

CHAPTER 4 – COMMUNITY RELATIONS

BACKGROUND

An effective communications and community involvement program addresses both the unique characteristics of the school district and the community that it serves as well as actively engages school district stakeholders in decisions and operations.

A critical component of a community relations program includes strategies for communicating both with the community (external communications) and within the school district (internal communications). Other essential program components include methods for recruiting, engaging, and tracking the effectiveness of volunteers and soliciting business support for school functions and outreach activities designed to encourage community participation in the district.

Accordingly, community members and volunteers provide valuable resources that can enrich and enhance the educational system. In turn, community members directly benefit because they ultimately supply an informed citizenry, an educated workforce, and future community leaders.

The Lamar Consolidated Independent School District (LCISD) is named in honor of Mirabeau B. Lamar, the “Lamar Father of Education in Texas.” The second president of the Republic of Texas, it was Lamar who took early action to support public schools. LCISD as we know it today was formed in 1947, when three independent and nine common school districts began consolidating into one new district. In 1947, Rice Farm Common School District No. 2, Thompsons Common School District No. 8, Booth Common School District No. 9, George Common School District No. 23 and Pleak Common School District No. 30 all joined the new LCISD.

The school district grew again before 1950 when Beasley Independent School District, Fulshear Common School District No. 11, Foster Common School District No. 12 and Brandt Common School District No. 14 joined. The Simonton Common School District No. 10 was added in late 1950.

In 2009, the Texas Education Agency removed the accreditation for Kendleton Independent School District and it was absorbed by LCISD. LCISD currently comprises an area of approximately 385 square miles and extends from Brazoria County on the southeast to Waller and Austin counties on the northwest. Wharton County is on the western boundary. The district contains 43 percent of the area of Fort Bend County.

The cities of Rosenberg and Richmond, with a combined population of approximately 42,000 (Census Bureau, 2016), form the center of the school district. Some of the other municipalities within the LCISD are Beasley, Booth, Fulshear, Simonton and Thompsons.

The school district has an ethnically diverse population, of which 27.7 percent is White, 44.3 percent Hispanic/Latino, 19.1 percent African American, 6.3 percent Asian, and 2.5 percent other ethnicities or more than one race/ethnicity. Approximately 43 percent of the district’s student population is economically disadvantaged.

CHAPTER HIGHLIGHTS

- LCISD’s Community Relations Department, in conjunction with community partners, implement a host of external academic and social support programs to benefit students and their families.
- The Lamar Educational Awards Foundation raises approximately \$300,000 annually to fund teacher and classroom grants that augment student learning experiences.
- By adopting a more centralized approach to executing communications and community/stakeholder involvement programming, the Community Relations Department can deliver more comprehensive services to schools.
- Implementing a consistent process for background checks for volunteers will reduce the risk of volunteers with inappropriate backgrounds from harming a student or staff member.
- Centralizing the volunteer registration and application process will enable the school district to develop and maintain a complete, up-to-date database of all volunteers.

The role of a Community Relations Department in a school district is to link the school district to the community. LCISD’s Community Relations Department is responsible for internal and external communications, media relations, education partnerships, and graphic arts, and web content for the district’s website.

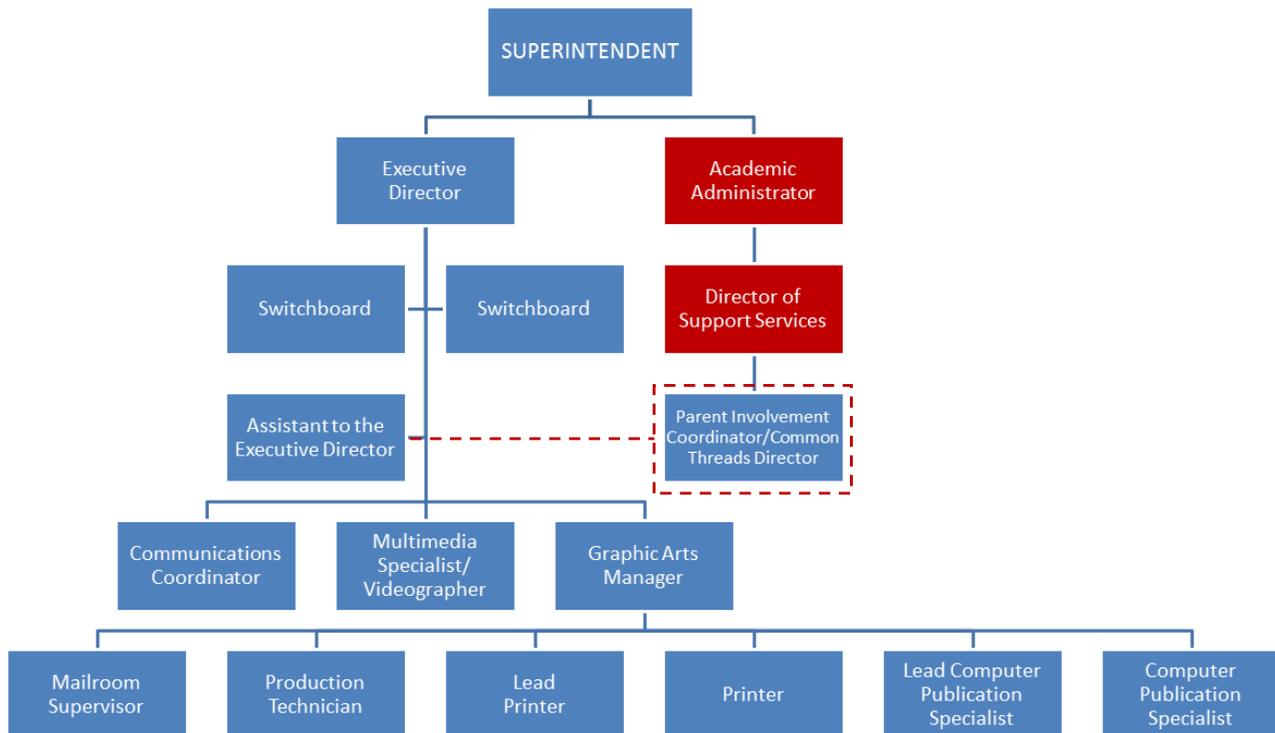
Organizational Structure

LCISD’s Community Relations Department is headed by an executive director who is supported by other staff and 13 other members. Additionally, a parent involvement coordinator/Common Threads Director works closely with the Community Relations Department and reports to the director of Support Services Department.

The Community Relations Department provides support to school staff, central administration, community stakeholders, and the general community regarding information dissemination, partnership development and community coalition building purposes. Additionally, community and district recognition programs are developed and implemented through this department as well as administration of community focus groups and surveys.

Exhibit 4-1 shows the district’s Community Relations Department organizational structure.

Exhibit 4-1
Lamar Consolidated Independent School District
Community Relations Department Organizational Structure
2016-2017



Source: LCISD Community Relations Department, January 2017.

Exhibit 4-2 on the following page presents a more detailed description of the key positions and major responsibilities assigned in regards to communications and community involvement functions at LCISD.

**Exhibit 4-2
LCISD Communications and Community Involvement
Staff Responsibilities**

Position Title	Major Position Responsibility
<i>Executive Director, Community Relations</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directs and manages the district’s public information activities. • Demonstrates awareness of the district/community needs and assists in initiating activities to meet those needs in cabinet-level decision making. • Participates in local efforts and organizations to demonstrate the district’s support of student needs and the community. • Communicates and interprets district and/or campus goals, board policies, administrative procedures and Texas Education Agency (TEA) regulations to appropriate audiences. • Serves as a liaison between the district and community at-large. • Advises superintendent, campus administrators and Board of Trustees on probable public relations consequences relating to district programs, policies, and actions.
<i>Communications Coordinator</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disseminates information to the media, public, and school district staff. • Provides support to the executive director of the Community Relations Department in writing, editing and proofreading district online and printed publications, including the district’s internal and external newsletters, scripts, brochures, fliers, etc. • Serves as editor/writer for district website, internal and external newsletters, e-newsletter, and other publications. • Assists as communications liaison between the written news media and district. Prepares and distributes news releases and assists with requests for information. • Provides photography for district programs and events for publications and presentations. • Assists schools in identifying community resources and sources of support that can enhance the instructional programs.
<i>Multimedia Specialist/ Videographer</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creates and manages district-level multimedia/videography efforts. • Develops district-level video productions from concept to completion, including all necessary scripting, filming, content and overall creative design. • Applies technical expertise and knowledge to other district-directed projects as well as field technical support and troubleshooting. • Attends daytime or evening campus/district events to provide multimedia/videography services. • Designs, manages, monitors, updates, and promotes dynamic web presence for LCISD on the district website and through social media channels. • Posts new stories, district publications, and events on the district website to ensure timely and accurate information.
<i>Graphics Arts Manager</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assists executive director of the Community Relations Department with editing, design, and production of all district-wide publications, including internal and external newsletters, annual performance reports, newsletters, brochures, calendars, course selection guides, student handbooks and any other district publications and/or instructional materials. • Supports district curriculum regarding the printing and publication of district instructional teaching and testing materials for students/staff. • Cooperates with staff members in publicizing and promoting performances, exhibitions, displays, or other special programs sponsored by the schools and open to the public. • Conducts weekly staff meeting to keep graphic arts staff members abreast of work orders in progress, job completion and shipping and inventory.

Position Title	Major Position Responsibility
Print Production Technician	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Operates and maintains all printing equipment in an efficient and safe manner. ● Performs printing duties and assists in bindery when necessary. ● Ensure that all printed materials are of the highest possible quality. ● Assists daily in keeping all machines clean and fully operational. Reports all needed adjustments or repairs. ● Reports all shortages of material/supplies.
Lead Printer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Completes all printing requests that require detailed presswork. ● Monitors use and inventory of printing supplies and related materials. ● Advises Graphic Arts Manager on supply-cost containment strategies and timetables for recording supplies. ● Coordinates scheduling of press runs for printing requests. ● Conducts staff development in printing processes of other graphic arts staff members.
Lead Computer Publication Specialist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Maintains tracking system for all jobs. ● Takes the lead in design work for all district publications. ● Typesets forms, certificates, newsletters, and other items as assigned. ● Shoots photos and develop layouts as directed. ● Assists Graphic Arts Department with computerized inventory control and work order tracking system.
Computer Publication Specialist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assists with design work for all district publications. ● Typesets forms, certificates, newsletters, and other items as assigned. ● Shoots photos and develops layouts as directed. ● Assists Graphic Arts Department with computerized inventory control and work order tracking system.
Parent Involvement Coordinator/Common Threads Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assists campuses with developing effective parent involvement programs that support a partnership among schools, parents, and the community to improve student achievement. ● Provides consultation to campus personnel so that they jointly develop, with parents, a school-parent compact that outlines how parents, campus staff, and students will share the responsibility for improved student achievement. ● Ensures that all campuses receiving Title I funds, develop and implement programs, activities, and procedures for the involvement of parents, including meaningful consultation with parents in the planning, development, and implementation of Title projects as specified in the improving America's School Act of 1994. ● Promotes parent activities that can accelerate student achievement, helps parents participate in campus planning and the review of campus plan initiatives, and improves communication and partnerships between parents and campus personnel. ● Promotes positive school/community relations and partnerships through networking and collaborations with district, community agencies, or businesses that promote meaningful parental involvement.

Source: LCISD Communications Department.

BEST PRACTICES

Best practices are methods, techniques, or tools that have consistently shown positive results, and can be replicated by other organizations as a standard way of executing work-related activities and processes to create and sustain high performing organizations. When comparing best practices, similarity of entities or organizations is not as critical as it is with benchmarking. In fact, many best practices transcend organizational characteristics.

McConnell & Jones LLP (or the review team) identified 16 best practices against which to evaluate the Community Relations Department. LCISD met 10 of the 16 best practices. **Exhibit 4-3** provides a summary of these best practices. Best practices that LCISD does not meet result in observations, which are discussed in the body of this chapter. However, all observations included in this chapter are not necessarily related to a specific best practice.

Exhibit 4-3
Summary of Best Practices – Community Relations

Best Practice Number	Description of Best Practice	Met	Not Met	Explanation
1.	Communications. An administrative infrastructure is in place to effectively support centralized communications to schools and constituents.	X		District leadership and departmental staff members understand their roles and responsibilities, are actively engaged in the local community, and are effective at communicating to stakeholders overall.
2.	Communications. A documented Communications plan exists to drive and ensure effective communication to both internal and external stakeholders.	X		Although not a formal communications plan, The Community Relations Department uses the 2016-2017 District Improvement Plan - Goal Five and related performance objectives for planning purposes.
3.	Communications. The school district has an extensive list of key stakeholders that represent a broad cross-section of parents, community/civic/business and political leaders that it can draw upon for stakeholder input when needed.	X		The Community Relations Department maintains a broad list of community stakeholders for the purpose of community outreach. This list was provided to the review team and used to obtain stakeholder input to evaluate the school district’s constituency base.
4.	Communications. The school district consistently engages in effective two-way communications and strives to provide transparent information to stakeholders.	X		The Community Relations Department has documented evidence of effective communications channels used to reach and obtain feedback from stakeholders regarding critical school district matters such as district bond campaigns and district boundary rezoning initiatives.
5.	Communications. Critical oral, written, and electronic communication is disseminated in the native language of non-English speaking parents when appropriate.	X		The Community Relations Department provides a wealth of information to stakeholders via the website, flyers, robo calls, and social media in multiple languages.
6.	Communications. The school district has developed a document that provides a comprehensive overview of its vision and accomplishments from one school year to the next. Information from board meetings is easily accessible to community members making it convenient for stakeholders to stay abreast of issues.		X	The district does not produce an annual report that highlights its vision and accomplishments. Board minutes and other critical materials are posted on the district’s website. However, the district does not live stream all or critical parts of board meetings on the Internet so stakeholders can view meeting “real time.” in order to stay current of district happenings. See Observation 4-1

Best Practice Number	Description of Best Practice	Met	Not Met	Explanation
7.	Communications. The school district has a procedure in place that it is in compliance with processing public information requests.	X		The Community Relations Department is responsible for responding to public information requests on behalf of the district. The district's external legal counsel handles complex public information requests. The assistant to the executive director of the Community Relations Department processed information requests timely.
8.	Communications. The school district has a feedback mechanism in place to gauge stakeholder perceptions of the effectiveness of its communications	X		The Community Relations Department administers an annual survey to parents and staff to gauge stakeholder perceptions about the effectiveness of district communications as well as the effectiveness of operations. See Accomplishment 4-D
9.	Community Involvement. An administrative infrastructure is in place to effectively support centralized community and parent/stakeholder involvement for schools and constituents.		X	The Community Relations Department does not provide administrative oversight for community and parent/stakeholder involvement for schools and constituents. See Observation 4-1
10.	Community Involvement. The school district has a tracking mechanism in place to document the number of volunteers, volunteer hours, and monetary and in-kind donations contributed.		X	Parent and community involvement initiatives are primarily managed at the school level with little administrative support from the Community Relations Department. The department lacks a centralized process to document the number of volunteers, volunteer hours, and monetary and in-kind donations contributed at schools. See Observation 4-1
11.	Community Involvement. The school district has established a strong network of community and business partners to leverage valuable resources.	X		The Community Relations Department has cultivated a strong network of community and business partners that contribute valuable resources to the district. See Accomplishment 4-A
12.	Community Involvement. The school district has established policies and guidelines for parent and community volunteers, including background checks and volunteer training requirements to ensure both the volunteers and schools have a positive experience in a safe and secure environment.		X	The school district lacks a comprehensive program to assist schools with securing volunteers, conducting background checks, and training volunteers and school staff, as well as policies and procedure to guide and facilitate working together. See Observation 4-3
13.	Community Involvement. Internal community involvement programs such as parental advocacy and academic/social support service organizations are in place to facilitate positive academic performance.	X		The district has a parent involvement coordinator/Common Threads program director that is assigned to the Support Services Department. This position is primarily responsible for parental advocacy and academic/social support services. See Accomplishment 4-B

Best Practice Number	Description of Best Practice	Met	Not Met	Explanation
14.	Community Involvement. Each school has a complement of parent volunteers and community partners that provide additional support and resources for learning.		X	While the majority of schools reported that they have support from parents and community partners, many schools reported that assistance from the Community Relations Department with identifying additional business partners would be helpful. See Observation 4-2
15.	Community Involvement. The school district has an external fundraising unit to assist with soliciting and attaining donations and contributions to supplement/expand resources.	X		The Lamar Educational Awards Foundation (LEAF) raises more than \$350,000 annually to supplement teacher and classroom resources for schools. See Accomplishment 4-C
16.	Community Involvement. The school district evaluates community involvement programs on an annual basis to ensure effectiveness.		X	The Community Relations Department does not have a formal process in place to evaluate its community involvement programs. See Observation 4-1

Source: McConnell & Jones LLP's Review Team.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

ACCOMPLISHMENT 4-A

District-wide and Campus Community Involvement Initiatives

LCISD's Community Relations Department and community partners work together to implement a host of external academic and social support programs targeted to help students and their families overcome impediments to both educational and personal success.

These community involvement programs are designed to promote academic and recreation enrichment, remove barriers to learning for students, and focus on improving instruction and increasing student achievement. The department has an integrated focus on parent engagement, health and social services, youth and community development, and community engagement. **Exhibit 4-4** below summarizes LCISD's numerous community involvement programs and activities.

Exhibit 4-4
Summary of LCISD Community Involvement Programs

Program	Description
Achieve Fort Bend County (AFBC)	AFBC, founded in 2009, is an organization that is committed to provide resources to students in high school that are in danger of dropping out of school. Participating businesses and community and education leaders provide assistance to the Fort Bend community.
Alvin Community College (ACC)	ACC provides LCISD's students the opportunity to take post-secondary courses through their high school and earn college credit. The courses are free and participating students may pay a small fee to have the hours earned entered in their transcript.
The Art Institute of Houston	The Art Institute of Houston provides LCISD students who are interested in pursuing an Associate of Applied Science degree the opportunity to take culinary courses through their high school and earn college credit. In order to receive credit, the student must have at least a "B" average and meet all other requirements for graduation. The courses are free and participating students may pay a small fee to have the hours earned entered in their transcript.

Program	Description
Attack Poverty (AP)	Attack Poverty was founded in 2011 by Richard Logan, a Missions Pastor at River Pointe Church, and their mission is to “strengthen under-resourced communities through spiritual growth, education, revitalization, and basic needs”. AP is a global organization that serves local communities and provides services such as student support, after school programs, and job readiness training.
Brazosport College	Brazosport College provides LCISD students who are interested in pursuing an Associate of Applied Science degree the opportunity to take post-secondary courses through their high school and earn college credit. Brazosport provides all of the course competencies, syllabi, and course outlines. The courses are free and participating students may a small fee to have the hours earned entered in their transcript. The student must meet all Brazosport College admission and entrance requirements, enroll within 15 months after graduation, complete six additional credit hours, complete prerequisite courses with a grade of 80 or above, and apply for articulated credit within 28 months after graduation to receive college credit.
Culinary Institute Le Norte	Culinary Institute Le Norte provides LCISD students who are interested in culinary arts the opportunity to take post-secondary courses through their high school and earn college credit. The course encompasses the fundamentals of baking and pastry production, such as cakes, tarts, candies, ice cream, sorbet, etc. It also introduces the students to fundamental cooking techniques where students will learn to prepare basic food dishes such as soups, creams, entrees, salads, etc. In addition, students could be eligible to receive the Culinary Competition Scholarship or the High School Merit Award scholarship.
Fort Bend Regional Council (FBRC)	FBRC, founded in 1976, is an organization that is committed to providing the community with substance abuse prevention, treatment services, and education. LCISD’s school campuses are served by FBRC Youth Prevention Counselors. Youth Prevention Counselors are trained counselors that provide treatment services to students and their families dealing with drug and alcohol addiction.
Houston Galveston Institute (HGI)	HGI is a 36 year old nonprofit counseling center that serves Greater Houston and surrounding areas. The institute was founded in 1978 by Dr. Harlene Anderson and seeks to meet the demands of mental health understanding to parents and families. The institute further develops skills in systems-oriented therapy. The therapists have produced work and studies which are groundbreaking in family counseling. HGI provides counseling services, workshops, and more to families of all social and economic backgrounds.
Houston Public Broadcasting Station (HPBS)	HPBS is a public media broadcast outlet that delivers high-quality content of news, information, education, and etc. to the Houston area. Houston PBS allows LCISD Regional Spelling Bee winners to compete in their spelling bee.
Kylie’s Prayer	Kylie’s prayer is a homeless assisting ministry. The group of volunteers assists the homeless and struggling families by prayer and donations of clothing, shoes, books, food, etc. for families in the Fort Bend community. Kylie’s Prayer assists LCISD students and families who struggle financially.
Loving Houston	Loving Houston provides training on how to maintain a solid long-term foundation for school partnerships and develop a clear understanding of the district’s policies and programs geared toward various churches. Training includes instruction from church and school leaders to those who are interested in serving in LCISD.
Memorial Hermann Sugar Land	Memorial Hermann Sugar Land provides IRONMAN Sports Medicine Institute at Sugar Land provides LCISD athletes with a 15,000 square foot sport-specific care facility. The facility offers customizable treatments, training programs, trained surgeons, therapists, coaches, unique equipment, and rehabilitation treatment/therapy services. The facility provides free and convenient self-parking. Memorial Hermann Sugar Land in conjunction with Mental Health America also provides referral and community outreach services to LCISD students for behavioral and mental health screenings.
Sole Loved	Sole Loved was launched in June of 2016 and it is a shoe charity that provides gently used shoes to anyone in need in the community. The foundation believes that this will bring hope and self-esteem to children and families in the community.
Sugarland Exchange Club (SEC)	SEC is a group of individuals who are committed to helping their community by raising awareness of child abuse prevention and giving food, school supplies, aide to senior citizens, etc.

Program	Description
Texas Children's Health Care Plan (TCHCP)	TCHCP was founded in 1996 by Texas Children Hospital and is a government assisting healthcare provider that offers a large network of doctors and resources to low income families and individuals.
Texas State Technical College (TSTC)	TSTC provides LCISD students with dual credit courses through Fort Bend Technical Center in Richmond. Courses include HVAC, Advanced HVAC and Refrigeration Technology, and Diesel Mechanics I and II. Students are responsible for books, fees, and tuition for the course, as well as their own transportation to and from the center. TSTC offers courses that are taught at LCISD's Terry High School, but are available to all high schools. Other courses offered by TSTC to LCISD students include Computer Technician, Automotive Technology, and Construction Technology.
Undies for Everyone	Undies for Everyone is a non-profit organization that distributes underwear for economically disadvantaged students in Houston's eight largest school districts. The Undies for Everyone mission is to provide underwear to disadvantaged students and increase their self-esteem, hygiene, and success.
Wharton County Junior College (WCJC)	WCJC provides LCISD students the opportunity to take post-secondary courses through their high school and earn college credit. Some of the courses offered include, Welding, Business Law, Fundamentals of Networking, and Introduction To Engineering Design. In order for students to receive credit, the student must have a grade of an 80 or better and enroll in WCJC within 15 months of high school graduation. The courses are free and participating students may pay a small fee to have the hours earned entered in their transcript.

Source: LCISD Community Relations Department, February 2017.

ACCOMPLISHMENT 4-B

LCISD has implemented an internal social support program targeted toward helping students and families to overcome impediments to educational and personal success through the Common Threads program, which assists in filling a void of county/community services.

The district established Common Threads in 2012 to serve the community by providing gently used and new clothing, toiletry items, and school supplies to needy families. Common Threads is housed in a spacious room in the district's special needs building. This program helps to relieve the burden from some of the economically disadvantaged families who need extra financial assistance during the school year. Common Threads has served more than 300 needy families and has over 50 parents, students, and community members who volunteer to help the cause. Common Threads' program objectives include:

- Providing students with basic necessities
- Enabling students to focus on their educational goals
- Developing students confidence in themselves

Eligibility requirements to participate in the program are simple. Families who find themselves in difficult circumstances can obtain resources from the program by contacting the school nurse, or obtain a referral from a teacher or administrator at the student's school. Once approved, parents and students may select clothes or other items at the Common Threads location or request the items to be sent directly to the student's campus. Parents, student organizations, and community members are encouraged to organize and volunteer at clothing drives by soliciting donations, filing orders, washing, folding, sorting clothes, and assisting parents and students with clothing selections.

Common Threads is an important community involvement/parent support program for the district because educational research confirms that poverty decreases a child's readiness for school through aspects of health, home life, schooling and neighborhoods. However, research also confirms that students who receive extra assistance in these areas benefit because they are more likely to stay in school, which ultimately improves dropout rates, contributes to higher graduation rates, and higher levels of preparation in order to succeed in post-secondary pursuits.

ACCOMPLISHMENT 4-C

The district has an effective external 501(c)(3) nonprofit educational foundation, Lamar Educational Awards Foundation (LEAF), which raises funds through sponsoring three major fundraisers each year.

The Lamar Educational Awards Foundation (LEAF) was established in 2000 to benefit LCISD by providing funds beyond the normal operating budget for educational programs and activities for the district's students and staff. LEAF is led by an executive director who manages the day-to-day functions of the organization. A board of directors, consisting of a maximum of 24 volunteer directors from local business, industry, and community leaders, provides policy and administrative oversight for the foundation. The foundation's main objective is to secure and distribute resources to students, staff, and campuses to supplement, enhance and enrich the quality of education.

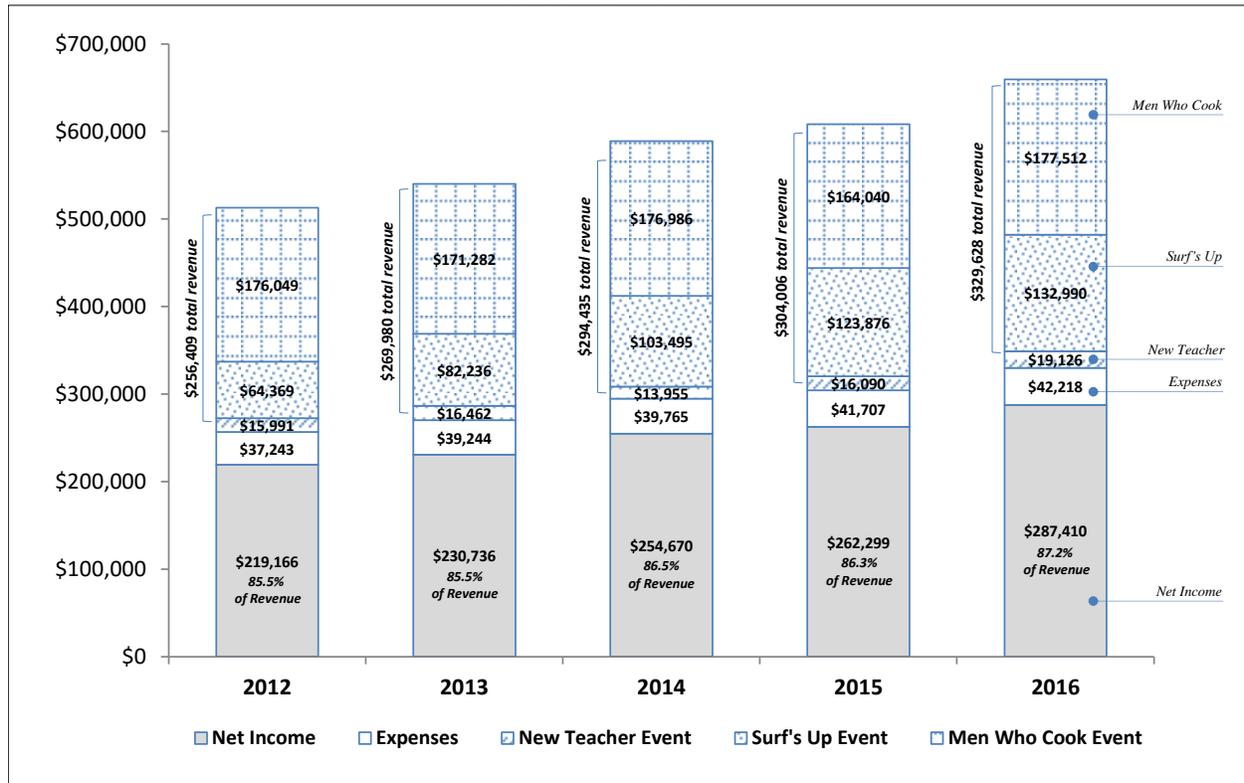
Since inception, LEAF has raised nearly \$3 million. Each year, the foundation sponsors three main fundraising events as described below:

- **Men Who Cook** – a popular food tasting event consisting of a multi-ethnic buffet where well known cooks and chefs in the community and LCISD employees, including the superintendent, cabinet members, and principals, volunteer to prepare their famous or favorite dishes. Guests may visit over 20 tasting stations with various culinary cuisines ranging from steak to barbeque to seafood, and a wide array of desserts. In addition to fabulous food from over 50 local “celebrity” chefs, many “highly sought after” items are offered for bid through live and silent auctions.
- **Surf's Up** – a charitable event with a beach party theme where families, teachers, and students enjoy bidding for food and desserts, and dancing.
- **New Teacher Roundup** – a welcome party to promote camaraderie for new staff members to feel a part of the community and the district. Teachers and staff members enjoy a nice dinner and meet new teachers in the district.

The Men Who Cook event has generated the highest amount of revenue over the past five-year period with average revenue of \$173,174 and average net income of \$153,527. The Surf's Up event generated the second highest amount of revenue over a five-year period averaging \$101,393 and average net income of \$84,510. Additionally, the New Teacher Roundup event generated five-year average revenue of \$16,325 and average net income of \$12,820.

Overall, five-year average net income for the foundation totaled \$1,251,281 and an average of 86.2 percent of revenue. The Better Business Bureau has established a formula to assist nonprofit organizations with measuring the financial effectiveness of its operations and suggests a general guideline for controlling expenses to 35 percent, which yields a profitability percentage rate of 65 percent. LEAF has consistently exceeded the suggested profitability guidelines with an average of 86.2 percent profitability rate over the past five years. **Exhibit 4-5** on the following page graphically depicts an overview of LEAF's funding sources and profitability.

**Exhibit 4-5
Lamar Educational Awards Foundation Major Funding Sources
School Year 2016-2017**



Source: LCISD Community Relations Department, Data Request – February 2017.

The district’s foundation uses the funds that are raised to award two types of grants – teacher and school grants as described below in **Exhibit 4-6**.

**Exhibit 4-6
Lamar Educational Awards Foundation
Grant Criteria**

Teacher Grants	School Grants
Teacher grants ranging from \$100 to \$1,500 are awarded to enhance, promote and augment classroom instruction in the areas not allotted in regular budgetary funds or reimbursable from other sources.	School grants of up to \$4,000 are awarded for a maximum of one grant per grade level or secondary department (per school) and allow staff to address needs/challenges that are aligned with the school’s mission, statement or philosophy, or campus improvement plan.

Source: LCISD Community Relations Department, Data Request – February 2017.

Many of the LCISD school principals reported that the extra financial support from teacher and school grants assists with funding innovative projects and programs that greatly benefit their students. Without this support, the schools could not fund these programs and projects.

ACCOMPLISHMENT 4-D

LCISD annually surveys staff, parents, and students to determine if they are meeting the needs of the district.

The school district administers an annual campus climate survey (online) to assess staff, parent, and student satisfaction levels with district operations. These stakeholder groups were invited to participate in the online survey from November 28, 2016 through December 18, 2016. Parents were invited to participate via email through a public link on the district website, and they could also take the survey for each of their children. The parent survey was available in both English and Spanish. The district sent teacher email invitations and they responded to the survey link in order to participate. Students were invited to take the survey online during school hours.

Exhibit 4-7 presents a breakdown of the total number of respondents that participated in the survey. Overall, more than 19,000 stakeholders participated in the survey.

**Exhibit 4-7
Breakdown of LCISD Campus Climate Survey Respondents by Stakeholder Category
School Year 2016-2017**

Participant Group	Number of Responses
Staff	2,159
Students	11,045
Parents	5,872
Total	19,076

Source: LCISD Campus Climate Survey, December 2016 administered by K12.

The annual district survey is designed to gauge perceptions regarding shared beliefs, values, and attitudes that shape interactions between students, teachers, and administrators, as well as set the parameters of acceptable behavior and norms for a school.

Topics covered as part of the survey included:

- Academic preparation
- Student support
- School leadership
- Faculty relations and support
- Parent engagement
- Safety and behavior
- School operations
- School and district events

Responses to the survey questions were primarily very positive, with most questions receiving a combined favorability rating (strongly agree or agree) of 84 percent or higher. Survey questions in each of the topical areas noted above were designed so that they would be relatable or applicable to the survey respondent’s campus experience; therefore, survey questions for parents, school staff, and students had similar themes, but were not identical.

Student responses to the survey questions tended to be slightly less favorable than responses from parents and school staff. In two instances, student responses varied widely from parents and staff. Only 57 percent of the students responding to the survey felt that their parents attended school activities with them compared to 89 percent of parents who indicated that they felt welcome in their child’s school and 97 percent of school staff who indicated that parents are welcome and encouraged to attend activities at their child’s school. Additionally, only 30

percent of students responded that their parents volunteered at their school as compared to 85 percent of parents who indicated that they were satisfied with the opportunities to be involved at their child’s school and 78 percent of school staff who indicated that parent input is used to improve instruction at their child’s school.

Exhibit 4-8 summarizes the district’s Campus Climate Survey responses.

**Exhibit 4-8
Summary of LCISD Campus Climate Survey Responses
School Year 2016-2017**

Survey Group/Question	Total	Strongly Agree or Agree	Disagree or Strongly Disagree	Do Not Know	Respondent Total 100%
ACADEMIC COMMUNICATION					
Parents <i>I am kept informed about my child's grades.</i>	5,829	91%	8%	1%	100%
School Staff <i>I regularly communicate with parents about their child's academic achievements</i>	2,139	87%	5%	8%	100%
Students <i>My parents communicate with my teachers about how I am doing in school.</i>	10,979	70%	19%	11%	100%
BEHAVIOR COMMUNICATION					
Parents <i>I am kept informed about my child's behavior.</i>	5,825	88%	10%	2%	100%
School Staff <i>I regularly communicate with parents about their child's behavior.</i>	2,140	86%	6%	8%	100%
Students <i>My parents ask me about my day at school.</i>	10,990	87%	11%	2%	100%
WELCOMENESS					
Parents <i>I feel welcome in my child's school.</i>	5,835	89%	10%	1%	100%
School Staff <i>Parents are welcome and encouraged to attend activities at this school.</i>	2,143	97%	1%	2%	100%
Students <i>My parents attend school activities with me.</i>	10,970	57%	35%	8%	100%
ACADEMIC INFORMATION					
Parents <i>Teachers give me useful information about how to help my child do well in school.</i>	5,817	78%	19%	3%	100%
School Staff <i>Parents support me when addressing an academic problem with their child.</i>	2,135	84%	7%	9%	100%
Students <i>My parents make sure I do my homework every night.</i>	11,007	84%	13%	3%	100%
LEARNING NEED					
Parents <i>My child's teachers are available to discuss my child's learning needs with me.</i>	5,821	86%	10%	4%	100%
School Staff <i>Parent input about student learning needs is respected and valued at this school.</i>	2,145	91%	3%	6%	100%

Survey Group/Question	Total	Strongly Agree or Agree	Disagree or Strongly Disagree	Do Not Know	Respondent Total 100%
Students <i>My parents or other family members help me with my homework if I ask.</i>	10,984	86%	11%	3%	100%
PARENTS INPUT					
Parents <i>I am satisfied with the opportunities for me to be involved in my child's school.</i>	5,814	85%	12%	3%	100%
School Staff <i>Parent input is used to improve instruction at this school</i>	2,141	78%	9%	13%	100%
Students <i>My parents volunteer at school.</i>	10,978	30%	59%	12%	100%

Source: LCISD Campus Climate Survey, December 2016 administered by K12 Insight (a national survey company).
Note: Survey results reflect only the perceptions and opinions of survey respondents since random sampling methodology was not used to administer the survey. Some survey tabulation results may not total to 100 percent due to rounding.

ACCOMPLISHMENT 4-E

LCISD's executive leadership team is actively involved in local business and civic community organizations, which helps promote positive relations between the community and the school district.

District leadership is very visible in civic organizations and professional organizations in the Rosenberg/Richmond community and around Texas. On an ongoing basis, the LCISD Community Relations Department works closely with the district's executive leadership team by encouraging active involvement in business, civic, governmental, and religious organizations, which helps to promote positive relations between the community and the school district. By regularly participating in community-based organizations, LCISD's executive leadership team is able to cultivate positive relationships within the local community and raise public awareness about the district, which ultimately promotes strong community and parental involvement.

Exhibit 4-9 shows a summary of the organizations in which LCISD's leadership regularly participate.

Exhibit 4-9
Summary of LCISD Executive Leadership Team Community Involvement Participation
2016-2017

Organization	LCISD District Administrator								
	Superintendent	Chief Financial Officer	Executive Director Secondary Education	Chief Academic Officer	Executive Director Community Relations	Chief Human Resources Officer	Chief Technology Information Officer	Administrator Operations	Executive Director for LEAF
Region IV Educational Service Center	X		X	X					
Central Ft. Bend Chamber of Commerce	X				X				
Richmond Rotary Club	X				X				
Oak Bend, Advisory Board	X								X
Greater Fort Bend EDC	X								

Organization	LCISD District Administrator								
	Superintendent	Chief Financial Officer	Executive Director Secondary Education	Chief Academic Officer	Executive Director Community Relations	Chief Human Resources Officer	Chief Technology Information Officer	Administrator Operations	Executive Director for LEAF
P-16 Council	X								
Fort Bend Chamber of Commerce	X				X				
Fulshear Area Chamber of Commerce					X				
Fort Bend Global Initiative					X				
Fort Bend County Public Information Officer Network, Steering Committee					X				
Rosenberg Woman’s Club									X
Texas Association of School Administrators	X								
Texas Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development	X								
Texas Future Farmers of America Association	X								
Texas School Public Relations Association					X				
The National School Public Relations Association					X				
The Public Relations Society of America					X				
Texas Association of School Business Officials		X						X	
Association of School Business Officials International (ASBO)		X							
Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA)		X							
Fort Bend Leadership		X	X				X		
State Professional Organization, Texas Computer Education Association (TCEA)							X		
Texas Computer Education Association (TCEA) Area 4							X		
Gulf Coast Texas Association of School Business Officials (TASBO) Regional Affiliate									X

Source: LCISD, Superintendent’s Office.

DETAILED OBSERVATIONS

Centralized Oversight of Community Stakeholder Involvement

OBSERVATION 4-1

When compared to current and future peers, LCISD’s Community Relations Department is the only department that does not provide a centralized oversight approach to planning and executing the district’s communications and community stakeholder involvement functions.

To determine how LCISD’s Community Relations Department operations compare to school districts with similar characteristics, the review team requested selected operational information such as organizational charts and best practices from two peers of similar size (Clear Creek ISD and Spring ISD) and two larger districts based on expected growth (Conroe ISD and Klein ISD). The peers selected had similar characteristics in that each district has been or still is a moderate to high growth enrollment district in close proximity to Houston, Texas. Clear Creek ISD and Spring ISD have similar enrollment to LCISD’s current enrollment and Conroe ISD and Klein ISD reflect expected student enrollment for LCISD in the next 10 years. The review team also included demographic information in the comparison statistics such as a breakdown of student ethnicity and economically disadvantaged percentages.

Exhibit 4-10 presents a comparison of peer district departments based on staffing and major functions performed.

Exhibit 4-10
Peer District Comparisons for Communications/Parent, Community & Stakeholder Involvement
Enrollment, Staffing and Major Functions Performed

Districts	Lamar	Clear Creek	Spring	Conroe	Klein
Enrollment (2016-2017)	30,829	41,896	36,698	59,764	50,594
Student Ethnicity					
White	27.2%	48.1%	8.65%	50.0%	34.14%
African American	19.1%	8.1%	39.95%	6.7%	13.94%
Hispanic	44.2%	29.4%	44.60%	35.9%	39.87%
Asian	6.6%	9.8%	3.04%	-	8.53%
Other	2.9%	3.6%	3.76%	7.5%	3.52%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	100.00%	100.0%	100.00%
Economically Disadvantaged	42.1%	27.6%	68.46%	35.8%	40.71%
Major Functions Performed by Department					
Total Department. Staff	5	7	20	10	9
Community Relations*	X	X	X	X	X
Centralized Parental/Community Involvement Oversight for Schools*		X	X	X	X
Public Information*	X	X	X	X	Performed by another Dept.
Media Relations*	X	X	X	X	X
Media Broadcast Services*		X	X	X	X
District-wide Educational Foundation/Fundraising*	X	X	X	X	X
Student Social Support Services*	Performed by another Dept.	Performed by another Dept.	X	X	X
Graphics and Publications*	X	Performed by another Dept.	X	X	X
Open Records*	X	X	X	X	Performed by another Dept.

Districts	Lamar	Clear Creek	Spring	Conroe	Klein
Print Shop	X	Performed by another Dept.	Performed by another Dept.	X	Performed by another Dept.
Mail Room	X	Performed by another Dept.			
Switchboard/District Reception	X	Performed by another Dept.	X	Performed by another Dept.	Performed by another Dept.

Source: LCISD and peer district organizational charts, best practice input, and website review.

Note 1: The most critical communications and community stakeholder best practice functions performed by highly effective community relations departments are denoted with an asterisk*.

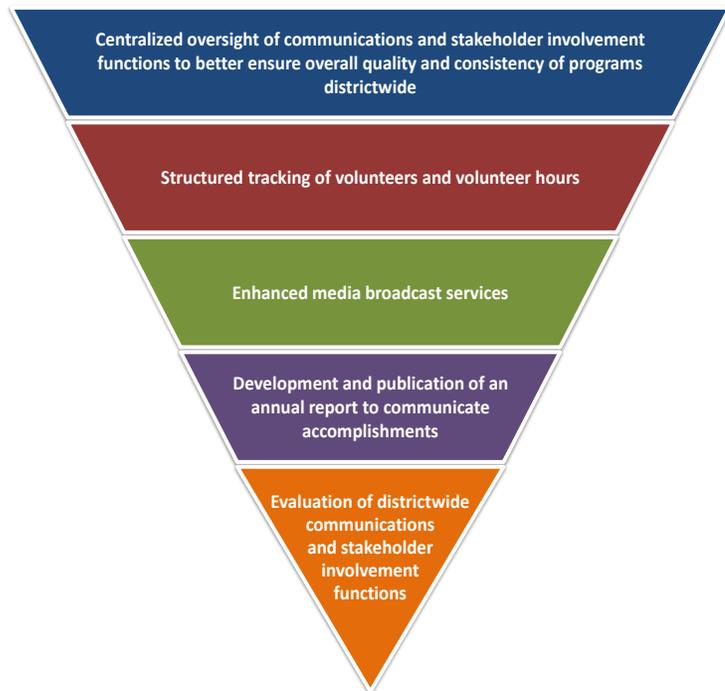
Note 2: While communications and stakeholder involvement staff may provide some coordination assistance for external district foundations, staff headcount is not included in the department totals.

Analysis of this data showed that the functions performed and the number of employees assigned to each of the peer departments varies widely. LCISD has the lowest enrollment of all of its peers and also has the lowest number of staff assigned to perform its communications and stakeholder involvement functions (when print shop, mailroom, and switchboard functions are excluded). An important factor regarding the peer analysis is that LCISD’s Community Relations Department does not perform centralized parental/community involvement oversight for all of its schools as do all of the other peer districts. While centralized communications and community outreach are critical functions in all school district operations, a comprehensive strategy to executing community and parent involvement programs and activities is equally as important. Peer comparisons also showed that LCISD’s media broadcast services are not as robust as the other peer districts (such as providing live streaming of board meetings on the Internet so stakeholders can view “real time”). LCISD’s Community Relations Department is responsible for the print shop, mailroom, and switchboard functions that the majority of the peers do not oversee (these positions at LCISD comprise about six FTEs).

Current Peer Department Comparison

Spring ISD has the highest number of staff assigned to oversee its communications and stakeholder involvement functions; yet it has the second lowest enrollment to LCISD and the other peers compared. Spring ISD’s economically disadvantaged student population is significantly higher than all of the peers and Spring ISD’s departmental organization chart suggests that substantial staff resources are dedicated to that student population group.

In contrast, Clear Creek ISD has two more staff members assigned to perform communications and stakeholder involvement functions when compared to LCISD. Clear Creek ISD also has the lowest percentage of economically disadvantaged students. Additionally, Clear Creek ISD is situated geographically very close to NASA and likely has more donated resources than all of the peer districts.



Future Peer Department Comparison

Both Conroe ISD and Klein ISD (future peers) have similar student enrollment to each other and a similar number of staff members assigned to the communications and stakeholder involvement functions. Conroe ISD performs many of the same services as LCISD and Klein ISD tends to focus its communications and stakeholder involvement departmental efforts on major functions.

Opportunities for Improvement

LCISD’s Community Relations Department generally provides solid service to the district and schools. However, there are some key best practices that the department has not implemented that would further strengthen its operations. (See Exhibit 4-11).

**Exhibit 4-11
LCISD Community Relations Department/Peer District Comparison**

Best Practice Standard	Key Best Practices Not Currently Performed by LCISD
<i>Centralized oversight of communications and stakeholder involvement functions to better ensure overall quality and consistency of programs district wide</i>	Campus community involvement activities are implemented and managed at each campus individually with little or no coordination among campuses or guidance and monitoring at the district level. The success and effectiveness of community involvement activities vary from campus to campus based on each principal’s interest and involvement and on the initiative and dedication of parents. Some schools have multiple business community and faith-based partners, while others have none. At some campuses, the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) has a large membership, is very active, and provides “a lot of support” for teachers through fundraisers and volunteering. At other campuses, the PTO generates less interest, and involves a small group of parents. These campuses typically have little support from campus administrators for parent/community activities. It was reported in principal focus groups that booster clubs are very active at all of the district’s high schools, but stronger central office oversight would be beneficial to assist with monitoring fundraisers and record keeping.
<i>Structured tracking of volunteers and volunteer hours</i>	Each individual school at LCISD determines how volunteers and volunteer hours will be tracked. Some individual schools use sign-in sheets but do not record the purpose of the volunteer effort or amount of time spent. Tracking of volunteer efforts in hours and calculating a monetary value for the time donated provides the school district with a record of the value of the donated resources. When the information is consistently/methodically recorded and tracked for each individual school, it also provides the school district with valuable information about which schools may need additional resources as well as creates a way to replicate stronger volunteer programs in schools that may be lacking.
<i>Enhanced media broadcast services</i>	The district does not provide enhanced media broadcast services such as live streaming its board meetings and other critical functions which would make meetings more accessible for stakeholders and constituents.
<i>Development and publication of an annual report to communicate accomplishments</i>	LCISD lacks a concise, but comprehensive annual report that summarizes the accomplishments and contributions of volunteers/volunteer hours and community and business partners.
<i>Evaluation of district wide communications and stakeholder involvement functions</i>	The district does not perform a needs assessment or formal evaluation of its communications or stakeholder involvement activities and programs.

Source: LCISD Operation Data and Peer District Survey Input. Principal comments were obtained from a series of focus groups conducted on February 27, 2017. Thirty (30) principals participated in the focus groups.

RECOMMENDATION 4-1

Assess the existing functions and priorities of the Community Relations Department and adopt a more centralized approach to executing communications and community/stakeholder involvement programming, and implement key best practices not currently performed by the district.

Creating a District-wide Centralized Approach

The district's Community Relations Department should begin by creating a long-range vision of what a more centralized approach to executing communications and community/stakeholder involvement would look like for LCISD. Currently, LCISD schools have significant autonomy to execute community/stakeholder involvement programming. However, the majority of larger school districts with successful programs allow schools to have program autonomy, but still create an overarching programming vision with standards and guidelines to better ensure overall quality and effectiveness across all schools. For example, the review team conducted focus groups with school principals and 30 out of the 37 school principals participated. The review team learned during the focus groups that only three of the district's schools do not have PTO organizations at all, although many of the PTO organizations function at varying levels.

Part of the long-range vision of what a more centralized approach to executing communications and community/stakeholder involvement could be that 100 percent of all district schools have a high functioning PTO organization. Additionally, a district-wide PTO could be formed consisting of selected school PTO officers to exchange ideas and best practices that would make all of the PTOs stronger. During focus groups, a few principals expressed concern that there is not enough accounting oversight for PTO and Booster Club fundraisers to ensure that no fraud or theft occurs. Principals indicated that many of the more affluent schools in the district sometimes raise \$40,000 to \$100,000, and more central office oversight is needed.

Standardized Guidelines for Tracking Volunteers

The Community Relations Department should develop standardized guidelines for all schools to track and monitor volunteers and volunteer hours. A mechanism to maintain records of each volunteer at each school should be maintained. Volunteer records should include (1) the name of the volunteer, (2) dates of volunteer service, (3) positions held, (4) duties performed, (5) training attended and (6) awards/recognition received.

Once all volunteer services are tracked and summarized for each school and district wide activity and program an estimated monetary value could be calculated. The Points of Light, a nonprofit organization which is nationally known for creating a culture of community engagement, suggests that the independent sector rate for applying monetary value to community service be calculated at \$23.85 per hour. For example, if the Community Relations Department totaled all combined volunteer hours at the end of the school year and the school district achieved 100,000 hours in volunteer support multiplied by \$23.85 per hour, the LCISD would have achieved and be able to quantify approximately \$2,385,000 in additional support for schools. Annual trend analysis should be performed to determine where there are gaps in volunteer efforts and where fewer and greater resources are needed.

Many school districts acquire software to assist with tracking volunteers. Klein ISD uses CERVIS volunteer and event management software, which is web-based, customizable, and allows organizations to more efficiently oversee volunteers and volunteer opportunities. CERVIS ensures volunteer info is always up-to-date and easy to find. The software allows users to (1) create volunteer opportunities and post them online for easy online volunteer registration (2) track volunteer skills and interests, and (3) determine availability and volunteer hours. The software also helps with volunteer administration by quickly printing name tags, event sign-in sheets, and more.

LCISD has Raptor, which serves as both a visitor management and volunteer management system. Raptor provides visitor management, volunteer management and emergency management system options for their schools. The Raptor volunteer management module allows organizations to automatically track hours, complete background

checks for volunteers, store vital volunteer information in one location, as well as easily create and manage reports. The Raptor volunteer management module is not used at the majority of LCISD schools.

Media Broadcast Services

The Community Relations Department should explore the practice of live streaming board meetings and other critical meetings as a means of expanding community outreach. All four peers compared (Clear Creek ISD, Spring ISD, Conroe ISD, and Klein ISD) post links to their respective websites to provide greater access to district events, activities, and policy making decisions. Klein ISD reported that its Communications & Planning Department is increasingly using video as the preferred method of communication. Klein ISD produces a weekly 90 second video with the superintendent and has begun live streaming special events such as new school openings and innovative academic programs in schools, such as special programs in Career Technical Education.

Comprehensive Annual Report

The Community Relations Department should also develop a comprehensive annual report (that is highly visible on the district's website) that highlights the school district's accomplishments and strategic initiatives. Sample content for the report should include: (1) Message from the Superintendent, (2) Vision for the District, (3) District Highlights and Demographics, Summary Profile of District Performance Overall and at Individual Schools, (4) Highlight of Significant Partners and Community Involvement Initiatives/Recognition, and (5) What's on the Horizon for the District (New Schools/Programs, etc.)

Program Evaluation

As a high growth district, at least every other year, the Community Relations Department should evaluate its structure as well as functions staff are performing to ensure that it keeps pace with the changing infrastructure and oversight demands of becoming a larger school district.

Responsibility Assignments

Once the long-range vision to develop a centralized approach to executing communications and community/stakeholder has been completed, responsibility assignments should be incorporated into appropriate staff job descriptions to ensure full implementation.

FISCAL IMPACT SUMMARY

All of the action items associated with this recommendation can be achieved with existing resources.

The district will need to fully implement the Raptor volunteer management module and the Community Relations Department in conjunction with the Technology Services Department will need to develop written guidelines for use and train school staff.

ANTICIPATING TOMORROW

As LCISD continues to grow and the number of schools continues to increase, the district's Community Relations Department will have to undergo an annual planning and evaluation exercise to determine the following:

1. Examine how existing functions are being performed and corresponding staff resources are being utilized to ensure that resources are allocated for the districts/department's highest and best use.
2. Conduct a district-wide needs assessment to determine infrastructure needs and explore how other school districts are addressing those needs while at the same time managing tight resources (e.g., while establishing a district wide plan to centralize the administration of tracking and monitoring volunteers may appear daunting, it can be accomplished more efficiently by implementing volunteer management software).
3. Undertake a formal benchmarking exercise every other year to determine what other school districts are doing to ensure that LCISD stays abreast of the number and type of staff needed and what priorities for the district should establish for the department.

Departmental Planning

OBSERVATION 4-2

As part of its District Improvement Plan, LCISD's Community Relations Department developed goals and performance objectives that guide its operations, which are mainly communications focused and lack sufficient - emphasis on centralized (district-wide) infrastructure for parent/community involvement programming.

As shown in **Exhibit 4-12**, LCISD's District Improvement Plan (DIP) contains six goals. Goal Five guides the district's Community Relations Department operations. As written, Goal Five and many of the associated excerpts from performance objectives outlined in **Exhibit 4-12** focus on image building and community outreach/communications channels. While image building and community outreach/communications channels are very important, Goal Five places insufficient attention on district wide parent and community involvement programming, which is also a critical component of community relations.

Six performance objectives support Goal Five. While performance objectives five and six are related to parent and community involvement programming, they do not adequately address some critical areas. For example, no clear performance objective for structured school volunteer programs and/or school-business partnerships is outlined in the plan. Additionally, many of the performance objectives are vague and the associated evaluation criteria lacks quantifiable measures that gauge accomplishment (e.g., meeting minutes/agendas and press releases).

Exhibit 4-12
LCISD 2016-2017 District Improvement Plan
Summary of District Goal Five and Associated Performance Objectives

GOAL 1: Deliver in a consistent manner, a planned, monitored instructional program that meets the needs and ensures the success of all students resulting in LCISD receiving multiple distinction designations.
GOAL 2: Attract, retain, and develop talented and highly effective personnel using equitable, efficient procedures and high quality, on-going staff development.
GOAL 3: Establish a structure for planning that ensures that all aspects of maintenance, growth, and improvement are systematically addressed and reviewed to meet both long and short-term needs.
GOAL 4: Create an effective integrated learning environment using technology as a tool to facilitate learning, delivery of instruction, and productivity thereby helping students and staff to become effective and efficient users of technology.
GOAL 5: <i>Provide multiple communications forums, both within and outside the school district that result in a greater understanding of the needs of all stakeholders, thereby increasing student successes and improving LCISD's image among parents, taxpayers, and other significant groups.</i>
GOAL 6: Address issues that enhance school climate thereby creating strong, safe, drug-free and disciplined schools.

DISTRICT GOAL FIVE – *Provide multiple communication forums, both within and outside the school district that results in a greater understanding of the needs of all stakeholders, thereby increasing student success and improving LCISD's image among parents, taxpayers, and other significant groups.*

Performance Objective 1 – *Develop and continue image-building activities at both the district and campus level.*

Activity/Strategy	Staff Responsible	Timeline	Resources	Evaluation
1. Continue to update and produce a General Information Guide to provide families moving to LCISD with information about the schools their children will attend. (Target Group: All) (NCLB:5)	Executive Director of Community Relations	July - June	(S)Local Funds	Enrollment Packet

Performance Objective 2 – *Provide opportunities for two-way communication to occur between community members and the district in order to receive input from and provide information to all stakeholders. Emphasize activities that address communication between the district and parents.*

Activity/Strategy	Staff Responsible	Timeline	Resources	Evaluation
1. Continue Advisory Councils that involve community members: Health Council, At Risk Committee, CTE Advisory Council, DSIC, Special Education Advisory Committee, Leadership High School Advisory Council, OEYP Advisory Committee, Common Threads Advisory Committee, LEAF Board, and Technology Advisory Committee. (Target Group: All) (NCLB: 1,2,4,5)	Chief Technology Information Officer, Executive Director of Community Relations, Department Coordinators and Directors	August - May	(S)Local Funds	Committee Minutes, Agendas, District Website
2. Receive suggestions for improvement from community from Your Voice / Let's Talk Webpage. (Target Group: All) (NCLB: 4,5)	Executive Director of Community Relations	July - June	(S)Local Funds	Suggestion from forms collected

Performance Objective 3 – *Establish reciprocal channels of communication between campuses and central administration to ensure support for student achievement.*

Activity/Strategy	Staff Responsible	Timeline	Resources	Evaluation
1. Continue involvement of DISIC in monitoring implementation of the district plan and assisting with decision-making. (Target Group: All) (NCLB:5)	Executive Director Elementary, Executive Director Secondary	October-November, January-February, April-May	(S)Local Funds	DSIC Agenda and Minutes
2. Utilize communication coordinator and videographer for every campus to serve as liaison between campus and communications	Communications Coordinator, Videographer	July-October, January-June	(S)Local Funds	Press Releases

DISTRICT GOAL FIVE – Provide multiple communication forums, both within and outside the school district that results in a greater understanding of the needs of all stakeholders, thereby increasing student success and improving LCISD’s image among parents, taxpayers, and other significant groups.

department. Purpose of coordinator and videographer will be to assist with information, events, and images to be published as media releases or articles for internal and external newsletters. (Target Group: All) (NCLB: 4,5)				
3. Continue student advisory committee with representatives from grades 5-12 from each campus. (Target Group: All) (NCLB:5)	Executive Director of Community Relations, Superintendent	October & May	(S)Local Funds	Meeting Minutes

Performance Objective 4 – Utilize technology to increase communication with community, among schools, and between schools and the district office.

Activity/Strategy	Staff Responsible	Timeline	Resources	Evaluation
1. Utilize the Intranet of Board Reports so that they will be readily available to all employees. (Target Group: All) (NCLB:5)	Web Developer	July-June	(S)Local Funds	Intranet/District Website
2. Place the district plan on the LCISD website so that it is available for parents, administrators and teachers to view.(Target Group: All) (NCLB:5)	Director of Research, Assessment, and Accountability, Web Developer	November	(S)Local Funds	Intranet/District Website
3. Update TAPR annually and place on LCISD website. Post campus ratings at the beginning of each year as required by law. (Target Group: All) (NCLB:5)	Director of Research, Assessment, and Accountability, Web Developer	December-January	(S)Local Funds	District Website

Performance Objective 5 – Provide school/business partnerships and other structures which result in community support of student achievement.

Activity/Strategy	Staff Responsible	Timeline	Resources	Evaluation
1. Promote ETCEP program which involves recycles ink cartridges for extra technology dollars for participating campuses. (Target Group: All) (NCLB: 5)	Executive Director of Education Foundation (LEAF)	August-June	(S)Local Funds	Rebate Amount
2. Expand the Employee Discount website by gaining more participation from area businesses. (Target Group: All) (NCLB: 5)	Communications Coordinator	August-May	(S)Local Funds	Intranet/District Website
3. Continue the Common Threads clothing recycling program which will provide clothing and uniforms, coats, undergarments, and toiletries to LCISD students in need and provide presentations to community groups to increase awareness of program. (Title I SW: 10) (Target Group: All) (NCLB:4,5)	Parent Involvement Facilitator	July-June	(F)Title I - \$10,000 (S)Local Funds	Number of clients served and Donation amounts
4. Train parents as volunteers utilizing the volunteer coordinator at each school. (Target Group: All) (NCLB:5)	Parent Involvement Facilitator	July-June	(S)Local Funds	Listing of Volunteer Coordinators Number of VIPS (Volunteers in Public Schools)
5. Meet with community-wide private/nonprofit schools for federal program planning. (Target Group: All) (NCLB:5)	Director of State and Federal Programs	May-June	(S)Local Funds	Meeting Agendas
6. Coordinate activities to LCISD students at participating private/nonprofit schools. (Title I SW: 10) (Target Group: All) (NCLB: 5)	Director of State and Federal Programs	August-June	(F)Title I - \$2,200	PNP Affirmations
7. Provide parent section on the LCISD webpage with parenting information. (Target Group: All) (NCLB: 5)	Communications Coordinator, Parent Involvement Facilitator, Web	July-June	(S)Local Funds	District Website

DISTRICT GOAL FIVE – Provide multiple communication forums, both within and outside the school district that results in a greater understanding of the needs of all stakeholders, thereby increasing student success and improving LCISD’s image among parents, taxpayers, and other significant groups.				
	Developer			
8. Promote use of Abitibi for district wide recycling of paper. (Target Group: All) (NCLB: 5)	Executive Director of Education Foundation (LEAF)	July-June	(S)Local Funds	Funds Received
Performance Objective 6 – Develop practices and programs for parents and families to meet needs and support academic success and post-secondary readiness for all students.				
Activity/Strategy	Staff Responsible	Timeline	Resources	Evaluation
1. Continue Project Learn Program in conjunction with LCISD extended year and Accelerated Reading Program. Explore options for expanding services for parents. (Target Group: All) (NCLB: 5)	Project LEARN Coordinator	July -June	Title I Funds \$215,000	Number of Participants, Evenstart indicators of Performance (IPQ)
2. Fully communicate benefits of Bilingual/ESL education to the parents of Bilingual and ESL students to decrease parent denials. (Target Group: All) (NCLB: 5)	Director of Bil/ESL Curriculum & Inst.	August - October	(S)Local Funds	Decrease parent denials
3. Continue to work with parent liaisons on Title I campuses to increase parent involvement. (Title I SW: 10) (Target Group: All) (NCLB: 4,5)	Parent Involvement Facilitator	August - June	Local Funds	Contact list of Parent Liaisons Meeting agendas and minutes
4. Provide workshops for parents of GT students. (Target Group: GT) (NCLB: 5)	Director of Advanced Studies	July to June	(S)Local Funds	Houston Coop Sign in sheets
5. Explore need and interest for additional parent support groups among parents of special education students. (Target Group: All) (NCLB: 5)	Director of State and Fed Programs	July - September, November - February & June	(F)IDEA Special Education	Parent training groups and parent education classes are held. Minutes, Agendas, and Sign in sheets from meetings

Source: LCISD 2016-2017 District Improvement Plan.

The Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL), *Leading Across Boundaries*, recommends several critical program elements be implemented for effective school partnerships. IEL suggests that the most positive impact on the academic and wellness outcomes for students comes from a collaborative approach to community and stakeholder involvement. Some of the EIL program elements that would be beneficial to LCISD include implementing the following:

- **A leadership team comprised of school and community stakeholders** – It is critical to engage the school principal, specialized instructional support personnel, parents, families, students, and community leaders in the planning in executing, and evaluation of the overall program and individual partnerships.
- **Assets and needs assessment to address the overall framework, existing program components, and results** – Community partnerships should enhance existing school-based service delivery models and help fill in the resources and service gaps based on the needs of individual schools. The school district (centralized oversight), individual schools, and community partner should then mutually establish a framework for results with specific short- and long-term goals based on the needs identified in the assessment.
- **Designated staff at individual schools to lead the coordination of community partnerships** – Coordinators help maintain partnerships with community agencies and facilitate effective communication and collaboration among the leadership team (centralized oversight), specialized instructional support personnel, service providers, school personnel, parents, families, and members of the community.

- **Clear expectations and shared accountability for the school and community partners** – Delineation of roles and responsibilities for school personnel and community providers enhances efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery while ensuring each school’s needs are being met.
- **Detailed plan for long-term sustainability** – Successful community stakeholder programs and partnerships plan for sustainability from the beginning. Develop a plan to cultivate new community partnerships and maintain existing partnerships across multiple school years.
- **Regular evaluation of effectiveness through a variety of measure** – Partners are chosen based on data that highlight their fit with the current needs of the school and community. It is equally important that important data are used to evaluate the effectiveness of the program and the partnership.
- **Annual Reporting** – Plan to share progress and challenges – It is important to share the successes and challenges of the program (what is working and not working) and ways to overcome challenges.

RECOMMENDATION 4-2

Refine DIP goal and performance objectives related to Community Relations Department functions to increase focus on centralized (district-wide) infrastructure for parent/community involvement programming.

The Community Relations Department should develop operating strategies and performance objectives that include staff responsibilities, timelines, resource requirements, and evaluation criteria with quantifiable measures to address the “key best practices not currently performed by LCISD” outlined in **Exhibit-4-10**.

The district should begin by conducting a needs assessment of each individual school. Input from the schools can be obtained either via small groups of principals, teachers, parents, and community stakeholders currently volunteering in schools or by electronic survey to determine: (1) what programs are in place at each of the schools, (2) what is working well and (3) where there are gaps. The needs assessment should be repeated every other year and feedback should be incorporated the district’s goals and performance objectives.

FISCAL IMPACT SUMMARY

There is no fiscal impact assumed for this recommendation until the district has determined the need for external assistance.

ANTICIPATING TOMORROW

As the district continues to grow over the next decade, and additional schools are added, it will become increasingly difficult if not impossible to ensure quality communications and community stakeholder programming across all schools without centralized oversight and certain standards and expectations being established for the district in this area. Developing additional operating strategies to bolster Community Relations Department functions to increase focus on centralized (district-wide) infrastructure will better ensure that all LCISD schools have equitable programming at all schools.

Visitor and Volunteer Screening

OBSERVATION 4-C

LCISD does not have a consistent process to ensure parents and visitors in schools have been properly screened for background checks.

The district’s website indicates that parents, guardians and grandparents can simply contact the campus of their child/grandchild directly to become a volunteer and all other visitors must complete the volunteer background check embedded in a link on the district’s website. While all visitors (including parents, guardians and grandparents) must sign in at schools and all schools have the Rapture system which flags visitor driver’s licenses for sex offenders, the Rapture system is not consistently used at some schools during evening hours when building receptionists are not in place to supervise the registration process. The absence of an ongoing process to consistently screen district visitors and volunteers could result in potential liability to the district if a criminal incident occurs between a volunteer and student or a volunteer and LCISD staff member.

All four of the selected peer and large districts (Clear Creek ISD, Spring ISD, Conroe ISD, and Klein ISD) require all prospective school volunteers who could be potentially working in proximity to students to complete an online confidential school volunteer application and undergo a criminal background check each school year. The volunteer registration process is more prominently displayed and easier to navigate on each of the peer or large district’s website, which makes it easier for potential visitors to register.

An example of Spring ISD’s school volunteer application process is shown in **Exhibit 4-13** below:

Exhibit 4-13
Sample Spring ISD Volunteer Registration Overview
School Year 2016-2017

Spring Branch Independent School District
Volunteer Registration

Thank you for your interest in being an SBISD volunteer!

- If you are a new volunteer, please complete the application below prior to beginning your service.
- If you are a returning volunteer, you must re-register every year. As of October 1, 2017, your approved volunteer status from the 2016-2017 school year will no longer be valid until you have completed a new application for the 2017-2018 school year. Please use the link below to do so.

SBISD requires all persons interested in being a volunteer to agree to a Name Based Criminal History Background Check (NBCHC) each school year. This is in addition to the Raptor System (V-soft) which compares all visitor names against sexual offender databases and is currently implemented at all SBISD campuses.

By completing and submitting the SBISD Volunteer Registration form, you agree to a criminal history background check. Please use your legal name, and complete all required fields in the correct format. The entire application takes just a few minutes and may take 5-10 business days to be processed. As with any district data, multiple security measures are in place to protect all information. Don't forget to click submit!

All approved volunteers will be entered into the district's Raptor system. To complete the process, you must bring your photo id to be verified and scanned into Raptor the first time you visit your campus this year. By US mail, SBISD will notify any volunteer applicant who does not pass the NBCHC.

Please contact SBISD Community Relations at 713.251.2468 or pattner@springbranchisd.com should you need additional information.

[Begin the Volunteer Application Process Now](#)

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Volunteers in Public Schools (VIPS)

Return this completed form to your child's school or send to:
Spring ISD, ATTN: VIPS, 16717 Ella Blvd., Houston, TX 77090

Thank you for your interest in being a Spring ISD Volunteer! The Spring Independent School District requires all persons interested in being a volunteer to agree to a criminal history background check each school year. This is in addition to the Raptor System (V-soft) which compares all visitor names against sexual offender databases and is currently implemented at all Spring ISD campuses.

By completing and submitting the Spring ISD Volunteers in Public Schools application you are also agreeing to a criminal history background check. Please use your legal name, and complete all fields. The background check may take up to five business days to be processed. As with any district data, multiple security measures are in place to protect all confidential information.

Please contact the Spring ISD Community Relations Department at callencr@springisd.org or fcarrillo@springisd.org or 281.891.6019 should you have any questions or need additional information.

Date: _____

Mr. Mrs. Ms. Volunteer's Name: _____

Street Address: _____ Apt. Number: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Home Phone: (____) _____ Work Phone: (____) _____

Cell Phone: (____) _____ Email: _____

Social Security Number: _____ AND Driver's License Number: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Sex: Male _____ Female _____

Schools of Interest: _____

In case of emergency while volunteering please contact: _____

Phone: (____) _____

If you have children in this school/district, please indicate:

Name: _____ School: _____ Grade: _____

Name: _____ School: _____ Grade: _____

Ethnicity: _____

RECOMMENDATION 4-3

Require all school district volunteers to complete a formal application and undergo a criminal background check each school year.

LCISD's Community Relations Department should work with the Technology Services Department to develop a volunteer registration and application form (see example from Spring ISD) that can be administered from the school district's central office. Because the volunteer registration and application will contain confidential personal identification data (PID) once completed by the applicant, the Technology Services Department should develop and implement protocols to ensure that volunteer applicant data is safe and secure similar to PID protocols that would be used to protect student and staff data maintained by the district.

Volunteers should be prohibited from participating in any volunteer task or program until the application and registration process is completed. The volunteer registration process should include an appropriate criminal background check. Once the volunteer is approved, they should be allowed to work anywhere in the district; however, in situations where volunteers are working in close proximity to students, the volunteer should always work under the direct supervision of a LCISD staff member.

The school district should continue to require all visitors and volunteers to sign in using the Rapture system and wear a visible badge printed from the Rapture system at all times. The simultaneous use of the Rapture system will alert the school district if any changes in the volunteer's criminal background occur in between updating volunteer registration and applications forms each year.

FISCAL IMPACT SUMMARY

The district can implement this recommendation with existing resources.

ANTICIPATING TOMORROW

As LCISD continues to grow and the number of schools continues to increase, the number of district volunteers will increase as well. In addition to protecting the district from the risk of a volunteer with an inappropriate criminal background from harming a student or staff member, centralizing the volunteer registration and application process will enable the school district to develop and maintain a complete, up-to-date database of all volunteers. The district wide volunteer database can be used to conduct mass outreach with volunteers as well as determine their interest for working with different volunteer efforts. The district-wide volunteer database will also be useful to the district because it will contain important information about volunteers such as address, children in the district the volunteer is associated with and emergency contact information that may or may not be captured at the school level.

RECOMMENDATION		2017–2018	2018–2019	2019–2020	2020–2021	2021–2022	TOTAL 5-YEAR (COSTS) SAVINGS/	ONE TIME (COSTS) OR SAVINGS
CHAPTER 4: COMMUNITY RELATIONS								
4-1	Assess the existing functions and priorities of the Community Relations Department and adopt a more centralized approach to executing communications and community/stakeholder involvement programming, and implement key best practices not currently performed by the district.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
4-2	Refine DIP goal and performance objectives related to Community Relations Department functions to increase focus on centralized (district-wide) infrastructure for parent/community involvement programming.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
4-3	Require all school district volunteers to complete a formal application and undergo a criminal background check each school year.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
TOTAL		\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0