DISTRICT AND CAMPUS
PLANNING AND DECISION MAKING

RESOURCE GUIDE

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The document is available on the Texas Education Agency’s website
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# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Definition of Integrated Planning and Decision Making</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. State Statutory Requirements</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. Federal Statutory Requirements</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. Leadership Roles and Administrative Procedures</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. Integrated Planning and Decision-Making Process</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII. Considerations for Local Implementation</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII. Evaluation of Effectiveness of Planning and Decision Making</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I. Introduction

In Texas, the focus of all district and campus planning and decision making is to improve the performance of all students. The ultimate purpose of all planning and decision making in schools is to attain the state's educational goals of equity and excellence in achievement for all students.

Senate Bill 1, passed by the Texas Legislature in May 1995, contained provisions that specified the district and campus planning and decision-making processes expected of all school districts. The 76th Legislature amended several areas of state statute pertaining to these requirements. Texas Education Code (TEC), § 11.254 requires the Commissioner of Education to oversee the provision of training and technical support to all districts and campuses in respect to planning and site-based decision making. The technical support may be conducted through one or more sources, including regional Education Service Centers (ESCs). It is to be provided for school board trustees, superintendents, principals, teachers, parents, and other members of school committees.

The purpose of this document is to provide technical support by outlining the current state and federal requirements pertaining to these areas of district and campus responsibilities. Additional support may be obtained by contacting the regional ESCs, professional educational associations, and other service providers.

The TEC sets out minimum requirements for district and campus planning and decision making that all school districts must satisfy. The local board of trustees has the responsibility to adopt policies for establishing a district and campus planning and decision-making process. The board must ensure that administrative procedures are established with the active involvement of the district-level committee to satisfy state requirements.

Neither the Texas Education Agency nor the State Board of Education (SBOE) has any rule-making authority in this area. Therefore, it is the responsibility of each school district to interpret and implement the provisions of the TEC in a manner consistent with the statute that will best serve the school district’s unique characteristics. District and campus leaders and committee members are encouraged to first read the statute and local policy and then refer to local administrative procedures to guide them in the implementation of their district and campus planning and decision making process.

This guide should be viewed as a resource to school districts seeking ways to implement and maintain effective district and campus planning and decision making. It begins with a definition and expected outcomes of integrated planning and decision making.

Section III of this Resource Guide provides citations to specific section of the TEC pertaining to district and campus planning and decision making, including legislation enacted by the 76th Texas Legislature and signed by Governor of the State of Texas in June 1999. It also includes pertinent excerpts of state statute that reference roles of the district- and/or campus-level committees with respect to several key areas of input. These include the development of and revisions to the student code of conduct, localized appraisal processes and criteria, waivers and exemptions, the use of state award funds, and the development and approval of district and
State legislative requirements pertaining to state compensatory education are outlined in this section.

Section IV of this document addresses current key provisions in federal statutes pertaining to planning and decision making. District policies are required under TEC §11.251(f) to ensure that all pertinent federal planning requirements are addressed through the district and campus planning process. Specific requirements related to Title I, Part A funds are provided in this section.

Section V focuses separately on the respective roles of the local board of trustees, the superintendent, the principal, and the district and campus committees. This section is provided to give guidance related to state requirements for these district and campus leaders.

Section VI section provides a suggested guide for integrated planning and decision making. It is very similar to suggestions provided in earlier resource guides. It should be clearly understood that planning may be conducted in a variety of ways. This section addresses the basic components of planning and emphasizes the importance of integration of district and campus planning. The details of how local planning and making occur should be clearly outlined in the local administrative procedures.

Local considerations for implementation are provided in Section VII. This section provides suggestions pertaining to committee membership, optional configurations for structuring committees in accordance with statute and local policy, and suggestions for establishing effective communications channels. It focuses on questions that may be posed with respect to the role of committees pertaining to budgeting, curriculum, staffing patterns, and school organization. This section also includes considerations for the development of the student code of conduct, the appraisal process and criteria, waivers, and staff development.

Finally, Section VIII contains suggestions for ways in which a district may conduct a self-evaluation to determine the effectiveness of the district and campus planning and decision-making processes and procedures. A self-evaluation is required at least every two years under state statute. The evaluation procedures in this document are not required; they are simply options to consider. Educators are encouraged to consider what processes are needed to accomplish locally targeted student performance objectives.
II. Definition of Integrated Planning and Decision Making

Integrated planning and decision making is a process for decentralizing decisions to improve the educational outcomes at every school campus through a collaborative effort. Through this integrated process, superintendents, district staff, principals, teachers, campus staff, the business representative, parents, and other community members assess educational outcomes of all students, determine performance objectives and strategies, and ensure that strategies are implemented and adjusted to improve student achievement for all students.

Expected Outcomes of Integrated Planning and Decision Making

The expected outcomes of integrated planning and decision making are excellence and equity in student performance for all students as a result of:

- effective district and campus planning for the purpose of improved student performance;
- improved parent, community, and business involvement in the school improvement process;
- clearly established accountability performance objectives for all student groups;
- raised staff productivity and satisfaction;
- improved communication and information flow;
- consensus-based, effective decisions;
- pervasive and long-range commitment to implementation;
- increased flexibility at the campus level in the allocation and use of both human and fiscal resources; and
- coordination of general education and special program components.
Effective Integrated Planning and Decision Making Steps

1. Performance objectives are determined based on campus-level staff determinations and of needs and analysis of campus-level student performance data.

2. Implementation activities are self-directed and initiated by campus staff and supported by district staff.

3. Budget development and decisions regarding the allocation of resources are determined at the campus level, based on local campus needs and priorities.

4. Evaluation of student performance is individualized and ongoing to provide information relevant to instructional decisions. It is based on analysis of disaggregated results of annual assessments, alternative assessments, and frequent teacher-selected assessments.

5. Selection of staff is guided by criteria developed by faculty that reflect the team needs for instructional expertise.

6. Curriculum revisions and instructional methods are coordinated at the campus level to meet the unique instructional needs of the students being served. District staff members provide support and coordination for cross-campus sharing.

7. Campus organizational structure allows for shared team decision making and input into campus-wide decisions.
III. State Statutory Requirements

The primary statutory requirements relating to district, campus, and state responsibilities pertaining to district and campus planning and decision making are contained in Chapter 11, Subchapter F of the TEC, entitled District-Level and Site-Based Decision Making. Additional responsibilities for the district and campus planning and decision making are specified in other sections of the TEC. The sections listed in Section III of this guide may be used to reference roles and responsibilities related to planning and decision making. The reader is encouraged to review the Texas School Law Bulletin, 2002 edition, for a complete compilation.

§ 11.251. Planning and Decision-Making Process

(a) The board of trustees of each independent school district shall ensure that a district improvement plan and improvement plans for each campus are developed, reviewed, and revised annually for the purpose of improving the performance of all students. The board shall annually approve district and campus performance objectives and shall ensure that the district and campus plans:

(1) are mutually supportive to accomplish the identified objectives; and

(2) support the state goals and objectives under Chapter 4.

(b) The board shall adopt a policy to establish a district and campus planning and decision-making process that will involve the professional staff of the district, parents, and community members in establishing and reviewing the district's and campuses' educational plans, goals, performance objectives, and major classroom instructional programs. The board shall establish a procedure under which meetings are held regularly by district and campus planning and decision-making committees that include representative professional staff, parents of students enrolled in the district, and community members. The committees shall include a business representative, without regard to whether the representative resides in the district or whether the business the person represents is located in the district. The board, or the board's designee, shall periodically meet with the district-level committee to review the district-level committee's deliberations.

(c) For purposes of establishing the composition of committees under this section:

(1) a person who stands in parental relation to a student is considered a parent;

(2) a parent who is an employee of the school district is not considered a parent representative on the committee;

(3) a parent is not considered a representative of community members on the committee; and

(4) community members must reside in the district and must be at least 18 years of age.

(d) The board shall also ensure that an administrative procedure is provided to clearly define the respective roles and responsibilities of the superintendent, central office staff, principals, teachers, district-level committee members, and campus-level committee members in the
areas of planning, budgeting, curriculum, staffing patterns, staff development, and school organization. The board shall ensure that the district-level planning and decision-making committee will be actively involved in establishing the administrative procedure that defines the respective roles and responsibilities pertaining to planning and decision making at the district and campus levels.

(e) The board shall adopt a procedure, consistent with Section 21.407(a), for the professional staff in the district to nominate and elect the professional staff representatives who shall meet with the board or the board designee as required under this section. At least two-thirds of the elected professional staff representatives must be classroom teachers. The remaining staff representatives shall include both campus- and district-level professional staff members. Board policy must provide procedures for:

(1) the selection of parents to the district-level and campus-level committees; and

(2) the selection of the business representative and other community members to serve on the district-level committee in a manner that provides for appropriate representation of the community's diversity.

(f) The district policy must provide that all pertinent federal planning requirements are addressed through the district and campus planning process.

(g) This section does not:

(1) prohibit the board from conducting meetings with teachers or groups of teachers other than the meetings described by this section;

(2) prohibit the board from establishing policies providing avenues for input from others, including students or paraprofessional staff, in district- or campus-level planning and decision making;

(3) limit or affect the power of the board to govern the public schools; or

(4) create a new cause of action or require collective bargaining.

§ 11.252. District-Level Planning and Decision Making

(a) Each school district shall have a district improvement plan that is developed, evaluated, and revised annually, in accordance with district policy, by the superintendent with the assistance of the district-level committee established under Section 11.251. The purpose of the district improvement plan is to guide district and campus staff in the improvement of student performance for all student groups in order to attain state standards in respect to the academic excellence indicators adopted under Section 39.051. The district improvement plan must include provisions for:

(1) a comprehensive needs assessment addressing district student performance on the academic excellence indicators, and other appropriate measures of performance, that are disaggregated by all student groups served by the district, including categories of
ethnicity, socioeconomic status, sex, and populations served by special programs, including students in special education programs under Subchapter A, Chapter 29;

(2) measurable district performance objectives for all appropriate academic excellence indicators for all student populations, including students in special education programs under Subchapter A, Chapter 29, and other measures of student performance that may be identified through the comprehensive needs assessment;

(3) strategies for improvement of student performance that include:

(A) instructional methods for addressing the needs of student groups not achieving their full potential;
(B) methods for addressing the needs of students for special programs, such as suicide prevention, conflict resolution, violence prevention, or dyslexia treatment programs;
(C) dropout reduction;
(D) integration of technology in instructional and administrative programs;
(E) discipline management;
(F) staff development for professional staff of the district;
(G) career education to assist students in developing the knowledge, skills, and competencies necessary for a broad range of career opportunities; and
(H) accelerated education;

(4) strategies for providing to middle school, junior high school, and high school students, those students’ teachers and counselors, and those students’ parents information about:

(A) higher education admissions and financial aid opportunities;
(B) the TEXAS grant program and the Teach for Texas grant program established under Subchapter M, Chapter 56;
(C) the need for students to make informed curriculum choices to be prepared for success beyond high school; and
(D) sources of information on higher education admissions and financial aid;

(5) resources needed to implement identified strategies;

(6) staff responsible for ensuring the accomplishment of each strategy;

(7) timelines for ongoing monitoring of the implementation of each improvement strategy; and

(8) formative evaluation criteria for determining periodically whether strategies are resulting in intended improvement of student performance.

(b) A district's plan for the improvement of student performance is not filed with the agency, but the district must make the plan available to the agency on request.

(c) In a district that has only one campus, the district and campus planning committees may be one committee and the district and campus plans may be one plan.
(d) At least every two years, each district shall evaluate the effectiveness of the district's decision-making and planning policies, procedures, and staff development activities related to district- and campus-level planning and decision making to ensure that they are effectively structured to positively impact student performance.

(e) The district-level committee established under Section 11.251 shall hold at least one public meeting per year. The required meeting shall be held after receipt of the annual district performance report from the agency for the purpose of discussing the performance of the district and the district performance objectives. District policy and procedures must be established to ensure that systematic communications measures are in place to periodically obtain broad-based community, parent, and staff input and to provide information to those persons regarding the recommendations of the district-level committee. This section does not create a new cause of action or require collective bargaining.

(f) A superintendent shall regularly consult the district-level committee in the planning, operation, supervision, and evaluation of the district educational program.

§11.253. Campus Planning and Site-Based Decision Making

(a) Each school district shall maintain current policies and procedures to ensure that effective planning and site-based decision making occur at each campus to direct and support the improvement of student performance for all students.

(b) Each district's policy and procedures shall establish campus-level planning and decision-making committees as provided for through the procedures provided by Sections 11.251 (b)-(e).

(c) Each school year, the principal of each school campus, with the assistance of the campus-level committee, shall develop, review, and revise the campus improvement plan for the purpose of improving student performance for all student populations, including students in special education programs under Subchapter A, Chapter 29, with respect to the academic excellence indicators adopted under Section 39.051 and any other appropriate performance measures for special needs populations.

(d) Each campus improvement plan must:

(1) assess the academic achievement for each student in the school using the academic excellence indicator system as defined by Section 39.051;

(2) set the campus performance objectives based on the academic excellence indicator system, including objectives for special needs populations, including students in special education programs under Subchapter A, Chapter 29;

(3) identify how the campus goals will be met for each student;

(4) determine the resources needed to implement the plan;

(5) identify staff needed to implement the plan;
(6) set timelines for reaching the goals;

(7) measure progress toward the performance objectives periodically to ensure that the plan is resulting in academic improvement;

(8) include goals and methods for violence prevention and intervention on campus; and

(9) provide for a program to encourage parental involvement at the campus.

(e) In accordance with the administrative procedures established under Section 11.251(b), the campus-level committee shall be involved in decisions in the areas of planning, budgeting, curriculum, staffing patterns, staff development, and school organization. The campus-level committee must approve the portions of the campus plan addressing campus staff development needs.

(f) This section does not create a new cause of action or require collective bargaining.

(g) Each campus-level committee shall hold at least one public meeting per year. The required meeting shall be held after receipt of the annual campus rating from the agency to discuss the performance of the campus and the campus performance objectives. District policy and campus procedures must be established to ensure that systematic communications measures are in place to periodically obtain broad-based community, parent, and staff input, and to provide information to those persons regarding the recommendations of the campus-level committees.

(h) A principal shall regularly consult the campus-level committee in the planning, operation, supervision, and evaluation of the campus educational program.

§11.254. State Responsibilities for the Planning and Decision-Making Process

(a) The commissioner shall oversee the provision of training and technical support to all districts and campuses in respect to planning and site-based decision making through one or more sources, including regional education service centers, for school board trustees, superintendents, principals, teachers, parents, and other members of school committees.

(b) The agency shall conduct an annual statewide survey of the types of district- and campus-level decision-making and planning structures that exist, the extent of involvement of various stakeholders in district and campus planning and decision making, and the perceptions of those persons of the quality and effectiveness of decisions related to their impact on student performance.

The following subsections may include only excerpts of codes. The Texas School Law Bulletin, 2002 edition, should be consulted for the complete versions of these codes. Subsections are reprinted for the purpose of stressing additional areas of involvement required by planning and decision-making committees.
§ 7.056. **Waivers and Exemptions** [Excerpts]

(a) Except as provided by Subsection (e), a school campus or district may apply to the commissioner for a waiver of a requirement, restriction, or prohibition imposed by this code or rule of the board or commissioner.

(b) A school campus or district seeking a waiver must submit a written application to the commissioner not later than the 31st day before the campus or district intends to take action requiring a waiver. The application must include:

1. a written plan approved by the board of trustees of the district that states the achievement objectives of the campus or district and the inhibition imposed on those objectives by the requirement, restriction, or prohibition; and

2. written comments from the campus- or district-level committee established under Section 11.251.

§ 21.351. **Recommended Appraisal Process and Performance Criteria** [Excerpts]

(a) The commissioner shall adopt a recommended appraisal process and criteria on which to appraise the performance of teachers. The criteria must be based on observable, job-related behavior, including:

1. teachers’ implementation of discipline management procedures; and

2. the performance of teachers’ students.

§ 21.352. **Local Role** [Excerpts]

(a) In appraising teachers, each school district shall use:

1. the appraisal process and performance criteria developed by the commissioner; or

2. an appraisal process and performance criteria:

   (A) developed by the district- and campus-level committees established under Section 11.251;

   (B) containing the items described by Sections 21.351(a)(1) and (2); and

   (C) adopted by the board of trustees.

(b) The board of trustees may reject an appraisal process and performance criteria developed by the district- and campus-level committees but may not modify the process or criteria.
§ 21.451. Staff Development Requirements

(a) The staff development provided by a school district must be conducted in accordance with minimum standards developed by the commissioner for program planning, preparation, and improvement. The staff development:

(1) must include training in technology, conflict resolution, and discipline strategies, including classroom management, district discipline policies, and the student code of conduct adopted under Section 37.001 and Chapter 37; and

(2) must include training that relates to instruction of students with disabilities, and is designed for educators who work primarily outside of the area of special education; and

(3) may include instruction as to what is permissible under law, including opinions of the United States Supreme Court, in regard to prayers in public school.

(b) The staff development must be predominantly campus-based, related to achieving campus performance objectives established under Section 11.253, and developed and approved by the campus-level committee established under Section 11.251. Campus staff development may include activities that enable the campus staff to plan together to enhance existing skills, to share effective strategies, to reflect on curricular and instructional issues, to analyze student achievement results, to reflect on means of increasing student achievement, to study research, to practice new methods, to identify students' strengths and needs, to develop meaningful programs for students, to appropriately implement site-based decision making, and to conduct action research. The campus staff development activities may be conducted using study teams, individual research, peer coaching, workshops, seminars, conferences, or other reasonable methods that have the potential to improve student achievement.

(c) A school district may use district-wide staff development developed and approved through the district-level decision process under Section 11.251.

§ 37.001. Student Code of Conduct [Excerpts]

(a) The board of trustees of an independent school district shall, with the advice of its district-level committee established under Section 11.251, adopt a student code of conduct for the district. The student code of conduct must be posted and prominently displayed at each school campus. In addition to establishing standards for student conduct, the student code of conduct must:

(1) specify the circumstances, in accordance with this subchapter, under which a student may be removed from a classroom, campus, or alternative education program;

(2) specify conditions that authorize or require a principal or other appropriate administrator to transfer a student to an alternative education program; and

(3) outline conditions under which a student may be suspended as provided by Section 37.005 or expelled as provided by Section 37.007.
§39.094. Use of Awards

(a) In determining the use of a monetary award received under this subchapter, a school or district shall give priority to academic enhancement purposes. The award may not be used for any purpose related to athletics, and it may not be used to substitute for or replace funds already in the regular budget for a school or district.

(b) The campus-level committee established under Section 11.253 shall determine the use of the funds awarded to a school under this subchapter. The professional staff of the district shall determine the use of the funds awarded to the school district under this subchapter.

§39.131. Sanctions [Excerpts]

(b) If a campus performance is below any standard under Section 39.073 (b), the campus is considered a low-performing campus and the commissioner may take any of the following actions, listed in order of severity, to the extent the commissioner determines necessary;

(3) order the preparation of a report regarding the parental involvement program at the campus and a plan describing strategies for improving parental involvement at the campus;

(4) order the preparation of a report regarding the effectiveness of the district and campus planning and decision-making committees established under Subchapter F, Chapter 11, and a plan describing strategies for improving the effectiveness of those committees;….

State Compensatory Education

State Compensatory Education (SCE), as defined in TEC §42.152(c), is a program designed to supplement the regular education program for students at risk of dropping out of school.

The purpose of the SCE Program is to increase the achievement and reduce the dropout rate of students at risk of dropping out of school. In determining the appropriate intensive, accelerated or compensatory program, districts must use student performance data resulting from the state assessment instruments in addition to other readiness and achievement tests administered locally by the district. Based on the needs assessment, district and campus staff design appropriate strategies and include them in the campus and/or district improvement plan. By law, the improvement plan must include a comprehensive needs assessment, measurable performance objectives, identified strategies for student improvement, identified resources and staff, specified timelines for monitoring each strategy, and formative evaluation criteria. Each district is responsible for evaluating the effectiveness of the locally designed program.

Identification of Students At Risk of Dropping out of School

The criteria used to identify students at risk of dropping out of school are defined in TEC §29.081. As stated in TEC § 29.081(d), a “student at risk of dropping out of school” includes each student who is under 21 years of age and who:

1. was not advanced from one grade level to the next for one or more school years;
2. is in grade 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, or 12 and did not maintain an average equivalent to 70 on a scale of 100 in two or more subjects in the foundation curriculum during a semester in the preceding or current school year or is not maintaining such an average in two or more subjects in the foundation curriculum in the current semester;

3. did not perform satisfactorily on an assessment instrument administered to the student under Subchapter B, Chapter 39, and who has not in the previous or current school year subsequently performed on that instrument or another appropriate instrument at a level equal to at least 110 percent of the level of satisfactory performance on that instrument;

4. is in prekindergarten, kindergarten or grade 1, 2, or 3 and did not perform satisfactorily on a readiness test or assessment instrument administered during the current school year;

5. is pregnant or is a parent;

6. has been placed in an alternative education program in accordance with Section 37.006 during the preceding or current school year;

7. has been expelled in accordance with Section 37.007 during the preceding or current school year;

8. is currently on parole, probation, deferred prosecution, or other conditional release;

9. was previously reported through the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) to have dropped out of school;

10. is a student of limited English proficiency, as defined by Section 29.052;

11. is in the custody or care of the Department of Protective and Regulatory Services or has, during the current school year, been referred to the department by a school official, officer of the juvenile court, or law enforcement official;

12. is homeless, as defined by 42 U.S.C. Section 11302, and its subsequent amendments; or

13. resided in the preceding school year or resides in the current school year in a residential placement facility in the district, including a detention facility, substance abuse treatment facility, emergency shelter, psychiatric hospital, halfway house, or foster group home.

In addition to students described above, a student who meets local eligibility criteria adopted by the local board of trustees of a school district is eligible to receive SCE services but is not reported in PEIMS as at risk of dropping out of school. The number of students receiving services using local criteria during a school year may not exceed 10 percent of the number of students who met the State criteria under Section 29.081(d) and received services from the district during the preceding school year.

2001 Legislation Regarding State Compensatory Education
New legislation enacted by the 77th Legislature will impact the SCE Program as described below:

1. Student Eligibility—the definition of “student at risk of dropping out of school” has changed. This impacts the identification of students in PEIMS and eligible activities and expenditures that may be charged to the FSP Compensatory Education Allotment.

2. Use of Funds—the SCE Program must be supplemental to the regular education program. Funds may be used to support a Title I, Part A Program at a campus with at least 50% poverty. No more than 18 percent of the school district’s allotment for SCE may be used to fund disciplinary alternative education programs established under Section 37.008.

3. Program Effectiveness—the SCE Program must be designed so that students who are not currently performing at grade level will be performing at grade level at the conclusion of the next regular school term. In order to determine if the SCE Program has accomplished this, the SCE Program must be evaluated by the district in the following two ways:

   • effectiveness in reducing any disparity in performance on assessment instruments between “students at risk of dropping out of school” and all other district students
   • effectiveness in reducing any disparity in the rates of high school completion between “students at risk of dropping out of school” and all other district students; and

SCE resources must be redirected when evaluations indicate that programs and/or services are unsuccessful in producing desired results for students at risk of dropping out of school.

The commissioner by rule will adopt accountability measures to be used in school year 2003-2004 for assessing the progress of students who have failed to perform satisfactorily in the preceding school year on an assessment instrument required under Section 39.023 (a), (c), or (l).

The progress of students who have failed to perform satisfactorily in the preceding school year on an assessment instrument required under Section 39.023 (a), (c), or (l) will be used in determining a district’s accreditation rating in school year 2003-2004.

The reporting and auditing system is explained in Volume Nine of the Financial Accountability System Resource Guide. It consists of information on the appropriate uses and coding of the state compensatory education allotment.

In addressing the needs of students at risk of dropping out of school, the district and/or campus improvement plan, as appropriate, must include the following:

   • total amount of SCE funds allocated for resources and staff
   • comprehensive needs assessment
   • identified strategies
   • supplemental financial resources for SCE
   • supplemental FTEs for SCE
   • measurable Performance Objectives
   • timelines for monitoring strategies and
• formative and summative evaluation criteria/processes.

Each district must identify supplemental direct costs and personnel attributed to the SCE Program in the district and/or campus improvement plans at the summary level for financial units or campuses. In addition, school districts must have local policies and procedures to identify:

1. students who are at risk of dropping out of school under the criteria in TEC, Section 29.081;

2. students who are at risk of dropping out of school under local criteria and document compliance with the 10% cap in TEC, Section 29.081;

3. how students are entered into the SCE program;

4. how students are exited from the SCE program;

5. the methodologies involving calculation of 110% satisfactory performance on all assessment instruments, in accordance with TEC, Section 29.081; and

6. the cost of the regular education program in relation to budget allocations per student and/or instructional staff per student ratio.

For more information regarding the appropriate use of compensatory education funds, please contact the Division of Student Support Programs at (512) 463-9374.
IV. Federal Statutory Requirements

When state and federal funds are used for special programs and services, these resources, related strategies, and appropriate formative evaluation criteria should be indicated in the campus improvement plan to accomplish performance objectives identified for populations served by such funds.

District policies are required under TEC §11.251(f) to ensure that all pertinent federal planning requirements are addressed through the district and campus planning process. This means that the campus improvement plan for a Title I, Part A schoolwide campus should incorporate all of the items required to obtain the federal Title I, Part A funds. Two separate parallel campus plans would be unnecessary and inappropriate in light of the intent of the state provisions in Chapter 11. Specific requirements related to the Title I, Part A funds for schoolwide planning are provided below.

Schoolwide Plan
P.L. 107-110, Section 1114(b)(2)

Title I, Part A funds on a schoolwide campus may be used only to support activities identified by the comprehensive needs assessment and described in the campus improvement plan. Federal law is quoted below.

Any eligible school that desires to operate a schoolwide program shall first develop (or amend) a comprehensive plan for reforming the total instructional program in the school. This plan must be developed (or amended) in consultation with the local educational agency and its school support team or other technical assistance provider under section 1117 of P.L. 107-110. This plan must:

1. describe how the school will implement the ten (10) components of a schoolwide program;

2. describe how the school will use Title I, Part A resources and other sources to implement those components;

3. include a list of State educational agency and local educational agency programs and other Federal programs that will be combined to upgrade the entire educational schoolwide program; and

4. describe how the school will provide individual student academic assessment results in a language the parents can understand, including an interpretation of those results, to the parents of a child who participates in the academic assessments that include, at a minimum, academic assessments in mathematics, reading or language arts, and science beginning in school year 2007-2008.

PLAN DEVELOPMENT—The comprehensive plan shall be—

1. developed during a one-year period, unless —
I. the local educational agency, after considering the recommendation of the technical
assistance providers under section 1117, determines that less time is needed to develop
and implement the schoolwide program; or
II. the school is operating a schoolwide program on the day preceding the date of enactment
of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001, in which case such school may
continue to operate such program, but shall develop amendments to its existing plan
during the first year of assistance after that date to reflect compliance with NCLB
requirements.

2. developed with the involvement of parents and other members of the community to be served
and individuals who will carry out such plan, including teachers, principals, and
administrators (including administrators of programs in other parts of Title I), and, if
appropriate, pupil services personnel, technical assistance providers, school staff; and, if the
plan relates to a secondary school, students from such school;

3. in effect for the duration of the school’s participation in Title I, Part A and reviewed and
revised, as necessary, by the school;

4. available to the local educational agency, parents, and the public, and the information
contained in such plan shall be in an understandable and uniform format and, to the extent
practicable, provided in a language that the parents can understand; and

5. if appropriate, developed in coordination with programs under Reading First, Early Reading
First, Even Start, Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998, and the
Head Start Act.

Ten Components of a Schoolwide Program
P.L. 107-110, Section 1114(b)(1)

1. A comprehensive needs assessment of the entire school [including taking into account the
needs of migratory children as defined in section 1309(2)] that is based on information which
includes the achievement of children in relation to the State academic content standards and
the State student academic achievement standards described in section 1111(b)(1).

2. Schoolwide reform strategies that—
   i. provide opportunities for all children to meet the State’s proficient and advanced levels
of student academic achievement described in section 1111(b)(1)(D);
   ii. use effective methods and instructional strategies that are based on scientifically based
research that—
      I. strengthen the core academic program in the school;
      II. increase the amount and quality of learning time, such as providing an extended
school year and before- and after-school, and summer programs and
opportunities, and help provide an enriched and accelerated curriculum; and
      III. include strategies for meeting the educational needs of historically underserved
populations.
   iii. I. include strategies to address the needs of all children in the school, but particularly
the needs of low-achieving children and those at risk of not meeting the State
student academic achievement standards who are members of the target population of any program that is included in the schoolwide program, which may include—

(a) counseling, pupil services, and mentoring services;

(bb) college and career awareness and preparation, such as college and career guidance, personal finance education, and innovative teaching methods, which may include applied learning and team-teaching strategies; and

(cc) the integration of vocational and technical education programs; and

II. address how the school will determine if such needs have been met; and

(iv) are consistent with, and are designed to implement, the State and local improvement plans, if any.

3. Instruction by **highly qualified teachers**.

4. In accordance with section 1119 and subsection (a)(4), high-quality and ongoing **professional development** for teachers, principals, and paraprofessionals and, if appropriate, pupil services personnel, parents, and other staff to enable all children in the school to meet the State’s student academic achievement standards.

5. Strategies to attract high-quality **highly qualified teachers** to high-need schools.

6. Strategies to increase **parental involvement** in accordance with section 1118, such as family literacy services.

7. Plans for assisting preschool children in the **transition from early childhood programs**, such as Head Start, Even Start, Early Reading First, or a State-run preschool program, to local elementary school programs.

8. Measures to **include teachers in the decisions** regarding the use of academic assessments described in section 1111(b)(3) in order to provide information on, and to improve, the achievement of individual students and the overall instructional program.

9. Activities to ensure that students who experience difficulty mastering the proficient or advanced levels of academic achievement standards required by section 1111(b)(1) shall be provided with effective, timely additional assistance which shall include measures to ensure the students' difficulties are identified on a timely basis and to provide sufficient information on which to base effective assistance.

10. Coordination and integration of Federal, State, and local services and programs, including programs supported under this Act, violence prevention programs, nutrition programs, housing programs, Head Start, adult education, vocational and technical education, and job training.

The Agency must review the school district's Title I, Part A parental involvement policies and practices to determine if the policies and practices meet the requirement of section 1118. [P.L. 107-110, Section 1118(h)]

For additional information regarding Title I, Part A schoolwide programs and plans, please contact the **Division of Student Support Programs at (512) 463-9374**.
V. Leadership Roles and Administrative Procedures

Under the TEC, a clear and consistent statutory linkage exists between educational accountability criteria, district and campus planning and decision-making requirements, and legal mandates for public disclosure of performance information. Therefore, it is suggested that responsibility be assigned at all levels of educational leadership to ensure that effective school improvement is occurring. The TEC includes specific role definitions for educational leaders including school boards, superintendents, principals, and committees with respect to planning and decision-making processes and requirements for public accountability for student performance.

The Board's Role in Improving Student Performance

Under state law, the local board of trustees is responsible for ensuring that district and campus improvement plans for each campus are developed, reviewed, and revised annually for the purpose of improving the performance of all students (TEC §11.251). The local board must annually approve district and campus performance objectives. The board is also responsible for ensuring that the district and campus plans are mutually supportive and that each plan supports state goals and objectives (TEC §11.251).

Board policy must be adopted to establish a district and campus planning and decision-making process, and the board must establish a procedure under which committee meetings are held regularly. With active involvement of the district-level committee, the board must ensure that an administrative procedure is established to define the respective roles and responsibilities of the superintendent, central office staff, principals, teachers, and district and campus committees. The procedure must define the roles of each position in the areas of planning, budgeting, curriculum, staffing patterns, staff development, and school organization. The board, or the board’s designee, must periodically meet with the district-level committee to review the district-level committee’s deliberations (TEC §11.251).

Chapter 39 of the TEC, entitled Public School System Accountability, provides detailed information for school boards in the area of public school system accountability. Subchapter C of Chapter 39 discusses academic excellence indicators, campus report cards, and performance reporting.

Campus report cards must be disseminated by the district to the parent, guardian, conservator, or other person with lawful control of each student on each campus. The campus report cards must include information on the academic excellence indicators, student/teacher ratios, and administrative and instructional costs per student (TEC §39.052).

House Bill 2172, enacted by the 76th Legislature, amended §39.053 (a) by adding an additional item, (3), for inclusion in the annual performance report. Section 39.053(a) now reads:

(a) Each board of trustees shall publish an annual report describing the educational performance of the district and of each campus in the district that includes uniform student performance and descriptive information as determined under rules adopted by the commissioner. The annual report must also include:
(1) campus performance objectives established under Section 11.253 and the progress of each campus toward those objectives, which shall be available to the public;

(2) the performance rating for the district as provided under Section 39.072(a) and the performance rating of each campus in the district as provided under Section 39.072(c);

(3) the district’s current special education compliance status with the agency;

(4) a statement of the number, rate, and type of violent or criminal incidents that occurred on each district campus, to the extent permitted under the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (20 U.S.C.S. Section 1232g);

(5) information concerning school violence prevention and violence intervention policies and procedures that the district is using to protect students;

(6) the findings that result from evaluations conducted under the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act of 1994 (20 U.S.C.S. Section 701 et seq.) and its subsequent amendments; and

(7) information received under Section 51.403(e) for each high school campus in the district, presented in a form determined by the commissioner.

The annual performance report for the district must be published and must include comparisons of district and campus performance to their previous performance and to state-established standards. It must include a statement of the amount of the district's unencumbered surplus fund balance, if any, as of the last day of the preceding fiscal year and the percentage of the preceding year’s budget that surplus represents. The annual report must also include the district’s current special education compliance status with the agency (TEC §39.053). The Agency will provide a report to the district including a comparison of each campus to its previous performance and to state-established standards.

The board must hold an annual hearing for public discussion of the annual performance report. It is required that the board of trustees give notice of the hearing to property owners in the district and to parents, guardians, conservators, or other persons with lawful control of district students. The notification must include notice to a newspaper of general circulation in the district and notice to electronic media serving the district. After the hearing, the report must be widely disseminated throughout the district (TEC §39.053).

The local school board also has a clear role in approving any district or campus requests for waivers from state law or rule. The commissioner of education may approve waivers to provide flexibility for innovative approaches. However, first the local board must approve waivers prior to submission for the commissioner's approval. The written waiver application must include written comments from the campus- or district-level committee (TEC §7.056). Any waiver pertaining to campus-based staff development must be based on the staff development developed and approved by the campus-level planning and decision-making committee (TEC §21.451). It is also possible for local boards to provide a policy-based procedure for approving waivers from local district policies that may assist campuses in restructuring initiatives.
These major educational leadership responsibilities have implications for board member training. All board members have the responsibility of attending a training course in accordance with provisions by the State Board of Education (TEC §11.159). Many interrelated laws and rules provide for board leadership and accountability for student performance, planning with the advice of district and campus committees, and public disclosure of performance ratings. Therefore, it is important for board members to participate in training activities as required under rules adopted by the State Board of Education, and it is advisable for board members to request board training to review state requirements and local district policies and procedures related to these topics.

The Superintendent's Role

The district's performance on the annual performance report must be a primary consideration in the evaluation of each district superintendent by the district's board of trustees, in accordance with statutory mandates. This puts the responsibility for overall student performance squarely on the shoulders of the superintendent.

To accomplish this ultimate and comprehensive responsibility, the superintendent has specific duties and authorities defined in state statute (TEC §11.201). These duties include:

- assuming administrative responsibility and leadership for the planning, operation, supervision, and evaluation of the education programs, services, and facilities of the district and for the annual performance appraisal of the district's staff;
- assuming administrative authority and responsibility for the assignment and evaluation of all personnel of the district other than the superintendent;
- making recommendations regarding the selection of personnel of the district other than the superintendent;
- initiating the termination or suspension of an employee or the non-renewal of an employee’s term contract;
- managing the day-to-day operations of the district as its administrative manager;
- preparing and submitting to the board of trustees a proposed budget (according to generally accepted accounting principles, State Board rules, and policies adopted by the board of trustees);
- preparing recommendations for policies to be adopted by the board of trustees and overseeing the implementation of adopted policies;
- developing or causing to be developed appropriate administrative regulations to implement policies established by the board of trustees;
- providing leadership for the attainment of student performance in the district based on the indicators adopted under Section 39.051 and other indicators adopted by the State Board of Education or the district's board of trustees;
• organizing the district’s central administration; and

• performing any other duties assigned by action of the board of trustees.

In addition to ensuring that local administrative procedures are provided to establish the district and campus planning and decision-making processes, the superintendent should ensure that the district-level committee holds at least one public meeting per year. The required meeting must be held after receipt of the annual district performance report from the Texas Education Agency for the purpose of discussing the performance of the district and the district performance objectives (TEC §11.252). This meeting may be combined with the board hearing for public discussion of the annual performance report required under TEC §39.053.

The superintendent is responsible for providing effective leadership for the district planning process and for ensuring that plans operate effectively in a way that causes student performance to improve. The board's designee is referenced in statute as the person responsible to periodically meet with the district-level planning and decision-making committee to review the committee’s deliberations. In practice, the board’s designee is usually the superintendent. The superintendent must regularly consult the district-level committee in the planning, operation, supervision, and evaluation of the district educational program (TEC §11.252).

At least every two years, each district must evaluate the effectiveness of the district’s decision-making and planning policies, procedures, and staff development activities related to district and campus planning and decision making to ensure that they are effectively structured to positively impact student performance (TEC §11.252). It would be appropriate for the district superintendent to ensure that this activity is undertaken.

The Principal’s Role

The principal’s role in the planning and decision-making process is also defined in state statute. The principal is charged with setting specific education objectives for his or her campus through the campus planning and decision-making process outlined in law, policy, and local procedures. The principal, with the assistance of the campus planning and decision-making committee, must annually develop, review, and revise the campus improvement plan (TEC §11.253). The purpose of the plan is to improve student performance for all student populations, including students in special education programs under Subchapter A, Chapter 29, with respect to the academic excellence indicators and any other appropriate performance measures for special needs populations. The information on the annual performance report must be a primary consideration in the campus planning (TEC §39.054).

The principal must ensure that each year, after receipt of the annual campus rating from the Agency, the campus-level committee holds at least one public meeting (TEC §11.253). The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the performance of the campus and the campus performance objectives. The principal must regularly consult the campus-level committee in the planning, operation, supervision, and evaluation of the campus educational program (TEC §11.253). The information on the annual performance report must also be a primary consideration in the annual evaluation of the campus principal (TEC §39.054).
**Composition of District and Campus Committees**

State statute requires that the district committee include elected district-level professional staff in addition to elected campus-based professionals. This is specified in the section of statute directly addressing the district committee that will meet periodically with the board or the board’s designee (TEC §11.251). It is also cross-referenced in the section in law on campus planning, clearly indicating that elected district-level professional staff should also be included in the campus committee membership (TEC §11.253). This allows for the possibility of election of professionals knowledgeable about special needs populations, federal requirements, and federal funding restrictions so they may be actively involved in the planning and decision-making processes. It may also provide an opportunity for linkage between the district and campus planning processes so plans are designed to be mutually supportive.

Some districts have raised concerns about including district-level professional staff in all campus committee meetings. Local district policy and procedures will need to address this concern. “District-level” staff does not necessarily refer to “central office” staff. The term “district-level” may be broadly defined in local policy to include any professional staff members who serve multiple campuses. Such staff members may or may not establish a base of operations in a central office location.

TEC §11.251(e) provides that, for both district- and campus-level committees, the elected professional staff must include at least two-thirds classroom teachers. There is no such ratio in statute addressing the proportion of professional staff versus other members (i.e., the business representative, parents, and other community members).

There is no allowance in statute for the inclusion of appointed professional staff as members of the committees. If districts wish to provide for input from non-elected professionals, they may establish sub-committees or invite other professionals to offer advisory input to committees based on their areas of expertise. The statute does not prohibit the board from establishing policies providing avenues for input from others, including students or paraprofessional staff, in district-or campus-level planning and decision making [TEC §11.251(g)].

Provisions in state law specify that representatives of the business representative, parents, and other community members be included in the district committee (TEC §11.251) and, by cross-reference, in each campus committee (TEC §11.253). Selection of the business representative and other community members must be conducted in a manner that provides for appropriate representation of the community’s diversity (TEC §11.251).
The following diagram illustrates the basic membership of the district- and campus-level committees.

**District- and Campus-Level Committee Compositions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2</th>
<th>• classroom teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>• other campus-level professional staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>• district-level professional staff</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

+ Selected Based on Local Policy

- Parents
- Community members
- A business representative

**Roles and Responsibilities of District and Campus Committees**

In each district, an administrative procedure must be provided to clearly define the respective roles and responsibilities of the superintendent, central office staff, principals, teachers, district-level committee members, and campus-level committee members in six areas (TEC §11.251). These are:

- Planning
- Budgeting
- Curriculum
- Staffing patterns
- Staff development
- School organization.

Several other district- and campus-level committee responsibilities are outlined in state statute. For example, a school district may choose not to use the appraisal process and performance criteria for teacher appraisal developed by the commissioner. In that event, the district’s appraisal process and performance criteria must be developed by the district and campus planning and decision-making committees and be adopted by the board of trustees (TEC §21.352).

If a district submits applications for campus or district waivers to the commissioner for approval, the applications must include written comments from the campus- or district-level planning and decision-making committee (TEC §7.056).

District policies and procedures must be established to ensure that systematic communication measures are in place to periodically obtain broad-based community, parent, and staff input to the district- and campus-level committees. Also, procedures should be in place to ensure that information is provided to those persons regarding the recommendations of the district- and campus-level committees. [TEC §11.252(e) and §11.253(g)].
Roles and Responsibilities of the District Committee

The board must ensure that the district-level planning and decision-making committee is actively involved in establishing the administrative procedure that defines the respective roles and responsibilities pertaining to planning and decision making at the district and campus levels (TEC §11.251).

The district-level committee is responsible for providing assistance to the district superintendent in the development, evaluation, and annual revision of a district improvement plan (TEC §11.252).

The district-level committee must provide comments on district-level waivers that are submitted to the board of trustees for approval prior to consideration by the commissioner [TEC §7.056(b)(2)].

In appraising teachers, if a district chooses not to use the appraisal process and performance criteria developed by the commissioner, the appraisal process and performance criteria must be developed by the district- and campus-level committees established under Section 11.251 (TEC §21.352).

The district-level committee must meet periodically with the board, or the board’s designee, to share their deliberations (TEC §11.251).

The district-level committee shall hold at least one public meeting per year. The required meeting shall be held after receipt of the annual district performance report from the agency for the purpose of discussing the performance of the district and the district performance objectives (TEC §11.252).

Statute requires that each district, with the advice of its district-level planning and decision-making committee, adopt a student code of conduct for the district (TEC §37.001).

A school district may use district-wide staff development developed and approved through the district-level decision-making process under TEC §11.251 as provided under TEC §21.451(c). In accordance with Section 21.451 (a) staff development (1) must include training in technology, conflict resolution, and discipline strategies, including classroom management, district discipline policies, and the student code of conduct adopted under Section 37.001 and Chapter 37; and (2) may include instruction as to what is permissible under law, including opinions of the United States Supreme Court, in regard to prayers in public school.

The district-level committee must address all pertinent federal planning requirements (TEC §11.251).

Roles and Responsibilities of the Campus Committee

The campus-level committee must provide assistance to the principal of each school campus in the development, review, and revision of the campus improvement plan. The purpose of input is improving student performance for all student populations, including students in special education programs under Subchapter A, Chapter 29, with respect to the academic excellence
indicators and any other appropriate performance measures for special needs populations (TEC §11.253).

In accordance with TEC §11.251(f), the campus-level planning process must address all pertinent federal planning requirements.

In accordance with TEC §11.253(e), the campus-level committee must be involved in decisions in the areas of planning, budgeting, curriculum, staffing patterns, staff development, and school organization.

The campus-level committee must approve the portion of the campus plan addressing staff development (TEC §21.451). Staff development must be predominantly campus based and related to achieving campus performance objectives established under TEC §11.253. Staff development provided by a school district must include training in technology, conflict resolution, and discipline strategies, including classroom management, district discipline policies, and the student code of conduct adopted under Section 37.001 and Chapter 37, and may include instruction as to what is permissible under law, including opinions of the United States Supreme Court, in regard to prayers in public school [TEC §21.451 (a)].

Each campus-level committee shall hold at least one public meeting per year. The required meeting shall be held after receipt of the annual campus rating from the agency to discuss the performance of the campus and the campus performance objectives (TEC §11.253).

Campus procedures must be established to ensure that systematic communications measures are in place to periodically obtain broad-based community, parent, and staff input and to provide information to those persons regarding the recommendations of the campus-level committees (TEC §11.253).

The campus-level committee must provide comments on campus-level waivers that are submitted to the board of trustees for approval prior to consideration by the commissioner (TEC §7.056).

If a local appraisal process and performance criteria are used, they must be developed by the district- and campus-level committees (TEC §21.352).

The campus-level planning and decision-making committee must determine the use of funds awarded to a school under the Texas Successful Schools Award System (TEC §39.094).
VI. Integrated Planning and Decision-Making Process

Under state statute the planning and decision-making process is presented as an integrated process (TEC 11.251). Planning is one of six specific decision-making areas in which the district- and campus-level committees are involved in accordance with local procedures. The other five areas include budgeting, curriculum, staffing patterns, staff development, and school organization. It is expected that the district- and campus-level committees will address the six areas as interrelated factors that contribute in a coordinated manner toward accomplishing school improvement efforts.

The state statute outlines key areas that must be addressed in district and campus planning (TEC §11.252 and §11.253). This section of the guide focuses on suggestions and options that local districts may consider as they work toward establishing integrated and effective planning and decision-making procedures.

**Integrated Planning**

State law stipulates that the district and campus plans must be *mutually supportive* to accomplish the identified objectives for improvement of student performance (TEC §11.251) and support the state goals and objectives. Therefore, procedures should be considered by which the district and campus planning and decision-making committees would have clearly established channels for communication and the opportunity to review each committee’s recommendations while revising the district and campus plans. Districts that have only one campus may have one committee to serve both district and campus levels and may develop one improvement plan to serve both the district and the campus levels [TEC §11.252(c)].

District policy must provide that all pertinent federal planning requirements are addressed through the district and campus planning process [TEC §11.251(f)]. Federal planning would include planning addressing the performance of students served in programs funded through federal sources, such as Career and Technology Education, Federal Title Programs, and Special Education.

District improvement plans must include provisions for a comprehensive assessment of the measurable performance of each group of students served by the district, including categories of ethnicity, socioeconomic status, sex, and populations served by special programs, including students in special education programs under Subchapter A, Chapter 29 [TEC §11.252(a)(1)].

Both district and campus plans must contain performance objectives for all appropriate academic excellence indicators for all students, including students in special education programs [TEC §11.252(a)(2) and TEC §11.253(d)(2)]. Likewise, district plans must have strategies for improvement of student performance that include:

- instructional methods for addressing the needs of student groups not achieving their full potential
- methods for addressing the needs of students for special programs, such as suicide prevention, conflict resolution, violence prevention, or dyslexia treatment programs;
- dropout reduction;
- integration of technology in instructional and administrative programs;
• discipline management;
• staff development for professional staff of the district;
• career education to assist students in developing the knowledge, skills, and competencies necessary for a broad range of career opportunities; and
• accelerated education [TEC §11.252(a)(3)].

District and campus improvement plans must include resources needed to implement strategies; staff responsible for ensuring strategy accomplishment; timelines for monitoring strategy implementation; and formative evaluation that determines periodically whether improvement is occurring [TEC §11.252(a)]. These components of planning will be discussed further in the section of this document addressing critical components of plans.

Each local board, with the assistance of its district-level committee, should carefully review local policy that provides procedures for the election of professional staff for the campus and district committees to ensure that a clear conduit for communication and coordination exists among the committees. It is advisable to establish a clearly defined procedure for district and campus committees to access the guidance and expertise of specialists knowledgeable of federal program and planning requirements. Careful construction of reciprocal channels of communication should result in well-coordinated efforts toward school improvement that are guided by complementary district and campus plans that effectively address the needs of all student populations, including those served by federal funds.

**Basic Assumptions About Effective Planning**

The basic assumptions regarding effective planning and identified critical components of plans are as follows:

• No single best "model" or process for planning exists; but critical components in both the development process and the structure of the plan should be addressed.

• Local district and campus plans should reflect the unique needs of the populations served and should address outcomes for all students.

• Goals should reflect the underlying philosophy that all students can learn and should serve to close the identified gaps in performance existing across various student populations.

• Goals and objectives should be driven by local, student-performance-based needs assessment data.

• Goals should be based on a long-range vision and should be developed to reflect multiple-year targeted outcomes for students (e.g., a five-year expectation to reach the state standards for each of the academic excellence indicators).

• Campus plans may be different in content and strategies from district plans, unless the district has only one campus at each level (elementary, middle school, high school). However, campus performance objectives and district performance objectives should be complementary and mutually supportive.
• Plans should take into consideration innovative structures and approaches and should initiate waiver requests, if needed, to facilitate meaningful improvements in student outcomes.

• Budgets should be developed in coordination with campus plans that include broad-based parameters regarding the allocation of resources. The parameters for the use of the budget should address the use of supplementary funds to which each campus is entitled based on the demographics of the students served. The resource component of the plan should indicate how funds and other resources will be used to accomplish established goals and objectives.

• Plans should include measurable checkpoints and incremental timelines to ensure that outcomes are monitored frequently.

• Formative (or frequent, ongoing) evaluation should provide the opportunity and basis for corrective actions during the implementation of the plans -- even if it becomes necessary to re-define objectives and strategies midstream.

• Summative (or annual) evaluation should be used to celebrate accomplishments as well as to define and initiate needed areas for change.

**The Planning Process**

Planning is an ongoing process. Needs assessments and revisions to plans should occur annually. Effective planning processes include the following steps:

1) Acquire governance support by ensuring that the local school board has approved policies outlining the district and campus planning and decision-making processes in accordance with state statute.

2) Ensure that board policy and local administrative procedures designate the procedures for election of both district- and campus-based professional staff members to the district and campus planning and decision-making committees. Provisions should be designated for the selection of the business representative, parents, and other community members at both district and campus levels. Also, ensure that procedures for selection of the business representative and other community members will result in committee membership that reflects the diversity of the community at both district and campus levels.

3) Follow local district policy, administrative procedures, and requirements of state statute to elect district and campus professionals for the district and campus committees. Follow local policy and administrative procedures to select the business representative, parents, and other community members for district and campus committees.

4) Ensure that all appropriate specialists, including staff knowledgeable of federal requirements, have an opportunity to provide input in the planning and decision-making process so the needs of special students are appropriately addressed in the development of performance objectives and strategies for improvement.

5) Conduct a comprehensive needs assessment, beginning with an analysis of the most current student performance on the academic excellence indicators for all student
populations tested. Assess the needs of special populations, including students in special education, with respect to appropriate, objective measures designated by the district and/or campus administration with input from the committees. Needs assessment information should be available for all student populations served by federal funds. It is also recommended that perceived needs of staff, the business representative, parents, and other community members be canvassed through some systematic process, e.g., phone or written surveys or focused group interviews.

6) Organize for planning. Provide appropriate background information and training for committee members to develop skills in brainstorming, problem solving, and consensus building. Select formats and procedures for developing plans. Set times and locations for committee work. Appoint skilled facilitators. Provide for adequate clerical support. Access needed materials, space, and equipment.

7) Conduct planning sessions. Collaboratively identify appropriate long-range goals and annual performance objectives. Develop action plans for implementation, including strategies, personnel assignments, timelines, and student-outcome related methods for incremental evaluation of the implementation of the plans. Ensure that the district and campus plans are mutually supportive and that campus strategies are coordinated to complement and support district strategies.

8) Identify resources necessary to accomplish performance objectives. If needed, conduct a cost-benefit analysis to provide support for prioritizing strategies and/or for generating additional resources with the assistance of parents, businesses, and community members, and state and federal agencies.

9) Complete the planning documents. Include performance objectives for all student populations served, strategies with sequential activities, incremental timelines for completion of activities, specific personnel assignments, resource allocations, and formative and summative evaluative criteria.

10) Develop formative evaluation criteria that allow for periodic measurement of specific student outcomes related to performance objectives.

11) Develop recommendations for a comprehensive budget aligned with strategies identified to accomplish stated performance objectives.

12) Ensure that a draft of the proposed plans has been made available for review to representatives of all stakeholder groups prior to final submission of the performance objectives to the board for approval.

13) Provide a review of the proposed district and campus performance objectives for board approval. It is also recommended that the board members receive an overview of district and campus plans so that they may provide community leadership and policy support for strategies and resource allocations recommended by the planning and decision-making committees.

14) After board approval of the performance objectives, disseminate plans to all district and campus staff, and make them available to parents, community, and the business
representative, parents, and other community members through established systematic channels.

15) Allocate adequate resources to accomplish the strategies. Assign specific staff members to guide implementation of each strategy and activity within each plan and to be responsible for periodic evaluation of the completion of activities throughout the school year. It is suggested that these personnel report progress regarding implementation of the strategies at least quarterly to the respective district- and campus-level committees.

16) Implement the plans, ensuring fidelity to the strategies outlined.

17) Monitor the ongoing implementation of each plan according to identified incremental timelines and formative evaluative criteria, and make adjustments as needed.

18) Evaluate the accomplishment of targeted performance objectives on an annual basis, following state requirements for public disclosure and input through public meetings.

Critical Components of Plans

State statute specifically designates the components that must be addressed in district and campus plans. It also states that district and campus plans must be mutually supportive to accomplish the identified objectives and that all pertinent federal planning requirements must be addressed through the district and campus planning process (TEC §11.251). It is essential for every district-level planning and decision-making committee to be aware of the critical planning components that are identified by law. For campus and district plans to be mutually supportive, campus-level committees must be aware of the components of the district plan so that the campus plans may be designed to assist in accomplishing the district performance objectives through consistent strategies and coordinated resource and staff allocations.

The following critical components of district and campus improvement plans may be included. Components should be appropriate for ages, grade levels, and specific characteristics of the students served within the districts’ and campuses’ educational programs.

Mission Statement

Each school district and campus usually develops its own unique mission statement that focuses on the shared beliefs of the educational staff, parents, and community members. A mission statement typically is a concise statement of purpose and function of the organization that can be easily understood and adopted by all students, parents, educational staff, and community members. It is intended to set a broad standard by which the activities of the district or school may be consistently guided over time. It usually contains or is followed by statements of generally held beliefs that fortify the mission.

While a mission statement is not specifically required under state law, it is required that district and campus plans, at a minimum, support the goals and objectives in state law [TEC §11.251(a)(2)].

The mission of the Texas Education Agency is “to build the capacity of the Texas public education system to provide all students a quality education that enables them to achieve their
potential and fully participate now and in the future in the social, economic, and educational opportunities of our state and nation.”

Texas has four academic and two Career and Technology Education goals. The academic goals are:

1. The students in the public education system will demonstrate exemplary performance in the reading and writing of the English language.
2. The students in the public education system will demonstrate exemplary performance in the understanding of mathematics.
3. The students in the public education system will demonstrate exemplary performance in the understanding of science.
4. The students in the public education system will demonstrate exemplary performance in the understanding of social studies.

The Career and Technology Education goals are: Each public school student shall master the basic skills and knowledge necessary for:

1. managing the dual roles of family member and wage earner
2. gaining entry-level employment in a high-skill, high-wage job or continuing the student’s education at the postsecondary level.

The state priority goal for education for public schools is “To ensure that all students in the public educational system learn to read at grade level by the end of the third grade, continue reading at grade level, and demonstrate exemplary performance in foundation subjects, and acquire the knowledge and skills needed to be responsible and independent Texans.” (Agency Strategic Plan For the 1999-2003 Period, Texas Education Agency, June 1998)

Comprehensive Needs Assessment

Prior to setting long-range goals or measurable district or campus performance objectives, effective district and campus planning and decision-making teams should review the most current, accurate needs assessment information available. Teams use this review to determine the effectiveness of educational programs for each and every student population served. State statute regarding district planning specifically calls for a comprehensive needs assessment addressing student performance on academic excellence indicators and other appropriate measures of performance. The results must be disaggregated with respect to the performance of all student groups served, including categories of ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, and populations served by special programs, including students in special education programs under Subchapter A, Chapter 29 (TEC §11.252). State law indicates that campus-level committees must assess the academic achievement for each student in the school using the academic excellence indicator system (TEC §11.253).
Sections 11.252 and 11.253 of the TEC were amended by the 76th Legislature to ensure the inclusion of students in special education programs as defined under Subchapter A, Chapter 29. According to TEC §29.003 (b), a student is eligible to participate in a school district’s special education program if the student:

(1) is not more than 21 years of age and has a visual or auditory impairment that prevents the student from being adequately or safely educated in public school without the provision of special services; or

(2) is at least three but not more than 21 years of age and has one or more of the following disabilities that prevents the student from being adequately or safely educated in public school without the provision of special services:

(A) physical disability;
(B) mental retardation;
(C) emotional disturbance;
(D) learning disability;
(E) autism;
(F) speech disability; or
(G) traumatic brain injury.

The needs assessment may involve reviewing and analyzing multiple types of data. The needs assessment may include, and extend beyond, the following:

- student performance on the academic excellence indicators, disaggregated by grade level, subject, classroom, gender, ethnicity, economic status, language differences, and qualification for participation in special programs
- other current, quantitative measures of program outcomes, such as the results of norm-referenced or criterion-referenced tests selected and administered locally
- locally developed measures of student performance, such as teacher-made assessments of essential curriculum outcomes or student behavior
- indicators of expected and actual outcomes for students in special programs that are typically exempt from measures used in the academic excellence indicators (e.g., students in early childhood, special education, migrant programs, kindergarten through second grade, and programs for those who are limited English proficient)
- surveys or group evaluations indicating the perceptions of staff, parents, community members, and students regarding the effectiveness of school programs and services
- description of organizational, physical, equipment, staff, materials, and other resource needs available to support improvement initiatives
- predicted needs based on projected enrollment, demographic trends, legislative impact, and state and community political and economic events
A needs assessment does not rest with simply gathering information. An analysis of the patterns and trends within and across multiple sources of data must be conducted by a team of knowledgeable practitioners. These practitioners represent the various areas of expertise needed to dissect and reconstruct all the pieces of the complex puzzle that work together to comprise the operational instructional delivery system.

An effective needs assessment entails one more step, a process that is the critical linkage between examination of data and development of effective strategies. It is suggested that the planning team decipher probable causal factors. These factors may be contributing to low performance in particular subject areas, low attendance rates, or high dropout rates for specific student populations. Although this is not mentioned under statute, it is considered to be good practice to conduct a determination of causal factors.

The team should identify the probable causes and, if possible, verify that, in fact, they are clear antecedents to the specific areas of need identified. Without completing this important step, the team may discover that the solutions (or strategies for improvement) may be misguided and ineffective. The accumulated summary of patterns of information and the clear isolation of probable contributing factors will provide a useful background for developing feasible improvement activities and making effective decisions during the implementation phase of the improvement plan.

A Title I schoolwide program should include a comprehensive needs assessment of the entire school that is based on information on the performance of children in relation to the state content standards and student performance standards.

For secondary campuses, the state’s educational accountability system is designed to ensure that schools are not rewarded for high TAAS performance at the expense of losing an inordinately high number of students as dropouts. If a middle school or high school demonstrates high TAAS performance, yet also allows many at-risk students (usually minority and/or economically disadvantaged) to leave the educational system, a resulting high annual and cumulative dropout rate will indicate the failure of the system to achieve both equity and excellence.

It is important for districts and district communities to conduct a thorough needs assessment with respect to the dropout rate. Such a needs assessment may include the following:

- analysis of the dropout rate for different student populations, e.g. by gender, number of years overage, ethnicity, special program assignment, language difference, economic status, involvement (or lack thereof) in extracurricular activities, and/or whether students are pregnant or parents
- analysis of specific characteristics of at-risk populations on the campus that may be related to causal factors impacting the dropout rate (e.g., repeated course failures, evidence of abuse or neglect, evidence of association with drug or alcohol abuse, repeated absences due to chronic health problems, etc.)
- analysis of program or instructional factors that may inadvertently contribute to the dropout rate
• a summary of the analysis of characteristics of students who actually dropped out in the past 1-3 years from the specific campus, reasons cited for dropping out, follow-up recovery efforts made, and identification of successful recovery strategies

• analyses of disciplinary incidences for disaggregated populations; placements in disciplinary alternative education programs (DAEPs) or juvenile justice alternative education programs (JJAEPs); suspensions and expulsions; and their impacts on school leavers.

When conducting needs assessments, all student populations including students in special education programs must be considered. Districts are reminded of the increased focus of the state on students in special education programs. New legislation (HB 2172) passed during the 76th Legislative Session and effective as of September 1, 1999, amended TEC § 39.073 Determining Accreditation Status to include Subsection (e). This inclusion states that the agency shall consider the district’s current special education compliance status with the agency in determining a district’s accreditation rating. Section 39.072 was also amended by HB 2172 to state that the special education compliance status and the academic excellence indicators adopted under Sections 39.051(b)(1) through (6) shall be the main considerations of the agency in the rating of the district under the section on accreditation standards. (TEC § 39.072 contains two passages identified as (b). Please refer to Chapter 39, Subchapter D in its entirety for assistance in determining accreditation status.)

Long-Range Goals

Long-range goals are broad statements of expected outcomes that are consistent with the belief statements, vision, or philosophy of the organization and the stated mission. The state’s public education goals are for students in the public education system to demonstrate exemplary performance in reading and writing the English language and understanding mathematics, science, and social studies.

Although state statute references the role of the superintendent in respect to educational goals, the statutory section on district and campus planning and decision making does not specifically designate goals as a component of the planning process. If local goals are identified and stated in more precise, measurable language than those of the state goals, they will provide more specific guidance to the organization.

District and campus long-range educational goals typically are focused on desired outcomes for students and are usually projected for a three- to five-year period. They may, at a minimum, address the state standards for the academic excellence indicators and may include other local priorities as well. They are usually reviewed and, if needed, revised annually, based on the most current, accurate needs assessment data of the local district or campus. Long-range goals typically are both strategic in nature and limited in number to provide direction and focus. New provisions in state statute (TEC §11.253) require campus goals to address violence prevention and intervention on campus and programs to encourage parental involvement.
**District and Campus Performance Objectives**

District and campus performance objectives identify specific, measurable, expected results or outcomes for all student populations served. These objectives target observable behaviors that provide indicators for student performance.

State statute requires all districts to adopt measurable district performance objectives for all appropriate academic excellence indicators for all student populations, appropriate objectives for special needs populations, including students in special education programs under Subchapter A, Chapter 29, and other measures of student performance that may be identified through the comprehensive needs assessment (TEC §11.252). District performance objectives should be logically related to campus performance objectives and provide direction and support for campus improvement initiatives.

The district and campus performance objectives within the plans should first address all appropriate academic excellence indicators. At the elementary campus level, the pertinent indicators would be attendance and student performance on the TAAS reading, math, and written expression exams for all students and for groups of students who are Hispanic, African American, White, and economically disadvantaged. Where other identified populations (e.g., students in Title I programs, migrant students, or non-exempted special education or limited English proficient students) participate in the administration of the TAAS, expected performance of those populations should also be identified in district and campus performance objectives.

Performance objectives for middle schools that serve students who are seventh graders or above and for high schools should address the dropout rate in addition to TAAS results and attendance. At the high school level, consideration should be given to the percent of students who take college entry exams and the percent who meet state criteria for performance on the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) and the American College Test (ACT). Dropout rates and, where available, SAT/ACT participation and performance could be targeted as performance objectives for special populations when the comprehensive needs assessment indicates a need for improvement for those groups.

As the state's assessment and accountability systems continue to develop and expand, other indicators will need to be addressed. These may include the percent of students who meet course requirements established by the State Board of Education for the recommended high school program and the level of student performance on the end-of-course exams to be administered at the secondary level. Results on the Spanish TAAS and the reading proficiency test in English (RPTE) should be monitored. Alternative assessments should be administered to students exempted from the TAAS. These results should also be evaluated through the comprehensive needs assessment and should provide direction for appropriate performance objectives for these populations.

The Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) report provided annually from the Agency to districts and campuses will display performance information that is disaggregated by student groups by ethnicity and economic differences. To ensure equitable outcomes for all students, district performance objectives will need to address improvement for any specific groups of students served under state or federal funding categories. This would include migrant students, students who are limited in English proficiency, and students who are served under funds for special education and Title I federal programs.
The Commissioner of Education sets the campus accountability standards or expected levels of performance, for each of the academic excellence indicators. For example, for a district to be acknowledged by the state as Exemplary, it must demonstrate that 90% of all students and each group of students (African American, Hispanic, White, and economically disadvantaged) have passed the TAAS exams in every subject area across all grades that were tested. Standards are set for each academic excellence indicator to identify Exemplary, Recognized, Academically Acceptable/Acceptable, and Academically Unacceptable/Low Performing accountability ratings. It is expected that all districts and campuses will strive for the highest levels of performance and will maintain at least an increment of annual improvement to attain the state's educational goals of Exemplary status. As district and campus committees recommend the establishment of annual district and campus performance objectives, it is important that campus accountability standards be considered.

The following table provides an overview of the standard and alternative education accountability ratings criteria for 2001-02.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Campuses Covered</th>
<th>*Standard Accountability</th>
<th>*Alternative Accountability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Applicable to all campuses other than those registered for and eligible to receive an alternative education accountability rating.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>ONLY applicable to campuses that register for and are eligible to receive an alternative education accountability rating. Registration is required annually.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ratings Issued</strong></td>
<td><strong>Exemplary</strong></td>
<td><strong>Commended</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recognized</strong></td>
<td><strong>Acceptable</strong></td>
<td><strong>Needs Peer Review</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Academically Acceptable/Acceptable</strong></td>
<td><strong>Not Rated</strong></td>
<td><strong>Not Rated</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Academically Unacceptable/Low-performing</strong></td>
<td><strong>Special Circumstances</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Academically Unacceptable: Special Accreditation Investigation</strong></td>
<td><strong>Suspended: Data Inquiry</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Not Rated: PK/K</strong></td>
<td><strong>Not Rated: Charter</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Not Rated: Data Quality</strong></td>
<td><strong>Not Rated</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Standard Accountability</strong></td>
<td><strong>Alternative Accountability</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TAAS Passing Rates</strong></td>
<td><em>Exemplary</em> -- at least 90.0% passing each of R, M, W (&quot;all students&quot; and each student group) and 90.0% passing SS (&quot;all students&quot;)</td>
<td><em>Commended</em> -- at least 30.0% passing each of R and M (all students and each student group)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spring 2002</strong></td>
<td><em>Recognized</em> -- at least 80.0% passing each of R, M, W (&quot;all students&quot; and each student group) and 80.0% passing SS (&quot;all students&quot;)</td>
<td><em>Acceptable</em> -- at least 30.0% passing each of R and M (all students)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Acceptable</em> -- at least 55.0% passing each of R, M, W (&quot;all students&quot; and each student group) and 50.0% passing SS (&quot;all students&quot;)</td>
<td><em>Needs Peer Review</em> -- below 30.0% passing in R or M (all students)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Low-performing</em> – below 55.0% passing in any of R, M, W (&quot;all students&quot; or any student group) or below 50.0% passing SS (&quot;all students&quot;)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2000-2001 Dropout Rate</strong></td>
<td><em>Exemplary</em> – 1.0% or less (&quot;all students&quot; and each student group)</td>
<td><em>Commended</em> – 6.0% or less (all students and each student group)</td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>Recognized</em> – 2.5% or less (&quot;all students&quot; and each student group)</td>
<td><em>Acceptable</em> – 10.0% or less (all students)</td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>Academically Acceptable/Acceptable</em> – 5.0% or less (&quot;all students&quot; and each student group)</td>
<td><em>Needs Peer Review</em> – above 10.0% (all students)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Academically Unacceptable/Low-performing</em> – above 5.0% (all students or any student group)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2000-2001 Student Attendance</strong></td>
<td>Not included as a Base Indicator</td>
<td><em>Commended</em> – 94.0% or higher (all students)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Acceptable</em> – 80.0% or higher (all students)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Needs Peer Review</em> – below 80.0% (all students)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TLI Growth</strong></td>
<td>Not included as a Base Indicator</td>
<td><em>Commended</em> – 85.0% of all students with current and previous TAAS scores must demonstrate TLI growth</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Acceptable</em> – Not a Base Indicator</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Additional Base Indicators</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Acceptable or Commended</em> – Percentage or average number of courses/credits passed,</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage of students demonstrating growth on TLI,</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage of students who are promoted or graduate,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Standard Accountability</strong></td>
<td><strong>Alternative Accountability</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Percentage of students passing Exit level TAAS retakes,</td>
<td>Not Rated – less than 10 long-term students for the school year</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Percentage of students who complete requirements for GED certificate,</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Percentage of GED sections passed by students</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Special Circumstances**

- Special Analysis for Small Numbers of Students – used to assign standard ratings to districts and campuses with less than 30 students tested.
- Pairing – campuses with no TAAS data due to grade span served are paired with a feeder campus in the district for accountability purposes.

**Ratings Issued**

- August 2002
- August 2002

*Excerpts from the 2001 Accountability and 2002 Alternative Accountability Manuals*

Performance objectives for the academic excellence indicators alone will not provide sufficient direction for instructional programs serving students who do not participate in the TAAS administration (e.g., pre-kindergarten, kindergarten through second grade students, or students who are exempted due to limited English proficiency or special education needs). Therefore, local districts will need to identify appropriate outcome measures for such groups of students. It is recommended that, when possible, standardized measures be used to ensure that student progress is accurately tracked from entry to exit at least on an annual basis.


Performance objectives for the academic excellence indicators alone will not provide sufficient direction for instructional programs serving students who do not participate in the TAAS administration (e.g., pre-kindergarten, kindergarten through second grade students, or students who are exempted due to limited English proficiency or special education needs). Therefore, local districts will need to identify appropriate outcome measures for such groups of students. It is recommended that, when possible, standardized measures are used to ensure that student progress is accurately tracked from entry to exit at least on an annual basis.
Strategies are statements that indicate how available resources will be used to accomplish identified long-range goals and annual performance objectives. Strategies may address the use of organizational, physical plant, spatial, material, political, human, fiscal, technological, and/or informational resources. Strategies should link the selected measurable performance objectives to accomplish the desired district or campus long-range goals. Effective strategies are characterized by the following:

- Strategies address broad improvement initiatives by outlining changes in district and campus operations and support activities that are expected to result in significantly improved outcomes for specifically targeted populations.

- Strategies include sequential activities or tasks that will result in specifically identified changes in knowledge, skills, or attitudes of educators, parents, community members, and, either directly or indirectly, of students.

- Strategies include, where appropriate, use of available community, regional, state, or federal options for effective support of local flexibility (e.g., waivers from state laws, coordination of regional health services, support from local community service providers).

At the campus level, strategies must address methods for violence prevention and intervention on campus. Campus strategies must also address a program to encourage parental involvement [TEC §11.253(d)]. Strategies within effective district plans address the areas required in state law. These include instructional methods for addressing the needs of student groups not achieving to their full potential. They also include methods for addressing the needs of students in special programs, such as suicide prevention, conflict resolution, violence prevention, or dyslexia treatment programs (TEC §11.252).

In addition, dropout reduction and prevention strategies must be addressed in district plans. Strategies and activities may be identified that have proved to be successful on specific campuses or that are indicated in research. New initiatives or activities may expand upon or provide alternative approaches to those already used to prevent and/or recover dropouts. It is suggested that improvement strategies for dropout prevention involve joint efforts from a variety of stakeholders who might include any or all of the following:

- members of the site-based decision-making team of each campus
- school counselor(s)
- school health professional(s)
- parents of students in at-risk situations
- students in at-risk situations
- specialists (e.g., vocational education, special education, bilingual education, and migrant teachers)
- community employers
- community service providers.
Other strategies that must be addressed in district plans include:

- the integration of technology in instructional and administrative programs
- provisions for the improvement of discipline management
- staff development for professional staff
- career education to assist students in developing the knowledge, skills, and competencies necessary for a broad range of career opportunities
- accelerated education (TEC §11.252)
- information on higher education admissions, financial aid opportunities, grant programs, and curriculum choice.

Resource Allocation

If plans are realistically conceived, the planning committee will give practical consideration to the resources needed to accomplish the stated objectives. This is particularly important if resources are scarce and additional funds are needed from community, business, or state sources. When planning committees take time to estimate resource requirements and project related costs and benefits associated with objectives, often alternative solutions or sources of assistance can be identified. Another benefit of identifying needed resources is that different campuses may discover shared resource needs and thus may pool efforts to acquire such commonly desired resources.

Effective district and campus plans contain the following provisions with respect to resources:

- Appropriately certified and trained staff members are assigned to accomplish the initiatives and strategies included in the plan.

- Clearly specified assessments of the costs for implementing new initiatives, and evidence indicates that the budget has been developed (or adjusted) to support the implementation of the plan.

- Priorities are identified for financial support, and alternative sources have been identified and accessed to address any shortfall in resources.

- Adequate and appropriate space, materials, and equipment are addressed within the plan to accomplish the specified strategies.

- The source of funds for each strategy is identified. Funds must be budgeted consistently with program legal fiscal requirements. With respect to the use of federal funds on schoolwide programs, the fund source would be identified as a combination of federal fund sources, as appropriate.

- Supplemental direct costs and personnel attributed to compensatory education and accelerated instruction are identified in accordance with 19 Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §109.B.
Implementation

Provisions for implementation of the plan are clearly stated within the content of effective plans. Implementation components may include the following:

- Specific activities are listed sequentially under each strategy.
- For each activity, incremental timelines are provided by which accomplishment can be monitored on an ongoing basis throughout each month or instructional period.
- Assignments are clearly specified for individuals responsible for periodic evaluation of progress and for persons accountable for the accomplishment of each activity.
- Incremental progress reviews are scheduled for presentation to the planning and decision-making committees and the board.
- A specific expected result, measured in terms of student behaviors, attitudes, or skills, is targeted for each activity so it can be monitored on an ongoing basis.

Evaluation

Plans should be monitored frequently for several reasons. First, the planners, stakeholders (e.g., students and parents) and resource providers (e.g., taxpayers) will wish to know if the plan is being carried out as it was intended. Second, the implementers need to have some basis to determine if the plan is both realistic in its projected expectations and sufficiently supported. If not, corrective efforts may be introduced, if needed, at critical points in the implementation of the sequential activities for each objective. Third, implementers and stakeholders can celebrate successes and use evidence of completion of objectives to further refine goals and justify future support for resources. For all these reasons, it is important for plans to include well-conceived evaluation criteria for each activity listed under each measurable objective.

The evaluation phase of the planning, decision-making, implementation, and evaluation cycle has two basic components: formative and summative evaluation activities. The formative, or frequent, ongoing evaluation activities should be guided by expected results and incremental timelines associated with the activities developed to accomplish the performance objectives. The summative, or annual, evaluation is conducted to assess the degree to which the district or campus actually accomplished the school year’s targeted performance objectives.

Formative Evaluation

The purpose of formative evaluation is to provide the opportunity and basis for corrective actions during the implementation phase. The evaluation should be tied to the initial assessment of student performance and should be based on the board-approved performance objectives. Evaluation measures assist in monitoring expected outcomes frequently and with specificity in the following ways:

- Measurable outcomes for each activity are identified with respect to expected knowledge, skills, or attitudes that students will acquire.
• Short-term outcomes (e.g., weekly, monthly, or by instructional periods) are included for each population for whom performance objectives have been identified.

Formative evaluation may take many forms. Some examples follow. They may or may not be appropriate to the needs of your school or district. If the local needs assessment and performance objectives address these areas, they may be pertinent examples.

• quarterly summary reports on academic excellence indicators that are measurable at frequent intervals, e.g., attendance rates and dropout rates disaggregated by gender, ethnicity, economic status, special program assignment, and courses or classes

• results on locally-developed performance measures for special needs populations acquired during each grading period

• interim survey response summaries of the perceptions of program and service recipients (e.g., students or parents in pilot programs)

• frequency counts of different types of disciplinary incidents within a specific period desegregated by gender, ethnicity, economic status, special program assignment, and courses or classes

• disaggregated patterns of placements in disciplinary AEPs or JJAEPs, suspensions and expulsions

• participation rates of students in different types of extracurricular activities desegregated by gender, ethnicity, economic status, and special program assignment

• samples of portfolio entries for targeted students in pilot projects initiated as a result of the planning and decision-making process

• video or other media presentations of events that have occurred as a result of the completion of activities within the plan.

Formative evaluation measures are intended to allow for ongoing feedback to educational staff so they may determine if the day-by-day instructional strategies are resulting in intended results. This feedback provides an opportunity for modifications, if needed, in a timely manner.

**Summative Evaluation**

The results of annual summaries of district and campus accomplishments may be used both to note accomplishments and to define and initiate needed areas for change. The annual performance report is one example of a summative evaluation report. Student performance on the academic excellence indicators is included in the annual evaluation.

Other examples of annual measures of performance are provided below. They are cited as possible measures that may be considered. However, they are not necessarily appropriate to all educational programs. Many annual evaluative measures may be chosen, depending on the
district or campus needs assessment and identified performance objectives. Examples of summative evaluative measures are the:

- percent of students at each grade level (Grades 7-12), by gender, ethnicity, economic status, and program assignment, who dropped out of school during the school year for a period of time sufficient to prohibit passing courses or being promoted to the next grade

- percent of students served in early childhood programs who exited the programs at an assessed readiness level sufficient to participate successfully with age-level peers in the regular educational program

- principal or other professional staff appraisals tied to the accomplishment of campus performance objectives

- perceptions of the business representative concerning the readiness of exiting graduates for the workplace

- number or percent of the graduating class that obtained scholarships for enrollment in institutes of higher learning

- percent of students at each grade level, by gender, ethnicity, economic status, and program assignment, who were passed to the next grade

- percent of students with disabilities who were dismissed from special education programs based on evidence that they are functioning successfully on or above grade level in non-special education programs

- district’s current special education compliance status with the agency

- percent of students who passed the Spanish TAAS disaggregated by grade level

- percent of students involved in disciplinary incidents disaggregated by types of offenses, frequency of offenses, ethnicity, gender, economic status, program assignment, and grade level.

Summative evaluation measures are intended to summarize the cumulative results for the year. They will typically provide a basis for, or augment the annual needs assessment to guide revisions to the planning and strategies for the coming year.

**Requirements for District Plans**

In accordance with TEC §11.252, each district improvement plan must include provisions for:

1) a comprehensive needs assessment addressing district student performance on the academic excellence indicators, and other appropriate measures of performance, that are disaggregated by all student groups served by the district, including categories of ethnicity, socioeconomic status, sex, and populations served by special programs, including students in special education programs under Subchapter A, Chapter 29;
2) measurable district performance objectives for all appropriate academic excellence indicators for all student populations, including students in special education programs under Subchapter A, Chapter 29, and other measures of student performance that may be identified through the comprehensive needs assessment;

3) strategies for improvement of student performance that include:
   - instructional methods for addressing the needs of student groups not achieving to their full potential;
   - methods for addressing the needs of students for special programs, such as suicide prevention, conflict resolution, violence prevention, or dyslexia treatment programs;
   - dropout reduction;
   - integration of technology in instructional and administrative programs;
   - discipline management;
   - staff development for professional staff of the district;
   - career education to assist students in developing the knowledge, skills, and competencies necessary for a broad range of career opportunities; and
   - accelerated education.

4) strategies for providing to middle school, junior high school, and high school students, those students’ teachers and counselors, and those students’ parents information about:
   - higher education admissions and financial aid opportunities;
   - the TEXAS grant program and the Teach for Texas grant program established under Subchapter M, Chapter 56;
   - the need for students to make informed curriculum choices to be prepared for success beyond high school; and
   - sources of information on higher education admissions and financial aid;

5) resources needed to implement identified strategies;

6) staff responsible for ensuring the accomplishment of each strategy;

7) timelines for ongoing monitoring of implementation of each improvement strategy; and

8) formative evaluation criteria for determining periodically whether strategies are resulting in intended improvement of student performance.
Requirements for Campus Plans

State statute outlines the specific components that must be included in the campus improvement plan. The components for campus plans are not as elaborately described in statute as are those for district plans. Since campus and district plans must be mutually supportive, it is essential to ensure that assessment areas, objectives, strategies, and evaluation components for campus plans reflect consideration of those in the district plan.

In accordance with state requirements, each campus improvement plan must:

1) assess academic achievement for each student in the school using the academic excellence indicator system as described by Section 39.051;

2) set campus performance objectives based on the academic excellence indicator system, including objectives for special needs populations, including students in special education programs under Subchapter A, Chapter 29;

3) identify how campus goals will be met for each student;

4) determine resources needed to implement the plan;

5) identify staff needed to implement the plan;

6) set timelines for reaching the goals;

7) measure progress toward the performance objectives periodically to ensure that the plan is resulting in academic improvement;

8) include goals and methods for violence prevention and intervention on campus; and

9) provide for a program to encourage parental involvement at the campus.

Considerations for local implementation pertaining to mutual support of district and campus plans include the following:

- How can the committees ensure that they are proceeding from the same data when conducting needs assessments?

- What procedures could be established to ensure that campus performance objectives are approved in concert with the approval of district objectives?

- How can district- and campus-level committees coordinate the development of strategies so they are mutually supportive?

An integrated planning process results in a powerful intervention district wide. When district and campus objectives are aligned, and strategies are coordinated, staff will be focusing instructional energies in common directions. It is expected that such coordination will promote higher achievement for all student populations.
VII. Considerations for Local Implementation

This section is provided to assist educators in deciding how they may wish to revise local district and campus planning and decision-making processes to make them more effective. Also, these ideas may assist committees during their ongoing implementation. First, this section contains suggestions pertaining to committee membership, some optional considerations regarding local policies and procedures governing the make-up of district- and campus-level committees, and suggested procedures for establishing effective communications channels. Following those suggestions are several sets of questions to assist committees in addressing the areas of budgeting, curriculum, staffing patterns, and school organization. Finally, this section provides educators with questions that may be considered with respect to the development of the student code of conduct, the appraisal process and criteria, waivers, and staff development.

Reviewing Committee Membership Policies

Provisions for district- and campus-level decision making campus have been evolving in state statute for a number of years. However, several factors in the requirements have remained constant. One constant factor is that professional staff serving on decision-making committees must be nominated and elected by other professional staff members. Another is that at least two-thirds of the elected professional staff must be classroom teachers. There is no state-designated ratio of professional staff versus non-staff members. Local policy defines how the other members (e.g., the business representative, parents, and other community members) are selected. Statute does not prohibit boards from establishing policies for means of receiving input from others, including students or paraprofessional staff, in planning and decision making at the district or campus level [TEC § 11.251 (g)(2)].

Local policies and administrative procedures must be developed and adopted to clarify the specific manner in which committees are structured. Procedures for the roles and responsibilities of the committees must be established by the administration, consistent with board policy, with the active involvement of the district-level committee (TEC §11.251). A number of issues must be taken into consideration when policies and procedures are designed. There are pros and cons to each decision.

Size of the Committee

As was indicated earlier, the committees must be comprised of elected professional staff and other members, including the business representative, parents, and other community members. Two-thirds of the elected professional staff must be classroom teachers. The professional staff must also include district-level staff. (This does not necessarily mean “central office” staff. District-level staff may be any professional staff member who is not assigned to one particular campus.) Although statute does not specify any certain ratio of professional staff to non-staff members, local districts may consider specifying such a ratio, if desired.

It is important to develop a system for election and selection of members that is both logical and streamlined. The focus should be on creating a representation of members that allows for effective consideration of student performance needs. Other considerations (e.g., representing the community’s diversity and providing linkage between campus and district committees) may tend to increase the size of the committee.
Representing Diversity

It is suggested that the board and administration give careful consideration to the policies and procedures for the selection of the business representative, parents, and other community members. Although statute requires that the business representative and other members represent the community’s diversity, it is suggested that parents also be selected to reflect the diverse needs of the student population. Consideration should also be given to gender as well as economic, cultural, racial, language, and geographic diversity.

With respect to election procedures for professional staff, many options are available. At-large elections may be the simplest procedure. However, at-large elections may not address adequate representation of all student populations. In considering balanced representation of all segments of the staff, some districts provide for “places” within the elective structure so that committee membership represents grade levels, instructional departments, or teaching teams within campuses. It is also possible to designate a specific elected position to represent professional staff with expertise in serving special needs populations. Setting such structures in place may facilitate widespread staff input into committee decision-making processes and thorough feedback to all staff. However, the “downside” to such an elaborate structure may be increasing the size of the committee beyond the parameters for maintaining effective problem solving.

To establish the district-level committee, some districts adopt policies that require election of professional staff from among those elected to serve on campus committees. Local policy may also provide that the district professionals represent elementary, middle, and high school level professional staff. The advantages to these procedures include possibly a more streamlined election procedure and the provision of built-in mechanisms for ensuring that district and campus plans are mutually supportive, as required by state statute (TEC §11.251). The disadvantages may be that certain specific professionals expend what may be perceived as unacceptably high amounts of time involved in committee activities and/or that the district-level committee becomes expanded to an unwieldy size.

Since the plans must address the needs of students receiving special education services, it is highly recommended that local procedures ensure representation of both staff and parents knowledgeable of the needs of this population.

Selection and Training of New Members

It is useful to consider a policy that provides for staggered terms of service for committee members. Such a provision may ensure the stability of the committee’s decision making over time. Whether staggered terms are used or not, it is probably wise to engage in team-building activities whenever new members join a committee.

Potential non-professional staff candidates may be solicited through newsletters distributed broadly to all appropriate community and business entities. Announcements of the request for candidates may be advertised in the local newspaper with a description of the expected responsibilities and the recommended qualifications of committee members. Nominees may be solicited from parent and teacher organizations or associations, the Chamber of Commerce, and other local businesses and community organizations. It may be useful to establish a panel of reviewers to interview and recommend candidates to the district and campus committees or the
board and administration. At the campus level, new legislation requires plans to “provide for a program to encourage parental involvement.” A critical first step in addressing this requirement is to ensure that a balanced, diverse group of parent representatives is included in the campus-level committee membership.

The timing of election and selection of new members is worthy of consideration. Some districts may wish to conduct elections in the fall at the start of a new school year (on a traditional school calendar). Others may decide to hold elections in the spring so that committees may meet during the summer to review performance data, revise objectives and strategies to address identified needs, and make recommendations for budget priorities to the board of trustees prior to the adoption of the budget. Campuses that have year-round calendars may identify other strategic points for elections.

Other important questions may be posed regarding the selection of committee members. For example:

- Is there a way for potential members to demonstrate the ability and commitment to regularly attend committee meetings?
- Is there a method for non-staff members to effectively communicate with the constituents they represent?
- Are all potential members willing to participate in team training with the committee?

Many considerations are available for structuring the membership of committees. It is recommended that primary considerations be those aspects that strengthen the committees’ abilities to improve student performance. The size, diversity, and broad representation of committees are critical factors impacting their effectiveness in problem solving for the improvement of instructional quality.

**Options for Including District-Level Staff in Campus Committees**

Some districts have raised concerns about the logistical feasibility of including district-level professional staff in all campus committee meetings because meetings on several campuses may be held on the same day and time. Clearly, local district policy and procedures will need to address these issues in creative ways. A number of options may be considered. For example, an elected district staff person may need to meet with various campus committees on a rotating basis. He or she may review agendas and meeting minutes when missing some meetings due to schedule conflicts.

Alternatively, a district may request that campuses schedule meetings on different weekdays or at different times of the day (e.g., prior to classes, mid-day, or after classes). Another option may be to hold cluster meetings where several committees (e.g., within “feeder” patterns) hold joint meetings periodically to discuss instructional issues that are of common concern and determine effective coordinated methods of achieving improved academic results. It is important to locally define what the term “district-level” may include. It does not have to be limited to “central office” staff but may be locally defined to include all professional staff members who have responsibilities beyond service to one particular campus.
Communication with All Stakeholders

In accordance with TEC Section 11.252(e), district policy and procedures must be established to ensure that systematic communications measures are in place to periodically obtain broad-based community, parent, and staff input and to provide information to those persons regarding the recommendations of the district-level committee. Under TEC §11.252(e), the district-level committee must hold at least one public meeting per year. The purposes of the public meeting are to discuss the performance of the district with respect to the district performance report received from the Texas Education Agency and to discuss the district performance objectives. Under TEC §11.253(g) a similar requirement exists for campus-level committees to hold at least one public meeting per year to discuss campus performance and objectives.

Communication of proposed plans to all stakeholders prior to final board approval is critical to achieving strong, broad-based support for implementation of district and campus plans. Some input is implicit due to requirements for annual public disclosure of district and campus performance reports, performance objectives, and accountability ratings. However, these requirements may not be sufficient to build full understanding of the resource implications for the community. Some districts and campuses appoint only two mainstream, traditional school supporters to each campus committee. In such cases, it is not surprising when other parents not involved in review and discussion of new strategies and materials object to innovative instructional methods and carry their concerns to the local school board for redress.

A variety of approaches may be used to ensure that communications are in place to positively impact student performance. Questions related to committee communications include the following:

- Do campus programs encouraging parental involvement include involvement in campus planning and decision-making efforts?

- Are brochures or copies of the excerpts of state law pertaining to the membership, roles, and functions of district and campus planning and decision-making committees provided to the public? Are these documents given to interested persons in attendance at school board meetings and made available through the local chamber of commerce, churches, and other community organizations?

- Are school newsletters, local newspapers, or other general communication methods used to remind constituents of the names of their committee representatives?

- Are regularly scheduled meetings set at times that are feasible for both staff and non-staff members to attend?

- Does the district publicly post locations, dates, times, and agendas of all meetings of the district- and campus-level committees prior to the actual meetings? Are the notices posted in prominent places in school lobbies, public libraries, and other commonly used public community buildings? Are the notices early enough to allow sufficient time for constituents to attend?
Do parent and teacher organizations or associations establish multiple ways to network, such as "phone trees" for reminding parents of scheduled committee meetings?

Is there a mechanism provided to ensure that input is received from all segments of each campus faculty?

Are methods provided by which constituents (e.g., community members, parents, and the business representative, parents, and other community members) may communicate their ideas and suggestions to committee members?

Are committee members informing their constituents about the recommendations of the committees and by what means are they doing so?

Are minutes provided in a timely manner indicating committee recommendations and future discussion items to school staff through administrative channels?

Are summaries of committee deliberations provided to the business representative and to parents upon request?

Methods for developing systematic communications vary from community to community depending on the size of the population, geographic constraints, and availability of public channels of communications. It is the responsibility of the board and administration to ensure that effective communications channels are established in policy and procedures.

**Committee Responsibilities**

In addition to responsibilities to assist in establishing district and campus performance objectives and developing district and campus plans for improvement, both the district- and campus-level committees are responsible to provide assistance in the areas of budgeting, curriculum, staffing patterns, and school organization. Each of the major areas of decision making should be guided by policy and procedures to ensure that committee members clearly understand their responsibilities and roles and whether or not they are advisory in nature with respect to each topic. Some of the suggestions in this section pertain to policy issues. Others represent issues that can be considered at the committee level.

**Budgeting**

In accordance with each district’s local policies and approved administrative procedures, the budgeting process may be highly centralized with a great deal of direction and guidance from the central administration. Alternatively, it may be quite decentralized, so that both the budget-building and proposal functions and the discretion for the use of funds are directed from the campus level. There are numerous types of budget procedures. Committee members could address this area of decision making effectively if given an annual orientation to the particular processes adopted for use by the district and campuses. Questions that superintendents, principals, and committees may wish to consider with respect to budgeting are as follows:
• What are the best timelines to align our planning processes with the building and adoption of the budget so that recommendations may be taken to the board for adequate resources to address the planning priorities and strategies?

• What type of training do committee members need to be sufficiently familiar with the local budget process to provide effective recommendations?

• What conditions, if any, are associated with the use of different funding sources, e.g., state and/or federal funds for special education, Title I, state compensatory education, and bilingual education? What conditions are associated with the use of state funds for technology or the establishment of alternative programs?

• Are state compensatory education funds budgeted to supplement the regular education program?

• How may state and federal funds be coordinated to support school improvement efforts?

• How are funds apportioned for use by campuses at the elementary, middle school, or high school levels? Do the methods differ? If so, how?

• What, if any, specific funds are available for piloting innovative programs? What, if any, conditions or constraints are associated with such funds?

• How can budgetary allocations be shifted, if desired, to be used for different purposes (e.g., using funds allocated for personnel salaries to buy materials or equipment)?

These questions are only a sample of the types of issues committees may be interested in addressing. As committee members become more experienced and knowledgeable, other possibilities will emerge. For a detailed guide to site-based budgeting, please refer to the Agency publication entitled, The Texas Education Agency Financial Accountability System Resource Guide. It may be accessed through the TEA website at www.tea.state.tx.us.

Curriculum

A key area that impacts student outcomes is that of curriculum. Local policy and procedures will define the level of involvement of the district- and campus-level committees with respect to curriculum decisions. This decision-making area may include issues related to instructional methods, as well as the selection of subject areas and the organization of essential knowledge and skills within subject areas.

At the high school level, campus committees may consider various possibilities such as whether to recommend that the local board adopt the state’s minimum, recommended, or advanced (distinguished) high school curriculum or offer magnet programs that focus on technology or arts. At the elementary level, committees may discuss the scope and sequence of a developmentally appropriate early childhood program, determine how to integrate the critical elements of art and music into the elementary curriculum, or create an ungraded sequence of instructional units. At the middle school level, committees may grapple with innovative approaches for creating thematic units and integrating instruction across disciplines. Technology
may be considered to assist students in self-paced instruction or to accurately assess the specific skill levels and learning needs of students with respect to essential knowledge and skills for specific subjects. Other important issues may be addressed, such as instructional methods to address reading readiness, improving results on the Spanish TAAS, or incorporating violence prevention strategies into the curriculum at all levels of educational program.

It is important that procedures are established with the active involvement of the district-level committee to provide parameters for committee decisions. The focus should remain consistently on tying curriculum decisions to improved student performance. A few questions that may assist committees include:

- Are we using adequate and appropriate assessments to determine whether our curriculum structure and instructional strategies are meeting the needs of all students, including students in special education programs?

- In what ways are we ensuring alignment of the curriculum across grade levels and campuses and across traditional and alternative programs?

- How does the curriculum build the district’s capacity to effectively assist students with special needs, e.g., language minority students, migrant students, students with disabilities, gifted and talented students, and students in at-risk situations?

- Are there innovative ways to address the areas in which student performance is not yet at an exemplary level?

- Are effective strategies in place to ensure that students accomplish transitions successfully from preschool to elementary, elementary to middle school, middle school to high school, alternative to regular campuses, and high school to post-secondary work and study?

- Is our curriculum structured in a way that allows each student to progress at the pace that will result in maximum performance for each individual?

- Does the curriculum have the capacity to effectively assist migrant students or students with other special learning needs?

- Are there more effective ways to structure the curriculum and/or instructional strategies so that students with disabilities may be included appropriately and successfully in regular classes with adequate consultative support to the regular classroom teacher?

- How may we best incorporate instructional technology in each classroom to augment the general instructional program and to assist individual students to accelerate their rates of learning?

More questions may be generated pertaining to specific levels and subject areas. It is essential for curriculum discussions to be linked to the assessed needs of students; the targeted campus performance objectives; and local, state, and federal regulations governing districts and campuses.
Staffing Patterns

This area of decision making may address a wide variety of topics. It may refer to the team composition of instructional units (e.g., for block scheduling teams, instructional departments, or interdisciplinary teams). It may address the levels or hierarchies of the campus staff configurations, such as the role of “helping teachers,” or the chain of command and duties for teacher aides and campus volunteers. It may even refer to the way in which staff members are screened for hiring purposes. In some districts, staffing patterns may refer to the scheduling of staff within the instructional day and the structure provided for teams to schedule planning periods in a coordinated time frame. Local district administrative procedures should define this area of decision making and delineate the respective authority of the superintendent, principal, and committees for decision making in this area. A few general questions pertaining to this area are:

- How can we ensure that our staffing patterns allow for effective flow of communications across teams for planning purposes?
- Are our instructional schedules structured to maximize use of available instructional specialists such as bilingual teachers and teachers endorsed in English as a Second Language?
- Are our staffing patterns designed to make effective use of instructional technology?
- Are the staffing positions funded from state compensatory education supplemental to the regular education program?
- Are our staffing patterns organized for the convenience of staff or to ensure that all student needs are met in the most effective ways?
- What kinds of training may be needed if a committee participates in the hiring process?
- How do external factors (such as transportation, food services, or extracurricular events) affect staffing patterns and/or instructional schedules? How can these factors be more effectively addressed?
- Do our staffing patterns provide for reasonable opportunities for parent conferences and for teaming to strategize effective behavioral interventions for individual students?
- Are the staffing patterns equitable for all teams and for meeting the needs of all student groups?

It is critical that the local district administrative procedures clearly define what staffing patterns mean. With such definition in place, the committees may explore a variety of important issues that have a major impact on student outcomes. In addition to instructional quality, staffing patterns may impact the strength of disciplinary interventions and dropout prevention efforts.
School Organization

Statute includes no specific definition for this term as it is used in the sections on district- and campus-level committees. Local district policy and administrative procedures will dictate the scope of this area of decision making. Some overlap may occur in this area and the area of staffing patterns in the ways that various districts interpret them. Each district should have its own clearly defined parameters for decision making in school organization. This area of decision making may address the physical organization of the building, the allocation of equipment and materials, and the use of space for regular and special functions and services. These decisions may address the organizational relationships of staff members to one another and to other district, community, and regional entities or organizations. It may also address communication channels, both formal and informal. It may address the interrelationships of various programs within the school, such as the in-school suspension program, a magnet component, or a vocational program.

Sample questions that may be addressed pertaining to school organization are:

- Is the organization designed to enhance the success of all children with regard to student groupings, promotion/retention procedures, scheduling of classes, etc.?
- Does this organization link effectively with available external sources of support (e.g., for access of instructional media or to ensure clear communication with law enforcement and human services agencies)?
- Is there a clear and easy way for new staff members to understand our school’s formal and informal organizational structures to easily access all available resources?
- What procedures are in place to ensure effective coordination among special programs and regular programs?
- Are the parents and community members aware of the school’s organizational structure?
- Do students understand the campus structure and how to get appropriate assistance within the organization?
- Is the organizational structure designed to react quickly and efficiently in a crisis situation?
- Do all staff members have equitable access to the resources available within the school’s organizational structure?

Questions about the organizational structure may extend beyond the instructional functions of the campus. Typically, a secondary campus is a microcosm of a community. It may serve a number of functions beyond providing instruction. The extracurricular and support functions available in schools are often the keys to keeping students in at-risk situations from dropping out.
Appraisal

A school district may choose to use the process and criteria for appraisal of teachers adopted by the commissioner of education. A district also has the option to establish an appraisal process and performance criteria for teachers other than those adopted by the commissioner. If the district does choose to adopt a local appraisal process, both the process and criteria must be developed by the district and campus planning and decision-making committees. The board of trustees must adopt the district’s appraisal process and performance criteria. The board may reject the appraisal process and performance criteria developed by the district and campus committees, but the board may not modify the process or criteria (TEC § 21.352). A number of issues may be addressed in developing and adopting a local appraisal process. The following questions may be useful to consider:

- Has a decision been made by the local board of trustees to authorize the development and recommendation of a local appraisal process?
- Have adequate procedures, time, and resources been allocated by the district to allow for appropriate input, training, development, review, validation, adoption, and phase-in for the new process?
- Are the requirements as prescribed by TEC § 21.352 clearly understood by the board of trustees and by those who will be involved in developing the appraisal process?
- Have those involved in developing the process reviewed the standards, including the teacher proficiencies, by which the state appraisal process will be approved? Have they reviewed models from other school districts that have developed local appraisal plans?
- Have the requirements of TEC § 21.352 relating to the local appraisal process and TEC § 21.203 relating to annual evaluations of term contract employees been included in appraisal procedures as appropriate?

Student Code of Conduct

Each district with the advice of its district-level planning and decision-making committee must adopt a student code of conduct for the district (TEC § 37.001). It is critical for the district-level committee to review the district’s safe school survey results annually to consider patterns indicating the effectiveness of disciplinary prevention and intervention strategies. This review and an evaluation of legislative changes may indicate a need for revision to the local student code of conduct. Questions that may be useful to consider with respect to this process are as follows:

- How will the committee obtain input and support from the school’s community in establishing the standards for student conduct?
- Do campus improvement plans include goals and methods for violence prevention and intervention on campus as mandated by TEC § 11.253 (d)(8)?
• Does staff development include training in conflict resolution and discipline strategies, including classroom management, district discipline policies, and the student code of conduct adopted under Section 37.001 and Chapter 37? [TEC §21.451 (a)(1)]

• What specific circumstances, beyond those outlined in state statute, would justify removal of a student from a classroom, campus, or alternative education program?

• Is each of the criterions for disciplinary intervention sufficiently serious to include, considering the burden of paperwork and notification of parents required under state law for such removal and considering the long-term impact on students?

• Is the district in a county large enough (i.e., with a population greater than 125,000) to require the development of a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the juvenile justice board? If not, would it be useful to develop an MOU so that sufficient procedures and programs are in place to ensure that all students who engage in serious offenses will be appropriately served?

• Would it be appropriate to provide an in-school suspension program for any or all of the district’s campuses?

• Under what conditions should a principal be authorized or required to transfer a student to an alternative education program?

• How can we most effectively and efficiently provide separate educational services for students who have engaged in violent behavior or serious offenses?

• What specific circumstances, within the limits of state statute, would justify suspension or expulsion of a student?

• If an MOU were established with a juvenile justice board, what would be the conditions on payments from the district to the juvenile justice board? What facilities would be used?

• If an MOU is established with a juvenile justice board, would the district or juvenile justice board hire the instructional staff and administration? Which entity would provide the instructional equipment, instructional materials, and transportation?

Depending on whether the district develops an MOU with one or more juvenile justice boards, a number of additional questions may be posed.

**Waivers**

Applications for campus or district waivers submitted to the commissioner for approval must include written comments from the campus- or district-level planning and decision-making committee. The applications must include a written plan approved by the board of trustees that states the achievement objectives and inhibitions imposed on accomplishment of objectives by existing requirements (TEC 7.056). Questions that may be useful to consider with respect to this process are as follows:
• Is the waiver request integrally related to the campus or district improvement plan?

• Did the appropriate planning and decision-making committee actively participate in an informed discussion of the waiver?

• Were the comments from the appropriate campus or district planning and decision-making committee collaboratively developed?

• Does the waiver application state the time period that the waiver will be effective? Is that period three years or less?

• Does the waiver request indicate specifically how the waiver will positively impact student performance?

• Are measurable indicators and expected results addressed in the waiver request?

The primary impetus for approving waivers should be the positive impact a waiver is intended to have on student performance. It is expected that campus- and district-level committees will provide written comments reflecting an understanding and commitment to the implementation of changes that will favorably influence achievement for all students.

**Staff Development**

Staff development must be predominantly campus based, related to achieving campus performance objectives established by the principal with the assistance of the campus-level planning and decision-making committee, and developed and approved by the campus-level committee (TEC §21.451). Questions that may be useful to consider with respect to this process follow:

• Does the staff development involve reflecting on curricular and instructional issues, analyzing student achievement results, and reflecting on means of increasing student achievement?

• What areas of the campus needs assessment indicate a need for improved instructional skills and methods?

• Which student groups are in greatest need of improvement? Is there an indication that staff members may need development with respect to effective interventions with specific groups (e.g., by gender, cultural differences, language differences, etc.)?

• Is there a need for staff development of diagnostic and assessment skills to augment the analysis of Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) data?

• Are there specific areas of need for staff development related to the performance of special needs populations (e.g., early childhood education, migrant students, students with limited English proficiency, or students with disabilities)?
• Does staff development include the areas required by state law, i.e., training in technology, conflict resolution, and discipline strategies, including classroom management, district discipline policies, and the student code of conduct adopted under Section 37.001 and Chapter 37?

• Does staff development include activities that enable the campus staff to plan together to enhance existing skills, to share effective strategies, and to practice new methods?

• Is there need for staff development to foster meaningful involvement of parents and other stakeholders?

• What are effective ways in which the committee may study research, encourage individual or action research, or convene study teams?

• Are staff development opportunities provided for all staff members to appropriately implement site-based decision-making and campus planning procedures?

• Are opportunities available for staff members to engage in peer coaching, workshops, seminars, or conferences that assist them to improve student achievement?

• What policies and procedures are in place to provide for the approval of staff development by the campus-level committees?

• What areas of need have been identified through an analysis of student performance of each group of students served by the campus?

• Are there disparities in the level of experience and instructional skills among staff? Would staff mentors, team-teaching, and instructional modeling be useful?

• If there is a large gap in performance among students of different ethnicity, could the staff benefit from training on cultural awareness or on instructional methods that have demonstrated success with diverse student populations?

• If local assessments have been adopted for students exempted from the TAAS, are all staff members familiar with the essential knowledge and skills assessed by the instruments?

• If the campus receives Title I funds, have staff members been oriented to the federal requirements associated with such funding?

• Do data on disciplinary incidences and/or factors related to dropouts indicate a need for training in effective behavior management techniques?

• Are all instructional staff sufficiently trained to make full, effective use of available instructional technology?

• If instructional aides and/or volunteers are used, do they have a need for orientation or training with respect to school policies and procedures, instructional methods, and/or behavior management techniques?
Staff development is one key area in which state statute clearly provides both the responsibility and the authority for decision making to be invested in the campus-level committee [TEC §21.451(b)]. Many educational leaders believe that staff development is one of the most critical areas of decision making that may impact student performance. The questions above are simply starting points for exploration. It is expected that campus committees will develop numerous additional issues and ideas to augment the primary considerations provided in this resource guide.
VIII. Evaluation of Effectiveness of Planning and Decision Making

As mentioned in Section III of this document, the law requires that each district evaluate the effectiveness of the district's decision-making and planning policies, procedures, and staff development activities related to district- and campus-level decision making and planning. (See TEC §11.252[d]). The purpose of the local self-evaluation is to ensure that the policies, procedures, and staff development are effectively structured to positively impact student performance. The district self-evaluation must be conducted at least every two years. The self-evaluation required under state statute does not require that evaluation results be submitted to the Agency. Rather, the results are to be used to guide local revisions and renewal efforts.

Local Evaluation of Effectiveness

The ultimate measure of the effectiveness of planning and decision making is its impact on student performance. The perception of district and campus stakeholders is also important in the evaluation of planning and decision-making effectiveness.

No specific form has been mandated or designated for local assessment of planning and decision making. The Agency’s website (http://www.tea.state.tx.us/accountability/dev_sup/index.html) contains copies of the surveys developed in the Division of Accountability Development and Support and used to fulfill Agency obligations for surveying district and campus planning and decision making statewide. Districts and campuses may choose to use the survey forms from the website to assess local planning and decision making. Forms may be modified to better suit local districts.

Another method for gathering feedback on district and campus planning and decision-making effectiveness is to conduct a structured interview with members of the district or campus committees or with district or campus staff members by department or grade level. An objective individual (e.g., a consultant, regional education service center staff member, or skilled community member) may conduct a structured interview. The interviewees may provide responses to a set of pre-determined, open-ended questions, such as those listed in the previous section on policy and procedural considerations or to the questions listed on the surveys on the Agency’s website.

Districts and campuses might consider compiling interview responses and displaying responses in chart format for review and study. Interview respondents might then be divided into work pairs, triads, or otherwise small teams, with each work team assigned issues to consider for consensus-based responses.

Evaluation of Staff Development Pertaining to Planning and Decision Making

Local districts and campuses may devise other more useful methods to guide revisions of their policies and procedures. There is no one “best” way. However, the self-evaluation should encompass an assessment of the effectiveness of staff development provisions pertaining to planning and decision-making processes. Questions that may be useful with respect to staff development include the following:
• Have all new staff members participated in a basic orientation to district and campus planning and decision-making policies, administrative procedures, roles, and responsibilities?

• When polled, what areas of staff development related to planning do staff members indicate as priorities?

• When polled, what areas of staff development related to effective decision making do the staff indicate as priorities?

• What staff development needs exist for committee members related to curriculum, budgeting, school organization, or staffing patterns?

• Is there a need for the development of committee member skills in problem solving, conflict resolution, or team building?

Districts and campuses are encouraged to develop additional questions based on their detailed understanding of the local factors influencing the committees’ impact on student performance. It is expected that local district policy and procedure revisions will be developed based on the findings of the local self-evaluation of the effectiveness of district and campus decision making.

**Considerations for Policy and Procedural Revisions**

Since statutory requirements pertaining to district and campus planning and decision making contain several significant changes (e.g., inclusion of students in special education programs; goals and methods for violence prevention and a program to encourage parental involvement at the campus; and training in classroom management, district discipline policies, and the student code of conduct), local board policies must be revised to be consistent with current statute. It is suggested that policy changes be founded on thoughtful consideration of the self-evaluation of the effectiveness of current policies, procedures, and staff development.

A district and campus self-evaluation may begin with a thorough review of the policies and procedures that have been in effect to date. Several key questions may be addressed, such as the following:

• What sections of existing policy are compatible with current law?

• Do those policy sections work effectively to focus district and campus committees on student performance?

• Do the provisions for the business representative and community ensure that the diversity of the community is effectively represented at both the district and the campus levels?

Additional questions may be posed to provide direction for modification of policies and procedures, such as:

• How is the board’s role defined with respect to the district and campus planning and decision-making process?
• Does the board have periodic opportunities to review the progress of the district in accomplishing the strategies needed to attain the educational goals and performance objectives?

• Is input from students and/or paraprofessionals solicited by the district and/or campus committees?

• Do procedures provide for committees to meet on a regular basis and to consult with the principal, board, or board’s designee on a periodic basis?

• Does the district committee’s role include establishing and reviewing the district’s educational plan, goals, performance objectives, and major instructional programs and the areas of budgeting, curriculum, staffing patterns, staff development, and school organization?

• Is an administrative procedure provided to clearly define the respective roles and responsibilities of the superintendent, central office staff, principals, teachers, district-level committee members, and campus-level committee members with respect to planning and decision-making responsibilities?

• Did the existing district-level committee have input in the development of these procedures?

• How do operational procedures ensure that district and campus plans are mutually supportive to accomplish identified objectives?

• Do policies and procedures for planning and decision making provide for input from staff members who have special knowledge and expertise with respect to all student populations, including those who are disabled, limited English proficient, migrant, and in early childhood and accelerated education (Title I federal) programs?

• How will committees address state goals and objectives outlined in statute?

• How do policies and procedures for systematic communications measures ensure that broad-based community, parent, and staff input is obtained and recommendations of committees are shared with constituents in a timely manner?

It may be useful to review the statewide surveys on the Agency’s website. The items in the surveys may be extracted and/or modified to create local surveys.