



Focus on Kids

Northwest ISD Strategic Goals



Strategic Goal #1

The district will provide exemplary programs to ensure that all students are successful learners.

Operational Goal - Student Learning - To ensure that students have a strong foundation for life-long learning through a rigorous academic curriculum, successful extracurricular programs, and citizenship development.

Strategic Goal #2

The district will provide an exceptional, highly motivated staff in order to maintain a positive learning environment.

Operational Goal - Quality Staff - The district will recruit, retain, train, and recognize its quality staff and, by doing so, continually improve the educational system for the students.

Strategic Goal #3

The district will provide expedient, consistent, and honest communication and positive parental and community involvement opportunities in our schools.

Operational Goal - Communication - to ensure two-way communication with parents and other community members regarding the performance of students and activities and accomplishments of the school district.

Operational Goal - A Learning Community - To extend education outside the district's formal system, thus making schools the center of the learning community.



Operational Goal - Community Involvement - To continually create opportunities for parental, business, and community participation in education.

Strategic Goal #4

The district will provide quality facilities that are safe, secure, drug-free, and that contribute to a positive learning environment while fostering student and community pride.

Operational Goal - The Learning Environment - To ensure a safe and orderly environment for student learning.

Operational Goal - Support Systems - To ensure that support systems (transportation, maintenance, food service, custodial, etc.) operate from a "customer driven" philosophy.

Strategic Goal #5

The district has a comprehensive planning process driven by quality data that addresses all district needs.

Operational Goal - Accountability - To ensure that students, parents, and other community members are getting the best educational services for their investment.



Goal 1 Student Learning



Strengths

Northwest ISD has made steady academic achievement growth as demonstrated on various state and federal accountability measures.

Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS)

The AEIS reports pull together a wide range of information on student performance in each school and district in Texas every year. The district received a *recognized* rating for the 2004-05 school year. Three campuses achieved *exemplary* ratings, eight campuses achieved *recognized* ratings, and two campuses were rated *academically acceptable*.

Gold Performance Acknowledgments (GPA)

The GPA system acknowledges districts and campuses for high performance on indicators other than those used to determine accountability ratings. The district and the campuses have increased the number of GPAs in 2005 to 40 indicators from 29 in 2004. There are four GPA standards governing acknowledgment:

- **Recommended High School Program**

60% of graduates meeting or exceeding requirements for the Recom-

mended High School Program or the Distinguished Achievement Program

- **Commended for Each Subject**

20% of examinees scoring at or above the commended performance standard

- **Attendance**

97% or above attendance rates for elementary campuses

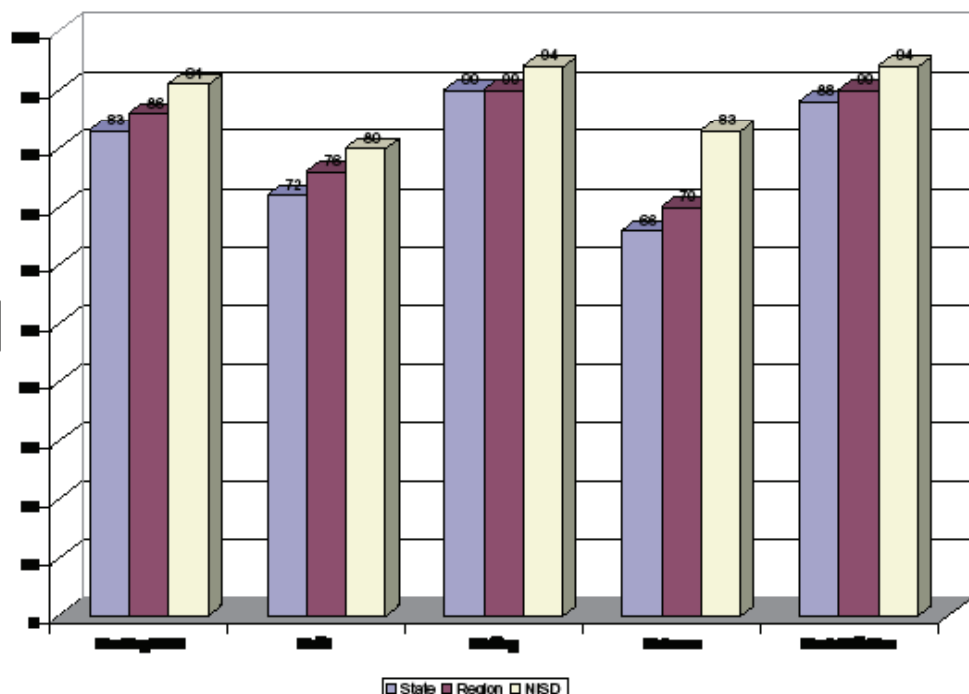
- **Comparable Improvement**

Campus must have an average Texas Growth Index (TGI) within the top quartile (25%) of their 40-member campus comparison group for the subjects.

Student Success Initiative (SSI)

The state's SSI requires that third grade students must pass the TAKS reading test to be promoted to the fourth grade; fifth grade students must pass the TAKS reading and math tests to be promoted to the sixth grade; eighth grade stu-

TAKS 2005





dents beginning in the 2007–2008 school year must pass the TAKS reading and math tests to be promoted to the ninth grade; and eleventh grade students must pass the Exit Level TAKS tests in order to graduate. The district has made data-driven decisions to address the needs of the students impacted by the grade advancement requirements. Ninety-nine percent of third grade and 96% of fifth grade students met SSI promotion requirements.

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)

Under the accountability provisions in the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, the districts and the campuses are evaluated for Adequate Yearly Progress. The district and the campuses are required to meet AYP criteria on three measures: Reading/Language Arts, Mathematics, and either Graduation Rate (for high schools and districts) or Attendance Rate (for elementary and middle/junior high schools). Northwest ISD met AYP. Twelve campuses met AYP, and one campus's AYP status is under appeal.

Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAOs)

AMAOs are achievement targets required by No Child Left Behind for districts that receive Title III funding for English language acquisition programs designed to develop Limited English Proficient students' English reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills. Northwest met all AMAOs.

Technology in Northwest ISD

One hundred percent of eligible professionals meet the Technology Proficiency Level III requirements. Our current network infrastructure is in place to support anticipated future growth. Technology folds into classroom lessons as a vital instructional tool. Also, at the campus level,

the Parent Internet Viewer (PIV) allows parents of Northwest ISD students to view on-line their child's attendance and grades and to receive enhanced communication through e-mail notifications.

Areas of Focus for 2005-2006

Engaging and Aligned Curriculum

The focus of the Curriculum and Instruction Department will center on Northwest ISD delivering an engaging and aligned curriculum to our students. That goal will be accomplished by beginning in the 2005-2006 school year to accomplish departmental objectives. The objectives will be focused on consistently over a three-to-five year period. Each objective will have co-created actions tied to it with responsibilities and roles assigned to the central and campus administrators and to classroom teachers. Those primary focus objectives include the following:

A curriculum management plan developed through the vertical teaming process

- Write a curriculum management plan that will guide the development of the district curriculum.
- Construct and implement professional development plans for administrators, teacher academies (I, II, and III), and a new-teacher academy. (Campus administrative leadership is currently being built through monthly District Leadership Team meetings and Administrator Professional Development sessions.)
- Begin the process of backward mapping and aligning the district curriculum 12-K.
- Implement the Web-based program, Eduphoria, to allow teacher and administrator access to the district curriculum via the



desktop as it is developed and put into the district-created framework.

Quality lessons designed by teachers, emphasizing student engagement

- Campuses are emphasizing the process that leads to effective lesson planning. This is a district-directed effort to create common language about planning and curriculum across the district.
- After the January 2006 Working on the Work (WOW) Conference, the district will have trained close to 90 district staff members, including all campus principals, assistant principals, campus instructional teachers (CITs), deans of instruction, deans of students, department chairs at the secondary level, many of the team leaders at the elementary level, all curriculum coordinators, the superintendent, the assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction, the director of curriculum and staff development, the director of human resources, and others.
- Ongoing campus plans center on creating the culture of engaging work on the individual campuses. This is happening through team and grade level discussions and book studies. Each campus principal has developed an articulated plan for the implementation of the WOW framework and staff development at his or her particular campus. Three basic questions are being answered about the campus WOW Design Team. "The Pursuit of WOW in Northwest ISD" planning process includes answers to those questions: *Where are we?* (reality); *What is the preferred future for your campus?* (vision); *How will we get there?* (direction).
- Principals are completing classroom walkthroughs aimed at observing classrooms

with engaging work and engaged students.

- The district superintendent and assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction are making monthly campus visits. At the end of the 2005-2006 school year, they will have made over 250 campus visits.

Formative assessments designed and aligned to the NISD curriculum

- As part of the curriculum management plan, a formative assessment program will be developed, including an assessment program that will be created to include measurements of academic progress leading to specified benchmark testing times. This will allow for district-wide data review and analysis and will provide an opportunity to make just-in-time curricular and/or instructional adjustments.
- District and campus administrators and other leaders attended INOVA Process training in the fall. This process allows for the use of value-added information from the TAKS test.

Professional learning communities establishment, leading to increased organizational capacity at both the district and campus levels

- Professional Learning Communities (PLC) are currently being formed at various campuses.
- The PLCs will revolve around doing short-term research and development cycles on specific research questions.





Goal 2 Quality Staff



Strengths

An on-line application process was launched in the spring of 2005 in response to rapid district growth. The new process offers these benefits:

- Decreased time to fill positions
- Increased ability to attract, interview, and hire the best teachers
- Reduced paper usage

The 2005-2006 Compensation Plans were approved by the board in May. They offer the following advantages:

- Allow the district to remain competitive
- Promote the district as leaders in education
- Elevate starting teacher salaries to \$40,000
- Attract highly qualified teachers
- Help retain highly qualified teachers
- Rank third in compensation in the Metroplex for first-year teachers
- Rank fourth in compensation in the Metroplex for 10 and 20 years of teaching experience

The district opened two new campuses in the 2005-2006 school year. That prompted the hiring of new district staff:

- 134 teachers
- 38 paraprofessionals
- 939 total employees as of 10/27/05
- 15% personnel increase from 2004-2005

The Aesop automated substitute and tracking system was implemented through the partnership of the Human Resources, Finance, and Technology departments in August. Campus administra-

tors and substitutes attended training. Because the Aesop System information is uploaded into the Pentamation system, it eliminated the need for a district substitute coordinator.

With the implementation of the Aesop System, it became apparent that there was not a need to accept applications for substitutes year-round. As of October 25, 2005, the district lists 355 substitutes in the Aesop System. The district will now accept substitute applications from July 1st – September 15th and December 1st – January 31st, and all applicants must have at least two years of college.

For the third year, the district conducted online open enrollment training sessions for new hires and at campuses throughout the district. As a result of the training there was:

- 37% increased participation in AFLAC unreimbursed medical
- 60% decreased participation in HMP plan
- 8% increased participation in supplemental AFLAC Products

NISD Salary History

Based on Experience with a Bachelor's Degree

School Years	0 Years	5 Years	10 Years	20 Years
1997-1998	24,364	26,302	30,703	37,660
1998-1999	28,000	28,709	33,000	40,130
1999-2000	31,200	31,709	36,000	43,130
2001-2001	34,000	34,300	38,050	45,360
2001-2002	35,500	37,150	38,898	46,460
2002-2003	36,350	38,155	38,650	47,135
2003-2004	37,078	38,883	40,378	47,863
2004-2005	38,561	40,083	41,578	48,863
2005-2006	40,000	41,400	42,802	49,780

Add \$2,000 to each salary for Master's Degree
Add \$1,000 to each salary for Doctorate Degree



- 27% increased participation in Unum Long Term Disability

In conjunction with the distribution of the 2005-2006 Annual Compensation Statements, the Human Resources, Finance, and Technology departments launched the Employee Access Center and new employee identification numbers. The employee identification numbers were issued to help prevent identity theft. Once the employees access the site, they can view personal information, including leave-balances, thus reducing calls to the Finance and Human Resources departments.

Human Resources developed and implemented a new time sheet for paraprofessionals. These employees attended training to explain the new sheet and to clarify compensatory time.

In late October, the Human Resources Internet Section was updated with links. Now employees can find benefit providers, forms, and a wealth of benefit information from their campuses or homes.

Areas of Focus for 2005-2006

Pre-Screening Product

In conjunction with the on-line application process, the Human Resources Department will begin looking at an applicant pre-screening product providing these advantages:

- System-created interview questions that are teacher- and student-centered
- Improved interviews
- Improved hiring procedures
- Training for administrators and supervisors
- Providing us with quality staff

The Human Resources Department will continue to expand its partnership with the Finance and Technology departments to enhance both the Aesop and Employee Access Systems and to look for other initiatives that will best suit our employees.

Curriculum Connections

In order to provide NISD students with strong classroom instruction, the Human Resources Department will continue to increase ties with the Curriculum Department as it trains and retains the best staff possible.

District-Wide Health Assessment

In January, the district will evaluate its health care program through a District-Wide Health Assessment Campaign. Each employee will participate through Campus Campaigns. This tool will give the Benefits and Risk Management Department information to assess needed areas of focus in district and United HealthCare wellness programs.

Open Enrollment

Open enrollment information will be posted on the district's Internet site for everyone to review. This will save the district \$5,000 formerly spent on packets.

Document Updates

The Human Resources Department will review and update job descriptions and evaluation instruments for all NISD employees.





Goal 3: Communication and Community Involvement



Strengths

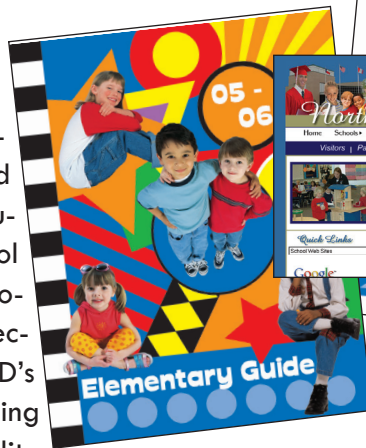
Northwest ISD is the common thread that unites 13 communities that span three counties. Given this expanse, effective communication and community involvement are critical tools to student success.

The district strives to provide internal and external communication that is expedient, consistent, and honest. One goal is to continue to communicate an awareness of raised expectations in these areas:

- Student Learning
- Quality Staff (selecting and retaining)
- Quality Facilities
- Financial Accountability

District publications provide information to students, staff, parents, newcomers, and the extended community. The Texas School Public Relations Association (TSPRA) has recognized many of NISD's publications, awarding them honors for quality, creativity, and purpose in providing resourceful information. These publications include the following:

- *Northwest ISD Key Communicator Guide*
- *Northwest ISD Student Handbook*
- *Back-to-School Booklet*
- *NISD Information Guide*
- *Elementary Information Guide*
- *Northwest Vision* (monthly district newsletter)
- *Bond Video*
- *NISD Budget Manual*



The district values technology as a major communication tool. Last year, NISD introduced a redesigned Web site that is more customer friendly. The goal is to provide every type of audience with an easy way to access information. Other electronic communications include these:

- *Noteworthy News*
- *Northwest News*
- *Board Notes*

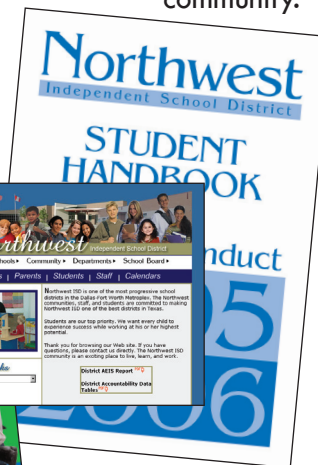
In addition to print and electronic media, the district relies on communication provided by the community. Parents, business mem-

bers, students, and staff collaborate on committees such as these:

- District Education Improvement Committee (DEIC)
- Attendance Boundary
- Long-Range Planning
- School Finance Task Force
- Superintendent's Roundtable

The district takes every opportunity to let the community see the excellence it provides for its students. For example, school leaders hosted a Realtors' Conference, providing a one-stop shopping center for information about the Northwest schools and community.

The Northwest ISD Education Foundation provides a powerful community connection. The NEF has established resource-rich partnerships with area businesses and organizations to enhance





student learning. Since 1999, through the efforts of the board of directors, donors, and volunteers, the foundation has provided these benefits:

- \$364,705 for innovative teaching grants
- Sponsors for district programs
 - ♦ Camp Grady Spruce
 - ♦ Space Camp
 - ♦ Summer Science Camp
 - ♦ Family Involvement Initiative
- Scholarship programs for students
- \$31,225 for the AP and SAT Initiatives (Scholars' Program)
- Opportunities for staff and student recognition
- Academic Banquet
- Shining Stars Gala honoring Teachers of the Year and 191 students
- School supplies for 432 students
- Professional development in grant writing

Through surveys, parents and staff have indicated increased satisfaction with the job the district is doing in meeting this strategic communication goal. In 2001, 77% were satisfied. That number increased to 84% in 2004.

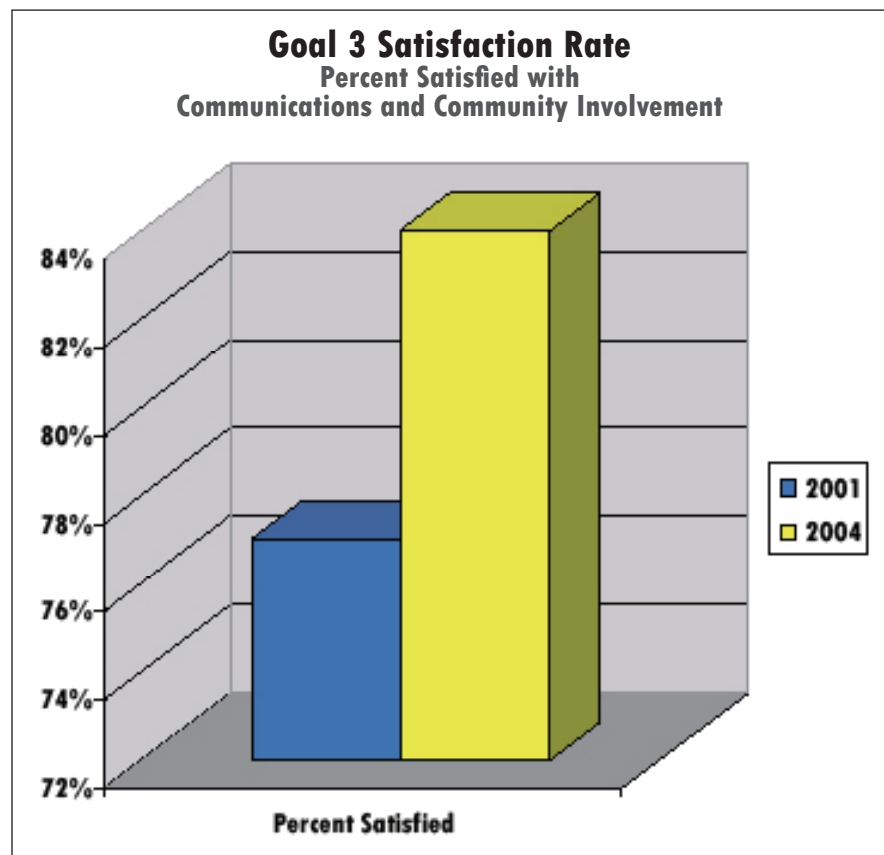
Areas of Focus for 2005-2006

Bond Package

A major focus of communications and community involvement for the 2005-2006 school year revolves around the passage of the \$224.5 million bond election held on October 1st. Student enrollment is projected to increase to 44,297 students by 2022. Ninety-six percent of this bond package addresses growth in student enrollment.

Technology

With the increasing use of technology in the home and workplace, the district will focus





on enhancing the efficiency of communication through the district's Web site and other technology tools. These are some of the planned improvements:

- Creating an appealing format for two-way electronic communications to the community and staff
- Creating an on-line Q & A or *Did You Know?* Web page
- Providing additional quick links to common areas of information
- Utilizing a district-wide, on-line calendar of events, including campus calendars

Campus-Based Marketing

The communication and marketing focus has been primarily at the district level. As the district grows, it is vital that each individual campus become fully engaged in the communications and marketing of student achievement to its public. To begin this process, the district will explore these avenues:

- Developing a district-wide communications plan that focuses on individual campuses with the support of the district's Communication Department
- Additional ways to use the on-line grade book program (Pinnacle - Parent Internet Viewer)

Document Updates

The Communications Department continuously works with other departments to create quality and informative documents. New documents for the 2005-2006 school year are:

- *Booster Clubs and School Support Organizations Guidelines*
- *Administrative Regulations for Policy*
- *NISD Annual Report*

- *Communications Procedures Manual*
- *NISD Stadium Marketing Packet*

The following documents will be evaluated and revised during the 2005-2006 school year, for the 2006-2007 school year:

- *Student Handbook*
- *Student Code of Conduct*
- *Elementary Student Guide*
- *NISD Budget Manual*
- *NISD Information Guide*
- *Board of Trustees Publication*
- *Key Communicator Guide*

Community Involvement

Northwest ISD Education Foundation (NEF)

To enhance annual giving and provide additional recognition of donors, the NEF has restructured the method of seeking annual donations and increasing donor levels. Donors will have the opportunity to pledge their donations for the year to the foundation for all events and have the donation credited toward the annual drive. This will eliminate constant solicitation and will provide the donor with an annual budgeted amount for donating to the foundation.

Through the Northwest ISD Education Foundation, the district will develop a structured program that engages and recognizes volunteers and business partners in the schools.





Goal 4: Learning Environment



Strengths

The Northwest Independent School District has experienced a 15% student growth rate from October 2004 to October 2005. The 2001 Capital Bond Program allowed the district to prepare for the influx of students and to create a learning environment that supports academic goals. Since 2001, all Northwest Independent School District facilities have been renovated. In addition, over 3,850 additional student seats have been added to the district.

Specific accomplishments during the 2004-2005 school year:

- J. Lyndal Hughes Elementary School and Sonny and Allegra Nance Elementary School were completed. On October 31, Hughes had 540 students, 4% below projections. However, Nance had 368 students, 12% above projections.
- The Northwest ISD stadium was completed. Northwest High School and all three middle schools enjoyed the use of the facility beginning in August. Soccer athletes will begin using the new stadium at the beginning of their season.
- A building addition

that added 250 student seats was completed at Gene Pike Middle School. Also, the science labs, band hall, choir room, art room, and library were renovated at Pike. It should be noted that the building addition at Pike was funded from money remaining after the completion of the planned projects in the 2001 Bond Program.

- The renovation and building addition project at Justin Elementary School was completed. The school now has 250 additional student seats, and the library, office, cafeteria, and kitchen are enlarged. Other renovations add to the beautiful atmosphere. The building addition at Justin was funded

J. Lyndal Hughes Elementary School



Sonny and Allegra Nance Elementary School





from money remaining after the completion of the planned projects in the 2001 Bond Program.

- The renovation project at Roanoke Elementary School was completed. This project enlarged the library, office, cafeteria, and kitchen, and included extensive renovation of the building.
- The Citizens' Advisory Committee developed the 2005 Capital Bond Program that addressed the needs of Northwest ISD for the next 3-5 years. Voters overwhelmingly approved the Bond Program with a 70% approval rate.
- Attendance zone changes established and implemented boundaries for J. Lyndal Hughes and Sonny and Allegra Nance Elementary Schools. In addition, middle school boundaries were changed to improve the balance of student enrollment among the three middle schools. This balance improvement will continue every year for the next three years.
- Demographic projections were developed to assist in the attendance boundary process. These projections predicted that 8,823 students would be enrolled in Northwest ISD in October 2005. In actuality, 8,763 students were enrolled on October 31, 2005. Therefore, the actual student enrollment was within .6% of the predictions.



- A west side high school site was acquired.
- A middle school site in the Sendera Ranch area was put under contract and is awaiting the completion of infrastructure. Closing of this site purchase is anticipated in the first quarter of 2006.

Areas of Focus for 2005-2006 **Capital Bond Program**

The 2001 Capital Bond Program set the stage to prepare for the phenomenal growth that is occurring within Northwest ISD. Passage of the 2005 Capital Bond Program allows the district to stay ahead of population expansion. Over 96% of the 2005 Capital Bond Program directly addresses growth. Upon completion, over 7,000 additional student seats will be added to Northwest ISD.

A master schedule illustrating the implementation of the 2005 Capital Bond Program has been developed. This schedule breaks each project into major tasks that must be completed to per-



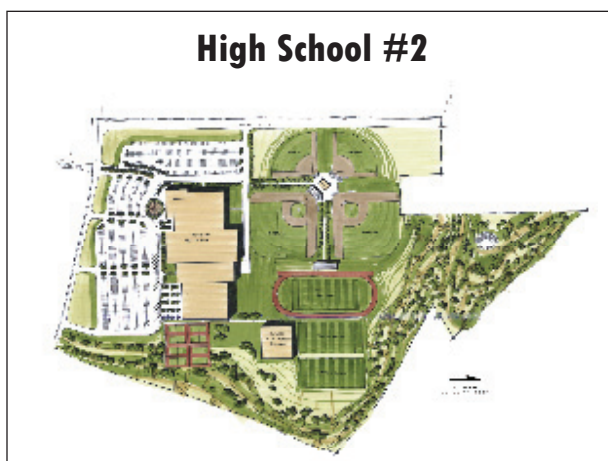
form the project. Demographic data was used to determine when each project must begin in order to be completed prior to its need.

It is important that the district stay prepared for growth and that facilities remain in good repair. With that in mind, the district will address the following projects during the 2005-2006 school year:

- Begin the design and construction process of Kay Grainger Elementary School. Completion of this school must occur by August 2007 to relieve the growing population at J. Lyndal Hughes Elementary School.
- Determine cash flow projections for the 2005 Capital Bond Program to ensure that funds are available before needed in order to perform the designated construction projects before it is necessary to incur debt.
- Perform an updated demographic analysis of Northwest ISD to ensure that the information used to forecast the facility and personnel needs is timely and accurate.
- Begin the design of the east side high school. Completion of this school is anticipated to be August 2009.
- Design and complete the replacement of the Vernon Solomon Performing Arts Center HVAC system. This project will improve

the humidity control and efficiency of the Performing Arts Center.

- Design the building addition for Medlin Middle School. Completion of the Medlin project is anticipated to be by August 2007.
- Design the building addition for Prairie View Elementary School. Completion of the Prairie View project is anticipated to be by August 2007. It should be noted that the enrollment of Prairie View Elementary School has increased from 271 to 421 students in one year. This growth is ahead of the projections. Portables will be located at Prairie View to house students prior to completion of the building addition.
- Design the building addition for Seven Hills Elementary School. Completion of the Seven Hills project is anticipated to be by August 2007.
- Purchase sites identified in the 2005 Capital Bond Program as developments are complete.
- Convert the old gymnasium behind the Support Services building into a centralized warehouse and implement a receiving and distribution system.
- Complete the RFP process for Contract Transportation Services. The 2005-06 school year is the fifth and final year of the contract services agreement with Durham School Services. A Request for Proposals will be initiated, and the process will be complete by March 2006.
- Revise the District Crisis Management plan and retrain all employees.



All efforts will be directed toward providing a safe, comfortable environment that supports our primary customers, the students of the Northwest Independent School District, as they achieve maximum academic performance.



Goal 5: Accountability (Allocation of Resources)



Strengths

The Northwest Independent School District again received a rating of *Superior Achievement* under the State of Texas' *Schools FIRST* (Financial Integrity Rating System of Texas). The *Superior Achievement* rating is the state's highest, and it reflects the quality of Northwest Independent School District's financial management and reporting system.

The Texas Education Agency developed *Schools FIRST* in response to Senate Bill 875 of the 76th Texas Legislature in 1999. The primary goal of *Schools FIRST* is to achieve quality performance in the management of school districts' financial resources, a goal made more significant by the complexity of accounting associated with Texas' school finance system.

Northwest Independent School District's *Schools FIRST* rating verifies that the district is making the most of the taxpayers' dollars. This rating shows that Northwest's schools are accountable not only for student learning, but also for achieving these results cost-effectively and efficiently.

The Northwest Independent School District budget document has been awarded the *Meritorious Budget Award* by the Association of School Business Officials International (ASBO) for the fiscal years 2001-2002 through 2004-2005 and the *Distinguished Budget Presentation Award* by Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) for the fiscal years 2002-2003 through 2004-2005.

Additionally, the Northwest Independent School District Comprehensive Annual Financial Report has been awarded the *Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting* by ASBO for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2003 through 2004 and the *Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting* by GFOA for the fiscal years ending June 30, 2002 through 2004.

These awards represent the highest level of recognition in budgeting and financial reporting for school entities and are awarded to very few districts in Texas.

The district's bonds are rated Aaa by Moody's and AAA by Fitch, by virtue of the Permanent School Fund of the State of Texas (PSF Guarantee). The underlying credit ratings of the district are A3 by Moody's and AA- by Fitch.

"Moody's believes despite the fiscal challenges the district faces, proven solid financial management continues to provide continued bondholder security."

- Moody's Investors Service, Inc.

Areas of Focus for 2005-2006

On October 1, the district's voters passed a \$224.5 million bond election with an impressive 70% voter approval. The strong student and economic growth in the local area should allow the district to maintain the current bond ratings.

Projects

For 2005-2006, the district has a three- step payroll software project underway.

- Absence Management and Substitute Placement Software
- Employee Access Center Software
- Paperless Payroll System

Benefits

The Absence Management and Substitute Placement Software interfaces directly into the district's Pentamotion FinancePlus Human Resources software and updates employee attendance



and substitute tracking data automatically. The Financial Services Department reduced one position in the 2004-2005 budget in planning for the implementation of this software.

A major benefit of having the Employee Access Center place personal information at the employees' fingertips will be a significant reduction in demands on Human Resources and Payroll to look up data and respond to employees' requests for information.

A paperless payroll system utilizing direct deposit and payroll debit cards along with the district's Pentamation Web-Based Employee Access Center will significantly cut annual labor, printing, and paper costs.

The department is also working with Human Resources and Technology to examine Pentamation Employee Timesheet software to replace the current manual paper system.

Additionally, the Financial Services Department has updated the district's *Financial Services* and *Activity Funds Procedures* manuals and continues to conduct twice-a-year paraprofessional training on procedures in August and January. The department has supported the district development and training in the new *Booster Clubs* and *School Support Organizations Guidelines*.

The Chief Financial Officer serves as the sponsor of the Northwest Educational Support Association (NESA) chapter of the Texas Educational Support Staff Association (TESA). The 2005-2006 kick-off session was held October 13 with over sixty district paraprofessionals in attendance.

Budget Development

The district budget process is instructionally driven and guided by the Strategic Plan.

The district is projected to add 1,082 students this year, for a 14% increase. This level of student growth is expected to continue for the foreseeable future.

Funding is a critical issue. The district has been at the maximum Maintenance & Operations tax rate of \$1.50 per \$100 in assessed valuation since the 2001-2002 school year. Unfortunately, this is not an uncommon situation in the State of Texas.

For example, in 2004-2005, 508 districts out a total of 1,035 were at \$1.50. These districts' Average Daily Attendance (ADA) was 2,441,233 students. This is forty-nine percent (49%) of the districts that educate sixty-one percent (61%) of the children in the State of Texas. Additionally, under current law, the district will be required legally to expend an estimated \$33,160,114 in local property taxes under the state's "Robin Hood" law.

The district approach to coping with the combination of fast student growth in a restricted funding environment with increasing academic standards has been to ensure that the budget process is instructionally driven and guided by the Strategic Plan.

The Financial Services Department looks forward to the development of the 2006-2007 budget.

Awards

One of the Financial Services Department's goals is to again earn a *Superior Achievement* rating under the state's *Schools FIRST* system.

Additionally, The Financial Services Department believes that the 2005-2006 *Adopted Budget* and the 2004-2005 *Comprehensive Annual Financial Report* conform to the requirements of both programs, and will be eligible for the ASBO and GFOA awards.



Glossary of Terms

Terminology for Texas Public Schools



Abatement: The process of reducing, postponing, exempting, stopping, or putting an end to something. This term is most frequently used in connection with taxing policy. (See Tax Abatement.)

Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS): The system used by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to rate the quality of Texas public schools. The system utilizes test results, dropout rates, and similar factors to arrive at its ratings.

Accountability: The process of holding educators responsible for the quality of education in the schools. Successful accountability systems are results oriented, the benchmarks are specific and measurable, and there is a “chain” of accountability from the superintendent down to the first line employee.

ACT Assessment®: The ACT Assessment® is designed by ACT Inc. (formerly American College Test), to assess high school students’ general educational development and their ability to complete college-level work. Participation is voluntary. The test is generally administered six times a year. Students can choose to take the test multiple times. The examination covers four academic skill areas: English, Mathematics, Reading, and Science Reasoning. The scores for each section range from 1 to 36.

Adaptive: The ability to respond to a changing environment or changing demands. In a competitive market, schools that are the most adaptive are most likely to thrive. Adaptive people are able to recognize emerging trends and patterns, modify their work accordingly, and continue to be successful.

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP): Every year schools across the nation must meet certain federal standards. Under the federal system in 2004, 47 percent of students in each subgroup – Anglo, black, economically disadvantage, and Hispanic – had to pass the reading portion of the state academic assessment test called TAKS.

Thirty-three percent were required to pass math, and at least 95 percent had to take the test. How well districts meet standards is called Adequate Yearly Progress.

Adjusted Basic Allotment (ABA): Calculation by the State of Texas using formulas which will determine monies entitled to the district. ABA multiplied by ADA will give the amount the district is to receive. This adjustment to the basic allotment is an adjustment for varying cost of living across the state. School districts in higher cost of living areas will receive slightly more funds per ADA than districts in lower cost of living areas.

Adopted Budget: A budget that has been approved by the school board. Once adopted, it becomes the legal budget document of the school or campus. In Texas, the deadline for adopting a district budget for the following year’s budget is August 31.

Admissions, Review, and Dismissal (ARD): A committee composed of a student’s parent(s) and school personnel who are involved with the student. The committee determines a student’s eligibility to receive special education services and develops the individualized education program.

Advanced Placement Program (AP Program or courses): The Advanced Placement Program is a cooperative educational endeavor between secondary schools and colleges and universities. It provides motivated high school students with the opportunity to take college-level courses in a high school setting. Students who participate in the program not only gain college-level skills, but in many cases, they also earn college credit while they are still in high school. Typically, courses and examinations are taken by 11th and 12th grade students.

Ad Valorem Tax: Taxes levied on the assessed value of taxable property within district boundaries. (See Appraisal District.)

Agency Funds: Often referred to as activity



funds; not included in the official school budget.

Appraisal District: A district (usually coinciding with county boundaries) established to appraise property for all taxing entities in the appraisal district. Each participating taxing entity uses these figures to assess a tax rate. The resulting tax is commonly referred to as an ad valorem tax. School districts must participate in the appraisal district.

Appraisal District Board of Directors: A five member board elected by the governing bodies of the taxing entities within the Appraisal District to oversee the functions of the Appraisal District. They function much the same way as the Board of Trustees of a school district.

Appraisal Review Board: A group of citizens selected by the Board of Directors of the Appraisal District to resolve disputes between taxpayers and the Appraisal District.

Appraised Value: The valuation placed on property.

Appropriation: A budgeting term used to describe the practice of setting aside (budgeting) money for a particular category of anticipated expenses such as salaries or teacher supplies. (See Expenditure.)

Assessed Value: The same as “appraised value.”

Assets: Funds that can be applied to cover liabilities.

At Risk Students: A term used to identify students who are “at-risk” of dropping out of school because they meet one or more of about a dozen criteria. Criteria that are used to indicate whether a student is at risk include; performing below grade level, has been held back a grade, is pregnant or a parent, has limited proficiency in English, has been expelled, is in an alternative educational setting, etc.

Audit: The process of examining a school func-

tion and verifying its accuracy and/or its success in meeting its stated objectives. Finances, curriculum, programs, and student performance are examples of audits conducted in schools.

Available School Fund (ASF): Funds accrued from the interest generated by the Permanent School Fund, leases, certain taxes, etc. for the purchase of textbooks with the remainder distributed to school districts on a per capita basis (based on ADA) to all districts in the state.

Average Daily Attendance (ADA): The average number of students in attendance in the district. It is calculated by dividing the total aggregate days of attendance for all students by the number of days of instruction.

Bilingual/ESL allotment: Additional funds available to school districts dependent upon the number of students in ADA which require instruction in bilingual education or English as a second language.

Block Grant: State or federal aid given to a district according to a statutory formula and can be used at the recipient’s discretion on a variety of activities within a broad functional area. Federal “Chapter 1” monies to provide a variety of programs for low-income children (see Socio-Economic Status) is an example of a Block Grant.

Bonded Indebtedness: Debt incurred by a district for which bonds were sold to borrow the money. Bonded debt is most often incurred when the district needs to finance facilities and/or purchase equipment.

Budget: A summary of projected income and expenses. (See Appropriation and Expenditure.)

Capital Outlay (Capital Expenditures): An expenditure that results in the acquisition of fixed assets or addition to fixed assets. Expenditures for land, building construction or additions, improvements of grounds, equipment, etc. are Capital



Expenditures.

Categorical Aid: Money provided by the state or federal government for a specific use such as special education, transportation, etc. (See General Aid.)

Certification: A legal document that validates that a person has completed a prescribed program of education and/or training and is approved to perform certain services. (e.g. teaching, nurse, etc.)

Certified Tax Roll: The tax roll that is adopted (certified) by the Appraisal District Board as being the official or set values for a district (or county or other entity) for that tax year. Once the tax roll is certified, the district can use those appraised values as the basis for developing a budget and setting the tax rate.

Charter School: A publicly funded school operated under a charter (or contract) that exempts it from certain regulations and restrictions. In Texas there are three classes of charters: a home-rule school district (a district-wide charter established by an election), a campus or campus program charter within a district (granted by the local board of trustees), and an open-enrollment charter school that has no boundaries (charter granted by the State Board of Education).

Choice: The process of giving parents of public school students options for their child's education. Vouchers, transfers, flexible schedules, home schooling, etc. are common types of choices being made available to parents.

College-Level Examination Program (CLEP): CLEP tests are comprehensive examinations that, if taken and passed by students, can result in the student being awarded full university credit for a course without taking the course. Most universities will accept CLEP results in many lower level subject areas.

Compensatory Education (Comp. Ed.): Additional

funds given a school district based on pupils who are enrolled in the national school lunch program. These monies must be used for the educational needs of these economically deprived students and for students who have been identified as "At Risk."

Competitive Bidding: Getting at least two responsible suppliers, acting independently and without collusion, to compete to sell goods and/or services to the school at the lowest price and under the most favorable conditions to the district.

Criterion Referenced Tests: Tests that measure student success against a set standard, rather than against the performance of other students taking the test. Student scores are usually expressed in numbers. The TAKS and SAT are examples of Criterion Referenced Tests although the results are sometimes used to measure performance against other students. (See Norm Referenced Tests.)

Curriculum: The program of courses taught in a school.

Curriculum Guide: A written plan of what is to be mastered by students in a particular course or subject. It contains, among other things, the objectives, student tasks, teacher strategies, resources, etc.

Debt Service: An amount of money set aside to pay the principal and interest of a debt.

Debt Service Fund (Also known as Interest and Sinking Fund): An account set up to receive revenue to pay the principal and interest on a general obligation debt (usually incurred by selling bonds to purchase buildings and equipment).

Debt Service Tax: A tax levied to pay off bonded indebtedness. Once collected it is placed in the Debt Service Fund to make bond payments as they come due.

Education: The process of training and develop-



ing the knowledge, skill, mind, and character of a student, especially through formal schooling.

Effective Tax Rate: The tax rate that, if applied to the current tax poll, would raise the same amount of revenue as in the previous year. If values rise from the previous year, the effective tax rate would be less than the previous year's rate. If values fall, the effective tax rate would be higher.

Empowerment (Decentralized Decision-Making): Giving people at lower levels in the organization the responsibility and authority to make certain decisions traditionally made by upper level administrators.

Encumber: The process of charging purchase orders, salaries, and other proposed expenditures against an account (appropriation) at the time the purchase is approved rather than wait until the money is actually spent. In effect, an encumbrance reserves (freezes) that amount of money in an account so it cannot be accidentally spent for other purposes before the invoice for the original item is received and paid.

Enrichment (Also called "local enrichment"): The use of local tax revenue to purchase goods and services for above and beyond the basic program guaranteed by the state.

Equity: A concept of fairness and justice. It is most often applied to financial equity between districts or to differing levels of performance between and among ethnic groups.

Ethnic Origin (ethnicity): The students in a district, school program, etc. that are of a particular race or ethnic background (e.g. African-American, Hispanic, Native American, Asian, Anglo, etc.).

Evaluation: The process of judging the performance of an employee based on data gathered through an objective observation of the employee at work. (See Observation.)

Exemption: Immunity from taxation as authorized by law. A partial exemption reduces taxable value of property, while a total exemption precludes any taxation on the property. Typical partial exemptions are homestead exemptions and over-65 exemptions. Full exemptions are usually granted to not-for-profit organizations (e.g. churches) and property belonging to a government entity (e.g. U.S. Post Office Building).

Expectations: The specific performance the board expects of the district and its superintendent. The expectations must be specific, measurable, related to the job description, and communicated to the superintendent at the beginning of the evaluation period.

Expenditure: The actual spending of money from a budgeted account. (See Appropriation.)

Fine Arts: The courses or subjects in the curriculum that provide for creative expression. These course/subjects include art, dance, music, drama, etc.

Fiscal: Of or relating to financial matters.

Fiscal Capacity: A quantitative measure reflecting the resources that a taxing jurisdiction is taxing, or could tax, (usually defined the assessed valuation multiplier by the maximum tax rate allowed by law) to raise revenue for public purposes.

Fiscal Year: A period of 12 consecutive months established by the state for developing a budget. In Texas, the fiscal year for a school district is September 1 through August 31. The fiscal year is designated by the calendar year in which it ends (e.g. a fiscal year of September 1, 1998 – August 1, 1999 would be "fiscal year 1999").

Fixed Assets: Assets of a long-term nature (land, buildings, furniture, machinery, etc.)

Foundation School Program (FSP): (Formally called



the Minimum Foundation Program.) A state funding formula that guarantees a minimum educational program for all pupils in Texas. The money to support this program comes from a combination of local taxes and state funds. The local share of the FSP is calculated based on a school district's property values, student attendance, the number of students in special populations, and the district's taxing effort. The FSP is two tiered. (See Tier 1 and Tier 2.)

Function Code: A two digit accounting code used in a school budget to identify the purpose of the transaction (e.g. counseling). (Also see Object Code.)

Function /Object Budgeting Concept: Very popular method of budgeting. Functions represent activities for which there are expenditures (e.g. counseling). Objects are those specific services or commodities purchases (e.g. computer). There are main and sub accounts. Coded accounts can be provided even for individual schools in a district.

GED Test: A test administered by the General Educational Development and generally accepted as a high school equivalency credential. It is most often taken by people who never completed the requirements for a high school diploma.

General Aid: State or federal aid given to a school district with few or no strings attached as long as it is spent on education. (See Categorical Aid.)

Gifted and Talented Grant (GT Grant): A grant providing additional funds for pupils who have been identified as gifted and talented. These funds are to be used in the operation of the district's Gifted/Talented Program.

Graduation Requirements: To graduate from a Texas public school entering freshmen must complete one of the three approved graduation plans: the Minimum Graduation Plan (22 credits), the Recommended Graduation Plan (24 credits),

or the Distinguished Achievement Program (24 credits plus some advanced measures).

Guidance Services (Counseling): The assistance provided to students, parents, and teachers by the school counselor. Academic counseling (guidance) refers to assisting students with planning their class schedule, selecting a college or career, etc. Personal counseling refers to activities related to the student's personal and professional development and may encompass working with the child's teacher or parents.

Incremental Budget: A budgeting process where each year's projected expenditures are based on the previous year's expenditures. (See Zero-Based Budget.)

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act: A federal law that assures that students with disabilities receive free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment.

Individualized Education Program (IEP): The ARD committee develops the IEP. The IEP includes the student's present levels of performance; measurable annual goals, including benchmarks and short-term objectives; specific supports and modifications; dates of service; and evaluation procedures.

Input: A term used to describe those things that go into the production of a service. In a school district input factors include such things as teacher morale, communication, leadership activities, quality of personnel, etc. (See Output.)

Input Evaluation: The process of measuring the quality and success of a district (or campus or other function) by measuring input factors. Input evaluation is based on the assumption that if all of the inputs are of sufficient quality, there will be good results (e.g. all students will pass the TAKS). (See Output Evaluation.)

Instruction: Any and all strategies a teacher employs to teach the curriculum.



International Baccalaureate: The International Baccalaureate Organization's Diploma Program was created in 1968 and provides a demanding pre-university course of study that leads to examinations that are recognized in over 100 countries around the world. It is designed for highly motivated secondary school students in their junior/senior years. Schools wishing to offer IB courses must go through an application process and be approved by IBO.

Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS): The system used by the Texas Education Agency to gather uniform, accurate data on student performance, finance, and personnel of public schools.

Per Capita: Funds distributed to school districts on the basis of the number of students in attendance.

Permanent School Fund (PSF): A perpetual trust fund established to hold and distribute funds from the sale of state lands and minerals dedicated to education. Earnings from the PSF are transferred to the Available School Fund and apportioned to districts annually on ADA basis.

Plan: A set of strategies designed to achieve a goal, i.e. to influence the outcome of future events to our advantage.

Professional Staff: An employee holding a position for which the Texas Education Agency requires the employee to hold a certificate issued by TEA. (See certification, support staff).

Proration: If the state's share of the cost of funding the Foundation School Program exceeds the amount appropriated by the legislature, each district's state aid is reduced proportionally, i.e. "prorated." Since the figure may not be known until after the budget is developed, prudent districts develop budgets that allow for state proration (reduction) of its contribution to districts.

Purchase Order: An order to buy tangible items

or services. This is usually preceded by a requisition and must be signed by the building principal and other district business officials.

Reading Proficiency Tests in English (RPTE): The RPTE are designed to measure annual growth in the English reading proficiency of second language learners, and are used along with English and Spanish TAKS to provide a comprehensive assessment system for limited English proficient (LEP) students. LEP students in Grades 3-12 are required to take the RPTE until they achieve a rating of advanced.

Recapture: A levy placed on districts defined by the state as high property wealth districts. The amount of the levy or "recapture" is based on the district's "wealth per student." (See Wealth per Student.)

Receiving District: The public or private school that agrees to "receive" a child from another school and educate him/her. The child can be a transfer student or have a voucher.

Recidivism: Repeated or habitual recurrence of anti-social activity. It is also the term used to describe how often (the rate) students return to the same alternative program or school because of the student's repeated failure to behave appropriately in a regular school setting.

Reconcile: An accounting term that refers to the process of checking one financial account with another to insure accuracy.

Requisition: A request to purchase an item or service that is submitted for approval and will result in a purchase order being issued.

Rollback Rate: A tax rate set annually for each district which, if exceeded, is subject to voter petition and possibly a vote to have the taxes rolled back to the previous year's level.

SAT: The SAT (formerly known as the Scholastic Aptitude Test) is developed by the College



Board to assess high school student readiness for college-level work. Taking the test is voluntary but many universities require SAT scores be submitted as a condition of admission review. The examination is generally administered seven times a year. Students can choose to take the test multiple times. The SAT I: Reasoning Test consists of two sections: Verbal and Mathematics. The scores for each section range from 200 to 800. A perfect score is 1600.

Sending District: The district that “sends” a student to another district via a transfer or voucher.

Special Education: Refers to the population served by programs for students with disabilities. A student is identified as a special education student by an Admission, Review and Dismissal committee (ARD).

Socio-Economic Status (SES): A classification system for students based on total family income and the number of people in the family. Students classified as “Low SES” fall below one of the levels and thereby qualify for certain types of financial assistance such as a free or reduced price lunch.

Standardized Tests: Tests developed by professional test makers and given to thousands of students from across the state or nation. Standardized tests are used by school districts to compare the performance of their students with students from other districts, the state, or the nation. The SAT and TAKS tests are examples of standardized tests. (See also Criterion Referenced Tests and Norm Referenced Tests.)

State-Developed Alternative Assessment (SDAA): The SDAA assesses special education students in Grades 3-8 who are receiving instruction in the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) but for whom TAKS is an inappropriate measure of their academic progress.

State-Developed Alternative Assessment II (SDAII): An assessment developed by the Texas Educa-

tion Agency to evaluate the academic progress of students with disabilities enrolled in grades three to eight. Students are tested on learning ability and not grade level.

State Revenue: Monies raised by the state for education and distributed to local districts through specific formulas.

Stranded Costs: Expenses that continue after the source for paying them is lost. An example of stranded costs for school districts is a school building that must be closed because a large number of students have transferred, vouchered, or moved out of a district. Yet, the bonded debt on the building remains and must still be paid by the district.

Subgroups: Under the NCLB Act students are classified into subcategories – Anglo, black, economically disadvantaged, and Hispanic. The Department of Education keeps track of subgroup scores on state standardized tests to determine if districts are doing enough to educate minority students and close the achievement gap between them and non-minority students.

Support Staff: An employee holding a position that does not require the employee to be certified by the Texas Education Agency. (See Certification, professional staff.)

Tax Abatement: An agreement by a taxing entity (school district, city, county, etc) to exempt or partially exempt property from taxation for a specified period of time in return for a company locating there, developing its property, renovating, or otherwise improving the value of its property. The government objective is usually to create new jobs and/or to add to the tax base.

Tax Base: Assessed valuation of real estate that a school district may tax for yearly operation monies and debt service.

Tax Levy: The total revenue collected from local taxes.



Tax Rate: The amount of money the board establishes that every property owner must pay for each \$100 of value assessed on the property he/she owns. (See Assessed valuation.)

Taxing Unit (also “Taxing Entity): A county, city, school district, or other governmental agencies that tax citizens.

Tech Prep Programs: These are coordinated programs between high schools and colleges that are designed to provide high school students with a continuing education program that is articulated with a college or university. The program builds on the last two to three years of high school and either the first two or all four years of college. These programs are designed to eliminate duplication of instruction and provide training in a focused curriculum or technical skill area. Students who meet the requirements of the articulation agreements may receive college credit for high school coursework.

Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS): Measures the statewide curriculum in reading at grades 3-9, in writing in grades 4 and 7; in English Language Arts at grades 10 and 11; in mathematics at grades 3-11; in science at grades 5, 10, and 11; and social studies at grades 8, 10, and 11; the Spanish TAKS is administered at grades 3 through 6. Satisfactory performance on the TAKS at grade 11 is prerequisite to a high school diploma.

Texas Academic Skills Program (TASP): An instructional program designed to ensure that students attending public institutions of higher learning in Texas and students entering educator preparation programs in Texas have the academic skills necessary to perform effectively in college-level work. It is administered by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating board (THECB). A student must take the TASP Test, or an alternative test before beginning classes at a public community college, public technical college, or public university in Texas or enrolling in dual credit or con-

current courses while still in high school. A student must pass the TASP Test or an approved alternative test, or meet the state’s standards in other ways (e.g. exemption because of high scores on the ACT, SAT, etc.), before he/she can graduate from a public two-year college or enroll in junior- or senior-level courses at a public university.

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS): The statewide test used by TEA to measure the statewide curriculum in reading, mathematics and writing at the exit level. TAAS will remain the graduation requirement for students who were enrolled in Grade 9 or higher on January 1, 2001.

Texas Essential Knowledge & Skills (TEKS): State law mandates that students be proficient in each of the core subjects including reading, math, writing, and science. Educators are charged with ensuring that students master set skills to be considered proficient.

Tier One of SB 351: Money in the state formula that provides financing for basic educational programs required to meet accreditation and other legal standards. Basically a district’s Tier I allotment consists of a basic grant or allotment per student established each biennium by the legislature, plus any categorical aid for special population students in the district. The source of funds for the Tier I allotment is a combination of local and state monies. The wealthier the district, the more local money it must contribute to the Tier I formula.

Tier Two of SB 351: The purpose of Tier II money is to enrich the basic educational program funded through Tier I. Tier II is based on the concept of “guaranteed yield.” The FSP model guarantees that a school district’s maintenance and operations tax effort, measured as an effective enrichment tax rate, will yield a certain amount of revenue per student. In general, the higher a district’s local tax effort, the larger the Tier II allotment.



Title I: Federal law meant to ensure that all children have a fair and equal opportunity to obtain a quality education.

Transfer Student: A student that is allowed by the school board to attend a school other than the school where the student resides. The school may be within the district or in another district.

Transportation Allotment: An entitlement (categorical aid) to a district to assist in funding the cost of transporting children.

Valuation per ADA (also known as district "Wealth"): A commonly used measure of fiscal capacity or wealth that is calculated by dividing the district's total estimated property value by the average daily attendance.

Virtual School: A school where students and teachers are not located together on a school campus, can be anywhere, and are connected over a computer and/or a video conferencing network. Hence the term "virtual" school.

Voucher: A "promise to pay" coupon given to a parent by the state, a school district, or a private source for the purpose of allowing the parent to "shop" for an alternate provider for his/her child's education. The parent cannot exchange the voucher for cash. The receiving school can "cash in" the voucher at the sending district. In some instances payment of part or all of a voucher by the sending district is conditional on the student having met certain academic standards specified by the sending district and agreed on by the receiving district.

Vocational: Courses and/or programs in the curriculum that prepare students for employability in an occupation that does not require a college degree.

Waiver Request: Written statement from a school district citing reasons for inability to comply with a particular mandate and requesting an exemption from the requirement or more time to com-

ply.

Wide Area Network (WAN): A general term used to describe a large network of computers and other equipment. It usually means the network extends beyond a particular campus but can mean beyond the boundaries of the district. (See also Local area network.)

Wealth: The relative ability of a school district to raise monies from local property taxes. When measured by the state, wealth is usually expressed as "valuation per ADA" or "wealth per student". (See also Valuation per ADA.)

Wealth Per Student: The taxable value of property in a district divided by the weighted average daily attendance or WADA. (See Weighted Average Daily Attendance.)

Weighted Average Daily Attendance (WADA): An average student in a district is given a "weight" of "1" when calculating state aid. But certain students (because of handicapping conditions, socio-economic status, etc.) are given a higher "weight." The weight is calculated by a formula spelled out in law. Typically the weighted average daily attendance (WADA) of a district is higher than the average daily attendance (ADA).

Weighted Pupil: A school finance approach where in a certain dollar amount per pupil is allocated to a program or district with some students getting a higher amount or "weight" because of the higher cost needs of certain students (e.g. special education students).

Zero-Based Budget: A budgeting process where each department or cost center must begin at zero and develop a budget based on proven needs. (See Incremental Budget.)