.	95/5
5. I have an up to date and comprehensive job description.	97/3
6. I have adequate facilities in which to conduct my work.	97/3
7. I have adequate equipment and computer support to conduct my work.	95/5
8. No one knows or cares about the amount or quality of work that I perform.	11/89
9. I am very satisfied with my job.	89/5
10. I plan to continue my career in my RESC.	89/5
11. I am actively looking for a job outside of my RESC.	5/81
12. Salary levels at my RESC are competitive.	84/11
13. I feel that my work is appreciated by my supervisor(s).	84/11
14. I feel that I am an integral part of the RESC team.	92/5

PART G: WORK ENVIRONMENT (CONT'D)

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
15. I feel that there is no future for me at the RESC.	8/86
16. My salary level is adequate for my level of work and experience.	76/19
17. Most administrative practices in the RESC are highly effective and efficient.	86/8
18. Administrative decisions are made promptly and decisively.	84/11
19. My RESC administrators are easily accessible and open to input.	86/11
20. Major bottlenecks exist in many administrative processes which cause unnecessary time delays.	16/78
21. My RESC has too many layers of administrators.	19/68
22. Most of RESC administrative processes (e.g., purchasing, travel requests, leave applications, personnel, etc.) are highly efficient and responsive.	84/5

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART H: GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. How would you rate your RESC facilities **(Check [✓] one).**

Exceptional	66%
Above average	32
Adequate	3
Needs improvement	0

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MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW OF THE TEXAS REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS RESC XIII

SURVEY OF REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTER EMPLOYEES
N = 35

PART A: GENERAL PERCEPTIONS ABOUT SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS (RESCs).

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. Most districts in our region frequently utilize services used by our RESC.	100/0
2. The services provided by our RESC are critical to the success of our districts' programs and operations.	100/0
3. Many of the current RESC services to districts could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by TEA.	6/91
4. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by other sources such as universities or private vendors.	3/97
5. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by allocating the dollars to districts and allowing them to purchase services from the most appropriate sources.	0/91
6. Many of the current RESC services to districts duplicate services provided by TEA.	0/94
7. Many of the services offered by RESCs around the state are critical to the success of many districts.	94/6
8. Our RESC is highly efficient and effective.	100/0
9. The RESC role in providing services to districts should be expanded.	71/3
10. Our RESC is highly responsive to the service needs of member districts.	100/0
11. Our RESC provides quality services.	100/0
12. There are adequate channels of communication with school districts in our region.	100/0
13. Our RESC is responsive to complaints.	97/0
14. Our RESC is responsive to requests for services.	100/0
15. Our RESC listens and tries to meet the needs of the school districts.	100/0

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART B: ACCOUNTABILITY

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. TEA should hold each RESC responsible for student performance in all districts within its region.	51/34
2. Each RESC should hold each district in its region responsible for student performance within the district.	66/17
3. Each district Board/Superintendent should hold each school within the district responsible for student performance within the school.	91/3
4. Under the concept of site-based management, only the district and each school in the district should be held accountable for student performance; the RESCs and TEA should provide services on demand but not be held accountable.	37/46
5. Each RESC should be held accountable by the districts for providing needed services but not for student performance.	37/46
6. Under the current governance structure, the RESCs are accountable primarily to: ■ the districts within each region	75/10
■ the Commissioner of Education	90/5
■ both the districts and the Commissioner of Education	85/12

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART D: STATEWIDE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. In order to effectively execute its responsibilities, the TEA needs regional offices.	63/31
2. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to provide services to districts.	94/3
3. The RESCs should become more directly linked with TEA and subject to TEA regulations.	18/59
4. The RESCs should be totally independent of TEA.	14/71
5. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to enforce TEA rules and regulations.	26/65
6a. The current number of RESC Board members is appropriate.	60/3
6b. The current number of RESC Board members should be expanded to include representatives from more districts.	6/43
7. The current number of 20 RESCs should be: ■ expanded	30/26
■ left as is	77/3
■ reduced	10/45
8. The current policy of having RESC directors appointed by local boards subject to approval by the Commissioner of Education is highly effective.	71/6
9. All RESCs should be abolished.	0/97

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART E: GOVERNANCE AND FUNDING

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. The current method of funding the RESCs to provide services to districts and allowing each RESC to charge the districts for other services is highly effective in meeting the needs of the districts.	68/12
2. All funds for services to districts should be allocated to the districts and allow each district to purchase those services that it needs from TEA, a RESC, or other sources.	6/82
3. School districts understand the governance and oversight structure of our RESC.	44/18
4. There are appropriate levels of oversight for our RESC.	74/0
5. Our RESC is adequately funded.	6/62
6. RESCs should continue to be funded by the state.	94/0
7. The amount charged to each district by our RESC is appropriate for the quality and amount of services provided.	68/15
8. Districts have the funding to purchase the services they need from our RESC.	18/30

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART F: SPECIFIC SERVICES

STATEMENT	(%VS+S)/(%D+SD)*
SUPPORT FOR REGULAR EDUCATION PROGRAMS 1. Reading and Language Arts	91/0
2. Mathematics	88/0
3. Social Studies	91/0
4. Science	88/0
SUPPORT FOR SPECIAL POPULATION PROGRAMS 5. Special Education	94/0
6. At-risk and compensatory education	91/0
7. Bilingual Education and ESL	94/0
8. Advanced academics (gifted and talented, AP)	91/0
RESC TRAINING 9. Training and assistance for campus planning	91/0
10. PDAS training and support	91/0
11. Training and support for Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)	94/0
12. Training and support for aligning the curriculum and instruction with TEKS	94/0
13. Leadership training and development programs and services	97/0
14. Training and assistance to help improve student performance	97/0
15. Training and assistance in using new teaching methods and strategies	85/0
16. Training and assistance in the use of technology	88/0
17. Training and assistance in discipline management and conflict resolution	94/0

PART F: SPECIFIC SERVICES (CONT'D)

STATEMENT	(%VS+S)/(%D+SD)*
18. School board training services	79/0
19. Teacher certification	88/0
20. Professional/Para-Professional certifications	85/0
RESC SERVICES 21. Computer network and telecommunication services	85/0
22. Purchasing cooperatives	68/3
23. Services and support for PEIMS	82/0
24. On-line/Distance Learning classes	88/0
25. On-site technical assistance	97/0
26. Video Conferencing	88/0
27. Lending Library	67/0
28. Best Practices Information	88/0
29. Organizational Links	71/0
30. Demonstrations and Equipment	76/0

* Percent responding *Very Satisfied* or *Satisfied* / Percent responding *Dissatisfied* or *Strongly Dissatisfied.*

PART G: WORK ENVIRONMENT

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. I find my RESC to be an exciting, challenging place to work.	100/0
2. RESC officials enforce high work standards.	100/0
3. RESC employees who do not meet expected work standards are disciplined.	50/9
4. I feel that I have the authority to adequately perform my job responsibilities.	100/0
5. I have an up to date and comprehensive job description.	97/3
6. I have adequate facilities in which to conduct my work.	94/3
7. I have adequate equipment and computer support to conduct my work.	97/0
8. No one knows or cares about the amount or quality of work that I perform.	0/97
9. I am very satisfied with my job.	100/0
10. I plan to continue my career in my RESC.	100/0
11. I am actively looking for a job outside of my RESC.	3/94
12. Salary levels at my RESC are competitive.	47/35
13. I feel that my work is appreciated by my supervisor(s).	100/0
14. I feel that I am an integral part of the RESC team.	97/0

PART G: WORK ENVIRONMENT (CONT'D)

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
15. I feel that there is no future for me at the RESC.	0/100
16. My salary level is adequate for my level of work and experience.	53/44
17. Most administrative practices in the RESC are highly effective and efficient.	94/0
18. Administrative decisions are made promptly and decisively.	88/0
19. My RESC administrators are easily accessible and open to input.	94/3
20. Major bottlenecks exist in many administrative processes which cause unnecessary time delays.	0/97
21. My RESC has too many layers of administrators.	0/97
22. Most of RESC administrative processes (e.g., purchasing, travel requests, leave applications, personnel, etc.) are highly efficient and responsive.	88/6

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART H: GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. How would you rate your RESC facilities **(Check [✓] one).**

Exceptional	75%
Above average	25
Adequate	0
Needs improvement	0

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MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW OF THE TEXAS REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS RESC XIV

SURVEY OF REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTER EMPLOYEES N = 35

PART A: GENERAL PERCEPTIONS ABOUT SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS (RESCs).

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. Most districts in our region frequently utilize services used by our RESC.	100/0
2. The services provided by our RESC are critical to the success of our districts' programs and operations.	100/0
3. Many of the current RESC services to districts could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by TEA.	3/94
4. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by other sources such as universities or private vendors.	0/100
5. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by allocating the dollars to districts and allowing them to purchase services from the most appropriate sources.	3/97
6. Many of the current RESC services to districts duplicate services provided by TEA.	0/100
7. Many of the services offered by RESCs around the state are critical to the success of many districts.	100/0
8. Our RESC is highly efficient and effective.	100/0
9. The RESC role in providing services to districts should be expanded.	71/15
10. Our RESC is highly responsive to the service needs of member districts.	100/0
11. Our RESC provides quality services.	100/0
12. There are adequate channels of communication with school districts in our region.	97/0
13. Our RESC is responsive to complaints.	100/0
14. Our RESC is responsive to requests for services.	100/0
15. Our RESC listens and tries to meet the needs of the school districts.	100/0

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART B: ACCOUNTABILITY

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. TEA should hold each RESC responsible for student performance in all districts within its region.	31/57
2. Each RESC should hold each district in its region responsible for student performance within the district.	14/80
3. Each district Board/Superintendent should hold each school within the district responsible for student performance within the school.	89/6
4. Under the concept of site-based management, only the district and each school in the district should be held accountable for student performance; the RESCs and TEA should provide services on demand but not be held accountable.	83/3
5. Each RESC should be held accountable by the districts for providing needed services but not for student performance.	86/9
6. Under the current governance structure, the RESCs are accountable primarily to: ■ the districts within each region	84/5
■ the Commissioner of Education	89/5
■ both the districts and the Commissioner of Education	100/0

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART D: STATEWIDE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. In order to effectively execute its responsibilities, the TEA needs regional offices.	23/69
2. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to provide services to districts.	97/0
3. The RESCs should become more directly linked with TEA and subject to TEA regulations.	3/77
4. The RESCs should be totally independent of TEA.	11/77
5. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to enforce TEA rules and regulations.	9/91
6a. The current number of RESC Board members is appropriate.	86/0
6b. The current number of RESC Board members should be expanded to include representatives from more districts.	3/74
7. The current number of 20 RESCs should be: ■ expanded	65/22
■ left as is	91/0
■ reduced	0/90
8. The current policy of having RESC directors appointed by local boards subject to approval by the Commissioner of Education is highly effective.	77/3
9. All RESCs should be abolished.	0/94

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART E: GOVERNANCE AND FUNDING

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. The current method of funding the RESCs to provide services to districts and allowing each RESC to charge the districts for other services is highly effective in meeting the needs of the districts.	94/0
2. All funds for services to districts should be allocated to the districts and allow each district to purchase those services that it needs from TEA, a RESC, or other sources.	9/91
3. School districts understand the governance and oversight structure of our RESC.	74/6
4. There are appropriate levels of oversight for our RESC.	91/0
5. Our RESC is adequately funded.	66/20
6. RESCs should continue to be funded by the state.	100/0
7. The amount charged to each district by our RESC is appropriate for the quality and amount of services provided.	97/0
8. Districts have the funding to purchase the services they need from our RESC.	26/60

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART F: SPECIFIC SERVICES

STATEMENT	(%VS+S)/(%D+SD)*
SUPPORT FOR REGULAR EDUCATION PROGRAMS 1. Reading and Language Arts	100/0
2. Mathematics	100/0
3. Social Studies	100/0
4. Science	100/0
SUPPORT FOR SPECIAL POPULATION PROGRAMS 5. Special Education	100/0
6. At-risk and compensatory education	97/3
7. Bilingual Education and ESL	100/0
8. Advanced academics (gifted and talented, AP)	100/0
RESC TRAINING 9. Training and assistance for campus planning	88/9
10. PDAS training and support	94/0
11. Training and support for Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)	97/0
12. Training and support for aligning the curriculum and instruction with TEKS	97/0
13. Leadership training and development programs and services	88/3
14. Training and assistance to help improve student performance	97/0
15. Training and assistance in using new teaching methods and strategies	97/0
16. Training and assistance in the use of technology	97/0
17. Training and assistance in discipline management and conflict resolution	97/0

PART F: SPECIFIC SERVICES (CONT'D)

STATEMENT	(%VS+S)/(%D+SD)*
18. School board training services	97/0
19. Teacher certification	97/0
20. Professional/Para-Professional certifications	97/0
RESC SERVICES 21. Computer network and telecommunication services	97/0
22. Purchasing cooperatives	94/0
23. Services and support for PEIMS	97/0
24. On-line/Distance Learning classes	97/0
25. On-site technical assistance	100/0
26. Video Conferencing	91/0
27. Lending Library	94/0
28. Best Practices Information	100/0
29. Organizational Links	94/0
30. Demonstrations and Equipment	94/0

* Percent responding *Very Satisfied* or *Satisfied* / Percent responding *Dissatisfied* or *Strongly Dissatisfied.*

PART G: WORK ENVIRONMENT

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. I find my RESC to be an exciting, challenging place to work.	100/0
2. RESC officials enforce high work standards.	100/0
3. RESC employees who do not meet expected work standards are disciplined.	71/6
4. I feel that I have the authority to adequately perform my job responsibilities.	97/0
5. I have an up to date and comprehensive job description.	97/0
6. I have adequate facilities in which to conduct my work.	69/20
7. I have adequate equipment and computer support to conduct my work.	94/3
8. No one knows or cares about the amount or quality of work that I perform.	0/100
9. I am very satisfied with my job.	97/0
10. I plan to continue my career in my RESC.	97/3
11. I am actively looking for a job outside of my RESC.	6/91
12. Salary levels at my RESC are competitive.	43/37
13. I feel that my work is appreciated by my supervisor(s).	97/0
14. I feel that I am an integral part of the RESC team.	97/3

PART G: WORK ENVIRONMENT (CONT'D)

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
15. I feel that there is no future for me at the RESC.	3/97
16. My salary level is adequate for my level of work and experience.	37/46
17. Most administrative practices in the RESC are highly effective and efficient.	97/0
18. Administrative decisions are made promptly and decisively.	94/0
19. My RESC administrators are easily accessible and open to input.	100/0
20. Major bottlenecks exist in many administrative processes which cause unnecessary time delays.	0/97
21. My RESC has too many layers of administrators.	0/100
22. Most of RESC administrative processes (e.g., purchasing, travel requests, leave applications, personnel, etc.) are highly efficient and responsive.	97/3

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART H: GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. How would you rate your RESC facilities **(Check [✓] one).**

Exceptional	20%
Above average	14
Adequate	23
Needs improvement	43

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MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW OF THE TEXAS REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS RESC XV

SURVEY OF REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTER EMPLOYEES N = 22

PART A: GENERAL PERCEPTIONS ABOUT SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS (RESCs).

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. Most districts in our region frequently utilize services used by our RESC.	100/0
2. The services provided by our RESC are critical to the success of our districts' programs and operations.	100/0
3. Many of the current RESC services to districts could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by TEA.	0/95
4. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by other sources such as universities or private vendors.	0/100
5. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by allocating the dollars to districts and allowing them to purchase services from the most appropriate sources.	0/100
6. Many of the current RESC services to districts duplicate services provided by TEA.	9/91
7. Many of the services offered by RESCs around the state are critical to the success of many districts.	95/0
8. Our RESC is highly efficient and effective.	100/0
9. The RESC role in providing services to districts should be expanded.	57/10
10. Our RESC is highly responsive to the service needs of member districts.	100/0
11. Our RESC provides quality services.	100/0
12. There are adequate channels of communication with school districts in our region.	100/0
13. Our RESC is responsive to complaints.	100/0
14. Our RESC is responsive to requests for services.	100/0
15. Our RESC listens and tries to meet the needs of the school districts.	100/0

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART B: ACCOUNTABILITY

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. TEA should hold each RESC responsible for student performance in all districts within its region.	24/48
2. Each RESC should hold each district in its region responsible for student performance within the district.	57/24
3. Each district Board/Superintendent should hold each school within the district responsible for student performance within the school.	86/9
4. Under the concept of site-based management, only the district and each school in the district should be held accountable for student performance; the RESCs and TEA should provide services on demand but not be held accountable.	50/27
5. Each RESC should be held accountable by the districts for providing needed services but not for student performance.	68/21
6. Under the current governance structure, the RESCs are accountable primarily to: ■ the districts within each region	92/0
■ the Commissioner of Education	91/0
■ both the districts and the Commissioner of Education	95/0

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART D: STATEWIDE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. In order to effectively execute its responsibilities, the TEA needs regional offices.	55/27
2. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to provide services to districts.	76/10
3. The RESCs should become more directly linked with TEA and subject to TEA regulations.	27/41
4. The RESCs should be totally independent of TEA.	14/45
5. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to enforce TEA rules and regulations.	23/55
6a. The current number of RESC Board members is appropriate.	62/0
6b. The current number of RESC Board members should be expanded to include representatives from more districts.	0/48
7. The current number of 20 RESCs should be: ■ expanded	8/58
■ left as is	94/0
■ reduced	10/70
8. The current policy of having RESC directors appointed by local boards subject to approval by the Commissioner of Education is highly effective.	71/5
9. All RESCs should be abolished.	9/91

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART E: GOVERNANCE AND FUNDING

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. The current method of funding the RESCs to provide services to districts and allowing each RESC to charge the districts for other services is highly effective in meeting the needs of the districts.	81/5
2. All funds for services to districts should be allocated to the districts and allow each district to purchase those services that it needs from TEA, a RESC, or other sources.	0/86
3. School districts understand the governance and oversight structure of our RESC.	68/18
4. There are appropriate levels of oversight for our RESC.	82/0
5. Our RESC is adequately funded.	59/18
6. RESCs should continue to be funded by the state.	100/0
7. The amount charged to each district by our RESC is appropriate for the quality and amount of services provided.	81/5
8. Districts have the funding to purchase the services they need from our RESC.	41/27

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART F: SPECIFIC SERVICES

STATEMENT	(%VS+S)/(%D+SD)*
SUPPORT FOR REGULAR EDUCATION PROGRAMS 1. Reading and Language Arts	95/0
2. Mathematics	95/0
3. Social Studies	95/0
4. Science	89/0
SUPPORT FOR SPECIAL POPULATION PROGRAMS 5. Special Education	95/0
6. At-risk and compensatory education	89/0
7. Bilingual Education and ESL	89/0
8. Advanced academics (gifted and talented, AP)	89/0
RESC TRAINING 9. Training and assistance for campus planning	100/0
10. PDAS training and support	89/6
11. Training and support for Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)	100/0
12. Training and support for aligning the curriculum and instruction with TEKS	100/0
13. Leadership training and development programs and services	95/5
14. Training and assistance to help improve student performance	100/0
15. Training and assistance in using new teaching methods and strategies	100/0
16. Training and assistance in the use of technology	95/0
17. Training and assistance in discipline management and conflict resolution	95/0

PART F: SPECIFIC SERVICES (CONT'D)

STATEMENT	(%VS+S)/(%D+SD)*
18. School board training services	95/0
19. Teacher certification	63/0
20. Professional/Para-Professional certifications	95/0
RESC SERVICES 21. Computer network and telecommunication services	100/0
22. Purchasing cooperatives	83/0
23. Services and support for PEIMS	95/5
24. On-line/Distance Learning classes	100/0
25. On-site technical assistance	95/0
26. Video Conferencing	89/0
27. Lending Library	74/0
28. Best Practices Information	95/0
29. Organizational Links	79/0
30. Demonstrations and Equipment	89/0

* Percent responding *Very Satisfied* or *Satisfied* / Percent responding *Dissatisfied* or *Strongly Dissatisfied.*

PART G: WORK ENVIRONMENT

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. I find my RESC to be an exciting, challenging place to work.	100/0
2. RESC officials enforce high work standards.	100/0
3. RESC employees who do not meet expected work standards are disciplined.	80/0
4. I feel that I have the authority to adequately perform my job responsibilities.	100/0
5. I have an up to date and comprehensive job description.	100/0
6. I have adequate facilities in which to conduct my work.	100/0
7. I have adequate equipment and computer support to conduct my work.	100/0
8. No one knows or cares about the amount or quality of work that I perform.	0/100
9. I am very satisfied with my job.	100/0
10. I plan to continue my career in my RESC.	100/0
11. I am actively looking for a job outside of my RESC.	0/90
12. Salary levels at my RESC are competitive.	35/35
13. I feel that my work is appreciated by my supervisor(s).	100/0
14. I feel that I am an integral part of the RESC team.	100/0

PART G: WORK ENVIRONMENT (CONT'D)

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
15. I feel that there is no future for me at the RESC.	0/95
16. My salary level is adequate for my level of work and experience.	45/40
17. Most administrative practices in the RESC are highly effective and efficient.	100/0
18. Administrative decisions are made promptly and decisively.	95/0
19. My RESC administrators are easily accessible and open to input.	100/0
20. Major bottlenecks exist in many administrative processes which cause unnecessary time delays.	0/90
21. My RESC has too many layers of administrators.	5/85
22. Most of RESC administrative processes (e.g., purchasing, travel requests, leave applications, personnel, etc.) are highly efficient and responsive.	100/0

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART H: GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. How would you rate your RESC facilities **(Check [✓] one).**

Exceptional	100%
Above average	0
Adequate	0
Needs improvement	0

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MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW OF THE TEXAS REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS
RESC XVI

SURVEY OF REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTER EMPLOYEES
N = 39

PART A: GENERAL PERCEPTIONS ABOUT SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS (RESCs).

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. Most districts in our region frequently utilize services used by our RESC.	100/0
2. The services provided by our RESC are critical to the success of our districts' programs and operations.	100/0
3. Many of the current RESC services to districts could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by TEA.	0/100
4. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by other sources such as universities or private vendors.	0/100
5. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by allocating the dollars to districts and allowing them to purchase services from the most appropriate sources.	0/92
6. Many of the current RESC services to districts duplicate services provided by TEA.	3/95
7. Many of the services offered by RESCs around the state are critical to the success of many districts.	100/0
8. Our RESC is highly efficient and effective.	100/0
9. The RESC role in providing services to districts should be expanded.	76/3
10. Our RESC is highly responsive to the service needs of member districts.	100/0
11. Our RESC provides quality services.	100/0
12. There are adequate channels of communication with school districts in our region.	95/0
13. Our RESC is responsive to complaints.	95/0
14. Our RESC is responsive to requests for services.	100/0
15. Our RESC listens and tries to meet the needs of the school districts.	100/0

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART B: ACCOUNTABILITY

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. TEA should hold each RESC responsible for student performance in all districts within its region.	26/56
2. Each RESC should hold each district in its region responsible for student performance within the district.	23/51
3. Each district Board/Superintendent should hold each school within the district responsible for student performance within the school.	92/3
4. Under the concept of site-based management, only the district and each school in the district should be held accountable for student performance; the RESCs and TEA should provide services on demand but not be held accountable.	82/15
5. Each RESC should be held accountable by the districts for providing needed services but not for student performance.	82/8
6. Under the current governance structure, the RESCs are accountable primarily to: ■ the districts within each region	83/0
■ the Commissioner of Education	88/0
■ both the districts and the Commissioner of Education	92/0

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART D: STATEWIDE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. In order to effectively execute its responsibilities, the TEA needs regional offices.	39/42
2. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to provide services to districts.	87/10
3. The RESCs should become more directly linked with TEA and subject to TEA regulations.	16/63
4. The RESCs should be totally independent of TEA.	10/74
5. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to enforce TEA rules and regulations.	15/82
6a. The current number of RESC Board members is appropriate.	74/0
6b. The current number of RESC Board members should be expanded to include representatives from more districts.	5/50
7. The current number of 20 RESCs should be: ■ expanded	9/55
■ left as is	87/3
■ reduced	0/71
8. The current policy of having RESC directors appointed by local boards subject to approval by the Commissioner of Education is highly effective.	77/8
9. All RESCs should be abolished.	0/100

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART E: GOVERNANCE AND FUNDING

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. The current method of funding the RESCs to provide services to districts and allowing each RESC to charge the districts for other services is highly effective in meeting the needs of the districts.	82/8
2. All funds for services to districts should be allocated to the districts and allow each district to purchase those services that it needs from TEA, a RESC, or other sources.	3/90
3. School districts understand the governance and oversight structure of our RESC.	74/8
4. There are appropriate levels of oversight for our RESC.	85/3
5. Our RESC is adequately funded.	32/47
6. RESCs should continue to be funded by the state.	100/0
7. The amount charged to each district by our RESC is appropriate for the quality and amount of services provided.	82/5
8. Districts have the funding to purchase the services they need from our RESC.	49/28

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART F: SPECIFIC SERVICES

STATEMENT	(%VS+S)/(%D+SD)*
SUPPORT FOR REGULAR EDUCATION PROGRAMS 1. Reading and Language Arts	97/0
2. Mathematics	97/0
3. Social Studies	92/0
4. Science	92/0
SUPPORT FOR SPECIAL POPULATION PROGRAMS 5. Special Education	92/0
6. At-risk and compensatory education	92/0
7. Bilingual Education and ESL	92/0
8. Advanced academics (gifted and talented, AP)	95/0
RESC TRAINING 9. Training and assistance for campus planning	97/0
10. PDAS training and support	95/0
11. Training and support for Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)	95/0
12. Training and support for aligning the curriculum and instruction with TEKS	95/0
13. Leadership training and development programs and services	89/0
14. Training and assistance to help improve student performance	97/0
15. Training and assistance in using new teaching methods and strategies	97/0
16. Training and assistance in the use of technology	92/0
17. Training and assistance in discipline management and conflict resolution	89/0

PART F: SPECIFIC SERVICES (CONT'D)

STATEMENT	(%VS+S)/(%D+SD)*
18. School board training services	92/0
19. Teacher certification	66/0
20. Professional/Para-Professional certifications	84/0
RESC SERVICES 21. Computer network and telecommunication services	92/0
22. Purchasing cooperatives	78/0
23. Services and support for PEIMS	86/0
24. On-line/Distance Learning classes	84/3
25. On-site technical assistance	89/0
26. Video Conferencing	82/5
27. Lending Library	51/0
28. Best Practices Information	81/0
29. Organizational Links	81/0
30. Demonstrations and Equipment	82/0

* Percent responding *Very Satisfied* or *Satisfied* / Percent responding *Dissatisfied* or *Strongly Dissatisfied.*

PART G: WORK ENVIRONMENT

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. I find my RESC to be an exciting, challenging place to work.	100/0
2. RESC officials enforce high work standards.	100/0
3. RESC employees who do not meet expected work standards are disciplined.	77/8
4. I feel that I have the authority to adequately perform my job responsibilities.	97/0
5. I have an up to date and comprehensive job description.	100/0
6. I have adequate facilities in which to conduct my work.	95/3
7. I have adequate equipment and computer support to conduct my work.	97/0
8. No one knows or cares about the amount or quality of work that I perform.	3/95
9. I am very satisfied with my job.	100/0
10. I plan to continue my career in my RESC.	97/3
11. I am actively looking for a job outside of my RESC.	5/87
12. Salary levels at my RESC are competitive.	51/38
13. I feel that my work is appreciated by my supervisor(s).	92/0
14. I feel that I am an integral part of the RESC team.	97/0

PART G: WORK ENVIRONMENT (CONT'D)

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
15. I feel that there is no future for me at the RESC.	0/87
16. My salary level is adequate for my level of work and experience.	64/31
17. Most administrative practices in the RESC are highly effective and efficient.	79/10
18. Administrative decisions are made promptly and decisively.	77/5
19. My RESC administrators are easily accessible and open to input.	85/5
20. Major bottlenecks exist in many administrative processes which cause unnecessary time delays.	29/53
21. My RESC has too many layers of administrators.	13/72
22. Most of RESC administrative processes (e.g., purchasing, travel requests, leave applications, personnel, etc.) are highly efficient and responsive.	69/10

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART H: GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. How would you rate your RESC facilities **(Check [✓] one).**

Exceptional	74%
Above average	23
Adequate	3
Needs improvement	0

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MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW OF THE TEXAS REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS
RESC XVII

SURVEY OF REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTER EMPLOYEES
N = 30

PART A: GENERAL PERCEPTIONS ABOUT SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS (RESCs).

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. Most districts in our region frequently utilize services used by our RESC.	100/0
2. The services provided by our RESC are critical to the success of our districts' programs and operations.	100/0
3. Many of the current RESC services to districts could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by TEA.	0/100
4. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by other sources such as universities or private vendors.	0/97
5. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by allocating the dollars to districts and allowing them to purchase services from the most appropriate sources.	3/93
6. Many of the current RESC services to districts duplicate services provided by TEA.	0/97
7. Many of the services offered by RESCs around the state are critical to the success of many districts.	97/0
8. Our RESC is highly efficient and effective.	93/0
9. The RESC role in providing services to districts should be expanded.	80/13
10. Our RESC is highly responsive to the service needs of member districts.	100/0
11. Our RESC provides quality services.	100/0
12. There are adequate channels of communication with school districts in our region.	100/0
13. Our RESC is responsive to complaints.	97/0
14. Our RESC is responsive to requests for services.	100/0
15. Our RESC listens and tries to meet the needs of the school districts.	100/0

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART B: ACCOUNTABILITY

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. TEA should hold each RESC responsible for student performance in all districts within its region.	33/60
2. Each RESC should hold each district in its region responsible for student performance within the district.	33/57
3. Each district Board/Superintendent should hold each school within the district responsible for student performance within the school.	87/10
4. Under the concept of site-based management, only the district and each school in the district should be held accountable for student performance; the RESCs and TEA should provide services on demand but not be held accountable.	67/27
5. Each RESC should be held accountable by the districts for providing needed services but not for student performance.	77/13
6. Under the current governance structure, the RESCs are accountable primarily to: ■ the districts within each region	82/6
■ the Commissioner of Education	69/13
■ both the districts and the Commissioner of Education	89/4

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART D: STATEWIDE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. In order to effectively execute its responsibilities, the TEA needs regional offices.	54/29
2. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to provide services to districts.	79/11
3. The RESCs should become more directly linked with TEA and subject to TEA regulations.	32/29
4. The RESCs should be totally independent of TEA.	10/86
5. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to enforce TEA rules and regulations.	31/55
6a. The current number of RESC Board members is appropriate.	66/17
6b. The current number of RESC Board members should be expanded to include representatives from more districts.	31/34
7. The current number of 20 RESCs should be: ■ expanded	11/63
■ left as is	80/16
■ reduced	32/58
8. The current policy of having RESC directors appointed by local boards subject to approval by the Commissioner of Education is highly effective.	73/13
9. All RESCs should be abolished.	0/100

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART E: GOVERNANCE AND FUNDING

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. The current method of funding the RESCs to provide services to districts and allowing each RESC to charge the districts for other services is highly effective in meeting the needs of the districts.	76/7
2. All funds for services to districts should be allocated to the districts and allow each district to purchase those services that it needs from TEA, a RESC, or other sources.	7/79
3. School districts understand the governance and oversight structure of our RESC.	55/21
4. There are appropriate levels of oversight for our RESC.	76/7
5. Our RESC is adequately funded.	55/41
6. RESCs should continue to be funded by the state.	97/0
7. The amount charged to each district by our RESC is appropriate for the quality and amount of services provided.	83/7
8. Districts have the funding to purchase the services they need from our RESC.	40/33

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART F: SPECIFIC SERVICES

STATEMENT	(%VS+S)/(%D+SD)*
SUPPORT FOR REGULAR EDUCATION PROGRAMS	87/0
1. Reading and Language Arts	
2. Mathematics	93/0
3. Social Studies	90/0
4. Science	87/0
SUPPORT FOR SPECIAL POPULATION PROGRAMS	93/0
5. Special Education	
6. At-risk and compensatory education	87/0
7. Bilingual Education and ESL	93/0
8. Advanced academics (gifted and talented, AP)	90/0
RESC TRAINING	90/0
9. Training and assistance for campus planning	
10. PDAS training and support	100/0
11. Training and support for Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)	97/0
12. Training and support for aligning the curriculum and instruction with TEKS	93/0
13. Leadership training and development programs and services	97/0
14. Training and assistance to help improve student performance	97/0
15. Training and assistance in using new teaching methods and strategies	93/0
16. Training and assistance in the use of technology	100/0
17. Training and assistance in discipline management and conflict resolution	89/0

PART F: SPECIFIC SERVICES (CONT'D)

STATEMENT	(%VS+S)/(%D+SD)*
18. School board training services	90/0
19. Teacher certification	53/3
20. Professional/Para-Professional certifications	83/0
RESC SERVICES 21. Computer network and telecommunication services	93/0
22. Purchasing cooperatives	93/4
23. Services and support for PEIMS	100/0
24. On-line/Distance Learning classes	93/0
25. On-site technical assistance	90/0
26. Video Conferencing	97/0
27. Lending Library	67/0
28. Best Practices Information	76/0
29. Organizational Links	79/0
30. Demonstrations and Equipment	90/0

* Percent responding *Very Satisfied* or *Satisfied* / Percent responding *Dissatisfied* or *Strongly Dissatisfied.*

PART G: WORK ENVIRONMENT

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. I find my RESC to be an exciting, challenging place to work.	87/10
2. RESC officials enforce high work standards.	90/3
3. RESC employees who do not meet expected work standards are disciplined.	53/7
4. I feel that I have the authority to adequately perform my job responsibilities.	87/10
5. I have an up to date and comprehensive job description.	93/3
6. I have adequate facilities in which to conduct my work.	97/0
7. I have adequate equipment and computer support to conduct my work.	97/0
8. No one knows or cares about the amount or quality of work that I perform.	0/93
9. I am very satisfied with my job.	90/10
10. I plan to continue my career in my RESC.	80/3
11. I am actively looking for a job outside of my RESC.	7/87
12. Salary levels at my RESC are competitive.	71/14
13. I feel that my work is appreciated by my supervisor(s).	79/10
14. I feel that I am an integral part of the RESC team.	73/10

PART G: WORK ENVIRONMENT (CONT'D)

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
15. I feel that there is no future for me at the RESC.	7/80
16. My salary level is adequate for my level of work and experience.	70/23
17. Most administrative practices in the RESC are highly effective and efficient.	80/13
18. Administrative decisions are made promptly and decisively.	63/27
19. My RESC administrators are easily accessible and open to input.	67/30
20. Major bottlenecks exist in many administrative processes which cause unnecessary time delays.	23/63
21. My RESC has too many layers of administrators.	10/80
22. Most of RESC administrative processes (e.g., purchasing, travel requests, leave applications, personnel, etc.) are highly efficient and responsive.	83/13

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART H: GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. How would you rate your RESC facilities **(Check [✓] one).**

Exceptional	66%
Above average	31
Adequate	3
Needs improvement	0

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MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW OF THE TEXAS REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS
RESC XVIII

SURVEY OF REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTER EMPLOYEES
N = 37

PART A: GENERAL PERCEPTIONS ABOUT SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS (RESCs).

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. Most districts in our region frequently utilize services used by our RESC.	100/0
2. The services provided by our RESC are critical to the success of our districts' programs and operations.	100/0
3. Many of the current RESC services to districts could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by TEA.	3/92
4. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by other sources such as universities or private vendors.	0/100
5. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by allocating the dollars to districts and allowing them to purchase services from the most appropriate sources.	3/92
6. Many of the current RESC services to districts duplicate services provided by TEA.	0/95
7. Many of the services offered by RESCs around the state are critical to the success of many districts.	100/0
8. Our RESC is highly efficient and effective.	100/0
9. The RESC role in providing services to districts should be expanded.	67/3
10. Our RESC is highly responsive to the service needs of member districts.	100/0
11. Our RESC provides quality services.	100/0
12. There are adequate channels of communication with school districts in our region.	92/3
13. Our RESC is responsive to complaints.	95/0
14. Our RESC is responsive to requests for services.	100/0
15. Our RESC listens and tries to meet the needs of the school districts.	100/0

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART B: ACCOUNTABILITY

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. TEA should hold each RESC responsible for student performance in all districts within its region.	16/54
2. Each RESC should hold each district in its region responsible for student performance within the district.	38/35
3. Each district Board/Superintendent should hold each school within the district responsible for student performance within the school.	86/5
4. Under the concept of site-based management, only the district and each school in the district should be held accountable for student performance; the RESCs and TEA should provide services on demand but not be held accountable.	71/20
5. Each RESC should be held accountable by the districts for providing needed services but not for student performance.	59/19
6. Under the current governance structure, the RESCs are accountable primarily to: ■ the districts within each region	71/10
■ the Commissioner of Education	81/5
■ both the districts and the Commissioner of Education	88/3

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART D: STATEWIDE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. In order to effectively execute its responsibilities, the TEA needs regional offices.	38/46
2. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to provide services to districts.	89/5
3. The RESCs should become more directly linked with TEA and subject to TEA regulations.	11/47
4. The RESCs should be totally independent of TEA.	30/35
5. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to enforce TEA rules and regulations.	19/62
6a. The current number of RESC Board members is appropriate.	81/0
6b. The current number of RESC Board members should be expanded to include representatives from more districts.	3/57
7. The current number of 20 RESCs should be: ■ expanded	6/69
■ left as is	94/0
■ reduced	6/82
8. The current policy of having RESC directors appointed by local boards subject to approval by the Commissioner of Education is highly effective.	84/3
9. All RESCs should be abolished.	3/95

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART E: GOVERNANCE AND FUNDING

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. The current method of funding the RESCs to provide services to districts and allowing each RESC to charge the districts for other services is highly effective in meeting the needs of the districts.	76/8
2. All funds for services to districts should be allocated to the districts and allow each district to purchase those services that it needs from TEA, a RESC, or other sources.	11/78
3. School districts understand the governance and oversight structure of our RESC.	51/22
4. There are appropriate levels of oversight for our RESC.	71/3
5. Our RESC is adequately funded.	26/60
6. RESCs should continue to be funded by the state.	94/0
7. The amount charged to each district by our RESC is appropriate for the quality and amount of services provided.	84/3
8. Districts have the funding to purchase the services they need from our RESC.	41/41

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART F: SPECIFIC SERVICES

STATEMENT	(%VS+S)/(%D+SD)*
SUPPORT FOR REGULAR EDUCATION PROGRAMS	97/0
1. Reading and Language Arts	
2. Mathematics	89/3
3. Social Studies	94/0
4. Science	91/0
SUPPORT FOR SPECIAL POPULATION PROGRAMS	97/0
5. Special Education	
6. At-risk and compensatory education	97/0
7. Bilingual Education and ESL	92/0
8. Advanced academics (gifted and talented, AP)	97/0
RESC TRAINING	94/0
9. Training and assistance for campus planning	
10. PDAS training and support	89/0
11. Training and support for Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)	100/0
12. Training and support for aligning the curriculum and instruction with TEKS	97/0
13. Leadership training and development programs and services	92/0
14. Training and assistance to help improve student performance	100/0
15. Training and assistance in using new teaching methods and strategies	100/0
16. Training and assistance in the use of technology	92/0
17. Training and assistance in discipline management and conflict resolution	100/0

PART F: SPECIFIC SERVICES (CONT'D)

STATEMENT	(%VS+S)/(%D+SD)*
18. School board training services	83/0
19. Teacher certification	94/0
20. Professional/Para-Professional certifications	94/0
RESC SERVICES 21. Computer network and telecommunication services	72/8
22. Purchasing cooperatives	92/0
23. Services and support for PEIMS	97/0
24. On-line/Distance Learning classes	81/3
25. On-site technical assistance	83/6
26. Video Conferencing	86/3
27. Lending Library	72/0
28. Best Practices Information	94/0
29. Organizational Links	89/0
30. Demonstrations and Equipment	92/3

* Percent responding *Very Satisfied* or *Satisfied* / Percent responding *Dissatisfied* or *Strongly Dissatisfied.*

PART G: WORK ENVIRONMENT

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. I find my RESC to be an exciting, challenging place to work.	100/0
2. RESC officials enforce high work standards.	94/6
3. RESC employees who do not meet expected work standards are disciplined.	64/17
4. I feel that I have the authority to adequately perform my job responsibilities.	100/0
5. I have an up to date and comprehensive job description.	92/0
6. I have adequate facilities in which to conduct my work.	100/0
7. I have adequate equipment and computer support to conduct my work.	94/3
8. No one knows or cares about the amount or quality of work that I perform.	9/89
9. I am very satisfied with my job.	97/0
10. I plan to continue my career in my RESC.	92/3
11. I am actively looking for a job outside of my RESC.	8/81
12. Salary levels at my RESC are competitive.	61/28
13. I feel that my work is appreciated by my supervisor(s).	92/3
14. I feel that I am an integral part of the RESC team.	92/0

PART G: WORK ENVIRONMENT (CONT'D)

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
15. I feel that there is no future for me at the RESC.	3/94
16. My salary level is adequate for my level of work and experience.	69/20
17. Most administrative practices in the RESC are highly effective and efficient.	89/3
18. Administrative decisions are made promptly and decisively.	78/6
19. My RESC administrators are easily accessible and open to input.	97/3
20. Major bottlenecks exist in many administrative processes which cause unnecessary time delays.	14/75
21. My RESC has too many layers of administrators.	11/67
22. Most of RESC administrative processes (e.g., purchasing, travel requests, leave applications, personnel, etc.) are highly efficient and responsive.	89/0

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART H: GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. How would you rate your RESC facilities **(Check [✓] one).**

Exceptional	70%
Above average	27
Adequate	3
Needs improvement	0

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MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW OF THE TEXAS REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS
RESC XIX

SURVEY OF REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTER EMPLOYEES
N = 31

PART A: GENERAL PERCEPTIONS ABOUT SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS (RESCs).

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. Most districts in our region frequently utilize services used by our RESC.	100/0
2. The services provided by our RESC are critical to the success of our districts' programs and operations.	100/0
3. Many of the current RESC services to districts could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by TEA.	0/100
4. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by other sources such as universities or private vendors.	0/97
5. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by allocating the dollars to districts and allowing them to purchase services from the most appropriate sources.	0/94
6. Many of the current RESC services to districts duplicate services provided by TEA.	0/90
7. Many of the services offered by RESCs around the state are critical to the success of many districts.	97/0
8. Our RESC is highly efficient and effective.	100/0
9. The RESC role in providing services to districts should be expanded.	87/0
10. Our RESC is highly responsive to the service needs of member districts.	100/0
11. Our RESC provides quality services.	100/0
12. There are adequate channels of communication with school districts in our region.	87/0
13. Our RESC is responsive to complaints.	100/0
14. Our RESC is responsive to requests for services.	100/0
15. Our RESC listens and tries to meet the needs of the school districts.	97/0

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART B: ACCOUNTABILITY

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. TEA should hold each RESC responsible for student performance in all districts within its region.	19/58
2. Each RESC should hold each district in its region responsible for student performance within the district.	55/26
3. Each district Board/Superintendent should hold each school within the district responsible for student performance within the school.	87/0
4. Under the concept of site-based management, only the district and each school in the district should be held accountable for student performance; the RESCs and TEA should provide services on demand but not be held accountable.	58/19
5. Each RESC should be held accountable by the districts for providing needed services but not for student performance.	68/16
6. Under the current governance structure, the RESCs are accountable primarily to: ■ the districts within each region	62/29
■ the Commissioner of Education	86/5
■ both the districts and the Commissioner of Education	72/14

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART D: STATEWIDE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. In order to effectively execute its responsibilities, the TEA needs regional offices.	58/26
2. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to provide services to districts.	87/6
3. The RESCs should become more directly linked with TEA and subject to TEA regulations.	32/39
4. The RESCs should be totally independent of TEA.	6/81
5. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to enforce TEA rules and regulations.	40/30
6a. The current number of RESC Board members is appropriate.	68/3
6b. The current number of RESC Board members should be expanded to include representatives from more districts.	13/48
7. The current number of 20 RESCs should be: ■ expanded	10/40
■ left as is	87/0
■ reduced	0/85
8. The current policy of having RESC directors appointed by local boards subject to approval by the Commissioner of Education is highly effective.	71/0
9. All RESCs should be abolished.	0/100

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART E: GOVERNANCE AND FUNDING

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. The current method of funding the RESCs to provide services to districts and allowing each RESC to charge the districts for other services is highly effective in meeting the needs of the districts.	68/16
2. All funds for services to districts should be allocated to the districts and allow each district to purchase those services that it needs from TEA, a RESC, or other sources.	3/87
3. School districts understand the governance and oversight structure of our RESC.	39/19
4. There are appropriate levels of oversight for our RESC.	84/0
5. Our RESC is adequately funded.	7/80
6. RESCs should continue to be funded by the state.	94/6
7. The amount charged to each district by our RESC is appropriate for the quality and amount of services provided.	61/23
8. Districts have the funding to purchase the services they need from our RESC.	52/23

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART F: SPECIFIC SERVICES

STATEMENT	(%VS+S)/(%D+SD)*
SUPPORT FOR REGULAR EDUCATION PROGRAMS 1. Reading and Language Arts	87/3
2. Mathematics	87/3
3. Social Studies	74/3
4. Science	81/3
SUPPORT FOR SPECIAL POPULATION PROGRAMS 5. Special Education	93/0
6. At-risk and compensatory education	81/0
7. Bilingual Education and ESL	87/0
8. Advanced academics (gifted and talented, AP)	87/0
RESC TRAINING 9. Training and assistance for campus planning	71/3
10. PDAS training and support	77/0
11. Training and support for Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)	81/0
12. Training and support for aligning the curriculum and instruction with TEKS	84/0
13. Leadership training and development programs and services	81/0
14. Training and assistance to help improve student performance	84/0
15. Training and assistance in using new teaching methods and strategies	87/0
16. Training and assistance in the use of technology	90/3
17. Training and assistance in discipline management and conflict resolution	84/3

PART F: SPECIFIC SERVICES (CONT'D)

STATEMENT	(%VS+S)/(%D+SD)*
18. School board training services	87/0
19. Teacher certification	87/0
20. Professional/Para-Professional certifications	84/0
RESC SERVICES 21. Computer network and telecommunication services	87/3
22. Purchasing cooperatives	87/0
23. Services and support for PEIMS	94/3
24. On-line/Distance Learning classes	58/10
25. On-site technical assistance	84/0
26. Video Conferencing	68/3
27. Lending Library	58/3
28. Best Practices Information	77/0
29. Organizational Links	65/0
30. Demonstrations and Equipment	71/0

* Percent responding *Very Satisfied* or *Satisfied* / Percent responding *Dissatisfied* or *Strongly Dissatisfied.*

PART G: WORK ENVIRONMENT

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. I find my RESC to be an exciting, challenging place to work.	100/0
2. RESC officials enforce high work standards.	100/0
3. RESC employees who do not meet expected work standards are disciplined.	90/0
4. I feel that I have the authority to adequately perform my job responsibilities.	100/0
5. I have an up to date and comprehensive job description.	100/0
6. I have adequate facilities in which to conduct my work.	100/0
7. I have adequate equipment and computer support to conduct my work.	100/0
8. No one knows or cares about the amount or quality of work that I perform.	3/97
9. I am very satisfied with my job.	100/0
10. I plan to continue my career in my RESC.	100/0
11. I am actively looking for a job outside of my RESC.	3/97
12. Salary levels at my RESC are competitive.	94/3
13. I feel that my work is appreciated by my supervisor(s).	97/0
14. I feel that I am an integral part of the RESC team.	100/0

PART G: WORK ENVIRONMENT (CONT'D)

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
15. I feel that there is no future for me at the RESC.	3/97
16. My salary level is adequate for my level of work and experience.	87/10
17. Most administrative practices in the RESC are highly effective and efficient.	100/0
18. Administrative decisions are made promptly and decisively.	97/0
19. My RESC administrators are easily accessible and open to input.	100/0
20. Major bottlenecks exist in many administrative processes which cause unnecessary time delays.	0/100
21. My RESC has too many layers of administrators.	3/97
22. Most of RESC administrative processes (e.g., purchasing, travel requests, leave applications, personnel, etc.) are highly efficient and responsive.	100/0

*Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART H: GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. How would you rate your RESC facilities **(Check [✓] one).**

Exceptional	74%
Above average	26
Adequate	0
Needs improvement	0

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MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW OF THE TEXAS REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS
RESC XX

SURVEY OF REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTER EMPLOYEES
N = 32

PART A: GENERAL PERCEPTIONS ABOUT SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS (RESCs).

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. Most districts in our region frequently utilize services used by our RESC.	97/0
2. The services provided by our RESC are critical to the success of our districts' programs and operations.	100/0
3. Many of the current RESC services to districts could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by TEA.	3/97
4. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by other sources such as universities or private vendors.	3/97
5. Many of the current RESC services could be more efficiently and/or effectively provided by allocating the dollars to districts and allowing them to purchase services from the most appropriate sources.	6/84
6. Many of the current RESC services to districts duplicate services provided by TEA.	3/91
7. Many of the services offered by RESCs around the state are critical to the success of many districts.	97/0
8. Our RESC is highly efficient and effective.	100/0
9. The RESC role in providing services to districts should be expanded.	94/0
10. Our RESC is highly responsive to the service needs of member districts.	100/0
11. Our RESC provides quality services.	100/0
12. There are adequate channels of communication with school districts in our region.	97/3
13. Our RESC is responsive to complaints.	100/0
14. Our RESC is responsive to requests for services.	100/0
15. Our RESC listens and tries to meet the needs of the school districts.	97/0

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART B: ACCOUNTABILITY

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. TEA should hold each RESC responsible for student performance in all districts within its region.	28/53
2. Each RESC should hold each district in its region responsible for student performance within the district.	31/59
3. Each district Board/Superintendent should hold each school within the district responsible for student performance within the school.	94/0
4. Under the concept of site-based management, only the district and each school in the district should be held accountable for student performance; the RESCs and TEA should provide services on demand but not be held accountable.	59/28
5. Each RESC should be held accountable by the districts for providing needed services but not for student performance.	69/22
6. Under the current governance structure, the RESCs are accountable primarily to: ■ the districts within each region	87/4
■ the Commissioner of Education	83/4
■ both the districts and the Commissioner of Education	90/0

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART D: STATEWIDE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. In order to effectively execute its responsibilities, the TEA needs regional offices.	56/41
2. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to provide services to districts.	91/6
3. The RESCs should become more directly linked with TEA and subject to TEA regulations.	19/41
4. The RESCs should be totally independent of TEA.	19/55
5. The RESCs should be the regional structure used by TEA to enforce TEA rules and regulations.	16/56
6a. The current number of RESC Board members is appropriate.	69/0
6b. The current number of RESC Board members should be expanded to include representatives from more districts.	6/31
7. The current number of 20 RESCs should be: ■ expanded	21/50
■ left as is	87/3
■ reduced	9/70
8. The current policy of having RESC directors appointed by local boards subject to approval by the Commissioner of Education is highly effective.	88/0
9. All RESCs should be abolished.	0/100

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART E: GOVERNANCE AND FUNDING

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. The current method of funding the RESCs to provide services to districts and allowing each RESC to charge the districts for other services is highly effective in meeting the needs of the districts.	69/13
2. All funds for services to districts should be allocated to the districts and allow each district to purchase those services that it needs from TEA, a RESC, or other sources.	6/74
3. School districts understand the governance and oversight structure of our RESC.	59/13
4. There are appropriate levels of oversight for our RESC.	84/0
5. Our RESC is adequately funded.	19/63
6. RESCs should continue to be funded by the state.	91/3
7. The amount charged to each district by our RESC is appropriate for the quality and amount of services provided.	75/16
8. Districts have the funding to purchase the services they need from our RESC.	28/47

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART F: SPECIFIC SERVICES

STATEMENT	(%VS+S)/(%D+SD)*
SUPPORT FOR REGULAR EDUCATION PROGRAMS 1. Reading and Language Arts	97/0
2. Mathematics	94/0
3. Social Studies	94/0
4. Science	94/0
SUPPORT FOR SPECIAL POPULATION PROGRAMS 5. Special Education	94/0
6. At-risk and compensatory education	90/3
7. Bilingual Education and ESL	91/3
8. Advanced academics (gifted and talented, AP)	94/0
RESC TRAINING 9. Training and assistance for campus planning	88/3
10. PDAS training and support	94/0
11. Training and support for Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)	94/0
12. Training and support for aligning the curriculum and instruction with TEKS	94/0
13. Leadership training and development programs and services	91/0
14. Training and assistance to help improve student performance	94/0
15. Training and assistance in using new teaching methods and strategies	94/0
16. Training and assistance in the use of technology	88/6
17. Training and assistance in discipline management and conflict resolution	91/0

PART F: SPECIFIC SERVICES (CONT'D)

STATEMENT	(%VS+S)/(%D+SD)*
18. School board training services	91/0
19. Teacher certification	94/0
20. Professional/Para-Professional certifications	88/0
RESC SERVICES 21. Computer network and telecommunication services	84/6
22. Purchasing cooperatives	94/0
23. Services and support for PEIMS	90/0
24. On-line/Distance Learning classes	90/3
25. On-site technical assistance	90/0
26. Video Conferencing	94/0
27. Lending Library	84/0
28. Best Practices Information	90/0
29. Organizational Links	81/0
30. Demonstrations and Equipment	84/3

* Percent responding *Very Satisfied* or *Satisfied* / Percent responding *Dissatisfied* or *Strongly Dissatisfied.*

PART G: WORK ENVIRONMENT

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
1. I find my RESC to be an exciting, challenging place to work.	100/0
2. RESC officials enforce high work standards.	100/0
3. RESC employees who do not meet expected work standards are disciplined.	88/6
4. I feel that I have the authority to adequately perform my job responsibilities.	94/3
5. I have an up to date and comprehensive job description.	97/3
6. I have adequate facilities in which to conduct my work.	94/3
7. I have adequate equipment and computer support to conduct my work.	94/3
8. No one knows or cares about the amount or quality of work that I perform.	3/94
9. I am very satisfied with my job.	97/0
10. I plan to continue my career in my RESC.	100/0
11. I am actively looking for a job outside of my RESC.	3/91
12. Salary levels at my RESC are competitive.	75/16
13. I feel that my work is appreciated by my supervisor(s).	97/3
14. I feel that I am an integral part of the RESC team.	100/0

PART G: WORK ENVIRONMENT (CONT'D)

STATEMENT	(%A+SA)/(%D+SD)*
15. I feel that there is no future for me at the RESC.	3/91
16. My salary level is adequate for my level of work and experience.	72/22
17. Most administrative practices in the RESC are highly effective and efficient.	91/0
18. Administrative decisions are made promptly and decisively.	88/3
19. My RESC administrators are easily accessible and open to input.	97/0
20. Major bottlenecks exist in many administrative processes which cause unnecessary time delays.	16/75
21. My RESC has too many layers of administrators.	9/84
22. Most of RESC administrative processes (e.g., purchasing, travel requests, leave applications, personnel, etc.) are highly efficient and responsive.	81/9

* Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*

PART H: GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. How would you rate your RESC facilities **(Check [✓] one).**

Exceptional	56%
Above average	38
Adequate	6
Needs improvement	0

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