

# Legislative Budget Board Update

JANUARY 2022

## LBB REPORT SUMMARY

- The Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team conducted a review of district operations during calendar year 2019. Analysis of the review findings was completed during late fall of 2019. The finalized report included 94 recommendations with companion sub-recommendations in five major categories:
  - Strengthening spending practices and improving financial monitoring
  - Reorganization and realigning of staff, departments, and functions
  - Standardization of programs and services
  - Improvement of communication, planning, and procedures
  - Improvement of board operations

## COMPLETED RECOMMENDATIONS BY CATEGORY

- District Organization, Planning, and Governance
  - Recommendation 1: Modify the district's organizational structure to decrease the superintendent's supervisory responsibilities and streamline the number of executive leadership positions.
  - Recommendation 2: Systematize the district process for developing, reviewing, and implementing School Improvement Plans.
  - Recommendation 6: Develop and implement procedures that establish a timeline and framework to review and update all board policies systematically.
- Educational Service Delivery
  - Recommendation 11: Develop and implement districtwide structures that support a consistent and systematic approach for supervising and supporting campus principals.
  - Recommendation 12: Develop comprehensive processes for principal placement and retention and instructional transitions at the campus level.
  - Recommendation 14: Implement a process for continuous evaluation of the structure, staffing, instructional delivery, and resources of the district's supports for its English learner students.
  - Recommendation 15: Implement systemic approaches to master scheduling, including improved training and oversight.
  - Recommendation 16: Develop, implement, and evaluate a strategic plan for a long-term, comprehensive system of the district's wraparound services initiatives.
  - Recommendation 17: Increase academic and financial oversight of in-district charter campuses.
- Financial Management
  - Recommendation 23: Establish a board policy that mandates a required level of unrestricted fund balance for the general fund, internal service funds, and enterprise funds.

UPDATED  
01/2022

## COMPLETED RECOMMENDATIONS BY CATEGORY (CONTINUED)

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- Recommendation 24: Promote accountability and decrease the number of invoices paid late by deducting from departmental and campus budgets late payment charges billed to the district by vendors.

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01/2022

- Recommendation 25: Implement the modules approved by the board for the district's enterprise software system and establish an implementation and prioritization committee to help guide system upgrades and address identified operational inefficiencies districtwide.
- Recommendation 27: Increase the annual revenue of the alternative certification program to meet operating expenses or eliminate the program and seek partnerships with other certifying organizations to meet Houston ISD's ongoing needs.
- Recommendation 28: Resume regular weekly staff meetings with department managers to exchange information, inform staff, and seek opportunities to increase efficiencies and collaboration across teams.

- Asset and Risk Management

UPDATED  
01/2022

- Recommendation 29: Enhance controls of cash and investment management processes.
- Recommendation 30: Monitor all receivables to record, reconcile, and report in the district's financial statements in a timely manner.
- Recommendation 31: Analyze property insurance needs based on construction projects and increasing property values and present a plan to the board to control increasing premium costs.

UPDATED  
01/2022

- Recommendation 32: Analyze the self-funded insurance funds compared to coverage offered by an independent insurance provider and present the findings to the board.

- Purchasing and Contract Management

- Recommendation 33: Develop procurement processes for greater productivity and efficiency, ensure that purchases are tracked, and increase communication and training to purchasing end users
- Recommendation 34: Evaluate vendor management procedures to ensure that practices are transparent and equitable and provide the best value for the district.
- Recommendation 35: Develop and implement efficient auditing guidelines and financial controls for purchasing card processing to safeguard district assets and ensure that all transactions follow district procedures
- Recommendation 38: Review the efficiency of each warehouse function and implement processes to make the most productive use of warehouse services.

- Human Resources Management

- Recommendation 39: Reorganize the Human Resources Department and adhere to best practices for an effective and equitable span of control.
- Recommendation 42: Strengthen controls over ad hoc stipends and extra-duty pay.
- Recommendation 44: Develop recruiting strategies for campuses that have high turnover among staff, and standardize procedures for hiring, integrating new staff, and exit interviews districtwide.

## COMPLETED RECOMMENDATIONS BY CATEGORY (CONTINUED)

- Facilities Use and Management

UPDATED  
01/2022

- Recommendation 46: Develop an accurate facility utilization rate for each campus and ensure that campuses maintain industry-standard utilization rates.

UPDATED  
01/2022

- Recommendation 47: Develop or maintain districtwide building prototypes for all campus types.

UPDATED  
01/2022

- Recommendation 48: Develop a comprehensive long-range facility master plan that incorporates accurate information about facility replacement costs and enrollment projections.

UPDATED  
01/2022

- Recommendation 51: Develop a furniture, fixtures, and equipment standard for elementary, middle, and high school campuses to provide consistency across district facilities.

- Recommendation 52: Revise the process for the design and construction document reviews, and mandate that specific departments have representation during the design and construction phases of projects.

- Recommendation 54: Assess the work order needs and evaluate the ability of a digital system to improve service quality provided by the Facilities Services Department.

- Safety and Security Management

- Recommendation 58: Consolidate the safety functions and form a districtwide safety and security committee to address safety issues.

- Recommendation 59: Restructure the police chief's reporting relationship so that the position reports only to the superintendent.

- Recommendation 60: Charge specific positions with reassessing, maintaining, and regularly updating key district documents, such as memorandums of understanding and service expectations.

- Recommendation 61: Develop and institute data-driven performance measures and information sources for the Houston ISD Police Department.

- Information Technology Management

- Recommendation 66: Retrain and monitor key IT processes and use a semiannual maturity model assessment as part of the system of key performance indicators.

- Recommendation 71: Combine Educational Technology and Instructional Technology into one organization, based in the Academic Department.

- Nutrition Services Management

- Recommendation 72: Analyze participation rates monthly, develop and implement strategies to increase participation, and develop board policies that address challenges to participation.

- Recommendation 73: Hold principals accountable for ensuring that all competitive foods sales on campuses comply with United States Department of Agriculture regulations.

- Recommendation 74: Develop guidelines for meal scheduling to assist principals.

**COMPLETED RECOMMENDATIONS BY CATEGORY (CONTINUED)**

- Recommendation 75: Develop and implement procedures and systems to provide oversight and consistent management of campus cafeteria operations.
- Recommendation 76: Use productivity data to manage staffing in accordance with industry standards.
- Recommendation 77: Develop an annual plan for nutrition education and menu displays in campus cafeterias.
- Recommendation 78: Develop a plan to improve catering and adult-only meal operations to a financially accountable position.
- Recommendation 80: Use the contracted consultant's report to eliminate inefficiencies and decrease costs at the Nutrition Services Department.
- Transportation Management and Fleet Operations
  - Recommendation 81: Reorganize Transportation Department functions and develop strategies to improve recruitment and retention of staff.
  - Recommendation 83: Explore options to achieve greater inclusion and promote the use of the least restrictive environment on buses.
  - Recommendation 84: Establish processes to strengthen Transportation Department internal and external communications and solicit feedback from stakeholders.
  - Recommendation 85: Enhance transportation training for drivers and students and address safety concerns at the terminals and on school buses.
  - Recommendation 86: Develop a bus replacement plan that includes industry-standard criteria and decrease the number of spare and surplus school buses in the district's inventory.
  - Recommendation 87: Develop and implement processes to monitor service center productivity and vendor performance to decrease the district's number of out-of-service vehicles.
- Community Involvement
  - Recommendation 88: Consolidate the Office of Communications and the Strategic Engagement and Outreach Department to streamline the district's communications functions.
  - Recommendation 89: Develop and implement written procedures to update campus and department websites with consistent and current information.
  - Recommendation 90: Update the affiliation agreement between the district and the Houston ISD Foundation to reflect actual practices and promote accountability and transparency to the public.
  - Recommendation 91: Review the different ways that donations are reported to the district and develop a unified plan to accept and track campus donations.
  - Recommendation 92: Update procedures to manage partnerships with external organizations and develop a system to track all district partnerships.
  - Recommendation 93: Ensure the efficient communication of staff and department changes to the Information Center to maintain an updated and cohesive central directory.

**COMPLETED RECOMMENDATIONS BY CATEGORY (CONTINUED)**

- Recommendation 94: Develop guidelines to train parent and community volunteers.

**PROGRESS SUMMARY**

- 68 out of 94 total recommendations, 72.3% have been completed. Out of the recommendations under the administration's purview 77.2% are presently complete.
- 1 out of 94 recommendations will not be fully implemented as it would lead to additional costs to the district budget instead of reductions.
  - Recommendation 37: Revise travel procedures for more efficient travel processing.
- 26 out of 94 recommendations are presently in progress and in various phases of implementation.
- 6 out of 94 recommendations, recommendations 3-5 and 7-9, are recommendations under the purview of the Board of Trustees. These recommendations are not reported in the progress metric shared above.

## RECOMMENDATIONS BY PHASE

**Phase 1****Spring and Summer 2020**

- February-July 2020
- Recommendations: 1, 12, 14, 20, 28-29, 31, 33-34, 41-42, 44, 47, 55, 71, 77-78, 88, 90, 94

**Phase 2****Fall/Winter 2020-2021**

- August 2020-February 2021
- Recommendations: 2, 6, 17, 32, 35, 38, 48, 58, 66, 68, 70, 79, 83, 87, 91, 92

**Phase 3****Spring/Summer 2021**

- March-July 2021
- Recommendation: 11, 24-25, 30, 36, 45, 60-61, 67

**Phase 4****Fall/Winter 2021-2022**

- August 2021-February 2022
- Recommendations: 13, 15, 23-25, 30, 32, 51, 62, 74, 79

**Phase 5****Spring/Summer 2022**

- March-July 2022
- Recommendations: 10, 18, 21, 22, 26, 36, 45, 53, 55, 60, 61, 63-65, 69, 82

**Phase 6****Fall/Winter 2022-2023**

- August 2022-February 2023
- Recommendations: 13, 19, 40, 41, 49, 50

**Notes:**

- Does not include recommendations completed by January 2020 (16, 27, 39, 46, 52, 54, 59, 72, 73, 75, 76, 80, 81, 84, 85, 86, 89, 93)
- Does not include the following list of recommendations for which a full schedule and completion date is still to be determined:
  - 3-5 and 7-9
- Does not include 37 and 57 which cannot be fully implemented without the district incurring additional costs
- Does not include recommendation #56 whose projected completion date is 01/25
- Does not include recommendation #43 whose projected completion date is 06/23