

# Review of the Instructional Program of the Fresno Unified School District

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*Submitted by the*  
*Council of the Great City Schools*



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*April 2012*

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The Council of the Great City Schools thanks the many individuals who contributed to this project to improve the organizational structure of the Fresno Unified School District and the academic achievement of students attending its schools. Their efforts were critical to our ability to present the district with the best possible proposals.

First, we thank Superintendent Michael Hanson. It is not easy to ask for this kind of review. It takes courage, openness, and uncompromising commitment to the city's children. Superintendent Hanson has these qualities in abundance.

Second, we thank the Fresno school board for its support of this project and its commitment to the school district and its young people.

Third, we thank the staff members of the Fresno Unified School District, who provided all the time, documents, and data that the Council needed in order to do its work. Their openness and enthusiasm were critical to our understanding of the challenges faced by the Fresno public school system.

Fourth, we thank the many individuals, groups, organizations, and associations with which we met. Our only regret is that we were unable to meet with everyone whom we know had something valuable to contribute.

Fifth, the Council thanks the Albuquerque and Boston Public Schools for contributing staff to this review. The enthusiasm and generosity of these school districts serve as further examples of how the nation's urban public school systems are working together to help each other improve student performance.

Finally, I thank Council staff members Ricki Price-Baugh, Denise Walston, and Sharon Lewis, whose skills were critical to the success of this effort. Thank you.

Michael Casserly  
Executive Director  
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## By the Council of the Great City Schools

### **INTRODUCTION**

After facing the possibility of a state takeover in 2005, the Fresno Unified School District made a series of important moves to put its house in order and improve the prospects of its city's children. The Board of Education hired an energetic and reform-minded superintendent and presided over the re-emergence of the school district. It pursued governance assistance, adopted a strong set of Core Beliefs and Commitments, and articulated goals to guide the district through 2013.

In turn, the new superintendent, Michael Hanson, stabilized the school district's financial situation, balanced the books, and redeployed additional resources into the classroom. His administration has also led the development of a strong data-dashboard, articulated a theory of action for the district's improvement, built up the technological infrastructure, initiated a number of professional development programs to boost staff and teacher capacity, launched a facilities master plan that was approved by the voters, formed a series of district task forces to address critical issues, and took steps to improve student safety.

All of these measures by the board and the superintendent have benefited students and the community, and have laid a strong foundation for the district's next steps in its journey toward providing the high-level instruction that students need to secure the vitality and future of the Fresno community.

To begin taking those next steps, Superintendent Michael Hanson asked the Council of the Great City Schools, the nation's primary coalition of large urban public school districts, to conduct a high-level, rapid, and no holds barred review of the school system's academic program and the organizational structure that supports it to see where the district's reforms need to go next. This brief report is the product of that review.

### **Overview of the Project**

The Council of the Great City Schools prepared this report to summarize its observations and recommendations to the Fresno Unified School District about improving student achievement and strengthening the organizational structure supporting teachers and students.

To conduct its work, the Council assembled a Strategic Support Team (SST) composed of curriculum and instructional leaders who have worked to address some of the same issues as those faced by the Fresno Unified School District and who have substantially improved student performance over the last several years in their own districts. Four Council staff members

accompanied and supported the team, and prepared this report summarizing the team's findings and proposals.

In brief, the Council's team reviewed the school district's efforts to improve student achievement, benchmarked the district's broad practices against faster-improving urban school districts throughout the country, and examined the district's organizational structure to see how well it was positioned to support future reforms.

The team conducted its site visit to Fresno on April 1-4, 2012. Its work began with a discussion with Superintendent Hanson about the district's work and the challenges it faced moving forward. That discussion was followed by two days of fact-finding and a day devoted to synthesizing the team's findings and mapping out preliminary strategies for improving achievement. The team debriefed Superintendent Hanson at the end of the site visit.

The Council has now conducted more than 220 Strategic Support Team reviews in over 50 major city school districts in a variety of instructional and management areas. These reviews have included examinations of instructional systems, organizational structures, finances and budget operations, transportation, food services, security, procurement, technology systems, and many other facets of urban schooling.

The Council tailors its reports specifically to each district and to the particular challenges it faces. The Council recognizes that each city is different and that no city has exactly the same mixture of student demographics, staffing patterns, and resources that Fresno has. Our recommendations, therefore, may not be precisely applicable elsewhere.

It is also important to note that this project did not examine everything, and this analysis cannot be considered an audit as such because we do not attempt to itemize all district practices and materials. We did not, for example, spend time looking at food services, transportation, personnel, facilities management, security, or other operational functions. Instead, we looked at broader instructional factors that might affect the academic attainment of students in Fresno. Also, we did not look at school board policies or other governance issues in any depth. Our focus in this report is exclusively on instruction and the organizational structure that supports it.

## **Goals of the Project**

The broad goals of the project were—

- Conduct a broad, high-level review of the academic program of the Fresno Unified School District.
- Assess the organizational structure and staffing levels of the Fresno school system to determine how well they support the academic program at the building level.
- Propose ways for the Fresno Unified School District to strengthen its instructional program, accelerate student achievement, and better align its staffing and organization to support student achievement.

## **Work of the Strategic Support Team**

The Strategic Support Team was made up of Council staff and of curriculum and instructional leaders from other urban school systems that have been improving student achievement.

The team visited Fresno on April 1-4, 2012, and began its work by discussing the academic and organizational status of the Fresno Unified School District with Superintendent Hanson. In that discussion, the superintendent laid out the challenges facing the district and the steps the district was taking to address them. The team used this discussion to sharpen its focus for the subsequent two days as it examined the school system's broad instructional and organizational strategies.

The team was comprised of Katy Dula, director of literacy for the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Public Schools (retired); Linda Sink, chief academic officer of the Albuquerque Public Schools; Linda Chen, deputy chief academic officer of the Boston Public Schools; and four members of the Council: Michael Casserly, executive director; Ricki Price-Baugh, director of academic achievement; Sharon Lewis, director of research; and Denise Walston, director of mathematics. (Biographical sketches of team members are attached.)

The work of the team included extensive interviews with central office staff members, school board members, principals, teachers, representatives of outside organizations, parents, and others. About 60 individuals were interviewed. (A list is attached to this report.) The team did not interview all staff because of scheduling issues, and did not visit schools because of the spring break. No doubt, this affected the completeness of the review and limited our ability to provide a comprehensive picture of how the district's instructional program is being shaped and perceived at the ground level. Still, we are confident that we have captured a number of important issues.

The team also reviewed numerous documents and reports and analyzed data on student performance. A list of materials the team examined is also attached to this report.

Moreover, the Council was able to conduct a quick review of the district's National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) data for 2009 and 2011, comparing Fresno's reading and math results with those in other major cities participating in the Trial Urban District Assessment (TUDA). We also looked at the district's state test score data and ACT data. And the team conducted a preliminary analysis of spending patterns and staffing levels that might affect overall student achievement.

This approach to providing technical assistance, reviews, and support to urban school districts working to improve student achievement is unique to the Council of the Great City Schools and its members, and it has proven effective for a number of reasons.

First, the approach allows the superintendent to work directly with talented, experienced practitioners from other urban school systems that have established track records of performance and improvement.

Second, the recommendations developed by these peer teams have validity because the individuals who develop them have faced many of the same problems now encountered by the school system requesting a Council review. Team members are aware of the challenges faced by urban schools, and their strategies have been tested under the most rigorous conditions.

Third, using senior urban school managers from other communities is faster and less expensive than retaining a large management consulting firm. It does not take team members long to determine what is going on in a district. This rapid learning curve permits reviews that are faster and less expensive than could be secured from experts who are not as well versed on how urban school systems work.

Finally, the teams comprise a pool of expertise that a school system such as Fresno can use to implement report recommendations or develop further plans and strategies.

### **Contents of This Report**

This report is made up of four sections. The first section is an introduction. The second section summarizes the findings and observations of the SST, and the third section presents the team's recommendations to improve student achievement and strengthen the district's organizational structure. The fourth section summarizes the report and discusses next steps.

The appendices of the report include:

- Item 1. A summary of district NAEP reading and math proficiency levels in grades 4 and 8.
- Item 2. Expected NAEP scores after adjusting for family and student background characteristics.
- Item 3. Statistics on ELLS: Number of years spent in and percentages of students at different proficiency level.
- Item 4. District ACT scores and college-readiness benchmarks between 2007 and 2011, including trends in participation rates.
- Item 5. Expenditure trends per pupil and staffing levels using National Center for Education Statistics data between 2002-03 and 2008-09.
- Item 6. A list of all individuals interviewed during the team's site visit and the schedule of interviews.
- Item 7. A list of materials reviewed the team during its site visit.
- Item 8. Brief biographical sketches of the members of the Strategic Support Team.
- Item 9. A short description of the Council of the Great City Schools and a list of the Strategic Support Teams the organization has conducted over the last 12 years.

## **FINDINGS AND OBSERVATIONS**

The Strategic Support Team from the Council of the Great City Schools made a number of broad, high-level observations about the organizational structure of the district and the academic program currently in place. The findings below are divided into a number of broad categories: general observations about key features of the school system, student achievement patterns, organizational structure, strategic positioning, goals and accountability, curriculum and instructional programming, and data and assessments. The following is a summary of those findings and observations, both positive and negative.

### **Findings and Observations**

#### **A. General**

- The community served by the Fresno Unified School District has a number of important resources, but it is also marked by high levels of need. For instance, some 26 percent of Fresno families with children younger than 18 years old live in poverty according to the Census Bureau, and some 47 percent of female-headed households with children younger than 18 live in poverty. In addition, only 23 percent of the population over 25 years of age graduated from high-school, and only 13.5 percent of the population graduated from college. Finally, some 43 percent of the population over five years old speaks a language other than English at home and about 14 percent of the nation's farm workers live principally in Fresno County.
- At 81 percent, the Fresno Unified School District has one of the highest student poverty rates of any school district in the nation, including among most major urban school systems.
- The Fresno school district enrolls approximately 73,000 students of which about 1,900 are preschool students, about 7,100 receive special education, and some 20,700 are English language learners (ELLs). The top five languages spoken by ELLs in the district are Spanish (70.3 percent), Hmong (20.5 percent), Khmer (2.8 percent), Lao (2.6 percent), and Punjabi (0.6 percent).
- About 61 percent of district students are Hispanic, 14 percent are Asian American, 13 percent are White, and about 11 percent are African American.
- The Fresno Unified School District is governed by a seven-member school board; all members are elected to at-large positions by the community's voters.
- The district employs some 10,100 individuals, operates about 94 schools (including alternative and special education schools), and has an annual budget of about \$1.0 billion.
- District leadership has taken a number of important steps over the last several years to improve the school system. Some of these steps include (1) articulating district values and goals; (2) launching a number of professional development initiatives to boost the capacity of school-level staff and teachers; (3) stabilizing the budget and district finances; (4) initiating a district data dashboard; (5) improving the technological infrastructure; (6) addressing student

safety needs; (7) formulating a series of task forces to address district challenges; and (8) approving a district facilities master plan.

## B. Student Achievement

- Data from the California state test indicate that the percentage of Fresno fourth graders who scored at or above proficient levels increased from 39 percent in 2008 to 46 percent in 2011, a rate of gain (2.3 percentage points per year) that was somewhat smaller than the annual rate of gain among fourth graders statewide (3.0 percentage points). In addition, the percentage of Fresno's fourth graders scoring below basic levels in reading on the state test dipped slightly from 26 percent in 2008 to 24 percent in 2011. Most of the gains among fourth graders in Fresno occurred between 2008 and 2009. Fresno's reading gains on the state test were higher in grades 3, 5, 6 and 8 than in grade 4, but only at grades 3 and 6 did the gains exceed the rate of state gains. In all grades, the proficiency levels among Fresno's students are substantially below those of students statewide.
- Gains between 2008 and 2011 on state reading tests among fourth graders in Fresno were most prominent among Native American and Asian American students, whose increases exceeded their peer groups statewide. White and Hispanic fourth graders saw the smallest increases during that period, and African American students saw moderate gains. In eighth grade, reading gains were most prominent among Asian American students. All other groups saw gains that were smaller than the gains of their same-race peers statewide. Fresno's reading gains at both the fourth and eighth-grade levels among students eligible for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), students with disabilities, and English language learners were the same as or smaller than the gains of their peer groups statewide over the same period.
- In math, data from the state test indicate that the percentage of Fresno fourth graders who scored at or above proficient levels increased substantially between 2008 (50 percent proficient) and 2011 (65 percent proficient), a rate of gain (5.0 percentage points per year) that was significantly larger than the average statewide gain among fourth graders (3.3 percentage points per year). In addition, the percentage of Fresno fourth graders scoring below basic levels in math on the state test fell from 22 percent in 2008 to 17 percent in 2011. Gains in math scores in Fresno exceeded rates of gain statewide in grades 3, 4, 5, and 6 but did not in grade 7. Math scores in Fresno are below statewide scores in every grade.
- Gains between 2008 and 2011 on state math tests among fourth graders in Fresno were most prominent among Native American, Asian American, and Hispanic students, whose increases exceeded their peer groups statewide. White and African American fourth graders saw the smallest increases during this period, but their gains—along with those of Native American, Asian American, and Hispanic students—exceeded those of their same-race peers statewide. Fresno's math gains among fourth graders who were eligible for the National School Lunch Program, and English language learners exceeded their same-group peers statewide, but math gains among students with disabilities were smaller than those statewide over the same period.

- Data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), which the Fresno Unified School District participated in for both the 2009 and 2011 administrations, show that Fresno scored significantly below large city and national averages in reading and mathematics at both fourth- and eighth-grade levels.
- About 12 percent of district fourth and eighth graders read at or above proficient levels on NAEP in 2011. Some 14 percent of fourth graders scored at or above proficient in mathematics in 2011, as did 15 percent of eighth graders.
- Fresno students at both the fourth and eighth grades scored at around the 23<sup>rd</sup> percentile in both reading and mathematics on the national score distribution. Generally, students in Fresno only scored significantly higher than students in Detroit in reading and math among the 21 cities participating in NAEP.
- Few of the district's national school lunch program-eligible students and English language learners scored at or above proficient levels in reading or math on NAEP. For example, some 8 percent of Fresno's fourth graders who were eligible for the National School Lunch Program scored at or above proficient levels of attainment in reading on the NAEP, while 66 percent scored below the basic level. Similarly, only 1 percent of ELL fourth graders scored at or above proficient on NAEP reading tests, while some 88 percent scored below basic levels. Math scores were only somewhat better: About 11 percent of fourth graders who were eligible for the National School Lunch Program scored at or above proficient levels, while 47 percent scored below basic levels; and about three percent of ELL fourth graders scored at or above proficient levels in math, while 66 percent scored below basic levels of attainment.
- Students in Fresno scored significantly below what might have been expected statistically in both reading and mathematics at both fourth and eighth grades after adjusting for demographic and family background characteristics. (See appendix.)
- Students in Fresno did not see significant gains in reading or mathematics at either fourth or eighth grades between the 2009 and 2011 administrations of NAEP.
- In fourth grade reading, Fresno students had the most difficulty with NAEP questions asking them to integrate and interpret information and ideas presented in the text. At the eighth grade level, Fresno students had the most difficulty with questions asking them to locate and recall information from the text, integrate and interpret information and ideas presented in the text, and critique and evaluate information and ideas in the text. This pattern indicates that students are not being exposed to higher-level questions or complex text appropriate to the grade level beyond the basic reading skills they are being taught.
- In fourth grade mathematics, Fresno students had the most difficulty with NAEP questions asking them to complete a graph from a data set; graph or interpret points with whole number or letter coordinates on a grid; solve problems by estimating and computing using a single set of data; and selecting or using appropriate measurement instruments, such as a ruler, meter stick, clock, or thermometer. At the eighth grade level, Fresno students had the most difficulty with questions asking them to read or interpret data, determine the probability of independent and dependent events, recognize or informally describe the effect of a

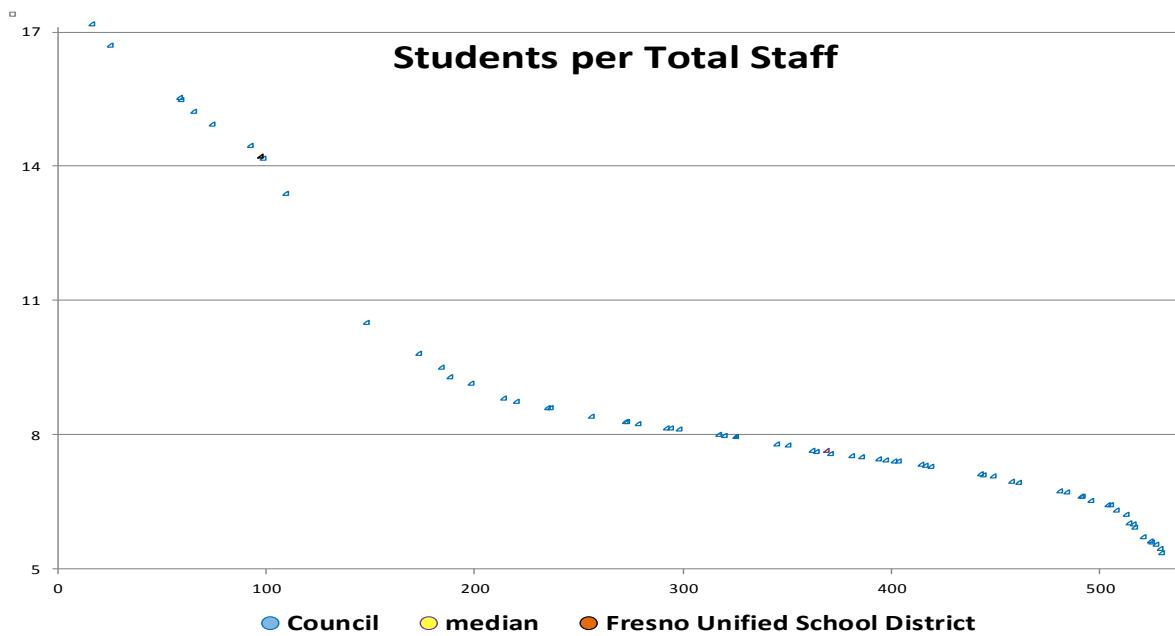
transformation on two-dimensional geometric shapes, and interpret probabilities. This pattern indicates that students are not able to apply the basic mathematical concepts they are learning.

- District results on the ACT composite college entrance exam have hovered around 18.7 between 2007 and 2011, while the number of students taking the exams has more than doubled over the same period. About 12 percent of the district's ACT test takers met all four college readiness benchmarks. (The average across the Great City School districts is 13 percent, and the national average is about 25 percent.)
- The number of students participating in AP classes has increased substantially over the last several years. Some 2,830 more students in Fresno took an AP exam in 2010—11 than in 2002—03, but the most recently available average score on the AP exams was only 2.03.

## C. Staffing and Organizational Structure

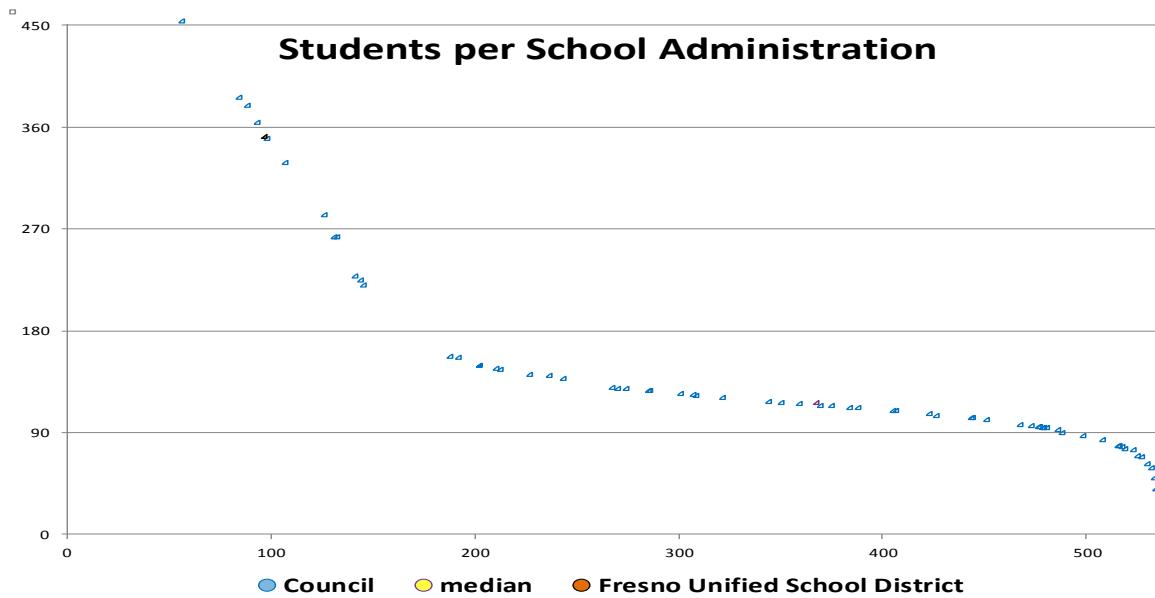
- Overall, the Fresno school district has fewer total staff members per student, compared with other major urban school districts. The district also has a higher teacher-to-student ratio than other major cities and higher student to school- and district-level administrators than the median Great City School system. (See graphs on subsequent pages.)
- Fresno spends a greater share of its total current expenditures on instruction (54.0 percent) than the average Great City School system (median is 45.5 percent).
- The Fresno school district spends about 0.4 percent of its total current expenditures on district administration, the lowest of all Great City School districts. (The median of the Great City Schools is 1.0 percent.)
- The districtwide organizational chart (dated May 1, 2010) given to the team shows that the superintendent has a very wide span-of-control, with approximately 10 direct line-administrator reports, including a chief academic officer, chief financial officer, human resources and labor relations officer/director/manager, two school support services officers/directors/managers, chief information officer, equity and access manager, chief technology officer, accountability and improvement officer/director/manager, and school leadership officer/director/manager.
- The organizational chart shows wide spans-of-control under the chief academic officer, and the chart shows inconsistent job titles at the same level, e.g., administrators, directors, and executive directors. In addition, a number of like functions are not grouped together, e.g., safety and security is under school support rather than operations.
- The 2011-12 organizational chart provided to the Council's team for the K-12 school support services unit shows eight direct reports to the associate superintendent, including directors of state and federal programs, leadership development, special education, grants office, research and evaluation, elementary school leadership, secondary school leadership, and English learner services and professional development.

## Students per Total Staff, Compared with Other Great City School Districts\*



Y-axis=Number of students-to-total teachers. X-axis=Ranking in relation to the Great City Schools.  
 \* Fresno has 19.8 students per teacher; the Great City Schools median is 15.3 students per staff member.

## Students per School Administrators, Compared with Other Great City School Districts



- The school support services organizational chart is oddly arranged, and lacks job titles and names of people leading the functions. The secondary school leadership position reports directly to the superintendent in the 2011–12 school year. In addition, responsibility for professional development is divided across a number of offices.
- The line of supervision presented in the organizational chart is not necessarily adhered to, as the superintendent and other staff members sometimes take on others' responsibilities when the work is not being done satisfactorily. Still, these formal lines are important for smooth communications, clear accountability, and appropriate support. They also ensure order and respect among members of the organization.

#### **D. Leadership and Strategic Positioning**

- The district has been on a steady path of general improvement over the last several years and has substantially stabilized its financial picture in the midst of a very difficult economic environment.
- Principals interviewed by the team gave the superintendent high marks for leadership and direction, and for improvement of the school district over the years while admitting that the system has a long way to go before anyone is happy with results.
- The school board articulated a series of core beliefs in 2007 to guide the district's work. The beliefs include:
  - (1) Every student can and must learn at grade level and beyond,
  - (2) Teachers must demonstrate the ability and desire to educate every child at a high level,
  - (3) Leaders must perform courageously and ethically to accomplish stated goals,
  - (4) A safe learning and working environment is crucial to student learning, and
  - (5) Fresno Unified is a place where diversity is valued, educational excellence and equity are expected, individual responsibility and participation are required by all, collaborative adult relationships are essential, and parents, students and the community as a whole are vital partners.
- In addition, the district has four broad instructional goals around (1) academic attainment in reading, writing, and math; (2) engagement in arts, activities, and athletics; (3) demonstration of character and personal competence for work-place success; and (4) graduation. These four goals are found on the school system's website and are included in the "single plans" for student achievement (i.e., school improvement plans).
- The district is missing a clearly articulated vision of how curriculum could be used to drive instructional improvement. In addition, district personnel interviewed by the team often reflected very low expectations for student achievement.

- The district has a considerable number of initiatives, but staff members have difficulty understanding how they connect and how they fit into a broader strategic direction for the district. In addition, many of the district's main initiatives are not reflected or mentioned in school improvement plans reviewed by the team.
- The district has a number of strategic plans for departments and programs, but it lacks a comprehensive plan that pulls everything together into a single systemwide direction.
- The school board has a working majority but is divided over the district's direction and leadership. The board lacks sufficient training and a code of ethics and behavior.
- The district does not use its federal Title I, Title III or IDEA funds to support early childhood programming.
- Parents reported that they were concerned about the lack of diversity among staff and teachers in the central office and schools. (An analysis of district data showed that 66.6 percent of all teachers in the district were White, 20.9 percent were Hispanic, 3.2 percent were African American, and the remaining small number of teachers were Asian American, Native American, Filipino, or were not reported. In addition, the data showed that 73.9 percent of teachers were female and 26.1 percent were male.)

## **E. Goals and Accountability**

- Individual schools have goals and targets for improving student achievement that are largely defined around *No Child Left Behind* requirements. Some schools set goals on their own that are beyond what NCLB requires, but the district does not offer incentives or encourage schools on a regular basis to set higher goals.
- There is no clearly defined system for holding district or school staff accountable for improvements in student achievement. Senior district staff members are not on performance contracts, principals are not evaluated based on improvements in student achievement, and teachers are not evaluated, even in part, on gains in student achievement. (The district should be commended, however, for beginning to move aggressively on low-performing principals and teachers when their practice does not meet district expectations.)
- The district's school improvement plan templates are aligned with systemwide goals and the district's data dashboard. The templates also have descriptions of Response to Intervention (RTI) frameworks. In general, the template is a strong exemplar for what such plans ought to include.
- The district lost approximately 30,000 instructional days to suspensions in the 2010--11 school year, a decline from about 37,000 in 2008--09. These instructional days lost in 2010--11 involved some 7,500 students in approximately 14,500 incidents. In addition, the district expelled 507 students last year, a relatively large number in comparison to other similar city school systems. (Albuquerque has an enrollment of 90,000 students and expelled 32 students the same year.) Some 25 percent of those expelled in Fresno were students with disabilities. Furthermore, the district's Phoenix Alternative School, which serves students with behavioral

issues, has an enrollment that is 35 percent disabled at the elementary level and 52 percent at the secondary level. The district is implementing the Safe and Civil Schools behavioral program to address the issues.

## **F. Curriculum and Instructional Programming**

- The district has launched cross-functional achievement and English language learner (ELL) task forces to address critical instructional challenges facing the school system.
- Fresno schools are focused on building basic literacy and math skills in the early grades, but the district has no instructional strategy for building comprehension skills in literacy and application skills in math. The district also lacks a strong emphasis on writing from the earliest grades, other than its use of the Write Tools program. In addition, there are no exemplars of grade-level expectations for the quality of student reading comprehension and writing skills, so that every teacher in every school has a shared understanding of what level of performance students are to meet at each grade level.
- The district is discussing implementation of the common core standards, but there is not yet a clear plan for phasing in the standards. The Algebra University is an exception. The program involves algebra teachers at the middle school level, supporting their use of mathematical practices from the common core and connecting conceptual and procedural understanding in math.
- Students may access credit-bearing algebra courses in grade 7. However, there was no district effort to ensure that students had the requisite knowledge and skills required for algebra by compacting the curriculum, i.e., building up the foundation for algebra by adding objective to earlier grade levels and providing teacher support to ensure that students learned those objectives prior to beginning algebra. Lacking this foundation resulted in high student failure rates in the course. Furthermore, seventh grade California Standards Test (CST) scores declined because only the lowest performing students were left in seventh-grade math courses.
- The district has 11 “Emphasis Schools” and three School Improvement Grant (SIG) schools that it is attempting to turn around. It is too early to determine the effectiveness of these efforts.
- The district has provided curriculum guides to articulate what teachers are to teach. The third-grade guide, for instance, provides academic vocabulary, focused standards, sample assessment items, and references to pages from the adopted texts. However, the guides do not clarify the level of rigor or depth that teachers are expected to teach or that students are expected to master. Perhaps as a result, the quality of teacher-developed lesson plans the team read on the website was very mixed. Many of the lesson plans had no objectives or called for very low-level activities. There are also no written plans for transitioning this lesson-writing process to the common core standards; nor does the lesson plan template include the key “shifts” assumed by the common core. It appeared that the plans were not vetted before being posted on-line, nor was there any plan to do so in the future.

- The curriculum guides also do not lay out big ideas or how they are developed across the periods or grade levels. In addition, the team found that Fresno had re-written some state standards but without a clear rationale for doing so. For example, the team examined sample math documents, and noted that, for assessment purposes, the phrase “word problems” had been eliminated from the state standards three times, which could inadvertently lead teachers to de-emphasize them. There were also instances where higher expectations stated in the state standards had been removed, in effect lowering the level of rigor in the standards.
- The district’s Foundations framework is a laudable effort to move instructional practice forward, but in order for it to have the desired effect, the district will have to develop an explicit focus on the quality of instructional practice and the level of instructional rigor required by the common core standards, and how to achieve them from current levels of performance.
- The district had the foresight to anticipate budget cuts and the necessity for “combination” classes, which resulted in the development of ELA and math curriculum guides to ensure the appropriate level of rigor for each grade level in the combination. The effort suggests that the district knows how to define the rigor it expects.
- The district lacks sufficient central office content-level staff to support improved programming in the schools.
- The district is placing extensive confidence in its teaching force and is committed to building capacity in its personnel. It is relying extensively on its Accountable Communities as the main vehicle for professional development and on the ability of the lead teachers to provide this development. However, there is no support for lead teachers to deepen knowledge of curriculum, analyze student work, or design effective instruction, and there is no accountability for the outcome of the communities. In some cases, building-level leadership is even discouraged from participating.
- The team saw very little evidence that student work was routinely used to reflect on instructional practice. Some teachers reported that they bring student work into the Accountable Community meetings, but there is little guidance on what teachers need to be looking for in student work or how to translate what they find into instructional practice.
- The district does not have any incentives to encourage the best principals and teachers to work in the lowest performing schools.
- The district does not have a systemwide RTI plan to define instructional practices for students with differing academic needs, although it is piloting efforts in some schools. The district has purchased some secondary-level intervention programs (e.g., Corrective Reading, Ramp Up, and Academic Reading), but there is no commonly understood procedure for how to use them and under what circumstances—or professional development on their use. There do not appear to be any intervention strategies in the elementary grades. The lack of a systemwide RTI strategy may result in uneven identification of students for special education services. Finally, a number of interviews revealed that differentiated instruction is irregularly applied across the district.

- Despite budget cuts over the years, the district has a number of instructional coaches (around 70) but they do not appear to be strategically deployed. Instead, they provide individualized pedagogical and planning support to willing teachers without focused attention on building content expertise. Many lead teachers gave coaches positive reviews, while others were more mixed when coaches were not in classrooms. Teachers also indicated that coaches are often pulled into administrative and other responsibilities. The team saw no evidence that the effectiveness of coaches had been evaluated. The district has discontinued the on-line tool previously used for monitoring the coach's time.
- District data indicate that about 93 percent of teachers in the Fresno school system have a bachelor's degree plus 30 or more hours of graduate work or have a master's degree. Data also indicate that the district has a relatively senior teacher work-force. It is not clear that either the seniority levels of teachers or their high levels of graduate education have necessarily accrued to the academic benefit of students.
- The district will have a total of three days next year devoted to professional development plus 27 hours per semester that can be used for professional development and/or collaboration. In addition to being an inadequate amount of time, the 27 hours have not been clearly defined around how to raise student achievement. There is little data to demonstrate that the district's professional development investments change instructional practice or improve student achievement.
- Teachers interviewed by the team reported receiving little professional development in instructional strategies, working with ELL students (other than professional development on sheltered instruction and observation protocol [SIOP] and Frontloading), or interventions for low-achieving students. In addition, teachers indicated they received little professional development on methods for giving low-performing students strategies for accessing grade-level reading material. However, teachers did report receiving professional development on Foundations.
- District principals and teachers receiving professional development reported benefiting from the school system's ongoing training provided through the "Skillful Leader" and Skillful Teacher" programs. Unfortunately, the training does not appear to have a strong content focus, and the district does not have a comparable capacity-building program for staff members in the central office.
- District staff members and principals conduct walk-throughs of classrooms, but the process is not standardized and the results are not fed back directly to individual teachers or used to inform the deployment of instructional support or professional development. The district has deliberately moved away from more standardized walk-through procedures because the previous processes had become too compliance oriented.
- The district has a strong partnership with the Long Beach Unified School District on the *Beyond the Basic Facts* and *Math Lesson Design* programs, but the Fresno district did not develop the prerequisite capacity, systems, content knowledge, and structures necessary for successful implementation at the outset.

- The district appears not to have a coherent English-language development (ELD) program or strategy. The district's task force on English Learners concluded in 2009 that these students "are not making adequate progress in learning." From data collected on district NAEP scores on ELLs, the Council's team concurs.
- Also, it appears that students have limited opportunities to be redesignated out of ELL programming. (About half the district's ELLs are long-term.) About half of grade K-5 ELLs in English Language Proficiency (ELP) levels 3, 4, and 5 have been in a language program from three to five years. Between 81 percent and 83 percent of all grade 6-8 ELLs who are at ELP levels 3 and 4 have been in a language program for more than five years, and between 78 percent and 88 percent of all grade 9-12 ELLs who are ELP levels 3 and 4 have been in a language program for more than five years. (See appendix.) ELLs at ELP levels 4 and 5 (early advanced and advanced) are eligible for redesignation according to four state-determined criteria, i.e., California English Development Test (CELDT) scores, teacher evaluations, parent opinions, and ELA performance at the "basic" level of attainment. Local school systems in California have discretion over how to apply these criteria and Fresno Unified has additional language (FUSD Board Policy AR 6174) beyond the state criteria that may be precluding the exit of many ELLs from their language programs, resulting in higher-than-expected numbers of long-term ELLs. (The number of redesignations to Fluent English Proficient status in Fresno has increased substantially over the last 10 years, but the overall low number of redesignations the Council found is consistent with the district's.)
- The district has only five K-2 early-exit bilingual education programs and only two dual language programs. Most students are in sheltered English immersion or mainstream programs, although limited numbers also participate in bilingual instruction and two-way immersion programs. Technically, parents are given the choice of programs but the default placement is the structured English immersion (SEI) program. Programs use *Avenues* for elementary-grade instruction and *National Geographic* for secondary grades.
- Descriptions of the district's language-instruction programs are generally vague and do not contain well-defined parameters for the amount of time devoted to native language instruction or how native language support is phased out. For instance, the grade K-6 SEI program description indicates that "*depending* on their proficiency, students receive English Language Development (ELD) instruction, English Language Arts instruction *or a mix* of the two. The program provides an accelerated English language acquisition process with *nearly* all classroom instruction taught in English. Some primary language support will be provided for students who are not making sufficient academic programs." (Emphasis added.) Apparently, program specifics are determined at the individual school level.
- In addition, there are large numbers of ELL students who have been identified for special education services and small numbers of ELLs who participate in gifted and talented programs. In general, there appears to be little sense of urgency about the district's very low achievement among ELLs.

## **G. Data and Assessments**

- Results from the district's interim assessments are returned to schools quickly and are presented in an easily accessible data-base. The data-base (AiS) could be an important resource for teachers wanting to differentiate instruction by areas of strength and weakness.
- Interviewees expressed consistent concern that the interim assessments are not aligned with state standards. (The team did not have sufficient time to determine the validity of these concerns.) In addition, some items on the interim assessment are not covered by the curriculum guide for that quarter, and many school-based staff do not understand the reason.
- Some senior staff clearly do not understand the purposes of the district's interim assessments; some staff indicated that they were largely predictive and not formative in nature. The district's use of the interim assessments, however, has resulted in the staff's viewing the interim assessments as summative rather than formative.
- The team saw no evidence that the central office had used the results of the interim assessments to modify the instructional program, provide professional development, or assign interventions. The test is mostly used by the central office for CST predictive purposes. However, the district uses the CST results for placement in secondary ELA interventions.
- The district's interim assessments lack any performance tasks. Items are multiple choice, as they are on the state assessment. The need for performance measures will increase substantially with the introduction of new assessments emerging from the common core standards. The district will not be able to transition to the new assessments in one year.
- The district participates in the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) but does not use the results to inform the school system's strategies, programs, or teaching practices. (A summary of some of the basic NAEP results for the district is found in the appendix.) NAEP results are fine-grained enough to shed light on the district's instructional practices and the results are an important proxy measure for where the district is likely to score on assessments emerging from the common core assessment consortia.
- The district does more program evaluations than the team often sees in other city school systems (e.g., math academy, expanded learning summer programs, social and emotional support services, and the Foundations rollout). These reports were well done and were good examples of the program evaluations that other major city school systems across the country should be doing.

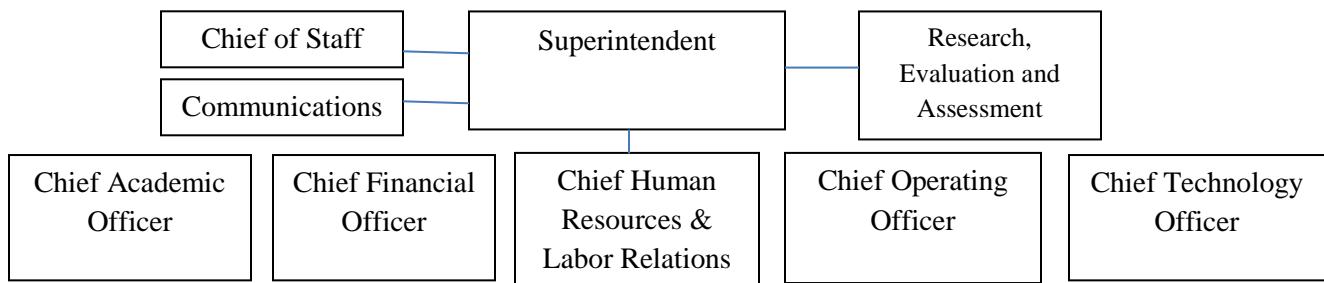
## **RECOMMENDATIONS AND PROPOSALS**

### **Recommendations and Proposals**

The Council proposes a number of steps to improve student achievement and enhance the effectiveness of central office instructional staff. These proposals are meant to be implemented seamlessly and strategically in a phased sequence rather than as isolated and independent activities pursued all at once. The Council would be pleased to revisit the district on a regular basis to follow up on district progress in implementing these proposals.

#### Staffing and Organizational Structure

1. Streamline and reduce the number of direct reports to the superintendent: chief academic officer, chief financial officer, human resources and labor relations officer, school supports, and chief information and technology officer. (See chart below.)

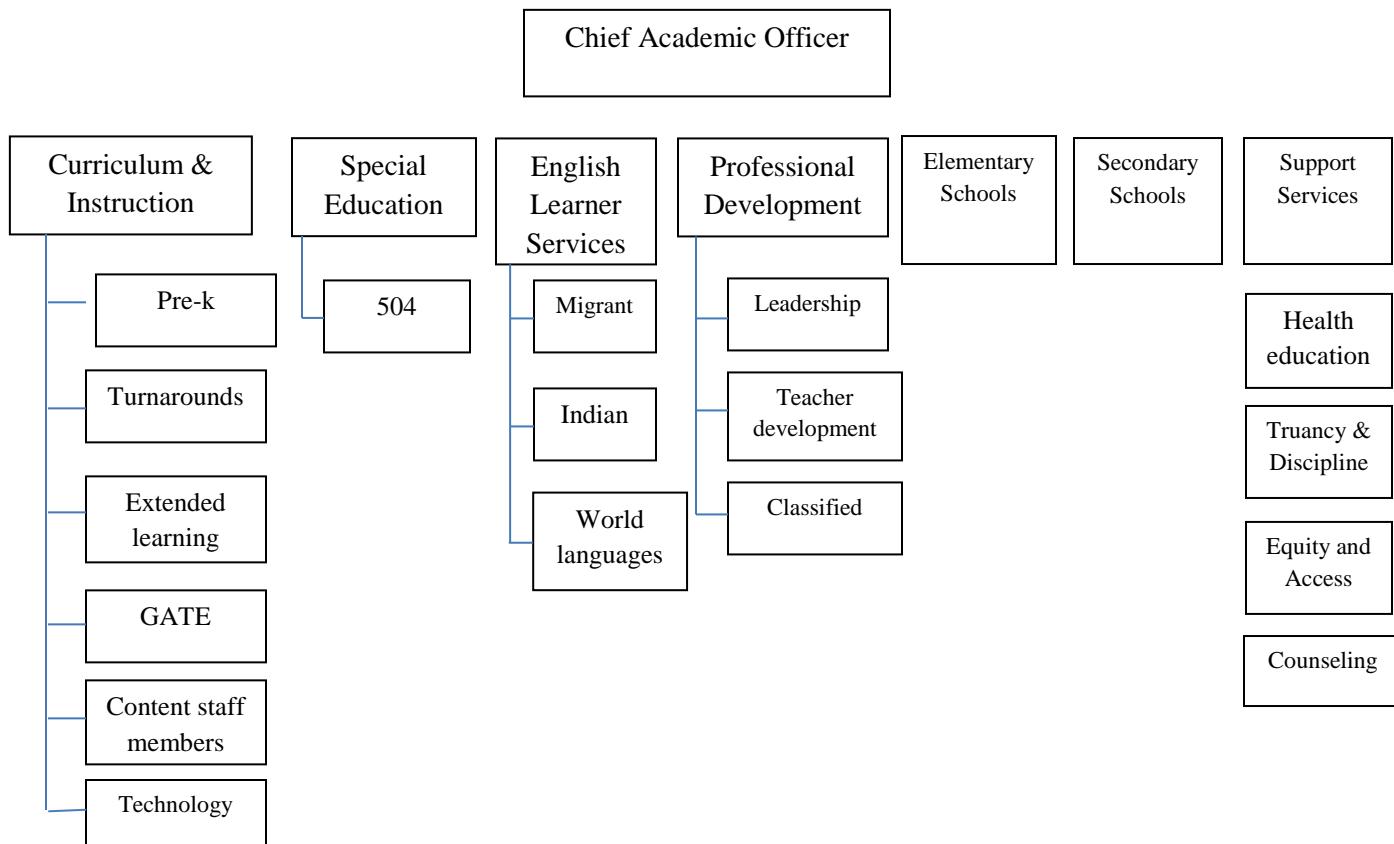


2. Reorganize the organizational structure of the senior staff as follows (see chart above)—

- Create a chief of staff position reporting directly to the superintendent.
- Enhance the office of communications and have the director report directly to the superintendent.
- Consolidate the offices of the chief academic officer and associate superintendents for school support services (see subsequent recommendation).
- Retain office of the chief financial officer, but create a chief operating officer position and transfer operational services (facilities, purchasing, maintenance and operations, transportation, food services, and safety and security) to this office.
- Retain office and structure of the office of associate superintendent of human resources and labor relations.
- Consolidate the district's technology offices.
- Move the offices of equity and access, accountability and improvement, and school support services from direct reports to the superintendent to the office of the chief academic officer.
- Move the director of research, evaluation, and assessment to be a direct report to the superintendent.
- Consolidate the office of state and federal programs and the grants office, and move it to the office of the chief financial officer.

3. Reorganize the instructional unit as follows--(see chart below):

- Retain the office of special education as currently structured and reporting to the associate superintendent/chief academic officer. Move 504/Home Hospital Instruction into this unit. Move health education to the new support services office.
- Create a new support services unit under the chief academic officer that would include health education, discipline-related activities, equity and access, and counseling.
- Retain the office of English Learner Services reporting to the associate superintendent/chief academic officer—but restructure it. Retain migrant education under the office of English Learner Services and move Indian education into this unit. Put any world languages staff under this unit.
- Retain elementary school leadership and secondary school leadership positions reporting to the associate superintendent/chief academic officer.
- Create a position to head the district's work on curriculum and instruction reporting to the associate superintendent/chief academic officer. Under this position, place pre-K-3 early learning, turnaround schools, extended learning, gifted and talented education (GATE), content staff, and instructional technology.
- Create a position to head the district's work on professional development. Include leadership development, teacher development, and classified professional learning under this unit.



4. Repurpose some of the current coaching cadre with extensive common core-based expertise to work under the district's reading, math, and science content staff. These coaches can work with lead teachers and the remaining school-based coaches, and participate in "rapid response teams" to assist schools needing targeted assistance. Some of these coaches should also be cross-trained to help teachers with English language learners. The team suggests retaining these coaching positions as a way of extending the work of a small central office and implementing changes in the district.

#### Leadership and Strategic Positioning

5. Send a stronger and clearer message from the leadership of the district of high expectations for student achievement and a sense of urgency for improvement. Develop a series of stretch goals at the district and school levels that move the district beyond low-level NCLB targets.
6. Charge the school board with pursuing and attending a regular program of professional development and developing and enforcing a code of conduct. (The Council can provide models.)
7. Enhance and bolster the capacity of the district's communications office to provide stronger messaging for both external and internal stakeholders and constituents. Put any district community engagement staff in this unit.
8. Ensure that parents have access to translators--particularly at the opening of school and at strategic times throughout the year. This could be accomplished through Skype-like electronic means if there are insufficient numbers of translators. However, no parent should experience being excluded from interacting with school staff due to the lack of a translator on site. Consider partnering with County Offices to share costs for translation services such as Language Line and other services that are used by a number of Council districts.
9. Look ahead to the common core standards and begin phased-in implementation immediately. Develop a deliberate focus on specific components of the standards, so that the district staff and community have time to understand the rationale for change, the implications for classroom practice and student work, and expected levels of rigor. Give careful attention to supporting teachers and principals on how to accelerate student learning and how to implement the standards at a deliberate pace, so that students can achieve at the required levels. Deepen the support for Foundations and Accountable Communities to demonstrate how their work encompasses the Common Core. Take care to plan communication and feedback loops to minimize misunderstandings about this important curriculum change and why it is essential for students.
10. Examine how all current and planned initiatives/programs fit within the Foundations framework. Ensure that all documents and professional development offered internally or from external organizations explicitly illustrate how the concepts these initiatives are advocating fit within this framework. For example, the consultants that the district is retaining often import their own terminology and frameworks, adding to the impression among staff that the pieces of the district's reforms do not fit together. Instead, retain the Foundations terminology and work to ensure that the concepts brought in by the consultants are easily incorporated into Foundations.

11. Redeploy some of the district's federal Title I, Title III, and IDEA funds now used for external consultants to support expanded early childhood programming. Consider using some Title III funds to support ELD instruction and professional development in early childhood programming.
12. Negotiate a new provision in the teacher contract to allow incentives for some of the district's best teachers (and principals) to work in the school system's lowest performing schools. The district can use Title I funds for this purpose. Incentives could be monetary or come in the form of reduced course loads or extra equipment, etc.
13. Charge the human resources leadership with expanding the areas in which it searches for talent in order to help diversify the district's central office and building-level staff and teachers.
14. Continue the work of the cross-functional achievement task force, and use it as a project-management leadership team to monitor and mobilize central office supports to address student dashboard indicators. Have the team meet weekly with the superintendent to review how resources are deployed, address priority areas, and report on evidence of progress.

#### Goals and Accountability

15. Revise personnel evaluations for central office instruction staff, principals, and teachers to incorporate improvements on multiple measures of student achievement across performance levels, including reductions in student suspensions and expulsions. (Consider findings and approaches contained in the Measures of Effective Teaching (MET) studies by Thomas Kane and Ron Ferguson at Harvard University.)
16. Revise the evaluation instrument for coaches to address district expectations for their work. Reinstate the electronic system for tracking the allocation of coaching time, and require its use so that the district can link these activities to changes in student achievement.
17. Create a districtwide in-school suspension program that is able to provide instructional support and assignments to students who are being disciplined. Track discipline events to know what the effects might be.
18. Review district guidelines for suspending students with special needs to align with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Determine if the district's alternative school model (Phoenix) is consistent with that of other districts. Determine if the district's alternative schools and programs meet the needs of students in terms of assignments, placements, and services offered. Coordinate districtwide work on student discipline with the new school support office and counseling staff. Finally, examine the degree of implementation of all three components of the district's Safe and Civil Schools program in all schools. Establish a formal process for evaluating the impact of the program on improved behavior.

## Curriculum and Instruction

19. Review and modify curriculum guides to provide exemplars consistent with the common core by grade level and subject, illustrating the expected depth and rigor of student assignments and work in order to articulate the meaning of the standards. These should include sample tasks, scaffolding, rubrics, examples of use of complex text, text-dependent questions that reflect higher-level thinking, models of classroom discussions of the text, use of interventions, and assessments that include and go beyond multiple choice items. Rollout these revised guides by priority area and incorporate them into professional development. And include detailed exemplars with scaffolding, examples of instruction for intense language development and accelerated conceptual understanding for students performing at very low levels under the current standards.
20. Establish a series of common student learning experiences and readings based on the common core, which teachers at each grade will know have been covered in the previous grades.
21. Inventory current materials and reading lists to ensure that they reflect and contain the type of rigor and content necessary to meet common core standards and boost achievement. If not, supplement them with complex questions teachers could be asking students to supplement current materials.
22. Ensure that reading instruction is not limited to leveled texts but includes grade-level material and beyond that is consistent with the common core. Make sure that an examination of materials includes implications for instruction with ELLs. And provide the professional development necessary to show teachers how students can access common core-like work and look for teachers who are already demonstrating these practices to show how the work can be done.
23. Integrate writing into all subjects across all disciplines. Include formal writing instruction that emphasizes how to focus on a topic, provide sufficient detail on a topic, organize points logically based on the mode of writing, employ academic vocabulary, and sufficiently respond to the text the student is reading. Ensure that writing instruction includes research-based practices for students who are acquiring English.
24. Similarly in mathematics, develop exemplars based on the common core to support curriculum standards using the Foundations framework to clearly define rigorous instruction and achievement at each grade level and course. Include the expectation for instructional practice; examples and strategies for connecting conceptual and procedural understanding; sample tasks with examples of student work indicating level of attainment; use of interventions; and specific questions and questioning strategies for teachers to use with students.
25. Review and revise the math curriculum grade by grade in grades K-6 to identify and address gaps between the state standards and the common core while emphasizing the instructional shifts of focus, coherence, and rigor within the content. This process should address necessary prerequisite knowledge for students to access algebra I at the middle school level.

26. Revise the Foundations lesson-plan template so that it calls attention to the instructional shifts required by the common core. Vet the on-line lesson plans for consistency with the common core in clarity, depth, and quality. This could begin with a school-level teacher review until the school team is satisfied with the lessons. Further reviews by coaches or lead teachers could also be used. Central office should review the lessons and note those that are exemplary. Plan to annually review older plans and remove those that no longer reflect the higher expectations of the district. Provide a tagging system so that, over time, teachers can access the best lessons for teaching particular objectives. Recognize that some objectives and standards cannot be taught in a single lesson, so indicate how lessons continue over time. Ensure that lessons show how to employ grade-level materials while accelerating students who are operating below grade-level. This could be done in conjunction with outside consultants.
27. In the pacing guides, build in time for instructional review, interventions, and extensions to address student needs. Interventions should be built into the daily schedule for students who are struggling.
28. Develop a mechanism to provide feedback to school staff on the results of school and classroom walk-throughs. Develop a series of “guiding questions” to define the walk-through process rather than a standard checklist or form. A similar concept (“grounding questions”) is used in implementing Foundations in the Accountable Communities.
29. Use the Accountable Community structure and buy-in to develop the knowledge base of teachers in the instructional shifts, analysis of student work to inform instruction, and understanding and use of assessment data. This would strengthen the district’s ability to carry out the instructional recommendations the Council team is making.
30. Charge the new professional development unit with infusing content-specific instructional strategies and practices into the existing Foundation framework and into other district initiatives such as the Accountable Communities. Ensure that all schools receive professional development on SIOP or SIOP-like strategies, Frontloading, writing strategies, and inclusive practices, and ensure that training is implemented schoolwide. Begin to develop internal capacity to provide the professional development absent the external consultants. Define how the 27 hours of professional development each semester will be structured to enhance student achievement.
31. Define and implement a districtwide RTI strategy or pyramid of academic and behavioral interventions for struggling students at all levels. Strengthen the tier 1 general education program pursuant to earlier recommendations around common core and incorporate tier 2 and 3 interventions during the school day and through enhanced afterschool activities. Define a regular series of tier 2 and 3 interventions that could be used in all schools, including using some currently available interventions where they fit with student needs.
32. Articulate a clear district philosophy on English language development. While the district wants to ensure academic English-language fluency, it should also leverage native language skills along with English. This approach entails much higher expectations for student mastery of academic language and writing in two languages and places new, rigorous demands on

programs and teachers. Develop a clear framework for the strategic use of native language to support or provide instruction, and incorporate the results into any classroom observation procedures. Provide professional development to instructional staff on how the use of native language skills can accelerate the ability of English language learners to build their conceptual understanding of material.

33. Articulate much clearer descriptions of the district's language-program models than is currently the case, and ensure they are differentiated by ELD levels.
34. Charge the achievement task force with examining content-area achievement and English-language proficiency data to inform the district's ELL classification and reclassification procedures, so that students are not stuck in non-appropriate programs for long periods of time. Use the existing data system to trigger review by principals and the central office when ELLs are not advancing after having met criteria for redesignation.
35. Charge the ELL office and the elementary and secondary school leadership with using longitudinal data to examine the current instructional pathway of ELLs in order to build a more coherent instructional program across grade levels for ELLs.

#### Data and Assessments

36. The district should continue to evaluate major district initiatives. Also, develop relationships with neighboring universities to assist with these evaluations. Research, evaluation and assessment (REA) staff should collaborate with the curriculum and instruction staff to create a three-year plan for program evaluation. The plan should be reviewed and modified annually. Programs/initiatives should be modified based on the findings of these evaluations.
37. Revise the district's interim assessments to include questions more aligned with the new common core standards and assessment frameworks. A greater portion of items should be performance tasks and short constructed-responses and open-ended responses.
38. Create a comprehensive professional development plan that communicates the purpose and use of the benchmark assessments--formative not summative. Lead teachers, coaches, site leaders, and central office staff should participate in these professional development sessions. They, in turn, can work with teachers, parents, and the community. Although results from these benchmark assessments should continue to be collected and maintained on the district's data base, staff evaluations should not be based on these assessments.
39. Discuss the district's NAEP results in meetings with senior staff, principals, and school board sessions and discuss implications for implementing the common core standards. Since the new common core assessments will not be administered until 2014-2015, it is not possible for the new benchmark assessments to be predictive at this time. Once these recommendations are implemented, it would no longer be necessary to insert items into the benchmark assessments that were not in the curriculum guide.

## **SYNOPSIS AND DISCUSSION**

The Fresno Unified School District has made substantial progress over the last several years and is poised to make future gains. In particular, the district's leadership and staff deserve significant credit for (1) articulating a series of goals outlining what the school system is working to achieve, (2) stabilizing the finances of the school system when the district was on the verge of a state takeover, (3) launching a new data dashboard, (4) forming partnerships with higher-performing school systems, (5) bringing national consultants to boost the capacity of the instructional program, (6) enhancing instructional technology, and (7) approving a master facilities plan among other critical initiatives.

Still, there are many in the community who are frustrated and concerned about the fact that student achievement has not improved faster than it has. To be sure, the district has seen movement in the right direction on state assessments of reading and math performance, but in many cases, the gains are no greater than one sees statewide. In addition, new data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)—the national gold standard that the district's leadership had the courage and vision to administer—indicates that student achievement levels are unusually low, compared not only with California but also with other major city public school systems across the country. It appears that community concern is warranted, and district leadership's determination to get to the bottom of why student performance is not improving faster is timely.

In understanding the dynamics that shape student achievement, it is important for all to understand the context in which the school district operates. It serves a student body that is unusually poor, even by urban school standards, and is learning English, in many cases for the first time. Moreover, the school district is significantly understaffed both in its classrooms and at the central office. Both are important.

That being said, the reasons behind the lack-luster gains in student achievement in Fresno seemed clear to the team of academic experts assembled by the Council of the Great City Schools at the request of the superintendent. There are uniformly low expectations for student achievement. There is little sense of urgency among many—not all—we interviewed to make things right for the community's children, including many from the community itself. There are numerous initiatives around student achievement but little strategic glue to hold them together. And there are also no meaningful accountability mechanisms by which district and school personnel are held responsible for improvements in student learning.

In addition, there is an emphasis on building basic literacy and math skills in the early grades but little serious effort systemwide to enhance the comprehension skills that students will need to be successful in later grades. There is no intervention system to support students who are falling behind. There is no coherent English-language development strategy for students learning the language to be successful on grade level with academic language. And while there are a number of documents for teachers to use to guide their instruction, none of them state clearly at what level of rigor students are to learn any particular concept. Unfortunately, low expectations step into this void together with the lack of strategies for how to accelerate learning, and students are allowed to languish.

Fortunately, some of the initiatives the district has launched over the last several years can be marshaled to boost student achievement, including its Skillful Leader and Skillful Teacher programs, its Foundations framework, and its Accountable Communities. These initiatives are important because they build staff and teacher capacity, help to inform instructional practice, and leverage the eagerness of teachers to work together to improve instruction.

What is missing is the instructional content that can fasten these components together and move the system in unison towards higher expectations. We think this adhesive could be the Common Core State Standards that California has adopted but that Fresno has moved slowly to put into place. By themselves, the new standards will do little, but if the district could reorient some of its now-disparate initiatives and curriculum guides around the level of rigor that the benchmarks embody and implement them faithfully, then the school system could anchor its reforms in something substantive and rally its staff to meet the challenge. District staff members will need a clearer understanding of how reforms built around the common core lock together than they do presently with the current portfolio of reforms.

In addition, the Council's team proposes that the district build its implementation of the common core standards around a tiered system of interventions that could be defined around what students will need if and when they fall behind. We also propose a more coherent and carefully defined English-language development strategy, and we suggest that the district revisit its criteria for exiting students from their language programs. Moreover, we recommend repurposing the district's cadre of instructional coaches around implementation of the common core.

Furthermore, we suggest using the emerging professional learning communities (i.e., the Accountable Communities) in combination with regular professional development opportunities to build capacity to implement the common core and to harness teacher expertise around examples of student work that could make the standards come alive in the district's classrooms. And we suggest modifying the district's interim assessments to include more performance tasks similar to the ones students will face when the tests derived from the common core are available.

Finally, the Council's team recommends realigning and reorganizing staff at the central office level to bear down on the instructional work ahead. At present, senior staff members are not deployed in a way that makes greatest use of their skills or enhances the quality of the district's academic program.

The Council of the Great City Schools is confident that the board and administrative leadership of the school district will take the next steps in transforming Fresno schools into what the community needs to build a brighter future for its children. Many urban school systems across the country are rolling out the common core and can be relied on to help Fresno with its own implementation efforts. More importantly, many other urban school systems are showing significant improvements in student achievement that can be used as "proof points" for the Fresno team.

There is little reason to think that the Fresno Unified School District can't be the high-performing school district it wants to be and the community needs it to be. We offer our proposals in that spirit and stand ready to help the district move forward on behalf of its students.

## **APPENDIX**

**Item 1. National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Results**

<b>Grade 4 Reading</b>						
<b>All Students</b>						
	2009			2011		
	% Below Basic	% at or Above Basic	% at or Above Proficient	% Below Basic	% at or Above Basic	% at or Above Proficient
Fresno	60	40	12	63	37	11
Los Angeles	60	40	13	55	45	15
San Diego	41	59	29	39	61	31
California	46	54	24	44	56	25
Large City	46	54	23	45	55	24
National Public	34	66	32	34	66	32
<b>National School Lunch Program Eligible</b>						
	2009			2011		
	% Below Basic	% at or Above Basic	% at or Above Proficient	% Below Basic	% at or Above Basic	% at or Above Proficient
Fresno	65	35	9	66	34	8
Los Angeles	64	36	9	61	39	11
San Diego	57	43	14	53	47	17
California	62	38	10	58	42	12
Large City	55	45	15	52	48	16
National Public	49	51	17	48	52	18
<b>English Language Learners</b>						
	2009			2011		
	% Below Basic	% at or Above Basic	% at or Above Proficient	% Below Basic	% at or Above Basic	% at or Above Proficient
Fresno	86	14	1	88	12	1
Los Angeles	84	16	2	86	14	1
San Diego	71	29	7	67	33	7
California	75	25	4	73	27	5
Large City	75	25	4	72	28	6
National Public	71	29	6	70	30	7

<b>Grade 8 Reading</b>						
<b>All Students</b>						
	2009			2011		
	% Below Basic	% at or Above Basic	% at or Above Proficient	% Below Basic	% at or Above Basic	% at or Above Proficient
Fresno	52	48	12	55	45	12
Los Angeles	46	54	15	44	56	16
San Diego	35	65	25	32	68	27
California	36	64	22	35	65	24
Large City	37	63	21	35	65	23
National Public	26	74	30	25	75	32
<b>National School Lunch Program Eligible</b>						
	2009			2011		
	% Below Basic	% at or Above Basic	% at or Above Proficient	% Below Basic	% at or Above Basic	% at or Above Proficient
Fresno	58	42	7	60	40	9
Los Angeles	50	50	11	49	51	12
San Diego	47	53	13	42	58	16
California	48	52	11	45	55	13
Large City	46	54	13	41	59	16
National Public	40	60	16	37	63	18
<b>English Language Learners</b>						
	2009			2011		
	% Below Basic	% at or Above Basic	% at or Above Proficient	% Below Basic	% at or Above Basic	% at or Above Proficient
Fresno	88	12	--	92	8	--
Los Angeles	90	10	1	89	11	--
San Diego	83	17	2	81	19	2
California	79	21	2	74	26	3
Large City	78	22	2	75	25	2
National Public	75	25	3	71	29	3

<b>Grade 4 Mathematics</b>						
<b>All Students</b>						
	2009			2011		
	% Below Basic	% at or Above Basic	% at or Above Proficient	% Below Basic	% at or Above Basic	% at or Above Proficient
Fresno	42	58	14	44	56	15
Los Angeles	39	61	19	37	63	20
San Diego	23	77	36	20	80	39
California	28	72	30	26	74	34
Large City	28	72	29	26	74	30
National Public	19	81	38	18	82	40
<b>National School Lunch Program Eligible</b>						
	2009			2011		
	% Below Basic	% at or Above Basic	% at or Above Proficient	% Below Basic	% at or Above Basic	% at or Above Proficient
Fresno	46	54	11	47	53	11
Los Angeles	43	57	15	41	59	15
San Diego	34	66	19	29	71	25
California	40	60	15	37	63	18
Large City	34	66	20	31	69	22
National Public	29	71	22	27	73	24
<b>English Language Learners</b>						
	2009			2011		
	% Below Basic	% at or Above Basic	% at or Above Proficient	% Below Basic	% at or Above Basic	% at or Above Proficient
Fresno	59	41	3	66	34	3
Los Angeles	60	40	4	64	36	3
San Diego	43	57	13	38	62	15
California	52	48	6	49	51	11
Large City	45	55	11	42	58	14
National Public	43	57	12	42	58	14

<b>Grade 8 Mathematics</b>						
<b>All Students</b>						
	2009			2011		
	% Below Basic	% at or Above Basic	% at or Above Proficient	% Below Basic	% at or Above Basic	% at or Above Proficient
Fresno	54	46	15	57	43	13
Los Angeles	54	46	13	51	49	16
San Diego	32	68	32	34	66	31
California	41	59	23	39	61	25
Large City	40	60	24	37	63	26
National Public	29	71	33	28	72	34
<b>National School Lunch Program Eligible</b>						
	2009			2011		
	% Below Basic	% at or Above Basic	% at or Above Proficient	% Below Basic	% at or Above Basic	% at or Above Proficient
Fresno	60	40	9	62	38	9
Los Angeles	59	41	9	56	44	12
San Diego	42	58	19	47	53	16
California	53	47	12	51	49	14
Large City	49	51	15	45	55	18
National Public	43	57	17	41	59	19
<b>English Language Learners</b>						
	2009			2011		
	% Below Basic	% at or Above Basic	% at or Above Proficient	% Below Basic	% at or Above Basic	% at or Above Proficient
Fresno	82	18	1	86	14	--
Los Angeles	90	10	1	89	11	--
San Diego	76	24	5	82	18	2
California	79	21	3	82	18	2
Large City	77	23	4	74	26	5
National Public	72	28	5	72	28	5

**Item 2. Average expected scale scores of public school students, based on relevant background variables, in 2009 grade 4 NAEP reading, by district**

City/jurisdiction	Mean	Expected mean	District effect
Atlanta	209.1	208.2	0.9
Austin	220.4	213.9	6.5*
Baltimore City	202.0	206.3	-4.3*
Boston	215.0	206.4	8.6*
Charlotte	224.4	218.2	6.2*
Chicago	202.2	206.8	-4.6*
Cleveland	193.6	206.1	-12.4*
Detroit	187.2	203.1	-15.9*
District of Columbia	203.5	209.4	-5.9*
Fresno	197.3	208.3	-11.0*
Houston	211.4	206.7	4.7*
Jefferson County	219.4	220.4	-1.0
Los Angeles	197.4	203.7	-6.3*
Miami-Dade County	221.2	213.0	8.1*
Milwaukee	195.8	206.6	-10.8*
New York City	216.8	209.6	7.2*
Philadelphia	195.0	207.1	-12.1*
San Diego	212.8	212.6	0.2

\*Statistically significant at .05 level.

**Average expected scale scores of public school students, based on relevant background variables, in 2009 grade 8 NAEP reading, by district**

<b>City/jurisdiction</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Expected mean</b>	<b>District effect</b>
<b>Atlanta</b>	249.7	246.9	2.8
<b>Austin</b>	261.1	254.9	6.1*
<b>Baltimore City</b>	244.6	246.5	-1.9
<b>Boston</b>	257.3	250.7	6.6*
<b>Charlotte</b>	259.3	256.8	2.5*
<b>Chicago</b>	249.1	247.7	1.5
<b>Cleveland</b>	242.3	244.4	-2.1
<b>Detroit</b>	232.2	242.8	-10.7*
<b>District of Columbia</b>	240.3	247.6	-7.3*
<b>Fresno</b>	239.6	247.8	-8.1*
<b>Houston</b>	251.9	249.6	2.2*
<b>Jefferson County</b>	258.5	261.4	-2.9*
<b>Los Angeles</b>	243.8	245.7	-1.9*
<b>Miami-Dade County</b>	260.6	253.1	7.5*
<b>Milwaukee</b>	241.4	245.9	-4.6*
<b>New York City</b>	252.4	252.8	-0.4
<b>Philadelphia</b>	247.0	248.3	-1.3
<b>San Diego</b>	254.4	255.6	-1.2

\*Statistically significant at .05 level.

**Average expected scale scores of public school students, based on relevant background variables, in  
2009 grade 4 NAEP mathematics, by district**

<b>City/jurisdiction</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Expected mean</b>	<b>District effect</b>
<b>Atlanta</b>	225.2	226.6	-1.4
<b>Austin</b>	240.5	232.1	8.3*
<b>Baltimore City</b>	222.2	223.8	-1.6
<b>Boston</b>	236.3	228.1	8.2*
<b>Charlotte</b>	244.7	237.4	7.3*
<b>Chicago</b>	221.9	227.6	-5.7*
<b>Cleveland</b>	213.4	223.9	-10.5*
<b>Detroit</b>	199.8	222.5	-22.7*
<b>District of Columbia</b>	220.0	226.0	-6.0*
<b>Fresno</b>	218.9	231.2	-12.3*
<b>Houston</b>	235.8	226.5	9.3*
<b>Jefferson County</b>	232.7	238.0	-5.3*
<b>Los Angeles</b>	221.9	228.1	-6.2*
<b>Miami-Dade County</b>	236.3	232.7	3.6*
<b>Milwaukee</b>	219.7	227.0	-7.3*
<b>New York City</b>	237.5	230.6	6.9*
<b>Philadelphia</b>	221.5	226.6	-5.1*
<b>San Diego</b>	236.3	235.4	0.9

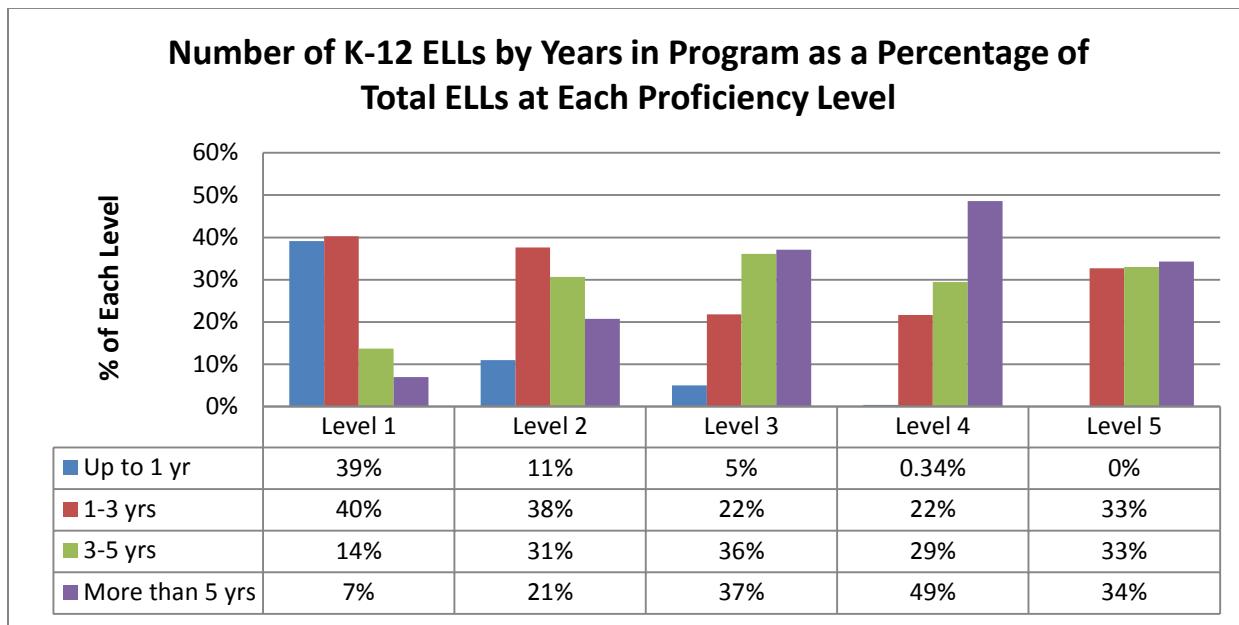
\*Statistically significant at .05 level.

**Average expected scale scores of public school students, based on relevant background variables, in  
2009 grade 8 NAEP mathematics, by district**

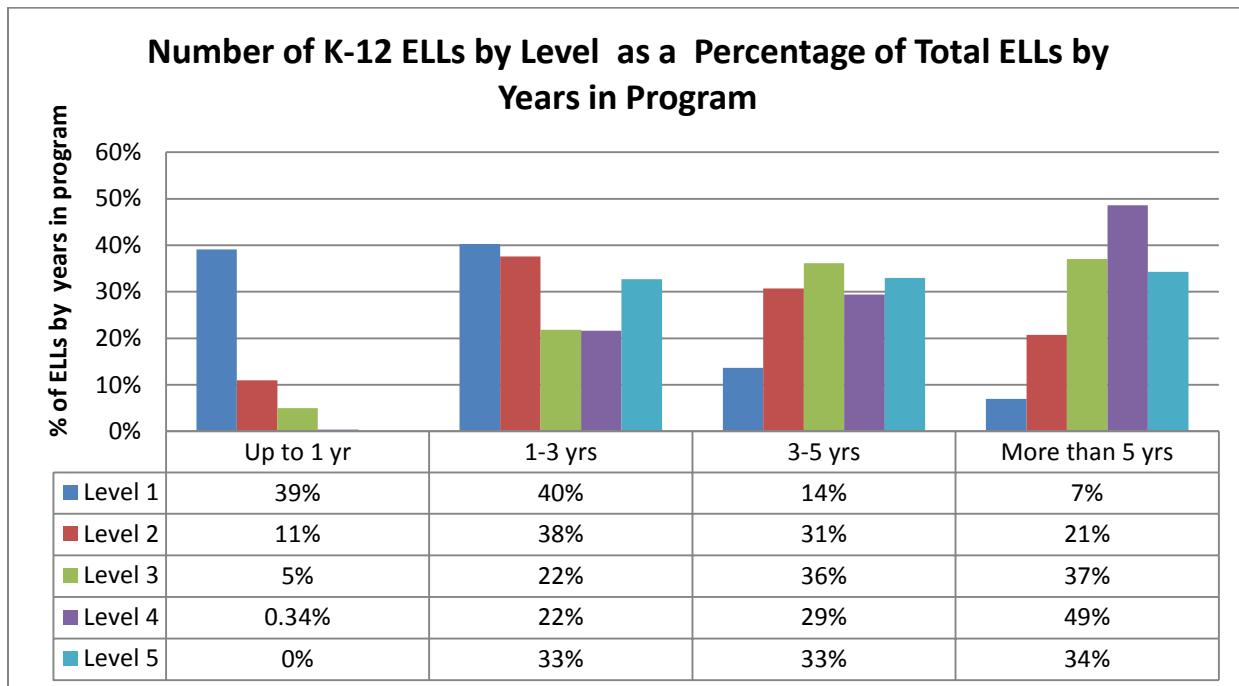
<b>City/jurisdiction</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Expected mean</b>	<b>District effect</b>
<b>Atlanta</b>	259.4	260.5	-1.1
<b>Austin</b>	287.2	272.8	14.4*
<b>Baltimore City</b>	257.1	260.1	-3.0
<b>Boston</b>	279.4	267.3	12.1*
<b>Charlotte</b>	282.4	274.0	8.4*
<b>Chicago</b>	263.6	263.6	0.0
<b>Cleveland</b>	255.7	258.3	-2.6*
<b>Detroit</b>	238.1	256.4	-18.3*
<b>District of Columbia</b>	251.1	259.4	-8.4*
<b>Fresno</b>	258.3	268.3	-9.9*
<b>Houston</b>	276.9	265.8	11.1*
<b>Jefferson County</b>	271.1	278.2	-7.1*
<b>Los Angeles</b>	258.4	264.5	-6.1*
<b>Miami-Dade County</b>	272.7	269.1	3.6*
<b>Milwaukee</b>	251.2	260.8	-9.5*
<b>New York City</b>	272.8	270.1	2.7*
<b>Philadelphia</b>	264.5	265.0	-0.5
<b>San Diego</b>	280.1	278.1	2.0

\*Statistically significant at .05 level.

**Item 3. Numbers of K-12 ELLs by Years in Program as a Percentage of Total ELLs**



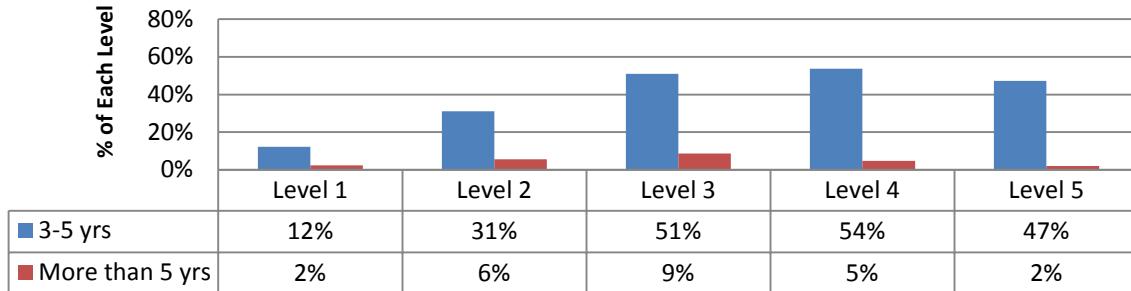
**Reads:** 39 percent of ELLs at Level 1 of English proficiency have been in ELL programs for up to one year. 21 percent of ELLs at Level 2 have been in ELL programs for more than five years—the Long Term ELL problem. It would be important to know how many of these are dually identified as having special needs.



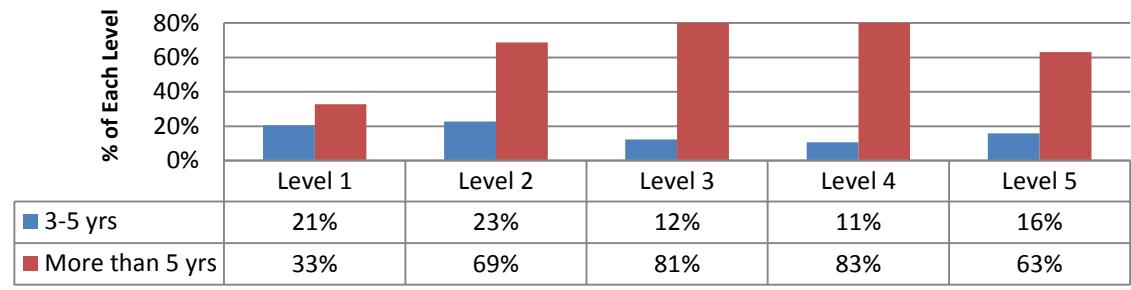
**Reads:** Of all ELLs who have been in an ELL program for more than five years, 49 percent are at Level 4 and 34 percent are at Level 5. Both levels 4 (early advanced) and 5 (advanced) meet the California's eligibility criteria for proficiency in English. Three additional state criteria must be met, however, for an ELL to be redesignated.

**Number of ELLs by Year in Program as a Percentage of Total ELLs at Each Proficiency Level**

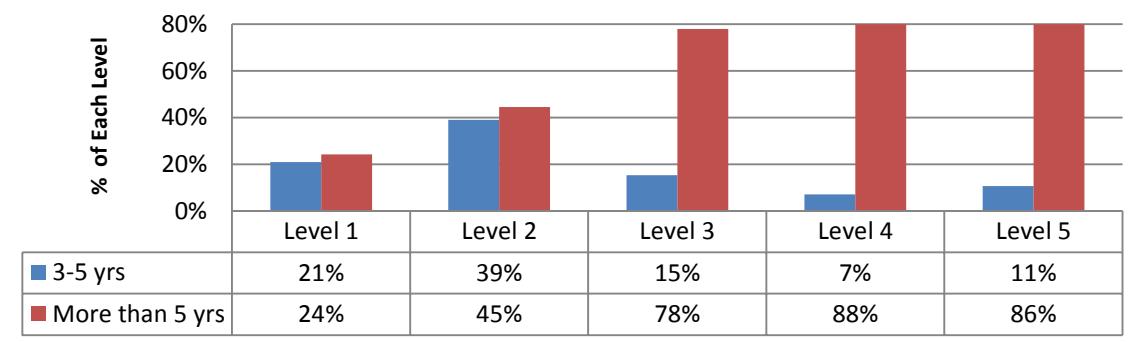
**Number of K-5 ELLs by Years in Program as a Percentage of Total ELLs at Each Proficiency Level**



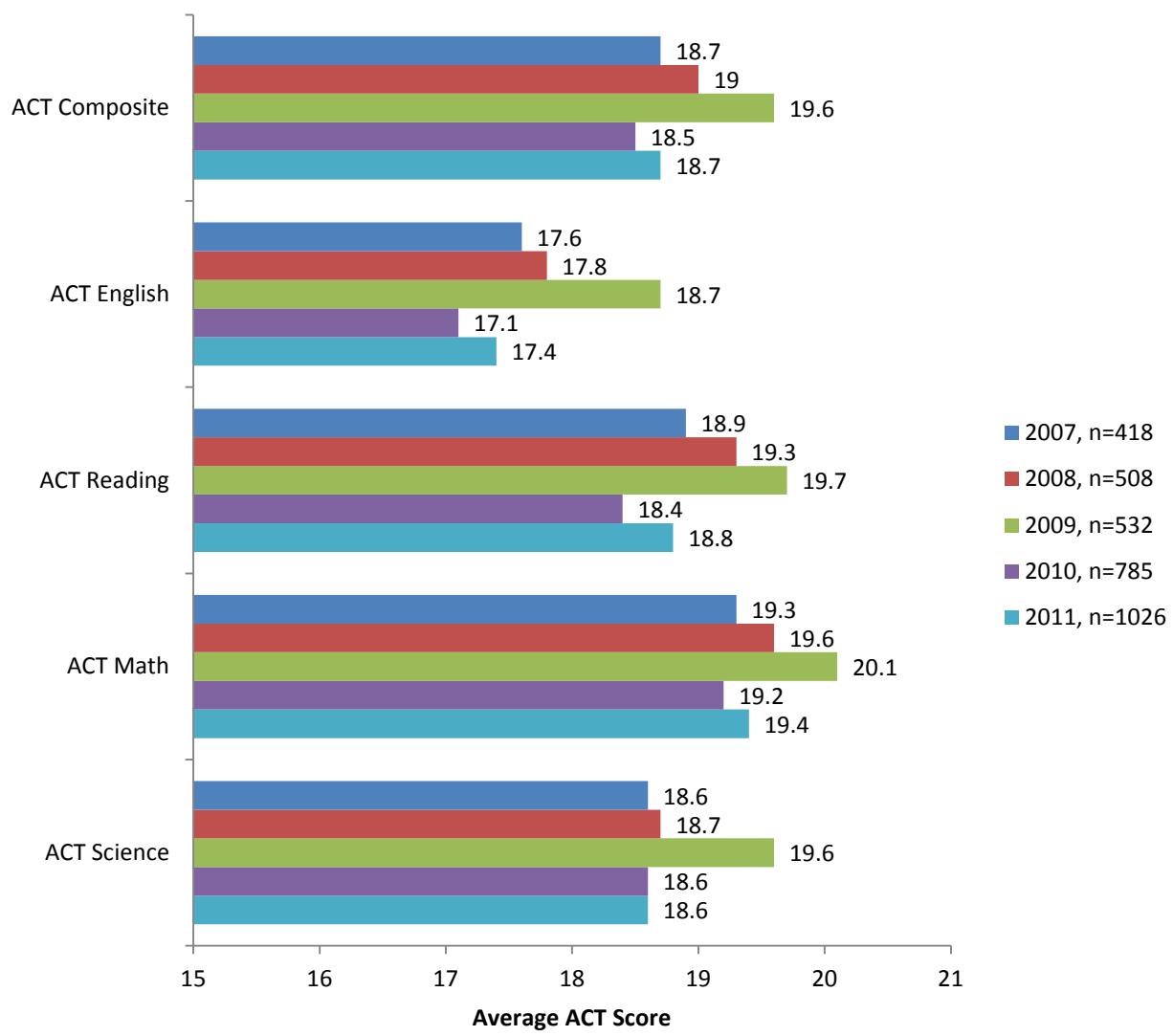
**Number of 6-8 ELLs by Years in Program as a Percentage of Total ELLs at Each Proficiency Level**



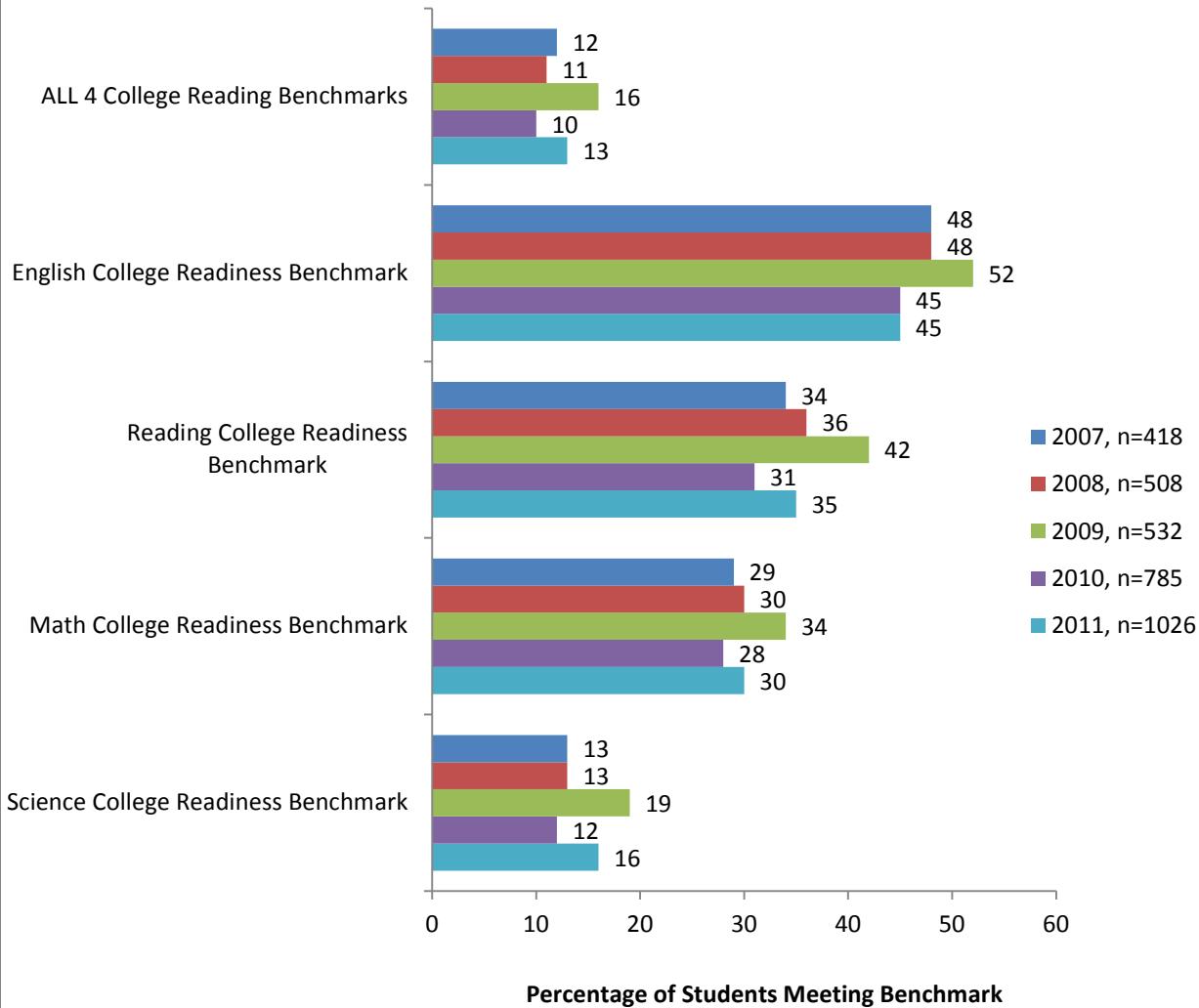
**Number of 9-12 ELLs by Years in Program as a Percentage of Total ELLs at Each Proficiency Level**



**Item 4. Average ACT Scores for Composite, English, Reading, Math, and Science for Fresno Unified, 2007 - 2011**



**Percentage of Students Meeting ACT College Readiness Benchmarks for English, Reading, Math, Science, and All 4 Benchmarks for Fresno Unified,  
2007 - 2011**



**Item 5. District funding per pupil and percentage of total expenditures devoted to instruction, 2003-2009**

		2002-03			2006-07			2008-09	
	Instructional APPE	Total APPE	Percent of Total	Instructional APPE	Total APPE	Percent of Total	Instructional APPE	Total APPE	Percent of Total
Atlanta	\$6,442	\$11,435	56.3%	\$6,939	\$12,745	54.4%	\$6,684	\$13,516	49.5%
Austin	4,420	7,580	58.3	4,691	8,182	57.3	5,156	9,035	57.1
Baltimore City	6,036	9,639	62.6	7,274	12,440	58.5	8,355	14,201	58.8
Boston	7,837	13,730	57.1	11,129	19,435	57.3	11,737	20,324	57.8
Charlotte	4,441	7,188	61.8	4,991	8,081	61.8	5,045	8,115	62.2
Chicago	4,937	7,967	62.0	5,774	9,666	59.7	6,207	10,392	59.7
Cleveland	5,782	10,199	56.7	6,812	11,383	59.8	7,416	12,393	59.8
Detroit	5,089	9,063	56.2	6,503	11,896	54.7	6,522	12,016	54.3
District of Columbia	6,976	13,328	52.3	6,226	14,324	43.5	6,542	14,594	44.8
Fresno	4,651	7,769	59.9	5,237	8,995	58.2	5,990	10,053	59.6
Houston	4,277	7,236	59.1	4,732	7,994	59.2	5,048	8,604	58.7
Jefferson County	4,218	7,663	55.0	5,206	9,698	53.7	5,350	9,966	53.7
Los Angeles	4,892	8,447	57.9	6,256	10,364	60.4	6,666	11,357	58.7
Miami-Dade County	4,246	6,956	61.0	5,694	9,371	60.8	6,057	9,933	61.0
Milwaukee	6,156	10,352	59.5	6,990	11,725	59.6	7,242	12,705	57.0
New York City	8,960	11,920	75.2	12,494	16,443	76.0	--	17,923	--
Philadelphia	4,333	7,554	57.4	4,716	8,985	52.5	5,051	9,399	53.7
San Diego	4,973	8,482	58.6	5,441	9,682	56.2	5,767	10,305	56.0

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data, "Local Education Agency Universe Finance Survey 2008."

**Percentage of district staffing levels that are teachers and student/teacher ratios, 2003-2009**

		2002-03		2006-07		2008-09	
	% of Staff that are Teachers	Pupil/Teacher Ratio		% of Staff that are Teachers	Pupil/Teacher Ratio	% of Staff that are Teachers	Pupil/Teacher Ratio
Atlanta	52.2%	14.2		53.5%	13.7	54.0%	13.0
Austin	50.1	14.6		52.7	14.4	52.0	14.2
Baltimore City	57.5	14.7		51.4	14.3	50.7	14.1
Boston	46.5	13.6		60.8	13.2	56.3	12.8
Charlotte	51.2	15.1		53.2	13.7	50.5	14.5
Chicago	85.0	17.7		77.9	21.8	84.4	19.6
Cleveland	50.4	10.7		43.3	15.8	44.8	13.9
Detroit	31.5	30.6		43.8	16.5	43.0	16.4
District of Columbia	43.3	13.5		--	--	41.8	12.5
Fresno	52.7	20.6		56.8	19.9	53.6	19.5
Houston	44.4	17.1		49.7	16.8	49.0	16.7
Jefferson County	39.7	17.9		46.1	15.5	43.4	16.1
Los Angeles	47.7	21.0		48.6	20.6	47.1	19.6
Miami-Dade County	51.1	20.0		54.6	17.1	57.5	15.4
Milwaukee	45.4	15.0		50.7	17.6	47.5	16.6
New York City	51.1	16.4		84.1	14.1	--	--
Philadelphia	41.3	19.5		78.7	18.0	49.2	15.6
San Diego	51.5	18.8		53.6	18.4	51.6	19.3

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data, "Local Education Agency Universe Finance Survey 2008."

## **Item 6. Individuals Interviewed**

- Neil Baird, GATE Program School Psychologist
- Dominga Bautista, Parent, Scandinavian MS  
Lilia Becerril, Parent, Roosevelt HS and Southeast Elementary
- Debbie Buckman, Principal, Fort Miller Middle School
- Allyson Burns, Manager, English Learner Services,
- Rebecca Bustos, Parent, Sunnyside and Scandinavian MS
- Ana Cabrera, Parent, Sequoia
- Dave Calhoun, Executive Director, Research, Evaluation and Assessment  
(School Support Services)
- Jennifer Carr, Vice Principal on Special Assignment, School Support-  
Curriculum & Professional Learning
- Esther Carson, Parent, Dukan
- Tiffany Castillo, Instructional Coach, School Support Services (King/Muir)
- Valerie F. Davis, Clerk, Board of Education
- Esmeralda Diaz, Parent, Computech and John Burrows
- Karl Diaz, Parent, Computech and John Burrows
- Frank Duran, Principal, DeWolf HS
- Chris Evans, Associate Superintendent for School Leadership, Central Office
- Van Forbes, Instructional Coach, Edison High School
- Mabel Franks, Assistant Superintendent, Special Education and Health Services  
Elizabeth Gamino, Curriculum Manager Mathematics/Science, School Support  
Services
- Lisa Gatewood, Teacher, Manchester GATE Elementary
- Ed Gomes, Principal, Yosemite Middle School
- Ed Gonzalez, Associate Superintendent, Department of Prevention and  
Intervention
- Steve Gonzalez, Principal, Carver ES
- Tiff M. Hill, Principal, Balderas
- Val Hogwood, Director, Instructional Support, School Support Services
- Nick Hustedde, Parent, Baird
- Yolanda Jimenez-Ruiz, Principal, Cambridge HS
- Eric Johnson, Executive Director, External Affairs, AT&T
- Zoua Lor, Parent, Computech and Edison High School
- Maria Maldonado, Assistant Superintendent, English Learners Services
- Deanna Mathies, Vice-Principal on Special Assignment I (Early Learning  
Support Services)  
Kelley McGlasson, Teacher 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade, Wishon Elementary
- Kim Mecum, Associate Superintendent, HR/LR, Central Office
- Elisa T. Messing, Instructional Coach, Student Support Services (Cooper MS)
- Elaine Mitchell, Parent, Computech
- Deb Navaville, CEO, Fresno Business Council
- Tressa Oversteet, Teacher, Design Science High School

- Felicia D. Quarles-Treadwell, Principal, Winchell
- Ruthie Quinto, Deputy Superintendent/Chief Financial Officer, Administration Services
- Adrian Palazuelos, Principal, Fresno High School
- Sarah Reyes, Regional Program Manager, The California Endowment
- Pat Roehl, Manager II, Office of State Federal Programs, School Support Services
- Janet Ryan, Member, Board of Education
- Norma Ann Sanchez, Teacher, Terronez Middle School
- Rosario Sanchez, Assistant Superintendent for School Leadership, Central Office
- Julie Severns, Administrator (Turnaround Schools), Leadership Development & School Leadership
- Patricia Pasillus Skopal, Teacher, Viking Elementary  
Blair Eliason Smith, Teacher AP English Language and Literature, Edison High School
- Cindy Tucker, Associate Superintendent School Support Services (Central Office – School Support Services)
- Andrea Valdez, Teacher, Forkner Elementary
- Jamie Vannata, Social Science Teacher (World History/Psychology, Bullard High
- Elin Van Vleet, Instructional Coach, School Support (Ayer/Greenberg Elementary)
- Tony Vang, President, Board of Education
- Lissa Vasquex, Social Emotional Supports Manager, Department of Prevention and Intervention
- Sheryl Weaver, Principal, Sunnyside HS
- Darcy Williams, Teacher 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Core, Fort Miller Middle School
- Zan Zoller, Principal, Hamilton, K-8

## OVERVIEW OF SCHEDULE INTERVIEWS

### COUNCIL OF THE GREAT CITY SCHOOLS

April 2-3, 2012

Monday, April 2, 2012

Time	Area of Topic	Participants
7:00 am – 8:30 am	Curricula Overview	Cindy Tucker
8:35 am – 9:20 am	Data Review	Dave Calhoun
9:25 am – 10:10 am	Curriculum Instruction	Val Hogwood
10:15 am – 10:30 am	Break	
10:35 am – 11:20 am	Early Learning	Deanna Mathies
11:25 am – 12:10 am	Professional Development	Julie Severns
12:15 pm – 1:00 pm	Lunch	
1:05 pm – 2:05 pm	ELA-Elementary/Secondary	Jennifer Carr, Allyson Burns
2:10 pm – 3:40 pm	ELL, Migrant Education, TSA, Staff Development, After School Programs	Maria Maldonado
3:45 pm – 4:00 pm	Break	
4:05 pm – 5:05 pm	Mathematics Instruction	Elizabeth Gaminio
5:10 pm – 6:10 pm	Mathematics/Reading Coaches Elem./Secondary	Elin VanVleet, Elisa Messing, Jeannette Forbes, Tiffany Castillo

Day 2

Tuesday, April 3, 2012

Time	Area of Topic	Participants
8:00 am – 8:30 am	Special Education	Mabel Franks
8:35 am – 9:35 am	NCLB, Legislation, State & Federal	Pat Roehl, Ruthie Quinto
9:40 am – 10:40 am	Principal Evaluations	Chris Evans, Kim Mecum, Rosario Sanchez
10:45 am – 11:00 am	Break	
11:05 am – 11:35 am	Gifted & Talented Programs	Neil Baird
11:40 am – 12:40 pm	Focus Group—Lead Teachers/Targeted Sites per CGCS—Bullard, Design Science, Edison, Ahwahnee, Ft. Miller, Terronez, Forkner, Manchester Gate, Viking Wishon	Jamie Vannata, Darcy Williams, Ann Sanchez, Andrea Valdez, Lisa Gatewood, Blair Eliason Smith, Marianne Kast, Kelley McGlasson, Tressa Overstreet, Patricia Pasillas
12:45 pm – 1:45 pm	Lunch	

1:50 pm – 2:50 pm	Focus Group— Principals/Targeted sites per CGCS—Balderas, Holland, Powers-Ginsburg, Winchell, Ft. Miller, Hamilton K-8, Yosemite, Cambridge, Sunnyside, Fresno High	Yolanda Jimenez-Ruiz, Adrian Palazuelos (via phone), Sheryl Weaver, Deborah Buckman, Janet Zoller, Ed Gomes, Steve Gonzalez, Felicia Treadwell, Tiffany Hill, Frank Duran
2:55 pm – 3:55 pm	Focus Group—Parents	(See attached list)
4:00 pm – 5:00 pm	Focus Group—Community Leaders	Kendra Rogers (First Five of Fresno County), Dan Desantis (Fresno Regional Foundation), Pete Weber (Retired Fortune 500 Executive), Eric Johnson (AT&T), Deb Navaville (Fresno Business Council)
5:05 pm – 6:05 pm	Focus Group—Board Members	Janet Ryan, Valerie Davis

## **Item 7. Materials Reviewed**

### **Binder Material**

#### ***Section #1-District Background***

- Core Beliefs
- District Goals 2008-2013
- Fresno Unified School District Roadmap to Excellence, 2008--2013
- Creating a Culture for Student Success in Fresno Unified School District Through a Nested System of Standards
- From the Board Room to the Classroom (negotiated targets; District Dashboard)
- District at a Glance
- Achievements 2010--2011

#### ***Section #2-Strategic Plan***

- Aligned Instruction, v30 revision-Nov 29 (including Tiered Interventions Framework – secondary draft; Response to Instruction and Intervention)
- Assessment Development Action Matrix
  - Current and Proposed Assessment Development Actions, December 2011 through June 2013
- Assessment Philosophy-Draft Revision
- Classified Professional Learning Strategic Action Plan Template 1-10-11
- Human Resources/Labor Relations Recruitment and Selection Action Plan, March 21, 2012
- Certified Leadership Development Strategic Action Plan
- Five-Year Strategic Action Plan
- Fresno Unified School District Professional Learning Overview
- Leadership Development Strategic Plan 9 14 11
- School Support Services K-12 Org. Chart
- Teacher Development Strategic Action Plan – August 20, 2010
- Skillful Teacher Report
- Strategy template--College Board
- Teacher Development Strategic Plan 3-12
- FUSD Tiered System of Support 2011--2012
- Professional Calendar-detail 2011--2012
- 2011-2012 Leadership Calendar

#### ***Section #3-Student Data***

- Fresno Unified School District--2010-2011 Base Academic Performance Index (API)
  - Historical data for API
- 2011 Expanded Learning Summer Program Evaluation Report
- ACT Summary
- Classroom and Accountable Community Foundations Roll-Out, Evaluation Brief
- California Mathematics and Science Partnership (CaMSP) Evaluation, 2010--2011

- API Historical Growth Summary Thru 2011
- EL Evaluation Report-finaldraft3 (2009-2010)
- Evaluation Brief
- Final\_SESS\_Report\_2010-11\_V-9-12-11
- Fresno Math Academy EOY Report 2011
- Fresno Unified ACT Summary
- Fresno Unified AP Summary (including demographic information for 2011)
- FUSD Data Dashboard\_jan\_2012
- FUSDAComparison
- FUSDAEthnic
- GATE Participation 9-10 and 10-11
- HSAPSsummary
- PU\_Report\_2010-11\_V4nwm
- SAT Summary
- SchoolsAPEthnic
- SPED population at FUSD 3-23-12
- Title III Accountability Summary 2010-11
- Title III Accountability Summary 2011-12
- Title III Accountability, Interim Report of the Analysis of Title III Accountability Data (2009-2010)
- Historical Trends in Title III Outcomes
- Performance Data Dashboard, district level v87

#### ***Section #4-Curriculum Program***

- Second and Third Grade Combination, Comprehension and Literary Analysis Standards
  - Document includes recursive/essential standards for combination of Grade 2/3 combination classes
- Mathematics Curriculum Guide for Combination Classes, Grades 2/3, 2011-2012
- Mathematics Curriculum Guide for Combination Classes, Grades 3/4, 2011-2012
- Reading Language Arts Curriculum Guide, Grade 3, 2011-2012
- Mathematics Curriculum Guide, Grade 3, 2011-2012
- Foundations (framework for lesson design)
- 17\_Foundations1
- Algebra University\_pre\_Algebra component
- Algebra\_II\_Curriculum\_Map
- ELA 7 2011 Course of Study
- English I 2010, Course of Study
  - Secondary Course Outline English I P
- English I Curriculum Guide with Assessed Standards, October 2010
- FUSD Materials Overview
- Just About the Facts
- Strategy template ERWC
- Fresno Unified School District Professional Learning Overview 2011-2012
  - Differentiation for Second and Third Grade Teachers

- Ninth Grade Algebra Teaching Resources, Algebra Support Course
  - Document includes curriculum map with Learning Progressions
- Algebra University
- Algebra I Curriculum Map
- Corrective Reading Sequence
- ELA 7 Curriculum Map 2011
- English I Curriculum Map 2010
- Geometry Curriculum Guide Template
- Placement Guidelines for Secondary Reading Intervention Atlas
- Write Tools
- Copy of Performance\_Data\_Dashboard\_EL\_level\_v19

### ***Section #5-Compliance***

- Fresno Unified School District, Voluntary Desegregation Plan, 4/25/2007
- Memorandum of Understanding Between Fresno Teachers Association and Fresno Unified School District
- Fresno Unified School District, LEA Plan Addendum (approved June 18, 2008)
  - Document includes information about Preparing Career-Ready Graduates
- Analysis of Title III Accountability Data, 2009-10
- Corrective Action Plan Form revised
- Designated as Persistently Low Achieving-MOU  
FUSD magnet 07 board policy

### ***Section #6-Other***

- Leadership Calendar 2, 2011-2012

### **Other Materials Reviewed**

- 2012- 2013 Org Chart (Research, Evaluation, and Assessment) provided by Dave Calhoun (Executive Director of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment)
- School Support Services K--12 (2011-2012 Org chart) provided by Cindy Tucker (Associate Superintendent School Support Services)
- 2010-2011 Organizational Chart (updated May 1, 2010)
- Fresno Unified School District – English Learners Task Force, May 27, 2009
- Fresno Unified School District, Parent University
- Ford PAS Summary
- Foundations Lead Teachers, Session #1, September 2011
- District Summary Report of Suspensions—End of Year—August through End of School Year, 2011
- Fresno Unified Suspensions by Special Ed—Regular Ed Status (Aug 16, 2010 to Aug 15 2011)
- Fresno Unified Number of Students with the Given Number of Suspensions in 2011
- Weekly Suspension Incidents—Week 33
- Fresno Unified School District Disproportionality Report—2010/2011

## Human Resources

- Does Not Meet Standards/Meets Standards Minimally Evaluations 2008-2011 (provided by Kim Mecum)
- 2009-2010, 2010-2011 Dismissal (includes retirements and resignations in lieu of dismissal)
- Non Re-elect Probationary Teachers (performance/conduct/credential)
- Diversity (Certificated Teachers, New Hire, Trend Data--Teachers; Trend Data – Teachers/Management) as of March 6, 2012
- Diversity (All Management, All Classified), as of March 6, 2012
- Step Up, Teach Fresno! – Transition to Teaching
- Human Resources/Labor Relationships – Five-Year Strategic-Action Plan
- Fresno Unified School District Evaluation Processes for Certificated, Classified, and Management
  - Certificated Stull Bill (calendar and timeline)
  - Preliminary Conference Form
  - Certificated Teacher Evaluation Form
  - Lesson Observation Form
  - Teacher Development Plan
  - Board Policy 4115, Personnel, Evaluation/Supervision
  - California Standards for the Teaching Profession
  - Collective Bargaining Agreement Fresno Unified School District/Fresno Teachers Association
- Fresno Unified School District Talent Management
- Supervision and Evaluation, 2011-2012
- Aligning Performance Management with Instructional Improvement (Employer of Choice)
- Draft – Special Education Pre-K programs – Total English Learners (EL) students with IEP, special education programs for ages 0-5 (provided by Mabel Franks)
- List of parents for interview on April 3, 2012
- Single Plan for Student Achievement 2011--2013 (Two copies)
- Single Plan for Student Achievement (2011--2013); Title I approved SWP plan; Program Improvement Plan for Columbia School
- Single Plan for Student Achievement (2011--2013); Title I approved SWP plan; Program Improvement Plan for Hoover High School
- Single Plan for Student Achievement (2011--2013); Title I approved SWP plan; Program Improvement Plan for Sunnyside High School
- Single Plan for Student Achievement (2011--2013); Title I approved SWP plan; Program Improvement Plan for Lincoln Elementary
- Single Plan for Student Achievement (2011--2013); Title I approved SWP plan; Program Improvement Plan for Ahwahnee Middle School
- Single Plan for Student Achievement (2011--2013); Title I approved SWP plan; Program Improvement Plan for Scandinavian Middle School
- Total Days
- Funding of Lead Teachers for Foundations
- Data Warehouse Expenditure Detail – Title III

## **Item 8. Biographical Sketches of Team Members**

### **Michael Casserly**

Michael Casserly is the executive director of the Council of the Great City Schools, a coalition of 65 of the nation's largest urban public school districts. Dr. Casserly has been with the organization for 28 years, 13 of them as executive director. Before heading the group, he was the organization's chief lobbyist on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC, and served as the Council's director of research. Dr. Casserly has led major reforms in federal education laws, garnered significant aid for urban schools across the country, spurred major gains in urban school achievement and management, and advocated for urban school leadership in the standards movement. He led the organization in holding the nation's first summit of urban school superintendents and big-city mayors. He holds a doctorate from the University of Maryland and a bachelor's degree from Villanova University.

### **Linda Chen**

Linda Chen is currently the deputy chief academic officer in Boston Public Schools, overseeing curriculum and instruction, professional development, teacher evaluation, and early childhood. Previously she served in various roles in the School District of Philadelphia: Assistant superintendent supervising 38 schools, and deputy chief of teaching and learning overseeing curriculum and instruction and the Office of English Language Learners. Ms. Chen was also principal of a dual language school, district literacy supervisor, and literacy staff developer in New York City. She has taught in both New York City and Seattle Public Schools. Ms. Chen is the author of *Balanced Literacy for English Language Learners*, has worked as a literacy consultant in a number of districts across the country, and has served as adjunct assistant professor at the University of Southern California's online Master's in Teaching program, focusing on the course regarding instruction of English language learners. Ms. Chen earned her B.S. degree in psychology from the University of Washington and her M.A. in curriculum and teaching from Teachers College, Columbia University

### **Katy Dula**

Kay Dula's career in education has been spent both teaching and working across the K--12 spectrum in the area of English/language arts and reading, mainly in the intermediate to middle school level or in administrative positions in the area of curriculum and instruction at the district level. In June of 2012, she retired from the education system in North Carolina. She began her career teaching language arts at the middle school level and was one of the first National Board Certified teachers in the nation. She worked for three years as part of the North Carolina State Assistance Teams as the state began its ABC initiative for academic improvement. As a part of this effort, she provided guidance to schools as they implemented efforts to improve academic achievement for all students. She was appointed to the Professional Teaching Standards Commission by then-Governor Jim Hunt. Ms. Dula worked as a district literacy specialist, and served briefly as the interim assistant superintendent of elementary curriculum and instruction, and as the executive coordinator for the associate superintendent of curriculum and instruction before becoming district director of Pre K-12 literacy, a post she held in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School district at the time of her retirement. Currently, working under a federal grant, she works part time for that district on teacher incentive grants (pay for performance).

Also, Ms. Dula has been involved in several school site visits with the Council of the Great City Schools.

### **Sharon Lewis**

Sharon Lewis has been with the Council for over a decade. She directs the Council's research program, which contributes to the organization's efforts to improve teaching and learning in the nation's urban schools as well as to help develop education policy. The Council's research team serves as support to all other departments by designing and conducting survey research, collecting and maintaining demographic/characteristics of large urban districts, collecting and analyzing longitudinal data, assisting in the developing policy research, gathering and reporting what works in urban schools, etc. Ms. Lewis has served on many national committees including but not limited to the Committee to Evaluate NAEP, National Research Council (NRC); Committee on Test Design for K-12 Science Achievement, NRC; High Stakes Testing for Tracking, Promotion, and Graduation, NRC; Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing, APA, AERA, NCME; and the Advisory Council for Educational Statistics, US Department of Education.

### **Ricki Price-Baugh**

Dr. Ricki Price-Baugh serves as the director of academic achievement for the Council of the Great City Schools. She directly assists urban districts in enhancing instructional systems to boost student achievement. Additionally, she participates in researching instructional materials and practices associated with improved student achievement. She has taken an active role in the Council's efforts to call for and advance common standards for our nation's schools. Dr. Price-Baugh retired as the assistant superintendent of curriculum and instructional development in the Houston Independent School District, where she led the development and implementation of the pre-kindergarten--12 curriculum, professional development for administrators and teachers, and the district's alternative teacher certification program. Her prior experience included teaching at the secondary school level for 13 years and serving as the district's K-12 software resource coordinator before joining the curriculum department as director of educational programs. She has also taught curriculum theory and practice for aspiring principals at the University of Houston. Dr. Price-Baugh received her B.A. degree from Tulane University and her M.A. from the University of Maryland. She earned her Doctor of Education degree in Educational Administration from Baylor University.

### **Linda Sink**

Linda Sink is in her thirty-fifth year in education, the past four as chief academic officer for the Albuquerque Public Schools (APS). In her current position, she is responsible for the instruction and educational programs for a district of 89,000 students in 140 schools and she supervises all instructional and support departments. Ms. Sink began her career in APS in 1977, serving along the way as a high school science teacher, department chair, principal, cluster leader principal, and associate superintendent. She led APS as interim superintendent for the first six months of 2008, creating a new extended learning program for elementary students. Ms. Sink is the district's point person for the transition to Common Core Standards adopted by the state of New Mexico. The new standards are expected to be implemented in all schools by the fall of 2013. APS also is one of six urban school districts piloting a National Common Core Standards program. A strong advocate of increased rigor for students, Ms. Sink has developed district-wide

instructional programs and curriculum maps. The number of students enrolled in Advanced Placement classes more than doubled during a four-year period when she was the principal at Albuquerque High School. Similar results have been seen across APS, particularly among minority students, since she became a district-level administrator. She left Albuquerque briefly twice, teaching for three years at predominantly Native American high schools in northeastern Arizona and spending a year as an assistant principal in Wichita, Kansas. She also supervised the student teacher program at the University of New Mexico for two years and has served on the New Mexico MESA Board of Directors and the College Board Regional Council. Ms. Sink holds bachelor's, master's degrees from the University of New Mexico.

### **Denise Walston**

Denise M. Walston is the director of mathematics for the Council of the Great City Schools. She has served on numerous Council of Great City Schools support teams in the area of curriculum, instruction, and professional development. She works with the Council to provide high-leverage support in implementation of the Common Core State Mathematics Standards in urban school districts. Ms. Walston retired from Norfolk Public Schools as the senior coordinator of K--12 mathematics. Her responsibilities included developing K--12 mathematics curriculum; providing job-embedded professional development; and leveraging resources to provide quality professional development for teachers, teacher leaders, and administrators. During her tenure, Norfolk Public Schools embarked on an Algebra For ALL initiative, which resulted in more than 50 percent of students completing algebra by the end of grade eight while simultaneously improving student achievement and closing achievement gaps in mathematics. She has also served as an adjunct instructor at both Old Dominion University and the University of Virginia. She is currently the first vice-president of the National Council for Mathematics Supervision, past president of the Virginia Council for Mathematics Supervision, and is on the board of the Virginia Mathematics and Science Coalition. Ms. Walston received her B.A. degree in mathematics and history from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, and her M.Ed. in mathematics education from Old Dominion University. She has completed additional study at The College of William and Mary and the Woodrow Wilson Institute (Princeton University).

### **Item 9. About the Council of the Great City Schools**

The Council of the Great City Schools is a coalition of 67 of the nation's largest urban public school systems. Its Board of Directors is composed of the Superintendent of Schools and one School Board member from each member city. An Executive Committee of 24 individuals, equally divided in number between Superintendents and School Board members, provides regular oversight of the 501(c)(3) organization. The mission of the Council is to advocate for urban public education and assist its members in the improvement of leadership and instruction. The Council provides services to its members in the areas of legislation, research, communications, curriculum and instruction, and management. The group convenes two major conferences each year; conducts studies on urban school conditions and trends; and operates ongoing networks of senior school district managers with responsibilities in areas such as federal programs, operations, finance, personnel, communications, research, and technology. The Council was founded in 1956 and incorporated in 1961, and has its headquarters in Washington, D.C.

**History of Strategic Support Teams Conducted by the  
Council of the Great City Schools**

<b>City</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Year</b>
Albuquerque	Facilities and Roofing	2003
	Human Resources	2003
	Information Technology	2003
	Special Education	2005
	Legal Services	2005
	Safety and Security	2007
Anchorage	Finance	2004
	Communications	2008
	Math Instruction	2010
	Food Services	2011
	Organizational Structure	2012
Atlanta	Facilities	2009
	Transportation	2010
Austin	Special Education	2010
	Information Technology	2011
Baltimore	Organizational Structure	2007
	Operations	2008
	Facilities	2010
	Special Education	2009
Bridgeport	Transportation	2012
	Information Technology	2012
Broward County (FL)	Food Services	2009
	Transportation	2009
	Information Technology	2012
	Information Technology	2000
Buffalo	Superintendent Support	2000
	Organizational Structure	2000
	Curriculum and Instruction	2000
	Personnel	2000
	Facilities and Operations	2000
	Communications	2000
	Finance	2000
	Finance II	2003
	Bilingual Education	2009

Caddo Parish (LA)		
	Facilities	2004
Charleston		
	Special Education	2005
Charlotte-Mecklenburg		
	Human Resources	2007
Cincinnati		
	Curriculum and Instruction	2004
	Curriculum and Instruction	2009
Chicago		
	Warehouse Operations	2010
	Special Education	2011
Christina (DE)		
	Curriculum and Instruction	2007
Cleveland		
	Student Assignments	1999, 2000
	Transportation	2000
	Safety and Security	2000
	Facilities Financing	2000
	Facilities Operations	2000
	Transportation	2004
	Curriculum and Instruction	2005
	Safety and Security	2007
	Safety and Security	2008
	Theme Schools	2009
Columbus		
	Superintendent Support	2001
	Human Resources	2001
	Facilities Financing	2002
	Finance and Treasury	2003
	Budget	2003
	Curriculum and Instruction	2005
	Information Technology	2007
	Food Services	2007
	Transportation	2009
Dallas		
	Procurement	2007
	Staffing Levels	2009
Dayton		
	Superintendent Support	2001
	Curriculum and Instruction	2001
	Finance	2001
	Communications	2002
	Curriculum and Instruction	2005
	Budget	2005
	Curriculum and Instruction	2008
Denver		
	Superintendent Support	2001

	Personnel	2001
	Curriculum and Instruction	2005
	Bilingual Education	2006
	Curriculum and Instruction	2008
Des Moines		
	Budget and Finance	2003
Detroit		
	Curriculum and Instruction	2002
	Assessment	2002
	Communications	2002
	Curriculum and Assessment	2003
	Communications	2003
	Textbook Procurement	2004
	Food Services	2007
	Curriculum and Instruction	2008
	Facilities	2008
	Finance and Budget	2008
	Information Technology	2008
	Stimulus planning	2009
Fresno		
	Curriculum and Instruction	2012
Guilford County		
	Bilingual Education	2002
	Information Technology	2003
	Special Education	2003
	Facilities	2004
	Human Resources	2007
Hillsborough County (FL)		
	Transportation	2005
	Procurement	2005
Houston		
	Facilities Operations	2010
	Capitol Program	2010
	Information Technology	2011
	Procurement	2011
Indianapolis		
	Transportation	2007
	Information Technology	2010
Jackson (MS)		
	Bond Referendum	2006
	Communications	2009
Jacksonville		
	Organization and Management	2002
	Operations	2002
	Human Resources	2002
	Finance	2002
	Information Technology	2002
	Finance	2006

Kansas City		
	Human Resources	2005
	Information Technology	2005
	Finance	2005
	Operations	2005
	Purchasing	2006
	Curriculum and Instruction	2006
	Program Implementation	2007
	Stimulus Planning	2009
Little Rock		
	Curriculum and Instruction	2010
Los Angeles		
	Budget and Finance	2002
	Organizational Structure	2005
	Finance	2005
	Information Technology	2005
	Human Resources	2005
	Business Services	2005
Louisville		
	Management Information	2005
	Staffing study	2009
Memphis		
	Information Technology	2007
Miami-Dade County		
	Construction Management	2003
	Food Services	2009
	Transportation	2009
	Maintenance & Operations	2009
	Capital Projects	2009
Milwaukee		
	Research and Testing	1999
	Safety and Security	2000
	School Board Support	1999
	Curriculum and Instruction	2006
	Alternative Education	2007
	Human Resources	2009
Minneapolis		
	Curriculum and Instruction	2004
	Finance	2004
	Federal Programs	2004
Newark		
	Curriculum and Instruction	2007
	Food Service	2008
New Orleans		
	Personnel	2001
	Transportation	2002
	Information Technology	2003
	Hurricane Damage Assessment	2005

	Curriculum and Instruction	2006
New York City	Special Education	2008
Norfolk	Testing and Assessment	2003
	Curriculum and Instruction	2012
Orange County	Information Technology	2010
Philadelphia	Curriculum and Instruction	2003
	Federal Programs	2003
	Food Service	2003
	Facilities	2003
	Transportation	2003
	Human Resources	2004
	Budget	2008
	Human Resource	2009
	Special Education	2009
Pittsburgh	Curriculum and Instruction	2005
	Technology	2006
	Finance	2006
	Special Education	2009
Portland	Finance and Budget	2010
	Procurement	2010
	Operations	2010
Providence	Business Operations	2001
	MIS and Technology	2001
	Personnel	2001
	Human Resources	2007
	Special Education	2011
	Bilingual Education	2011
Richmond	Transportation	2003
	Curriculum and Instruction	2003
	Federal Programs	2003
	Special Education	2003
Rochester	Finance and Technology	2003
	Transportation	2004
	Food Services	2004
	Special Education	2008
San Diego	Finance	2006
	Food Service	2006
	Transportation	2007

	Procurement	2007
San Francisco	Technology	2001
St. Louis	Special Education	2003
	Curriculum and Instruction	2004
	Federal Programs	2004
	Textbook Procurement	2004
	Human Resources	2005
St. Paul	Special Education	2011
Seattle	Human Resources	2008
	Budget and Finance	2008
	Information Technology	2008
	Bilingual Education	2008
	Transportation	2008
	Capital Projects	2008
	Maintenance and Operations	2008
	Procurement	2008
	Food Services	2008
Toledo	Curriculum and Instruction	2005
Washington, D.C.	Finance and Procurement	1998
	Personnel	1998
	Communications	1998
	Transportation	1998
	Facilities Management	1998
	Special Education	1998
	Legal and General Counsel	1998
	MIS and Technology	1998
	Curriculum and Instruction	2003
	Budget and Finance	2005
	Transportation	2005
	Curriculum and Instruction	2007
	Common Core Standards	2011
Wichita	Transportation	2009