

# Effectiveness and Efficiency Indicators for Texas Public Schools

By Tom Canby, TASBO Director of Research and Technology

Myths about the public education system are real barriers to achieving lofty gains in academic performance. Texas public schools must be viewed in the context of complex systems. There were questions during the 82<sup>nd</sup> Legislative Session about the lack of data to support how students benefited from specific state grant funded programs. The successes of the Texas public schools are about local systems that as a whole serve each student from when they leave the front door of their home to board the school bus until they return home. It's a complex system to which there is no single simplistic strategy to significantly increase academic performance in all school districts. Simplistic solutions to complex problems tend to bring to mind the lessons in American history curriculum about futile attempts by past generations to establish utopian communities.

Many years ago, our legislators expressed in the Education Code their intent “to eliminate any disparity in performance on assessment instruments... or disparity in the rates of high school completion between students at risk of dropping out of school... and all other students...”

---

The successes of the Texas public schools are about local systems that as a whole serve each student from when they leave the front door of their home to board the school bus until they return home.

---

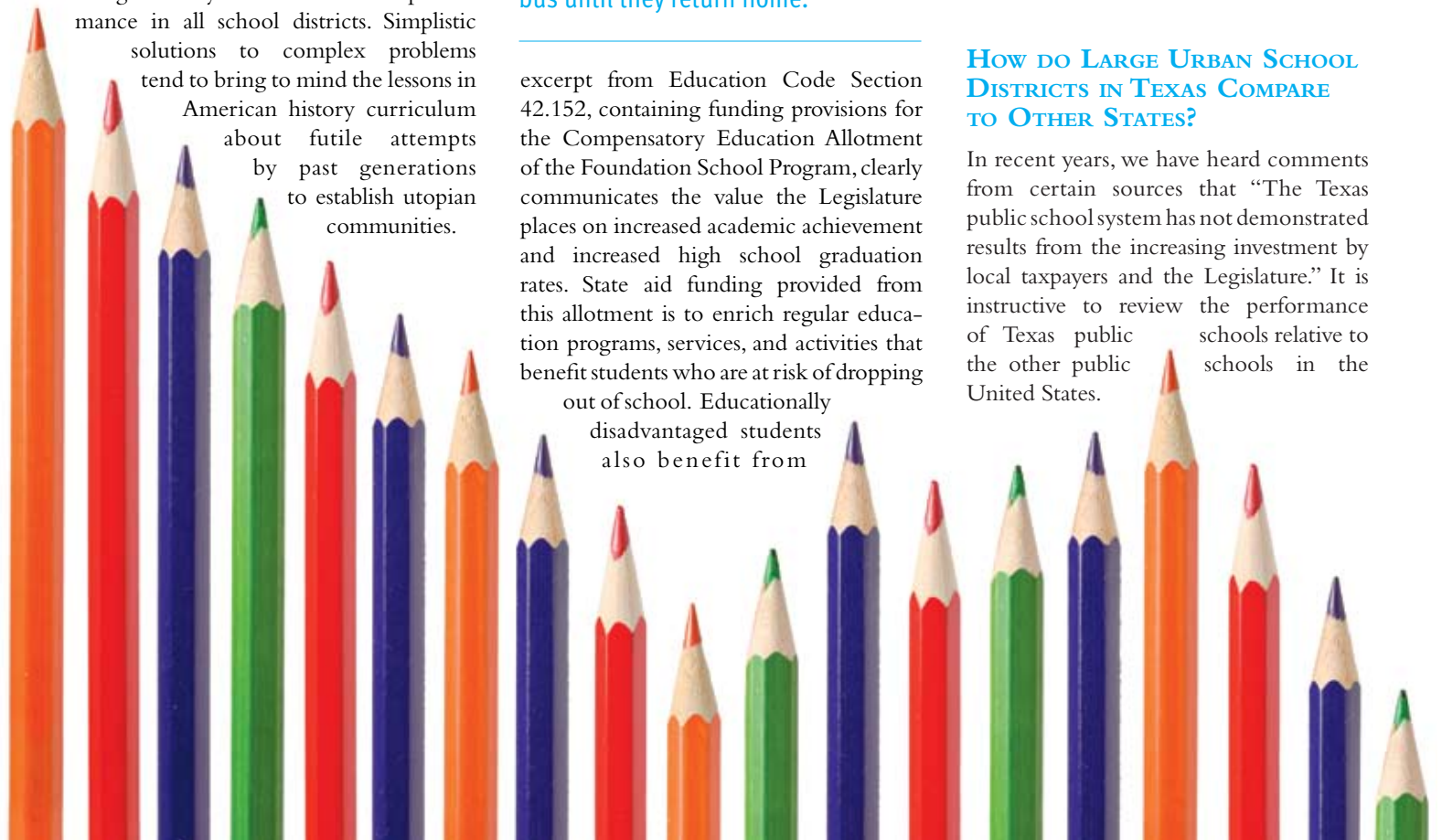
excerpt from Education Code Section 42.152, containing funding provisions for the Compensatory Education Allotment of the Foundation School Program, clearly communicates the value the Legislature places on increased academic achievement and increased high school graduation rates. State aid funding provided from this allotment is to enrich regular education programs, services, and activities that benefit students who are at risk of dropping out of school. Educationally disadvantaged students also benefit from

additional financial resources from state and federal grant sources that also supplement regular education programs.

For the sake of this article, I am setting aside the arguments at the heart of the developing school finance litigation case and am considering certain value propositions established by lawmakers who were voted into office by the citizens of Texas. Having said this, it's fair to say that all Texans would benefit from a K-12 public education system that is supported by adequate and sustainable revenue sources that are sufficient to ensure that all students graduate from high school irrespective of the relative affluence of households in students' local communities.

## HOW DO LARGE URBAN SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN TEXAS COMPARE TO OTHER STATES?

In recent years, we have heard comments from certain sources that “The Texas public school system has not demonstrated results from the increasing investment by local taxpayers and the Legislature.” It is instructive to review the performance of Texas public schools relative to the other public schools in the United States.



Each year, the Broad Foundation analyzes the academic performance of the largest urban school systems throughout the United States. To be eligible for the Broad Prize, K-12 school districts must meet certain criteria including: at least 37,500 students; at least 40% students eligible for free and reduced priced lunches; at least 40% students from minority groups; and located in a urban setting. (For a list of eligible school districts, visit [www.broadprize.org/about/eligible\\_school\\_districts.html](http://www.broadprize.org/about/eligible_school_districts.html).)

The Foundation awards the annual Broad Prize to “honor urban school districts that demonstrate the greatest overall performance and improvement in student achievement while reducing achievement gaps among low-income and minority students.” In 2010, the Broad Foundation published a special report recognizing school districts’ academic performance according to the following categories:

- Better at Serving Low-Income Students;
- Better at Serving Hispanic Students; and
- Better at Serving African-American Students.

**BETTER AT SERVING LOW-INCOME STUDENTS**

The Broad Foundation recognized 17 large urban school districts in the United States that evidenced “a higher percentage of low-

*continued on page 12*



**TxEIS awarded State-sponsored Student Information System contract by the Texas Education Agency!**

[www.txeis.net](http://www.txeis.net)

**Comprehensive Business and Student administrative software, including:**

- Human Resources
- Requisition
- Historical
- PID Enrollment Tracking (PET) export
- Scheduling
- Texas Records Exchange (TREx) extract
- <sup>tx</sup>Gradebook \*\*  
*teacher grade book*
- <sup>tx</sup>Connect \*\*  
*parent portal*
- <sup>tx</sup>MyZone \*\*  
*student portal*
- And much more...

**\*\* Now mobile device-compatible!**

**PEIMS-compliant**

**TCC software used by over 900 Texas school districts and charter schools**




Contact your regional education service center or Education Service Center, Region 20  
John McCauley, Information Technology  
210.370.5250 • [john.mccauley@esc20.net](mailto:john.mccauley@esc20.net)

**Texas Computer Cooperative**  
TxEIS ★ iTCCS

**Gerloff Company Inc**  
C A T A S T R O P H E M A N A G E M E N T

**Fire Investigation Support**      **Fire & Water Restoration**  
**Deodorization**                      **Structural Cleaning**  
**Project Management**              **Disaster Planning**  
**Pack Out & Storage**                **Contents Cleaning**  
**Structural Drying and**               **Water Extraction**  
**Deodorization**

**24 Hour Emergency Service**

**San Antonio**                      **Austin**                      **Toll-Free**  
**210-490-2777**                      **512-443-8822**                      **800-486-3621**  
[www.gerloffinc.com](http://www.gerloffinc.com)

---

*Serving All of Texas Since 1985*



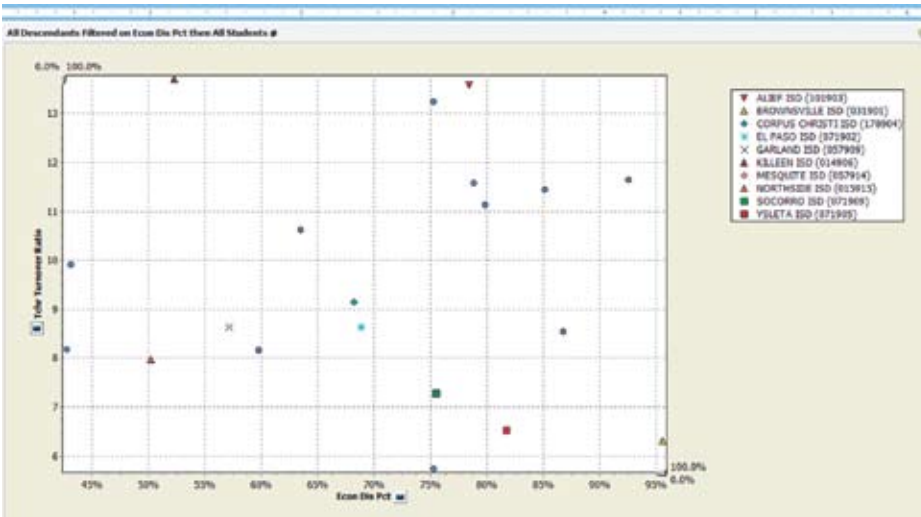

---

**GCI REMEDIATION LTD.**

**Mold Remediation**      **Indoor Air Quality Services**  
**24 Hour Emergency Service**

**San Antonio 210-490-7108**      **Toll-Free 866-779-4424**  
[www.gcirem.com](http://www.gcirem.com)

Effectiveness and Efficiency, continued from page 11



Source: eFACTS+ Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) data

income students [that] met or exceeded state standards in both reading and mathematics in 2009 than their respective state averages. In addition, a higher percentage of low-income students in these districts performed at the advanced level in both subjects than their respective states.” Six large urban school districts in Texas recognized in this Broad Prize category are:

- Alief ISD;
- Garland ISD;
- Mesquite ISD;
- Northside ISD;
- Socorro ISD; and
- Ysleta ISD.

- Killeen ISD;
- Mesquite ISD;
- Northside ISD;
- Socorro ISD; and
- Ysleta ISD.

### BETTER AT SERVING AFRICAN-AMERICAN STUDENTS

The Broad Foundation recognized 18 large urban school districts in the nation that evidenced “a higher percentage of African-American students [that] met or exceeded state standards in both reading and mathematics in 2009 than their

### BETTER AT SERVING HISPANIC STUDENTS

The Broad Foundation recognized 16 large urban school districts across the U.S. that evidenced “a higher percentage of Hispanic students [that] met or exceeded state standards in both reading and mathematics in 2009 than their respective state averages. In addition, a higher percentage of Hispanic students in these districts performed at the advanced level in both subjects than their respective states.” Five large urban school districts in Texas recognized in this Broad Prize category are:

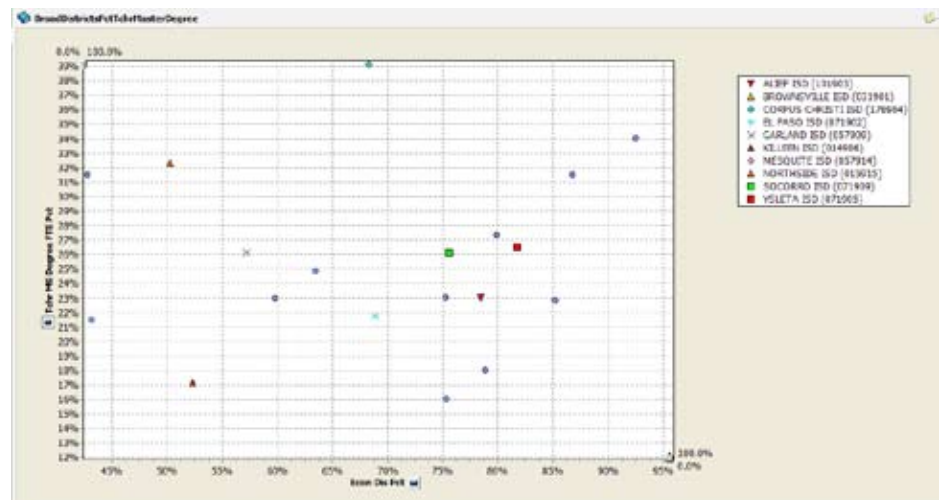
respective state averages. In addition, a higher percentage of African-American students in these districts performed at the advanced level in both subjects than their respective states.” Five large urban school districts in Texas recognized in this Broad Prize category are:

- Corpus Christi ISD;
- Garland ISD;
- Killeen ISD;
- Northside ISD; and
- El Paso ISD.

### BROAD PRIZE TO AN OUTSTANDING URBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT

The Broad Foundation also selects an outstanding model of academic performance in the United States. In recent years, Texas public school districts have been standout performers. In 2009, Aldine ISD received the annual Broad Prize for Urban Education, and Brownsville ISD received the award in 2008. In 2010, two Texas school districts in the El Paso area—Socorro ISD and Ysleta ISD—were finalists, and Ysleta ISD was a repeat finalist in 2011.

The disproportionate performances of the Texas public school system did not happen by accident. The performances recognized by the Foundation are the result of effective programs, services, and activities supported by the aggregate investment of revenues from property taxes and other local sources, state aid sources and federal sources.



Source: eFACTS+ Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) data

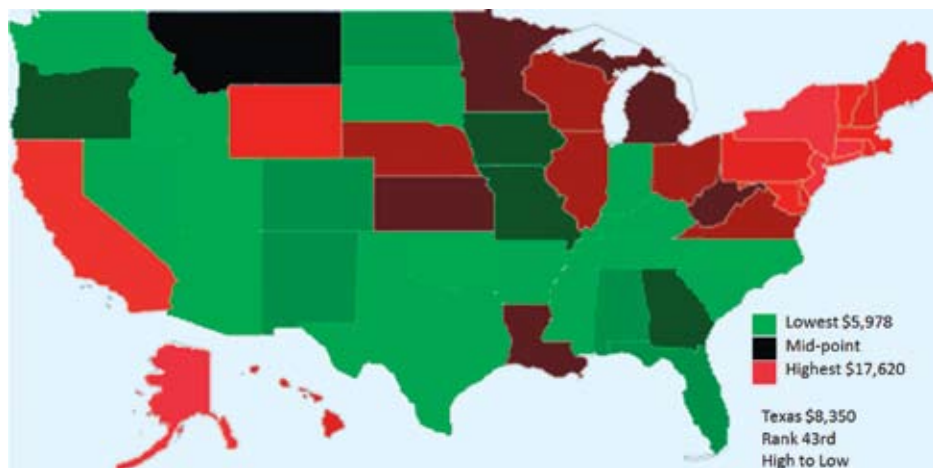


### KEY CHARACTERISTICS FOR BROAD PRIZE SCHOOL DISTRICTS ACCORDING TO PEIMS DATA

Let's review certain characteristics relating to the large urban school districts recognized by the Broad Foundation. The review includes data reported through the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) and other data sources that are included in reports generated by the Texas Education Agency Academic Excellence Indicator System, in addition to data reported by all states to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES).

The first scatter graph (page 12) provides the teacher turnover rates for all school districts that had a student enrollment of 37,500 or more students and a low-income percentage of 40% or more and displays the values for the districts recognized by the Broad Foundation, as mentioned above. A majority of the Broad Prize award school districts are associated with relatively low levels of teacher turnover, compared to the statewide average of 11.8% for all Texas public schools for school year 2009-1010. The teacher turnover rate ranged from 0 to 72% for all 1,030 school districts. The relatively low teacher turnover rate for a majority of the Broad Prize award school districts is a positive attribute.

The second scatter graph (page 12) also provides the percentages of teachers with Master's degrees for all school districts that had a student enrollment of 37,500 or more students and a low-income percentage of 40% or more and displays the values for the districts recognized by the Broad Foundation, as mentioned above. A majority of the Broad Prize award school districts are associated with relatively high percentages of teachers who have a Master's degree, compared to the statewide average of 21.3% for all Texas public schools for school year 2009-1010. The percentage of teachers with Master's Degrees ranged from 0 to 65% for all 1,030 school districts. Interestingly, the only district that reported zero students from low-income families also reported 65% of their teachers have Master's degree. This district has also received exemplary academic ratings under the state's academic



Current Expenditures per Pupil School for School Year 2007-2008. Source: NCES [http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d10/tables/dt10\\_191.asp](http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d10/tables/dt10_191.asp)

rating system. The relatively high percentages of teachers who have a master's degree in the Broad Prize award school districts is a strong teacher quality attribute.

#### MORE ON EFFECTIVENESS

Teacher turnover rates and graduate level degrees, especially in mathematics,

are some of the core academic effectiveness characteristics of high performing school systems. Additional qualities for academic program effectiveness are described in a report published in 2008 by Blackboard, Inc. The report—*Teaching in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*—states, "...it's clear that

*continued on page 14*

**MEDICAID FINANCE & CONSULTING SERVICES**  
A Division of the Houston Independent School District

**SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN PARTNERSHIP TO ACHIEVE EXCELLENCE**

The Leader in SHARS Billing & School-Based Medicaid Consulting Services; providing Decision Support Services & Expertise in Medicaid Requirements for Texas School Districts

Maximize Partnership

**SHARS Billing & Financial Cost Reporting**  
Contact us for Professional School-Based Medicaid Consulting Services at an Affordable Cost

Experience Trust

Web-Based SHARS Billing System  
IEP and One-Way Transportation Ratios  
Quarterly Certification of Expended Funds  
On-Site Annual SHARS Cost Report Training  
Gap Analysis of Billing and Financial Protocol  
Maintain Audit Protocol & Regulatory Compliance

PH: 800.381.6334  
EMAIL: [eSHARS@houstonisd.org](mailto:eSHARS@houstonisd.org) WEBSITE: [eSHARS.com](http://eSHARS.com)

*Effectiveness and Efficiency, continued from page 13*

systemic reform initiatives must encompass programs, strategies, 21st century learning tools and commitments to create supportive, productive environments for educators. Said NCTAF's Thomas Carroll, "With NCLB, we have many of the right pressure points—most notably accountability for each student's learning and knowing how each teacher is performing. When many district leaders examined the retention issue, they used to think what they had was simply a supply problem. Now, they're recognizing that it's not just about retention, it's retention of effective teachers." According to Carroll, there is a new role and new need for tools and strategies to help teachers become not just qualified, but effective. He stated, "We need a continuous process of development for teachers in schools so that each teacher becomes as effective as possible. There's a more systemic process in schools that

school leaders can use to empower teachers to manage their teaching." Carroll also noted that this "systemic process, when supported by appropriate technology, can harness the collective wisdom of teachers, adding quality, continuity, and collaboration to the entire approach to teacher training, development, and retention."

### HOW DO OPERATING COSTS FOR TEXAS PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM COMPARE TO OTHER STATES?

To reiterate, we have heard much discussion in recent years that "The Texas public school system has not demonstrated results from the increasing investment by local taxpayers and the Legislature." Data obtained from the National Center for Education Statistics provide insights on spending levels in the Texas public school system relative to other states in the United States. The heat map (page 13) was prepared by TASBO staff from NCES data.

As shown in the heat map, Texas is a low-spend state relative to other states and the District of Columbia. The gap in spending compared to a majority of other states is significant. The illustration on operating costs per student in Texas and the evaluations by the Broad Foundation speak to the value the Texas public school system provides to all taxpayers. Texas will be an even lower spend state with the \$5.3 billion reduction in public funding enacted by the 82<sup>nd</sup> Legislature for the 2012-2013 biennium.

### CONCLUSION

A discussion of efficiencies is generally out of context when they occur in the absence of considerations of effectiveness. According to the Broad Foundation, the Texas public school system is a standout performer relative to large urban schools in other states. Academic performance of students from lesser affluent communities

**YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE TO BE A MATH WHIZ TO CALCULATE YOUR ELECTRICITY PRICE.**

Is your bill not adding up? Suppliers often slip extra charges past their customers, leaving you paying for more than you thought.

Let GDF SUEZ Energy Resources shed some light on a few commonly overlooked, yet critical, cost components. We'll highlight specific details and line items so you'll never be surprised.

**GDF SUEZ**

877.321.4GDF | [powerineducation.com](http://powerineducation.com)

	Advertised	Actual
GDF SUEZ	\$\$.075/Kwh FIXED*	\$\$.075/Kwh FIXED*
Other Supplier	\$\$.074/Kwh*	\$\$.079/Kwh*

\*Prices subject to change. Actual prices may vary.



is vitally important for obvious reasons. The need for increased results or outcomes in academic performance has never been greater in light of the significant increase in the past decade in the percentage of students from low income families that are enrolled in the Texas public school system. This student demographic represents the entire increase and more in the enrollment increase in the past decade. Every dollar invested in the public education system will benefit future generations of Texans through significant cost avoidance for the Texas prison system and for social services, in addition to the more significant public policy goals of supporting public school students' transition to employed adults who are contributing to Texas' standing as one of the top 20 largest economies in the world.

**DON'T GET CAUGHT IN THE FLOOD.**  
Contact us for safe and secure offsite record storage.

Harding DMS [www.hardingdms.com](http://www.hardingdms.com)

Kelly Denny  
(214) 431-3628  
[kdenny@harding-group.com](mailto:kdenny@harding-group.com)

THEHARDINGGROUP  
DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT SERVICES

Interested in advertising in *TASBO Report*, please contact Kathleen Pishotta at 888.371.4933 or by email at [kathleen@apogeepublications.com](mailto:kathleen@apogeepublications.com)

**BLACKMON MOORING** SINCE 1948 **BMS CAT**

Over the past 60 years, Blackmon Mooring and BMS CAT have helped hundreds of educational facilities recover from fire, smoke, water, and mold damage.

- Smoke and Soot Removal
- Water Extraction/ Dehumidification
- Microbial Remediation
- Document/Media Recovery
- Complete Contents Cleaning and Restoration

**24 HOUR RESPONSE**  
**877.730.1948**  
**800.433.2940**  
[www.blackmonmooring.com](http://www.blackmonmooring.com)  
[www.bmscat.com](http://www.bmscat.com)

**MERIT™**  
ROOFING SYSTEMS, INC.  
Commercial • Educational • Industrial

[www.meritroofing.com](http://www.meritroofing.com)  
**(888) 960-ROOF**

Behind every Merit Roofing Systems project is our company's commitment to quality and customer satisfaction.

- **New Construction & Roof Replacement** ■  
Our expert staff will work with you to identify a long-lasting, quality roof system that will meet your needs and fit your budget.
- **Maintenance** ■  
A comprehensive roof maintenance program is the best tool you have for increasing the longevity of your investment. The key is addressing the minor problems before they develop into major (and potentially costly) ones.
- **Emergency Response & Disaster Recovery** ■  
When unexpected problems arise, rapid response is crucial in limiting the extent of damage to your building and minimizing potential damage to its contents. We offer 24/7 emergency response to help you manage critical situations.

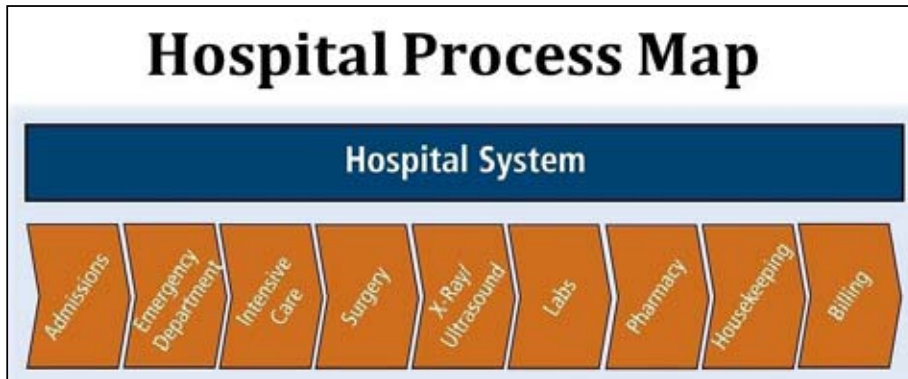
White space: (hvit spas) n.  
 1. The gaps between functional departments in an organization such as a business, school district, or hospital.

# White Space

By Fred A. Bentsen, Executive Director, The American Productivity and Quality Center

On the way to work this morning, you stopped at Starbucks for a tasty treat and as you returned to your car you were so distracted by the savory smell of your *Grande Venti Chocolate Mocha* that you tripped and fell and broke your arm. Off to the hospital for you!

As the ambulance takes you to the hospital, let's imagine what awaits you. The hospital you're headed to might look something like this from an organizational chart perspective:



Why do you care about the hospital's organizational chart while dealing with the pain of a broken arm? You care because how this hospital is organized will foretell some important information about what you're about to experience. Look at those departments in the orange blocks: admissions; emergency department; intensive care; surgery; x-ray; labs; pharmacy; housekeeping; billing. How many of these departments will you interact with while you're at the hospital? Well, you'll definitely interact with admissions. You'll certainly interact with the emergency department. Hopefully you don't interact with intensive care, but if you do you would want them prepared! Similarly, you may not have to interact with surgery although

that's a possibility depending on whether you performed a double pirouette during your fall. You'll absolutely interact with x-ray, labs, pharmacy, and housekeeping (although you may not see your interaction with them). Oh, and it is a guarantee that you'll interact with billing!

Now imagine that you have to spend seven hours at the hospital and you are in agonizing pain for two hours while you wait, getting angrier and more frustrated by the minute. While you endure this, a nurse

comes up to you and says, *"I'm terribly sorry for your long wait and agonizing pain but for the sake of clarity, I want you to understand that it is all because of those guys up in x-ray. If they could just get their act together we'd be able to do our jobs."* Does this make you feel better? Probably not. In fact, more than likely, that situation makes you feel worse. Angrier. More frustrated.

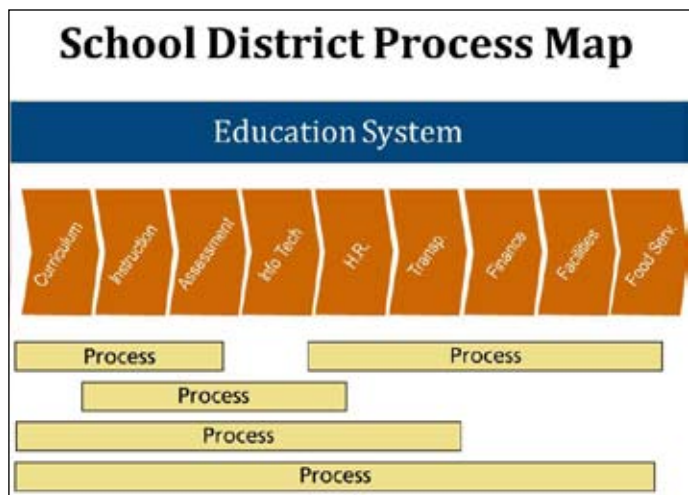
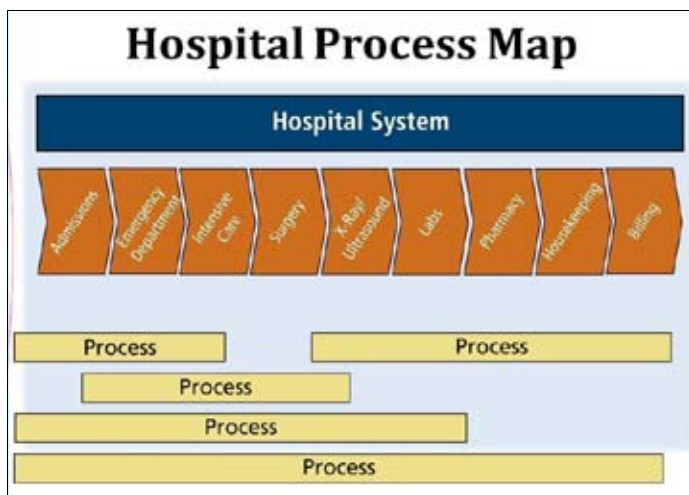
White space. White space is the gap between one department and the next. White space is the gap between one function and the next. **White space is the loss of valuable time, money and effectiveness.**

Since the dawn of time (or at least since the dawn of the industrial age), humans

have sorted work activities in organizations by function, by department. Look at the organizational chart for that hospital again. It could have been drawn by Henry Ford when he was making Model T automobiles more than 100 years ago. Each of those orange boxes, each of those departments, has a mission statement—goals, objectives, maybe even departmentally aligned compensation plans. This is all well and good from a vertical perspective. But work doesn't happen vertically. Work happens horizontally. Think about your path through the hospital with your broken arm: admissions, emergency department, labs, x-ray, etc. Horizontal. Not vertical. As the customer, you are part of a process pathway. Your specific path will be unique to your situation but every patient that comes through that hospital will be part of a process that is represented by the yellow horizontal bars in this graphic.

How that hospital manages your process pathway will determine how long you are there and how happy you are with the services you receive. The white space between the x-ray department and the emergency department in the scenario above is a problem—a big problem for you. But the individuals in the x-ray department might not even see the problem. They receive a case from downstairs; they run the films; and they return the results. If they are trapped within their functional or departmental silo, they may be blind to the issue. Who manages the handoff of the upstream process to them? Who manages the handoff back to the emergency department? If everyone is stuck in his or her own silo, who owns the process that you are a part of? All too often, nobody owns that process, and that is what creates white space. As a patient





in that hospital you don't care about that organizational chart. You care about getting your arm fixed and going home; none of their problems or excuses are part of your concern.

Now think about your school district. Does it look anything like this?

It probably does. The students and parents in your system don't care about this chart one bit. They care about the same things you cared about when you were in school: grades, homework, college, a job—horizontal process pathways. But *you* should care about that chart. Are you and your people locked in functional silos?

**WHITE SPACES WASTES TIME**

A parent waits in line on registration day at a campus. The four people who handle the initial part of registration are working as hard as they can, but the line is out the door. Nobody else is trained to pitch in and help them during that rush. *White space.* A teacher starts the school year without the correct number of textbooks because the three people who process incoming textbooks are waiting on the warehouse department. Nobody owns the entire process. *White space.*

**WHITE SPACE WASTES MONEY**

A principal needs a new copier for her campus and fills out the paperwork; it requires 17 signatures before it can be approved (true story). The process crosses

so many departments that, in the meantime, central office orders one, too. *White space.* A teacher needs a substitute for the afternoon but the process is so fragmented that the substitute ends up coming in the morning. *White space.*

**WHITE SPACE DIMINISHES EFFECTIVENESS**

A wonderful instructional technique is tried on one campus, and it works. But the technique never gets transferred to other similar campuses in your district because there are no processes for that. *White space.* Title I and Curriculum are both trying

to help a campus that is struggling with student achievement but they never talk and individually give the principal conflicting directives because they function as two ships passing in the night. *White space.*

**WHITE SPACE BY TEARING DOWN THOSE WALLS**

In addition to costing you time, money and effectiveness, white space demoralizes good employees. It literally takes the wind out of their sails. So what do you do about it? Here are some specific, actionable ideas:

*Continued on page 22*

**TPS**

**TEXAS POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS**

You owe it to your School to get another insurance quote...  
 What's the worst that could happen?  
 You find out you're getting a good price.  
 Or you find out you really can get a better price and better service!

**Serving Texas Schools Since 1983**

Coverages  
 Auto Physical Damage, Auto Liability, Crime, General Liability, Law Enforcement, Property, Public Officials,  
 School Board Legal Liability & Workers' Compensation

Compare your current insurance coverage and pricing with us Today.  
 Contact us by phone at 972-361-6303 or email [keith.albert@tspool.org](mailto:keith.albert@tspool.org).

Visit our website for additional information [www.tspool.org](http://www.tspool.org)



White Space, continued from page 21

- Tear down the walls between departments;
- Tear down the walls between “central office” and campuses;
- Tear down the walls between classrooms;
- Tear down the walls between campuses;
- Cross-train employees to perform multiple functions;
- Aggressively create cross-departmental dialogues;
- Eliminate unnecessary signature loops;
- Proactively strip-out bureaucracy;
- Train your staff on how to identify, capture and transfer best practices;
- Map and document your key processes;
- Assign process owners for your most important processes;
- Align your measurement systems to process measures, not just outcome measures.

Learn to look at your work—all work in the district—at the process level (horizontally). How does your work impact the people downstream from you? How does the work of the people upstream from you impact your work (processes)? Learn the art of managing work through process

**In addition to costing you time, money and effectiveness, white space demoralizes good employees. It literally takes the wind out of their sails. So what do you do about it?**

management, process improvement, process design and process redesign and you will be delighted with the results that you achieve!

Here are some free resources to help you on your journey:

[www.apqceducation.org/PDF/what-lies-beneath.pdf](http://www.apqceducation.org/PDF/what-lies-beneath.pdf)

[www.apqceducation.org/knowledge-base/download-documents/doc\\_download/21-excerpts-from-beyond-engineering-by-michael-hammer.html](http://www.apqceducation.org/knowledge-base/download-documents/doc_download/21-excerpts-from-beyond-engineering-by-michael-hammer.html)

[www.apqceducation.org/PDF/achilles-heel.pdf](http://www.apqceducation.org/PDF/achilles-heel.pdf)

*Fred A. Bentsen, Executive Director, Education, The American Productivity and Quality Center, is committed to enhancing the U.S. education system by identifying improvement opportunities within districts’ routine processes. By saving time and money, school districts can redirect money to school instruction. APQC Education works closely with superintendents, central office personnel, and principals to help districts work more efficiently and effectively and provides process and performance management for K12 nationwide. Fred has over 20 years’ experience in K12 curriculum, assessment and operations.*

**SSC Service Solutions**  
PREMIUM FACILITY SUPPORT FOR EDUCATION

- Custodial & Campus Services
- Plant Operations & Maintenance
- Grounds Management

For quality-focused Educational Institutions, SSC Service Solutions is the premium provider of cleaning and facilities services. With over 40 years of industry experience and highly trained skilled professionals, SSC is the choice for all of your support service needs.

*Sustaining a learning environment*

1840 Midpark Road, Suite 201 • Knoxville, TN 37921  
COMPASS SSC Service Solutions is a member of Compass Group PLC  
[www.SSCserv.com](http://www.SSCserv.com) • 1-800-765-0129

**When resources are limited, look to HCDE for help!**

- **CPE Credits and Networking:** Finance Council
- **Efficiency Studies:** Business, M & O, Personnel Utilization, Technology, Transportation
- **Grants:** Writing, Monitoring, Evaluating
- **Legally Procured Contracts:** Choice Facility Partners, HCDE Purchasing Cooperative
- **Records Management:** Electronic Imaging
- **Safety and Security:** Safe School Plans/Networks

Call 855-821-HCDE (4233)  
[www.hcde-texas.org](http://www.hcde-texas.org)

**HCDE**  
HARRIS COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION