Internal Audit Report
Achievement of District Student Achievement Goals

December 13, 2017
Executive Summary

In accordance with the Fiscal Year 2017-2018 Audit Plan, the Office of Internal Audit has completed its review of the Achievement of District Student Achievement Goals process. The audit determined the Board of Trustees adopted the Texas Education Agencies’ (TEA) Lone Star Governance (LSG) process to improve controls and processes related to establishing, monitoring, and reporting student achievement goals. The LSG process is a framework of vision, accountability, structure, advocacy, and unity for establishing, monitoring, and reporting student achievement goals. Adhering to the LSG principles can provide a reasonable expectation to the Board of Trustees and Administration that the District understands and is able to manage the risks associated with student achievement goals.

Objective, Scope, and Methodology

The objective of the audit was to evaluate the adequacy and effectiveness of the District’s processes for controlling its assets and managing its risk in the achievement of the established District student achievement goals and evaluate the tools used to track achievement in an effort to help the District accomplish its objectives.

The audit was based on the controls as defined by the Committee of Sponsoring Organizations of the Treadway Commission (COSO). COSO is a joint initiative of the American Accounting Association, American Institute of CPA’s, Financial Executives International, Association of Accountants and Financial Professionals in Business, and the Institute of Internal Auditors. The framework provides guidance in the form of enterprise risk management, internal control, and fraud deterrence. The COSO framework is organized into the following five interrelated components:

- Risk Governance and Culture
- Risk Strategy and Objective Setting
- Risk in Execution
- Risk Information, Communication, and Reporting
- Monitoring Enterprise Risk Management Performance

There are 23 principles that support the five components. These principles address everything from governance to monitoring. They’re manageable in size, and they describe practices that can be applied in different ways for different organizations regardless of size or sector. Adhering to these principles can provide a reasonable expectation to the Board of Trustees and Administration that the organization understands and is able to manage the risks associated with the strategy and business objectives to an acceptable level.

The scope of our audit included student achievement goals identified in the District’s Student Outcome Goals, District Goals, African American Success Initiative, and the Targeted Improvement Plans.

Our methodology included reviews of procedures, analysis of selected documents, and interviews with key personnel. The audit was conducted in accordance with the Institute of Internal Auditors’ International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing.
Background

During the course of the audit, Internal Audit determined the District has four sets of goals which involve student achievement:

- Student Outcome Goals
- District Goals
- African American Success Initiative
- Targeted Improvement Plans for Improvement Required Status Schools

Student Outcome Goals

In December 2016, the Board of Trustees and District administrators attended the TEA’s LSG training. The LSG program is based on the framework of Vision, Accountability, Structure, Advocacy, and Unity for establishing, monitoring, and reporting student achievement goals. At the February 23, 2017, Board of Trustees meeting, the Board adopted the Student Outcome Goal, Goal Progress Measures, Student Outcome Constraints, and Constraint Progress Measures, (AE(Local)), which align with the LSG procedures. At the same time, the Board of Trustees elected to retain the District goals adopted in January 2016. The established Student Outcome Goals are:

- **Goal 1**: Student achievement on state assessment in all subjects at Level II or above shall increase from 66 percent to 75 percent by 2022.
- **Goal 2**: Student achievement on the third grade state assessment in reading at Level II or above shall increase from 63 percent to 75 percent by 2022.
- **Goal 3**: Student achievement on state assessment as measured by post-secondary readiness standards in two or more subjects shall increase from 34 percent to 40 percent by 2022.

District Goals

In the November 2015 through January 2016 timeframe, the Board of Trustees worked to establish the District student achievement goals and constraints. The Board of Trustees identified six District goals and constraints directed towards increasing student achievement. The District goals were approved by the Board on January 28, 2016. After establishing the goals and constraints, management developed the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) by which the goals and constraints would be achieved and measured. The established District goals are:

- **Goal 1**: All students will exhibit satisfactory or above performance on state assessments. Students below satisfactory performance will demonstrate more than one year of academic growth.
- **Goal 2**: Dallas ISD schools will be the primary choice for families in the district.
- **Goal 3**: The achievement gap by race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status will be no greater than 10 percentage points on all academic measures.
- **Goal 4**: Ninety-five percent of students will graduate. Ninety percent of the graduates will qualify for community college, college, military, or industry certification.
- **Goal 5**: Ninety-five percent of students entering kindergarten will be school-ready based on a multidimensional assessment.
- **Goal 6**: All students will participate in at least one extracurricular or co-curricular activity each year.
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African American Success Initiative

In January 2015, the Board of Trustees established a task force to re-establish the African American Success Initiative and to explore ways to improve its outcomes. The task force identified several goals, including one student achievement goal:

- Close the reading gap for African American students.

Targeted Improvement Plans for Improvement Required Status Schools

The TEA uses data from the Texas Academic Performance Report (TAPR) to determine if a school will receive the Improvement Required (IR) status. In 2015-2016 the District had 42 schools on the TEA IR list. In 2016-2017, the District reduced the number of schools with an IR status to 23. In 2017-2018 the District further reduced the number of schools with an IR status to 14, which was later reduced to 13. Each school with an IR status must develop a Targeted Improvement Plan (TIP), which must be submitted to the TEA for approval. The number of student achievement goals ranged from one to five per school.

Observations, Recommendations, and Management’s Action Plan

Upon initiation of the audit, excluding the TIP process, procedures for establishing, measuring, and reporting achievement of student achievement goals were not documented leading to inconsistent and/or unclear goal establishment and monitoring practices. However, during the course of the audit, on February 23, 2017, the Board of Trustees adopted TEA’s LSG process. The LSG process aligns with COSO through a framework of vision, accountability, structure, advocacy, and unity for establishing, monitoring, and reporting student achievement goals. Adhering to the LSG principles should provide a reasonable expectation to the Board of Trustees and Administration that the District understands and is able to manage the risks associated with student achievement goals.

Conclusion

Adopting of the LSG process by the Board of Trustees established a framework of vision, accountability, structure, advocacy, and unity for establishing, monitoring, and reporting student achievement goals. Adherence to the LSG principals by the Board of Trustees and Administrations can provide a reasonable expectation that the District understands and is able to manage the risks associated with student achievement goals. LSG student achievement goal attainment progress will be reported to the Board in accordance with the Board of Trustee approved Monthly Board Reporting Schedule.

We would like to thank the Chief of Staff, Chief of School Leadership, and all of their staff for the cooperation and courtesy extended to Internal Audit during the course of this audit.