



A PROUD TRADITION | A BRIGHT FUTURE

Annual Financial Accountability Management Report



For the Year Ended August 31, 2014

Lamar Consolidated Independent School District
3911 Avenue I
Rosenberg, Texas 77471

Dr. Thomas Randle, Superintendent of Schools
Ms. Jill Ludwig, CPA, RTSBA, Chief Financial Officer

**LAMAR CONSOLIDATED
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT**

ANNUAL FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY MANAGEMENT REPORT

For the Year Ended August 31, 2014

**Thomas E. Randle, Ed. D.
Superintendent of Schools**

**Prepared by
Business Office**

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Chief Financial Officer**

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**3911 Avenue I
Rosenberg, Texas 77471**

**Lamar Consolidated Independent School District
School FIRST
August 31, 2014**

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Lamar Consolidated Independent School District
School FIRST
August 31, 2014

November 19, 2015

Mrs. Kathryn Kaminski, President
Members of the Board of Trustees
Lamar Consolidated Independent School District

Dear Mrs. Kaminski and Members:

Senate Bill 218 of the 77th Legislature (2001) authorized the implementation of the Financial Integrity Rating System of Texas, officially known as School FIRST. This law requires each school district to prepare and distribute an annual financial management report, and to provide the public an opportunity to comment on the report at a public meeting. The annual financial management report must include a description of the district's financial management performance based on a comparison of the district's performance on the indicators provided by the Texas Education Agency (TEA). The primary goal of School FIRST is to improve the management of school districts' financial resources.

School FIRST was developed by TEA in consultation with the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts, Texas Business and Education Council (TBEC), Texas Association of School Business Officials (TASBO), Texas Schools Public Relations Association (TSPRA) and other professional organizations.

The current School FIRST rating is based on student, staff, and budgetary and actual financial data reported through the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) for the fiscal year ended August 31, 2014. On August 7, 2015 we received notice of the 2014 preliminary School FIRST rating. We are pleased to announce Lamar Consolidated Independent School District "Passed" with a perfect score based on the seven indicators established by the Texas Education Agency. This is the thirteenth year the district achieved the highest rating.

This report includes a copy of the worksheet TEA used to determine the rating, along with the District's responses to the indicators and other relevant information that expands on the indicators.

Respectfully submitted,



Thomas Randle, Ed.D.
Superintendent



Jill Ludwig, CPA, RTSBA
Chief Financial Officer

Financial Integrity Rating Worksheet
 School Year 2013-2014
 Fiscal Year Ended August 31, 2014

County District: #079-901
 District Name: Lamar CISD

Indicator	Indicator Description	Yes/No/ Points
1	Was The Complete Annual Financial Report (AFR) And Data Submitted To The TEA Within 30 Days Of The November 27th Or January 28th Deadline Depending On The School District's Fiscal Year End Date Of June 30 Or August 31, Respectively?	YES
2	Was There An Unmodified Opinion In The AFR On The Financial Statements As A Whole? (The American Institute Of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA) Defines Unmodified Opinion. The External Independent Auditor Determines If There Was An Unmodified Opinion.)	YES
3	Was The School District In Compliance With The Payment Terms Of All Debt Agreements At Fiscal Year End? (If The School District Was In Default In A Prior Fiscal Year, An Exemption Applies In Following Years If The School District Is Current On Its Forbearance Or Payment Plan With The Lender And The Payments Are Made On Schedule For The Fiscal Year Being Rated. Also Exempted Are Technical Defaults That Are Not Related To Monetary Defaults. A Technical Default Is A Failure To Uphold The Terms Of A Debt Covenant, Contract, Or Master Promissory Note Even Though Payments To The Lender, Trust, Or Sinking Fund Are Current. A Debt Agreement Is A Legal Agreement Between A Debtor (Person, Company, Etc That Owes Money) And Their Creditors, Which Includes A Plan For Paying Back The Debt.)	YES
4	Was The Total Unrestricted Net Asset Balance (Net Of The Accretion Of Interest For Capital Appreciation Bonds) In The Governmental Activities Column In The Statement Of Net Assets Greater Than Zero? (If The School District's Change Of Students In Membership Over 5 Years Was 10 Percent Or More, Then The School District Passes This Indicator.)	YES
<i>A negative answer to indicators 1, 2, 3, or 4 automatically results in district rating of "Substandard Achievement."</i>		
5	Was The School District's Administrative Cost Ratio Equal To Or Less Than The Threshold Ratio?	10 points
6	Did The Comparison Of Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) Data To Like Information In The School District's AFR Result In A Total Variance Of Less Than 3 Percent Of All Expenditures By Function?	10 points
7	Did The External Independent Auditor Report That The AFR Was Free Of Any Instance(s) Of Material Weaknesses In Internal Controls Over Financial Reporting And Compliance For Local, State, Or Federal Funds? (The AICPA Defines Material Weakness.)	10 points

Financial Integrity Rating Worksheet
School Year 2013-2014
Fiscal Year Ended August 31, 2014

County District: #079-901
District Name: Lamar CISD

Determination of District Rating

Did the District answer No to indicators 1, 2, 3 or 4? If so, the District's rating is substandard achievement.

No.

Determine rating by applicable range for summation of the indicator scores (Indicators 5-7).

Lamar CISD earned 30 points.

PASS:	16-30
Substandard Achievement:	< 16

<p>RATING:</p> <p>PASSED – 30 pts.</p>
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**Lamar Consolidated Independent School District
School FIRST
August 31, 2014**

Responses to Base Indicators

Indicator #1 – Was the complete annual financial report (AFR) and data submitted to the TEA within 30 days of the November 27 Or January 28 deadline depending on the school district’s fiscal year end date Of June 30 Or August 31, respectively?

The District prepares its Annual Financial Report (AFR) for board approval at the regularly scheduled January meeting. The AFR was filed with the Texas Education Agency (TEA) by February 28, 2015 for the fiscal year ending 8/31/14 and by February 28, 2014 for the fiscal year ending August 31, 2013, after approval from the Board of Trustees. This indicator is considered “passed” if the audit report is filed within 30 days of the deadline.

Indicator #2 – Was there an unmodified opinion in the AFR on the financial statements as a whole? (The American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA) defines unmodified opinion. The external independent auditor determines if there was an unmodified opinion.)

When the AFR is audited by independent auditors, they issue an opinion stating that the financial statements are fairly presented and free of material misstatements. The affirmation of this process is indicated by issuance of an unmodified opinion by the auditors. A modified opinion from the independent auditors generally means that the District needs to take some type of corrective action on reporting its assets or internal controls. LCISD received an Unmodified Opinion from its independent auditors for the 2013-14 fiscal year and all prior years.

Indicator #3 – Was the school district in compliance with the payment terms of all debt agreements at fiscal year end? (If the school district was in default in a prior fiscal year, an exemption applies in following years if the school district is current on its forbearance or payment plan with the lender and the payments are made on schedule for the fiscal year being rated. Also exempted are technical defaults that are not related to monetary defaults. A technical default is a failure to uphold the terms of a debt covenant, contract, or master promissory note even though payments to the lender, trust, or sinking fund are current. A debt agreement is a legal agreement between a debtor (person, company, etc. that owes money) and their creditors, which includes a plan for paying back the debt.)

This indicator seeks to make certain that the District has paid its obligations on bonds issued to pay for school construction, etc.

Lamar CISD has a longstanding commitment to maintain its credit worthiness and has never defaulted on any debt payments. The District successfully passed this indicator for the 2013-14 fiscal year and all prior years.

Indicator # 4 – Was the total unrestricted net asset balance (Net of the accretion of interest for capital appreciation bonds) in the governmental activities column in the Statement of Net Assets greater than zero? (If the school district’s change of students in membership over 5 years was 10% or more, then the school district passes this indicator.)

This indicator simply asks, “Did the district’s total assets exceed the total amount of liabilities (according to the financial statement in the annual audit report)?” Fortunately, this indicator recognizes that high-growth districts incur large amounts of debt to fund construction and that total debt may exceed the total amount of assets under certain scenarios.

Lamar CISD’s is considered a high growth district with 13.69 % increase in students over a five year period. The district’s total unrestricted net asset balance is \$36,550,983. Therefore, Lamar CISD passed both tests for this year and the prior year.

Indicator #5 – Was the school district’s administrative cost ratio equal to or less than the threshold ratio?

The administrative cost ratio is determined by dividing the non-capital expenditures for central administration (fncs. 21 & 41) by total expenditures for instruction, curriculum & staff development, and guidance/counseling/evaluation services (fncs. 11, 12, 13, 31). TEA and state law sets a cap on the percentage of their budget that Texas school districts should spend on administrative costs based on district size. For districts in Lamar’s category, the administrative cost ratio should fall below 8.55 percent. Lamar’s ratio for the 2013-14 school year was 4.74 percent, well below the state cap and less than the prior year. The administrative cost ratio was 4.94 percent for the 2012-13 fiscal year.

Indicator #6 – Did the comparison of Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) data to like information in the school district’s AFR result in a total variance of less than 3 percent of all expenditures by function?

This indicator measures the quality of data submitted to TEA through the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) and reported in the Annual Financial Report by making certain that the data in both systems agree to each other. It is extremely important that the data reported to the State among the various systems agree, because it is used in a variety of ways and by various different user groups for comparison and decision-making purposes. If the difference in numbers reported in any fund type is more than 3 percent, the district “fails” this measure.

Lamar CISD’s data quality ratio was less than one percent (0.0017%) for the fiscal year ending August 31, 2014, well below the allowable 3 percent variation. The District’s data quality measurement was also less than 1% (0.0001%) for the fiscal year ending August 31, 2013.

Indicator # 7 – Did the external independent auditor report that the AFR was free of any instance(s) of material weaknesses in internal controls over financial reporting and compliance for local, state, or federal funds? (The AICPA defines material weakness.)

Internal control may be defined as a process designed to provide management with reasonable, but not absolute, assurance that:

- Assets are safeguarded against loss from unauthorized use or disposition,
- Transactions are executed in accordance with management’s authorizations and recorded properly,
- Financial reporting is reliable, and
- The District remains in compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

The internal control environment is affected by various factors, such as integrity and ethical values, the commitment to competence, management’s philosophy and operating style, and the school district’s organizational structure.

A weakness in the system of internal control creates the risk that any or all of the objectives outlined will not be met. A *material* weakness is a condition in which the design or operation of one or more of the internal control components does not reduce to a relatively low level the risk that material misstatements to the financial statements *or* material noncompliance with applicable laws, regulations, contracts, and grants may occur and not be detected within a timely period by employees in the normal course of performing their assigned functions.

No material weaknesses in internal controls were noted in the District’s 2013-14 or 2012-13 audit report.

Additional Information and Comparisons

The following information expands on the base indicators by providing information on current financial management practices and a historical view of some of the quantifiable indicators. Although our current rating reflects Superior Achievement, it is not an implication that monitoring or a need for improvement should be relaxed. It is our goal to monitor and improve all aspects of the District's business and financial services to maximize and protect available resources so that our main educational objectives are achieved.

Financial Strength

The District has enjoyed a very strong financial position for many years. A primary indicator of this strength is our liquidity position and the amount of available resources going into the next fiscal year. A commonly used benchmark of financial strength is the ratio of fund balance as a percentage of expenditures. Lamar CISD's unassigned fund balance as a percentage of the subsequent year's budgeted expenditures is approximately 29%.

A goal of many school districts in the state is to establish and officially adopt a fund balance policy. It has been recommended by the Texas Education Agency that an adequate fund balance target would range between 12.5% to 25% of budgeted expenditures. As a result of prudent financial management, Lamar CISD falls above this target range. Maintaining an adequate fund balance eliminates the need for short-term borrowing while providing flexibility in decision-making and strategic planning for long-term educational and financial goals.

Operating Cost Management

Salary and benefit costs comprise the largest category of expenditures each year, amounting to about 85% of the General Fund budget for 2013-14. Utility costs, another large category, totaled 3%. Considering that these two categories combined account for over 88% of the annual operating budgets, only a small portion of our budget is flexible or variable in nature. Contracted services, supplies, materials, and other operating costs (property/liability insurance, travel, and training) make up the remainder of what may be referred to as controllable operating costs.

The chart below illustrates how Lamar CISD's overall operating cost per student compares to surrounding districts, as well as to the state average. This information is taken from the 2013-14 Standard Reports and reflects the audited PEIMS data for the fiscal year. The Standard Reports for all districts may be found on the TEA website under "Finance/Forecasting & Fiscal Analysis." (www.tea.state.tx.us)

District	Operating Cost	Students in Membership	Operating Cost per Student
Lamar CISD	\$186,427,472	27,024	\$6,899
Alief ISD	\$356,308,145	46,207	\$7,711
Fort Bend ISD	\$494,920,884	70,512	\$7,019
Katy ISD	\$500,469,664	67,015	\$7,468
State Average	\$38,208,249,330	5,134,694	\$7,441

Administrative Cost Management

Another measure used by the Texas Education Agency to analyze operating cost efficiency is the administrative cost ratio. This formula is mandated by law and divides identified administrative costs by selected instructional costs to arrive at a percentage. A district's size determines its administrative cost limitation. Based on Lamar CISD's size, our administrative cost limit is 8.55 percent but was 11.05 percent in previous years.

The following chart presents the District's low administrative cost ratios, which fall well below the limit.

School Year	Administrative Cost Ratio	Ratio Limitation
2013-2014	4.74%	8.55%
2012-2013	4.94%	11.05%
2011-2012	4.99%	11.05%
2010-2011	4.72%	11.05%
2009-2010	5.06%	11.05%

Budgetary Planning and Allocations

State law requires that every local education agency in Texas prepare and file an annual budget of anticipated revenues and expenditures with the Texas Education Agency. It is the intent of management that the budgetary process result in the most efficient use of available resources while effectively attaining the goals and objectives set by the administration and campus staff.

The budget process at Lamar CISD typically begins in January of each year as administrators, teachers, and District planning committees evaluate current year progress toward goals set for student achievement and begin the goal-setting process for the next year. Local, state, and federal funds are budgeted at the campus level, based on specified allocations provided by central administration. Site-based teams allocate funds for contracted services, supplies and materials, and miscellaneous other operating costs according to District and Campus Improvement Plans. Non-campus (departmental) budgets for all costs other than personnel and fringe benefits are prepared by each department. The budgets are based on an assessment of current year requirements and projections of subsequent year needs. Budgets for personnel costs, fringe benefits, and salary increases are developed cooperatively by the Business Office and Human Resources Department. Special project and large capital outlay requests are considered on a case-by-case basis.

Our budget process is a highly participatory one, and campuses are given much discretion as to how to budget their funds. After all the budgets are prepared, they are combined and the review process begins in the Business Office. Allocations are verified, and campuses and departments are given the opportunity to make changes where necessary. Meanwhile, revenues are also being projected. Property taxes are estimated using preliminary appraised taxable values (provided by the appraisal district) and the proposed tax rate. State revenues are estimated using state funding templates and student population estimates developed by administration and demographers contracted by the District. Other minor sources of revenue are estimated based on past experience and any additional information available. Final calculations are made in August based on the most current information, and if necessary, adjustments to expenditure budgets are made. The General, Food Service, and Debt Service Fund budgets are adopted by the Board of Trustees at the functional category level in August.

Personnel Management

The education of students is a labor-intensive process and payroll expenditures comprised over 85% of the General Fund expenditures in 2013-14. In order to attract and retain highly qualified staff, Lamar CISD must offer a competitive salary and benefit package.

The District Compensation Plan, approved by the Board of Trustees and published annually, contains the following:

- Teacher Hiring Schedule
- Table of Extra Days and Stipends
- Concession Stand and Athletic Event Schedules

- Administrative/Professional and Clerical/Paraprofessional Salary Schedules
- Technical and Manual Trades Schedules, and
- Substitute and Part-Time Employee Rate Schedules

The Teacher Hiring Schedule is used by the Human Resources Department to place new employees into the compensation system. Salaries listed are based on an annual contract of 187 days, priced at market value commensurate with years of experience. The incremental amount between each year of experience gained is known as a “step,” and for 2013-14, were either \$500 or \$650. Raises awarded to teachers in 2013-14 were a flat amount of \$1,000, plus the incremental “step.” On average, the \$1,500 and \$1,650 amounted roughly to a 3% raise.

Non-teaching positions are paid according to market-driven schedules as outlined above. Positions are placed on paygrades within the schedules according to the complexity of the job duties and the knowledge, skills, and certifications/licenses required for performing the duties encompassed by the position. Raises are awarded based on a percentage of midpoint, with all positions in each pay grade receiving the same dollar amount. For 2013-14, employees received a raise valued at 3% of midpoint.

The table below illustrates the competitiveness of the Lamar CISD starting teacher salaries and average raises awarded for the periods shown. Please note that due to severe cuts in state funding for 2011-12, a \$500 salary supplement was awarded in lieu of the traditional raise.

<u>School Year</u>	<u>Starting Teacher Salary (Bachelor)</u>	<u>Midpoint Raise % (Non-Teaching Staff)</u>
2009-10	45,500	3.00%
2010-11	46,000	2.00%
2011-12	46,000	\$500 Supplement
2012-13	46,500	3.00%
2013-14	47,500	3.00%

Cash Management and Investment Policies

It is the practice of the District to pursue a cash management program that stresses safety of principal and interest, while generating favorable rates of return. This program is managed so that a sufficient level of liquidity is maintained to support anticipated expenditures without subjecting the District to material, unfavorable fluctuations of the market and to interest rate risk. The District’s investments include participation in five diverse investment pools (Texpool, Lonestar, MBIA Texas CLASS, TexSTAR, and Texas DAILY).

Cash balances are monitored daily by the District through on-line banking. Using this system allows accounting personnel to minimize bank balances by only transferring into the accounts the funds necessary to cover the dollar amount of checks that have been issued each day. This keeps non-interest bearing demand deposit bank balances at a minimum, thus maximizing interest earnings on invested funds.

The Board of Trustees has adopted a written policy regarding the investment of its funds as defined in the Public Funds Investment Act of 1995. This policy authorizes the District to invest in obligations of the U.S. Treasury, the State of Texas, or certain U.S. Agencies, certificates of deposit, fully collateralized repurchase agreements, banker's acceptances, commercial paper, money market and no-load mutual funds, guaranteed investment contracts, and public investment pools as permitted by Chapter 2256, Texas Government Code.

Assets of the District shall be invested mainly in instruments whose maturities do not exceed one year from the time of purchase. The investment portfolio is diversified in terms of investment instrument and financial institutions to reduce the risk of loss.

Monitoring of investments is performed monthly as investment reports are submitted to the Board of Trustees for review. In addition, the District's investment officers present comprehensive quarterly reports on the investment program and investment activity.

Annual Audit Report

Each year the District is required to be audited by an external independent auditor to provide reasonable assurance that the financial statements of the District are free of material misstatement. The independent audit involves examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements, assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, and evaluating the overall financial statement presentation. Our auditors, Whitley Penn, LLP., have concluded, based on the audit, that there was a reasonable basis for rendering an unmodified opinion, and that the District's financial statements for the fiscal year ended August 31, 2014 are fairly presented in conformity with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles.

Ratings and Awards

Certificate of Financial Excellence

The Association of School Business Officials International (ASBO) has awarded the Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting to the Lamar Consolidated Independent School District for its Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for the fiscal year ended August 31, 2014.

In order to be awarded a Certificate of Excellence, a governmental unit must publish an easily readable and efficiently organized Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR), whose contents conform to program standards. Such reports must satisfy both accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America and applicable legal requirements. The District has received this award annually since it began submitting its report for the year ending August 31, 2000.

*School First Rating: **Passed***

Lamar Consolidated Independent School District has received the highest rating under Texas' School FIRST financial accountability rating system since its implementation for the fiscal year ending August 31, 2002. Fiscal 2002 was the transitional year of implementation for the new accountability project, with full implementation for years thereafter. School FIRST (Financial

Integrity Rating System of Texas) is a financial accountability system for Texas school districts developed by the Texas Education Agency in cooperation with the State Comptroller's Office and in response to Senate Bill 218 of the 77th Texas Legislature (in 2001). The primary goal of School FIRST is to achieve quality performance in the management of school districts' financial resources, a goal made more significant due to the complexity of accounting associated with Texas' school finance system.