



Berkeley Unified School District

Executive Summary

Comprehensive Review
January 2005

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INTRODUCTION

This report, dated January 2005, is the third of four six-month progress reports required by Assembly Bill 2859 (Aroner, 2002). The report reviews the continuing efforts of the Berkeley Unified School District Governing Board, administrators and staff to address the recommendations for improvement made in the Berkeley Unified School District Assessment and Improvement Plan, first presented to the district by the Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team (FCMAT) in July 2003. Six-month progress reports were presented to the district in January 2004 and July 2004. This report provides data to the district, community and Legislature, updated for the six-month period since July 2004, to assist in facilitating effective collaboration and building the necessary capacity within the district to promote effective teaching and learning.

These ongoing assessments of the Berkeley USD's operations have been based upon legal and professional standards applicable to all California school districts in five school district operational areas: Community Relations and Governance, Personnel Management, Pupil Achievement, Financial Management and Facilities Management. A standards-based process of systemic assessment, prioritization and intervention helps to increase the overall capacity and productivity of the district by establishing a baseline of data against which progress can be measured over time. The district's improvement efforts must also engage the parents, students and the community in the partnership of improving student learning.

In its July 2003 comprehensive Assessment and Improvement Plan, FCMAT utilized 456 standards in its review of district operations and provided an analysis of the issues in the Berkeley Unified School District and a priority listing of those needs that were most pressing to address in the first six-month review period. The first six-month progress report issued in January 2004 provided an assessment of the progress made on 99 standards identified for the first six-month review period. The second six-month progress report provided an assessment of 103 standards identified for the second six-month review period. This third six-month progress report provides an assessment of 96 standards identified for focus during the third six-month review period: 18 in Community Relations/Governance, 20 in Personnel Management, 20 in Pupil Achievement, 20 in Financial Management, and 18 in Facilities Management. Identifying a smaller number of standards for the district to address during each six-month review period allows the district to focus its improvement efforts on those areas that can be further improved. The smaller number of standards is selected by FCMAT, in collaboration with the Berkeley USD administrators and staff.

The findings presented in this report represent a snapshot of the district, and these progress reviews are intended to assist in the improvement of student learning. In the time since the data-gathering portion of this six-month review, the district has continued to make progress that may not be reflected in this report.

FCMAT would like to acknowledge the cooperation of the district Governing Board, administration and staff during the review process.

Background

On September 29, 2002, the Governor signed Assembly Bill 2859 (Aroner) into law. In part, the bill required the Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team to conduct assessments of the Berkeley Unified School District in five major operational areas. The bill reallocated to FCMAT funds to conduct the assessments that were withheld from the district's principal apportionments in 2000-2001 and 2001-2002, and funds scheduled to be withheld from the 2003-2004 apportionment for disallowed average daily attendance (ADA) claims. The legislation further required FCMAT to file status reports every six months through June 2005 with various entities, including the Legislature, on the school district's progress in meeting the recommendations of the improvement plan.

On July 1, 2003, FCMAT presented a comprehensive Assessment and Improvement Plan to the Berkeley Unified School District. The first six-month progress report on the district's implementation of the recommendations in the Assessment and Improvement Plan was presented to the district on January 5, 2004. The second six-month progress report was presented to the district on July 1, 2004. This third six-month progress report will be presented to the district on January 4, 2005. One additional six-month report will be presented to the district on July 1, 2005.

Study Guidelines

FCMAT's approach to implementing the statutory requirements of AB 2859 is based upon a commitment to a standards-based, independent and external review process. FCMAT performed the assessments and developed the improvement plan in collaboration with four other external providers selected through a competitive process. Professionals from throughout California contributed their knowledge and applied the identified legal and professional standards to the specific local conditions found in the Berkeley Unified School District.

Prior to beginning work in the district, FCMAT adopted five basic tenets to be incorporated in the assessment and improvement plans. These tenets were based on previous assessments conducted by FCMAT in school districts throughout California and a review of data from other states implementing external reviews of troubled school districts. The five basic tenets are:

1. Use of Professional and Legal Standards

FCMAT's experience indicates that for schools and school districts to be successful in program improvement, the evaluation, design and implementation of improvement plans must be standards-driven. FCMAT has noted positive differences between an objective standards-based approach versus a nonstandards-based approach. When standards are clearly defined, reachable, and communicated, there is a greater likelihood they will be measured and met.

Every standard is measured on a consistent rating format, and each standard is given a scaled score from zero to 10 as to its relative status of completeness. The following represents a definition of terms and scaled scores. The single purpose of the scaled score is to establish a baseline of information by which the district's future gains and achievements in each of the standard areas can be measured.

Not Implemented (Scaled Score of 0)

There is no significant evidence that the standard is implemented.

Partially Implemented (Scaled Score of 1 through 7)

A partially implemented standard lacks completeness, and it is met in a limited degree. The degree of completeness varies as defined:

1. Some design or research regarding the standard is in place that supports preliminary development. (Scaled Score of 1)
2. Implementation of the standard is well into the development stage. Appropriate staff is engaged and there is a plan for implementation. (Scaled Score of 2)
3. A plan to address the standard is fully developed, and the standard is in the beginning phase of implementation. (Scaled Score of 3)
4. Staff is engaged in the implementation of most elements of the standard. (Scaled Score of 4)
5. Staff is engaged in the implementation of the standard. All standard elements are developed and are in the implementation phase. (Scaled Score of 5)
6. Elements of the standard are implemented, monitored and becoming systematic. (Scaled Score of 6)
7. All elements of the standard are fully implemented, are being monitored, and appropriate adjustments are taking place. (Scaled Score of 7)

Fully Implemented (Scaled Score of 8-10)

A fully implemented standard is complete relative to the following criteria.

8. All elements of the standard are fully and substantially implemented and are sustainable. (Scaled Score of 8)
9. All elements of the standard are fully and substantially implemented and have been sustained for a full school year. (Scaled Score of 9)
10. All elements of the standard are fully implemented, are being sustained with high quality, are being refined, and have a process for ongoing evaluation. (Scaled Score of 10)

2. Conduct an External and Independent Assessment

FCMAT employs an external and independent assessment process in the development of school district assessment and improvement plans. FCMAT assessment reports present findings and improvement plans based on the external and independent assessment from professional experts and agencies recruited to assist FCMAT in the assessment process. Collectively, these professional experts and agencies constitute FCMAT's providers in the assessment process. Their external and independent assessments serve as the primary basis for the reliability, integrity and credibility of the review.

3. Utilize Multiple Measures of Assessment

For a finding to be considered legitimate, multiple sources need to be utilized to provide the same or consistent information. The assessment and improvement plans are based on multiple measures. Testing, personal interviews, group meetings, public hearings, observations, review and analysis of data all provide added value to the assessment process. The providers are required to utilize multiple measurements as they assess the standards. This process allows for a variety of ways of determining whether the standards are met. All school district operations with an impact on student achievement, including governance, fiscal, personnel, and facilities are reviewed and included in the improvement plan.

4. Empower Staff and Community

The development of a strong professional development plan for the board and staff is a critical component of an effective school district. The assessment reports include the importance of a comprehensive professional development plan. The success of the improvement plans and their implementation depend on an effective professional and community development process. For this reason, the empowerment of the staff and community is one of the highest priorities, and emphasizing this priority with each of the providers is critical. As a result, a strong training component for board, staff and administration is called for consistently throughout FCMAT's assessment reports.

Of paramount importance is the community's role in local governance. The absence of parental involvement in education is a growing concern nationally. A key to success in any school district is re-engaging parents, teachers, and support staff. Parents generally care deeply about their children's future and most are willing to participate in improving their school district and enhancing student learning. The community relations section of FCMAT's assessment reports provides necessary recommendations for the community to have a more active and meaningful role in the education of its children.

5. Engage Local, State and National Agencies

It is critical to involve various local, state and national agencies in the recovery of a school district. This is emphasized by engaging state-recognized agencies as partners to assist with the assessment and improvement process. The California Department of Education, city and county interests, professional organizations, and community-based organizations all have expressed and shown a desire to assist and participate in the improvement of the Berkeley Unified School District.

Study Team

The study team was composed of the following members:

For the Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team

Roberta Mayor
William Gillaspie
Leonel Martínez

For the Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team – Financial Management

Michelle Plumbtree
Michele McClowry

For the California School Boards Association – Community Relations and Governance

Martin Gonzales	Holly Jacobson
Marge Peterson	Ben Bartos
Dan Walden	Diane Greene

For the Community Training and Assistance Center – Pupil Achievement

Donald Ingwerson	Maribeth Smith
Debbie Frick	Barbara Helms

For Schromm Associates – Personnel Management

Richard Schromm
Jack Weinstein
Charles Diggs

For School Services of California – Facilities Management

Ron Bennett
Curt Pollock

Executive Summary

The Berkeley Unified School District Governing Board and administration continue to address the recommendations in the initial Assessment and Improvement Plan, July 2003 as a district priority and therefore continue to make good progress in increasing the ratings in all of the five operational areas of Community Relations and Governance, Pupil Achievement, Personnel Management, Financial Management and Facilities Management.

The district also continues to address the broad issues noted in the initial assessment report concerning the extreme decentralization of the district schools; the need to increase communication and dialogue among district employees; the lack of clear, common goals and a communicated direction for the district; the need to update board policies and administrative regulations; and the noncompliance of programs such as special education. Significant effort has been made to remedy these issues.

The district has also made notable progress in management of its financial operations. FCMAT was appointed as Fiscal Advisor in October 2001 by the Alameda County Office of Education to oversee the district's finances. A financial recovery plan was developed by the district and approved by the board in February 2003. The plan required major cuts in expenditures to achieve fiscal solvency. The district closely monitored its expenditures over the last two years, updating the plan as necessary. The Alameda COE approved the Berkeley USD budget for 2004-05 in August 2004 and FCMAT no longer serves as the fiscal advisor to the district as a result of that action.

Summary of Principal Findings and Recommendations

The following is a summary of the general findings and recommendations that are presented in greater detail by study area in another section of this report. This assessment represents data collection and analysis at a specific point in time. The assessment team conducted this follow-up work in the district in October and November 2004.

Community Relations and Governance

The Berkeley USD continues to demonstrate steady progress in the area of Community Relations and Governance and increased its ratings in nearly all of the priority standards identified for this third six-month review. The governance team has effectively addressed the district's fiscal crisis and has now begun to renew its focus on areas related to communications, parent outreach and student achievement. A major achievement in the past six months was the successful campaign for the Measure B parcel tax, which provides bridge funding to the Berkeley Schools Excellence Project (BSEP). The funds from this parcel tax have been identified for use in reducing class sizes and expanding course offerings; funding school libraries and music programs; providing educational program evaluation and teacher training; and enhancing parent outreach and translation services. However, the district does need to implement its plan to engage in a comprehensive review of board policies and to officially adopt its comprehensive communications plan.

Communications

The implementation of a comprehensive communications plan is proceeding, although the board should continue to monitor the communication goals and key messages. Positive reactions have resulted from the implementation of the Public Information Officer (PIO) News that is distributed to all employees with their paychecks. The district administration continues to seek more staff input into school and district operations, and these positive steps should be formalized as part of the district's comprehensive communications plan. Overall, the district does a good job of promoting programs and student and faculty accomplishments. The district Web site, which was already an excellent resource for staff, parents and the public, has been even further enhanced and made even more functional. Another positive example of improved parent/community relations is the cable television show hosted by the PIO, utilizing the time immediately before Governing Board meetings to highlight news and activities of importance to the district and community.

The district is aware that engaging non-English-speaking and traditionally less-involved parents must continue to be a priority. In the future, the district should continue to demonstrate progress in this area as programs funded by Measure B, such as expanded translation services, are implemented.

Parent/Community Relations

Most school sites within the district continue to have a high level of parent/community involvement. The improved perceptions of the campus atmosphere for parents, staff and students at the high school that was reported in the last six-month progress report have been sustained in the past six months. The district has worked to coordinate communications across school sites. School accountability report cards for all schools now appear on the district's Web site and in other locations, and the district is working toward ensuring that all mandated information is included. Strong parent and community support is also evidenced by the active volunteer corps who participated in the district's Measure B campaign.

Community Collaboratives, District Advisory Committees, School Site Councils

The district has implemented a new, streamlined structure for its committee, council and task force system. This effort enhanced clarity and understanding for participants and staff about the functions of these various bodies and the way they fit into the overall district decision-making process. The board has given particular consideration and thought to school site plans, conducting a thorough review of the plans and providing feedback to district staff and to sites about the plans.

Policy

The district has adopted all of the policies mandated by law. The board has also adopted a new food policy and is in the process of adopting an updated conflict of interest policy. The district needs to continue to follow and sustain its processes to ensure that additional policies are adopted as necessary and that outdated policies are either updated or repealed. As policies are adopted, the district makes them accessible to staff and the public, including access through the district's Web site. As more policies are issued, the district must ensure that it consistently communicates key policy changes to staff and the public.

Board Roles/Boardsmanship

There are strong working relations among the members of the board and between the board and Superintendent. The governance team has demonstrated its ability to work together as it addressed the district's fiscal situation. The board continues to sustain its plan to indicate when specific organizational and student performance indicators and data will be provided by the staff to the board and public. Background for board agenda items now includes a subsection addressing the educational impact the action would have within the district. Individual board members continue to exhibit a deep commitment to the district and the community, and all individuals on the board devote considerable time and effort to district and community events and their work on board subcommittees and other assignments. The board continues to demonstrate respect and support for district and site-level staff.

The mission, vision and goals for the district have been adopted and are becoming more integrated into the actions of the district. The district should sustain these efforts by incorporating the goals of the board into the operations of district departments and school sites. The board needs to continue to monitor and evaluate the overall direction for the district. The successful campaign for Measure B demonstrates the board's and superintendent's commitment to engage the community in setting broad long-term goals to ensure a sustainable focus on student achievement. Alignment of the board goals to the superintendent's evaluation has occurred, and can be even further strengthened.

Board Meetings

Board meetings have consistently been constructive. The members of the board and the Superintendent have renewed their focus on matters related to student achievement. In addition to including a notation on the educational impact of each agenda item, the board now opens its public meeting with a presentation highlighting an educational program in the district. In addition, the board president is effectively engaged with the Superintendent in developing meeting agendas, and an emphasis is placed on ensuring that one or more items related to student achievement or instruction are included on each agenda.

Conclusion

This six-month review of Community Relations and Governance included the assessment of 18 standards. Of the 18 standards, two were fully implemented-substantially and 16 were partially implemented. Identifying a smaller number of standards for the district to address during each six-month review period allows the district to focus its improvement efforts.

The average rating of all 60 assessment standards for the operational area of Community Relations and Governance at this third six-month reporting period is **6.87** on a scale of 10, with 10 the highest score possible. The average rating in this operational area was 5.67 in the initial FCMAT Assessment and Improvement Plan report in July 2003, 6.03 in the first six-month progress report in January 2004, and 6.55 in the second six-month progress report in July 2004.

Personnel Management

The Human Resources Department is lead by two directors of personnel, one certificated and one classified. During the past six months, eight of the nine permanent staff members have remained in their positions, adding stability and confidence to the administration of personnel services. One new position, funded by the University of California, has been added to oversee the University of California Work Study Program within the district.

Evaluation of both certificated and classified employees still needs to be addressed by the district's administrative and supervisory staff. A report to the Governing Board in August 2004 revealed that, of the 880 employee evaluations due, only 52.4 percent of evaluations were turned in (57 percent of 231 permanent certificated, 45 percent of 73 non-permanent certificated and 53 percent of 576 classified employees).

The Personnel Department still has to develop an internal operational procedures manual. No time line for completion of such a manual has been developed. The Human Resources staff has been working on the development of individual desk manuals as time permits. It is anticipated that this process will take most of the year to complete.

The district has been somewhat successful in addressing the need to clear over a thousand employees who had not shown proof of being free of tuberculosis. A few employees remain to be certified with tuberculosis clearances, and steps are underway to have 100 percent compliance with this requirement.

Communications

The monthly Human Resources Newsletter that was started in February 2004 continues to provide all employees with improved communication of human resources activities that affect them. Monthly meetings between selected payroll, personnel, benefits and position control staff members that started six months ago also have been continued under both the personnel staff leadership and the new Supervisor of Payroll.

Recruitment, Hiring and Staffing

One of the objectives of the district's recently passed Measure B parcel tax is to reduce class sizes in grades 4 through 12. Planning for teacher recruitment for 2005-06 will be focused on hiring staff to improve diversity in the district.

A reference check process for hiring certificated personnel has not been implemented. The personnel department has prepared draft forms that can be used by administrators; however, no requirement has been established for making reference checks mandatory and submitting written documentation of reference checks to Human Resources. This continues to be an area that unnecessarily exposes the district to legal challenges to its hiring procedures.

The district's Personnel Commission continues to have only two of its three seats filled. This situation makes it difficult to get agreement on the necessary changes that need to be made to the commission's outdated rules. The district needs to have the commission vacancy filled. Also, the district should facilitate the process for updating the commission's rules by starting to prepare proposed new rules, particularly in the areas that bring the commission's rules in compliance with current law.

Classified Personnel has made available a number of written documents for district staff and applicants that describe the selection process. Human Resources now needs to develop internal written procedures that describe how it handles recruitment, testing and selection. Classified Personnel has worked closely with Cooperative Organization for the Development of Employee Selection Procedures (CODESP) to ensure it has the most recent tests available. Personnel also works with selecting administrators to ensure the tests used meet the administrators' needs. The district has adopted teacher staffing formulas that are used in its annual staffing of schools. For staffing of counselors, vice principals, principals and school clerical support, the district continues existing staffing each year. Changes in staffing not controlled by formulas require a specific budget request. The district may wish to create formulas for school administrators, counseling and clerical positions to recognize the factors that determine staffing levels.

Internal Operations

The Human Resources Department should develop written district procedures to identify who has access to personnel files, what should be entered, and what should not be entered in the files. Workers' Compensation information is appropriately located in the Risk Manager's office, separate from the personnel files. Medical information has been relocated to benefits, where it is placed in a locked file. Inactive files have been removed to a storage file room.

The Classified Department has job descriptions for all classified job classifications that meet the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements. Certificated Personnel does not have a complete set of job descriptions for either teachers or managers.

Excel spreadsheets are used to track job applicants. There currently are no plans to implement the Quintessential School System (QSS) Applicant Tracking Module. Some Human Resources staff members have been provided a QSS training overview of the module. A system needs to be developed for retaining current applicant files and removing the out-of-date applicant files. Staff reported that of the more than 70 classified employees who received notification of layoffs last spring, almost all have been rehired.

Human Resources and Payroll meet regularly to review and discuss problem areas. These meetings, and the ongoing cross-checking of position control data with payroll data, have resulted in significantly fewer payroll errors. The accuracy of personnel data could be further enhanced by periodically sending all employees a written notice with all their key payroll information for verification. Human Resources continues to rely on unwritten procedures for handling resignations, leaves and changes in salary. The district needs to formalize these procedures in writing to ensure all parties understand key time lines, and all employees are treated consistently.

Conclusion

This six-month review of Personnel Management included the assessment of 20 standards. Of the 20 standards, one was fully implemented-sustained, one was fully implemented-substantially and 18 were partially implemented. Identifying a smaller number of standards for the district to address during each six-month review period allows the district to focus its improvement efforts.

The average rating of all 102 assessment standards for the operational area of Personnel Management at this third six-month reporting period is **5.31** on a scale of 10, with 10 the highest score possible. The average rating in this operational area was 4.40 in the initial FCMAT Assessment and Improvement Plan report in July 2003, 4.71 in the first six-month progress report in January 2004, and 5.02 in the second six-month progress report in July 2004.

Pupil Achievement

This third six-month progress report on pupil achievement continues monitoring the district's efforts to develop a system of schools that makes maximum use of its human and financial resources in the education of its students. The Assessment and Improvement Plan for pupil achievement presented a "systems" approach to educational improvement, considering the system as a whole rather than a collection of separate, discrete parts. The interrelationships of system components and their impact on overall quality of the organization in accomplishing its purposes are examined in order to "close the loop" in curriculum and instructional improvement and in meeting state mandates.

The review team looked for organizational quality control by monitoring three elements: 1) a standard, goal or operational mission; 2) work directed toward achieving that standard, goal or operational mission; and 3) feedback (assessment) that is related to or aligned to the standard, goal or operational mission.

Goals and Objectives

The district has greatly improved its ability to formalize board direction, assign work to carry out that direction and obtain formal and informal feedback. However, the district needs to continue efforts in the following areas:

- Funding/staffing a research office to provide more data/information for staff
- Developing a K-12 policy and model for due process in student discipline, and maintaining an accurate data base on student attendance and suspensions
- Creating an organizational structure for K-12 curriculum development in one division
- Developing a collaboration model for communication among departments.

The district has developed a Local Educational Agency Plan. This plan is both short- and long-range (five years) and is adopted annually. The Governing Board did not adopt the plan for the 2004-05 year because of concerns that the LEA Plan did not address the needs of all students. The staff plans to address the board's concerns and resubmit the plan for adoption in November 2004.

In order to continue improving the instructional program, the district is developing a process to establish instructional priorities and to support them using existing resources. The planning process is outlined in a document entitled, "School Effectiveness on a Budget: A Planning Process for Berkeley Unified School District." The document is intended to direct program decisions effectively and efficiently. The district is partnering with the UC Berkeley Graduate School of Education in a strategic planning process.

Data and Assessment

Although the district collects attendance and suspension data by school, grade level, gender and ethnicity, the data is not regularly monitored, nor is it evident that the data is analyzed and used to help the school and district staffs determine the causes of poor attendance and behavior. Counselors use attendance data and input from faculty members to determine student progress. The board recently approved a policy relating student attendance to academic grades.

In visits to elementary and middle schools and the senior high school, the review team noted greater clarity on the part of the principals and staffs of the district mission. Also noted was

greater use of data for assessment and evaluation. Not all assessment data, however, is provided to the sites in a user-friendly format. The district has codified and formalized many aspects of the instructional program, but much work remains to be done in the areas of discipline, K-12 curriculum, and special education.

The efforts that have been devoted to improvements in the special education program are noteworthy. However, much work remains to be done concerning the continued financial encroachment of the special education programs and services on the general fund.

Conclusion

This six-month review of Pupil Achievement included the assessment of 20 standards. All 20 standards were partially implemented. Identifying a smaller number of standards for the district to address during each six-month review period allows the district to focus its improvement efforts.

The average rating of all 79 assessment standards for the operational area of Pupil Achievement at this third six-month reporting period is **5.91** on a scale of 10, with 10 the highest score possible. The average rating in this operational area was 4.30 in the initial FCMAT Assessment and Improvement Plan report in July 2003, 4.96 in the first six-month progress report in January 2004, and 5.51 in the second six-month progress report in July 2004.

Financial Management

The district has made significant and measurable progress on all of the 20 financial management standards selected for this third sixth month progress report. The financial operational areas in this report include: internal control environment; inter- and intra-departmental communication; staff professional development; budget development process (policy); budget adoption, reporting and audits; attendance accounting; and accounting, purchasing and warehousing.

The district has made remarkable progress since the time of the initial comprehensive review in July 2003. At that time, the district lacked documented processes and procedures in the business operational areas. A three-year recovery plan containing significant budget cuts had to be developed to ensure the district's future fiscal solvency. FCMAT was named fiscal advisor to the district at that time by the Alameda County Office of Education.

Internal Operations

The district's 2004-05 adopted budget was approved by the Alameda COE in August 2004, and as a result, FCMAT no longer serves as the district's fiscal advisor. Fiscal solvency has been restored, formal business processes and procedures and internal controls have been established. Staff training has occurred and the staff has greater confidence in its work. Better communication is occurring between departments and more comprehensive, understandable materials are provided to the board. Fiscal reports are being completed on time. All mandated board policies have been updated. Student enrollment procedures seem to be working efficiently and attendance accounting has improved.

A bridge parcel tax was approved by the community in November 2004, bringing additional funding for instructional programs to the district. The district has a balanced budget and deficit spending is no longer occurring. A new Deputy Superintendent has been hired for the business area. Critical positions remain vacant in the Business Department, which can slow improvement.

Systems and Procedures

The district has remained committed to strengthening internal controls and has done so in the majority of fiscal transactions. There is still concern over the process of issuing and canceling warrants to effectively manage and secure cash transactions in all funds. Significant improvement has been made in collaboration between the personnel, payroll and position control areas. A fraud policy has been adopted so that there is a plan outlining the proper steps to take if fraud is detected.

A district audit committee is planned to begin operations in the near future. This committee should help to prevent internal controls from being overridden, to ensure ongoing state and federal compliance, to provide assurance to management that internal control systems are sound, and to identify and correct inefficient processes. In addition, the Budget and Finance Advisory Committee is planned to be re-activated in the next few months.

The district has begun to automate and designate functions such as running budget reports for specific job sites and departments. Other functions that need to be considered for automation are purchase requisitions and budget revisions. The district also has plans to automate other functions such as timesheets and personnel requisitions, which will reduce the time it now takes to manually complete these documents.

Communications

Communication and staff development has increased. This area can be further improved by making attendance to specific workshops mandatory for key staff members so they can obtain the required knowledge.

The Governing Board has approved a mission statement and goals, and has attempted to ensure that the budget document reflects those goals. However, all employees are not aware of the mission and goals and their correlation to the budget document.

Requirement of Legislation

AB 2859 requires the district to utilize \$230,448 of district funds for each of the two years 2003-04 and 2004-05 to implement the recommendations of the improvement plan. FCMAT and the Alameda COE are required to review the district's expenditures and to validate that the funds were used as required by the legislation.

Conclusion

This six-month review of Financial Management included the assessment of 20 standards. All 20 standards were partially implemented. Identifying a smaller number of standards for the district to address during each six-month review period allows the district to focus its improvement efforts.

The average rating of all 104 assessment standards for the operational area of Financial Management at this third six-month reporting period is **4.95** on a scale of 10, with 10 the highest score possible. The average rating in this operational area was 3.08 in the initial FCMAT Assessment and Improvement Plan report in July 2003, 3.88 in the first six-month progress report in January 2004, and 4.35 in the second six-month progress report in July 2004.

Facilities Management

Since the review team's last visit six months ago, the Berkeley Unified School District has made some progress in the area of maintenance and operations. The District's Measure BB funds are helping the district keep up with the maintenance needs of the schools. The additional maintenance staff provided by the measure has allowed the district to hire maintenance staff specialized to manage the newly constructed and modernized facilities. It has also allowed the staff to maintain the facilities so students arrive at attractive schools with properly maintained grounds and facilities free of graffiti.

Safety Concerns

During the site visits in October 2004, the team observed several unsafe conditions for students while watching parents drop off their children for school. Some parents dropped off students at the curb, some across the street from the school, some in the middle of the street, and two incidences were observed of opening the child's door into traffic while the parent stayed in the car. In contrast to the parent's delivery practices, the district's bus drivers practiced good delivery practices, making sure that the students could step onto the sidewalk without obstruction or possibility of tripping over curbs.

Adults supervise students during the main school day, but students on the sites for before- and after-hour activities had little adult supervision. Visitors are still able to enter campuses with little effort and without challenge by site personnel.

No board policies have been adopted regarding providing periodic safety training and first aid training for employees. The director of maintenance and the risk manager are working together to develop a safety committee.

Operations

The Governing Board has not developed a policy regarding the proper handling of graffiti and vandalism at schools. All sites observed had some areas that had been painted over with similar colors. Site personnel indicated they have effective control of graffiti with the district's weekly painting program.

All sites are conducting fire drills as evidenced by fire drill logs maintained in the school offices. However it could not be determined whether procedures exist to report fire drill compliance to the central office. Fewer fire hazards were observed at the sites to be brought to the attention of the site administration. The few observed consisted mainly of containers piled in front of electrical panels and obstructions in front of some exits. The majority of buildings visited had appropriate fire extinguishers, but appropriate signage was lacking in some areas, which could cause employees and the public to overlook fire extinguishers in an emergency.

The staff at John Muir Elementary School has maintained the highest level of school safety and attractive facilities. During the October site visit, the team was impressed with the properly organized documentation in the school office and the custodial room for all of the standards. The facilities were very clean and well maintained.

The district did not provide the team with any prepared self-assessment of the standards that were selected to be addressed during this monitoring visit.

Conclusion

This six-month review of Facilities Management included the assessment of 18 standards. Of the 18 standards, 17 were partially implemented, and 1 was not implemented. Identifying a smaller number of standards for the district to address during each six-month review period allows the district to focus its improvement efforts.

The average rating of all 111 assessment standards for the operational area of Facilities Management at this third six-month reporting period is **6.31** on a scale of 10, with 10 the highest score possible. The average rating in this operational area was 5.75 in the initial FCMAT Assessment and Improvement Plan report in July 2003, 6.08 in the first six-month progress report in January 2004, and 6.12 in the second six-month progress report in July 2004.

TABLE OF BERKELEY USD'S PROGRESS OVER TIME

OPERATIONAL AREA	July 2003 Rating	Jan. 2004 Rating	July 2004 Rating	Jan. 2005 Rating
Community Relations/Governance	5.67	6.03	6.55	6.87
Personnel Management	4.40	4.71	5.02	5.31
Pupil Achievement	4.30	4.96	5.51	5.91
Financial Management	3.08	3.88	4.35	4.95
Facilities Management	5.75	6.08	6.12	6.31

This table indicates the growth in the average of all standards in each operational area over time.

