



Compton Unified School District

Community Relations

Comprehensive Review
August 1999

Administrative Agent
Larry E. Reider
Office of Kern County
Superintendent of Schools

Chief Executive Officer
Thomas E. Henry

1.1 Communications

Professional Standard

Decisions and other information are communicated effectively throughout the system in a timely manner.

Progress on Recommendations and Recovery Steps

- 1a. The district has begun the process of developing a comprehensive communications plan. A district community committee has been formed and is in the early stages of plan development.

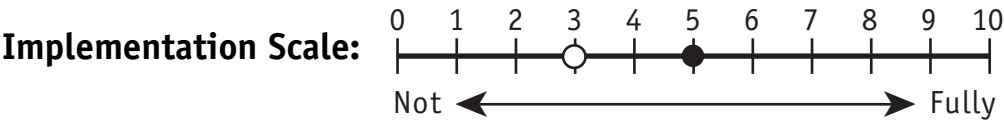
The district's information officer has initiated many improvements to the district wide communications efforts: school visits, linking the district's educational television station with school sites, promoting events and managing press conferences at school sites, developing a master list of key players who receive communication information, providing all school principals and staff with all press releases issued by the district and revamping the district's homework hotline updating, and updating the district's web page.

The efforts initiated thus far should be included in the district's communication plan. This plan should be a systematic in-depth plan, focusing not only on district to school/community communication but also on providing employees information that will empower them to act as advocates for the district.

- 1b. The district has prepared a draft of a community/district newsletter that will also contain some employee information sections. A further review of the success of this format in reaching its intended audience should be conducted in the next 6-month review.
- 1c. The district is considering developing a fact sheet. However, care should be taken not to duplicate the efforts of individual school's accountability report cards. These fact sheets should deliver the district's key message points to staff.
- 1d. The district has provided documentation that news releases are being distributed to all staff.
- 2.a. Some evidence of progress on solicitation of suggestions from employees about how to improve internal communications was provided with documentation concerning meetings with union representatives and brown bag lunches with staff.
- b. The district indicated that instituting simpler internal procedures requiring fewer signatures would lend itself to control accountability concerns.

Standard Implemented: Partially

Previous Rating: 3
Self Rating: 9
New Rating: 5



1.3 Communications

Professional Standard

The board has a proactive communications and media relations plan.

Progress on Recommendations and Recovery Steps

- 1.a. The district has developed a draft of a comprehensive, written plan for communications and media relations. The plan is in the early stage of development.
- 2.c. The public information officer has contacted the board requesting biographical information. Only two board members have responded with the requested information. Fact sheets to be provided to the board are being developed.
- d. The state administrator holds brown bag talk session with staff at each school on an annual basis. He also has changed the location of the monthly board meetings from the district office to school sites on a rotating basis. The state administrator speaks at community service group meetings sharing the “Compton Message.” The public information officer has also arranged for the state administrator to appear periodically on local television broadcasts. The state administrator needs to require these same efforts be set forth by all district and site administrators.
- 3.a. The public information officer maintains relationships with reporters by keeping in regular contact with them in following up releases sent out by the district. The PIO also has become a resource for reporters who draw on the PIO’s background in the state and federal government to identify sources for information concerning education related news reports. Examples of news releases were provided.
- b. The district has not developed a media relations opportunity calendar. The district is linked to the State Department of Education where timely information can be provided the public adding a local spin.
- c. While the district is doing a good job of reacting to issues as they arise, recent reports of the toxicity in modular classrooms triggered the creation of a letter to parents and staff updating them on what CUSD was doing to protect students from harm. The district needs to develop a strategic plan that presents key messages at public events.
- d. The district has considered the recommendation to adopt a media relations theme for each month.
- 4.a. A press release book was provided that contains all the press releases concerning the district as well as related issues. The distribution of the document is limited, however.
- b. The district indicated that the President of the District Advisory Council is the pipeline to the school site councils. No documentation of feedback concerning overall perception of the district and school sites was presented. There was no documentation whether specific communications efforts reached their intended audiences, or whether key messages were clearly

understandable. No indication was provided that this feedback was derived through the District Advisory Council or any other means of communication.

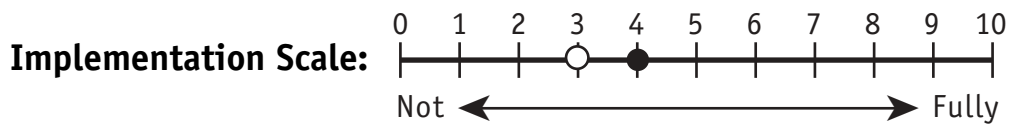
- c. The district has determined that the implementation of this recommendation is not appropriate or possible at this time. A district-wide committee representing the diversity of the community and the staff will assume these responsibilities.

Standard Implemented: Partially

Previous Rating: 3

Self Rating: 9

New Rating: 4



2.7 Parents/Community Relations

Professional Standard

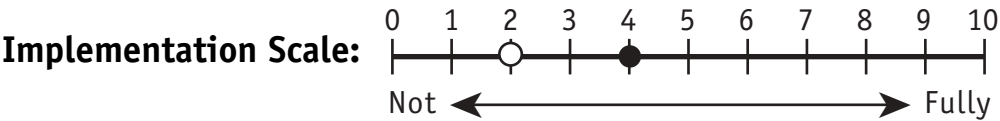
Parents and community members are encouraged to be involved in the schools.

Progress on Recommendations and Recovery Steps

- 1.a. No board policy has been approved on Parent Involvement. A parent handbook is being developed.
- b. The state administrator indicated that the review of school improvement plans for parent involvement programs is occurring. Evidence of Monthly Report Feedback noting citations of commendations for parent meetings was provided.
- c. A district-wide committee was established for the purpose of developing internal and external communication plans; no specific item regarding improved parent involvement was evident in the agendas reviewed. The committee has met twice.
- d. The district indicated that the school site council is responsible for coordinating parent involvement with Title I, bilingual and parents of other programs. Parent involvement is monitored by School Operations in their required monthly reports and district feedback of those reports.
- f. A district Master Facility Plan is being developed.
- 2.a. Although many opportunities of staff development were offered to staff, no evidence of specific staff development regarding “customer service” was evident. School Operations focuses on becoming more user-friendly places for parents.
- c. The district has indicated that it has been supportive of the following:
 - Site Safety Committee at each site including parents and school staff on committee who meet monthly;
 - Desegregation Parent Training — 400–500 parents were trained for jobs;
 - Positive student presentations at opening of board meeting have increased attendance;
 - Partnership breakfast has helped adopt the school program;
 - Community Partnership Newsletter has improved communication;
 - Principal for the Day — about 25 of 35 schools participated with community and business leaders being principal for the day.
- 4.c. Over half of the schools in the district now are adopted by an organization. Partnerships were initiated such as The Healthy Student Program, started in May 1999 with the LA County Office of Education. The Los Angeles County Probation Department partnered with Carver Elementary School Library to increase books in the school.

Standard Implemented: Partially

Previous Rating: 2
Self Rating: 7
New Rating: 4



2.9 Parent/Community Relations

Professional Standard

Board members are actively involved in building community relations.

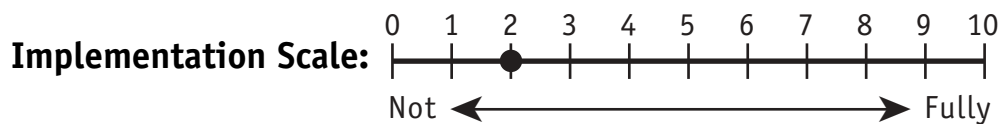
Progress on Recommendations and Recovery Steps

1. CSBA has been contracted and has provided two board weekend workshops, with two board members attending all day, another board member the majority of the July workshop, and only two board members attending the March workshop. A one-day February CSBA workshop was attended by three board members. Three board members attended the annual CSBA conference in December.
2. The board meeting tapes show evidence of the public speaking skills of board members and their ability to communicate message and feeling tone. District information is available through the state administrators office upon request to board members.

Although Board members participate in community activities as school board members, no overall coordinate strategy is evident to improve the understanding and knowledge base of the community. Board members speak to civic groups and organizations; however, no coordinated school board message is evident nor is the message part of the district's goals or community relations plan. The clearinghouse function of the public information office is not being utilized; no coordination of board members' presence in community functions is evident.

Standard Implemented: Partially

Previous Rating: 2
Self Rating: 4
New Rating: 2



3.1 Community Collaboratives, District Advisory Committees, School Site Councils

Professional Standard

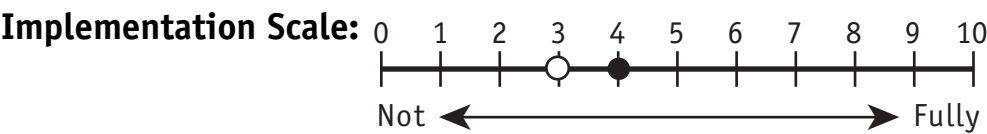
The board supports partnerships with community groups, local agencies and businesses.

Progress on Recommendations and Recovery Steps

- 1.a. The district has worked with community agencies to become part of the school community; this is the necessary first step in such agencies providing increased needed services. No reduction of duplication or refocusing of currently provided services was evident. The district has working partnerships with community agencies through its Guidance & Counseling, Health Services, Homeless Education, Child Welfare and Attendance and Mental Health Services Divisions. A parent interest survey was sent out (extent of survey unknown) by categorical programs; results and district actions based on those results need to be realized.
- b. The state administrator has initiated contacts with such agencies as African American Ministers and California State University Dominguez Hills, and has encouraged each school to be adopted by a community organization with over half the schools now being adopted. In addition, the state administrator’s moving the school board meetings to school sites has encouraged community participation and increased attendance at such meetings.
- c. CSBA has been contracted to provide training with the board on interagency collaboration.
- 2. The misuse of the school district’s partnership with the City Council was evident with the public criticism by an individual board member at a City Council meeting of the times and dates of school board meetings. There was no evidence of positive expansion of the school board’s role in building community relations.

Standard Implemented: Partially

Previous Rating: 3
Self Rating: 2
New Rating: 4



3.4 Community Collaboratives, District Advisory Committees, School Site Councils

Professional Standard

The district encourages and provides the necessary training for collaborative and advisory council members to understand the basic administrative structure, program processes and goals of all district partners.

Progress on Recommendations and Recovery Steps

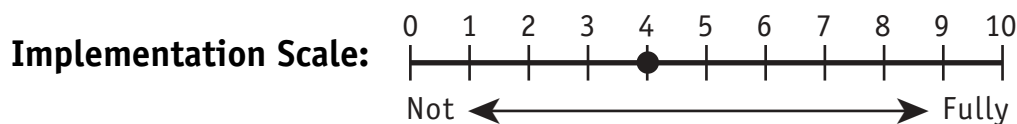
- 1.a. Evidence of a parent training conference held in November 1998 was noted. However, this is an annual parent training and no evidence was provided on enhanced parent training from the previous training. District advisory council bylaws were provided.
- b. Last fall, the curriculum development division received a report of services indicating parent in-service of roles and responsibilities at some school sites
- c. Sign-in sheets were provided by schools for Roles and Responsibilities of School Site Councils, a district in-service held January 8, 1999.
- d. No evidence other than "DAC chairman appears to be amenable to holding the annual DAC parent conference in a more local venue."
2. Minutes of the District Advisory Council along with one agenda were provided, with evidence a determination of standard compliance was impossible.

Standard Implemented: Partially

Previous Rating: 4

Self Rating: 6

New Rating: 4



3.11 Community Collaboratives, District Advisory Committees, School Site Councils

Legal Standard

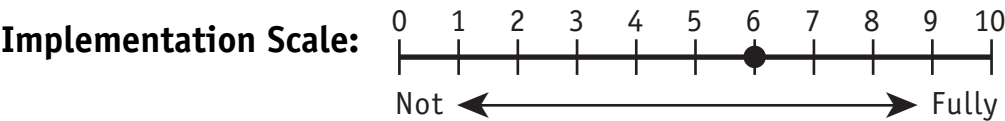
The school site council annually reviews the school plan and the board annually approves or disapproves all site councils’ plans.

Progress on Recommendations and Recovery Steps

- 1. A schoolwide Program Site Plan, 1998-99, for Abraham Lincoln Elementary was provided. Although the work in producing such a document was significant, evidence was not provided such revision effort is occurring district-wide. Evidence is necessary to verify approval of appropriate district administrator and the revisions to release time to comply with new laws.

Standard Implemented: Partially

Previous Rating: 6
Self Rating: 6
New Rating: 6



4.2 Policy

Professional Standard

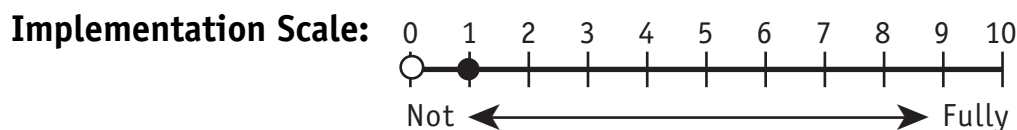
Policies and administrative regulations are up to date and reflect current law and local needs.

Progress on Recommendations and Recovery Steps

1. The district has contracted with CSBA to produce a policy manual for the district. The district staff members have made a commitment to spend time with the policy consultant and have prepared drafts to review with the CSBA consultant. Four days have been scheduled in August for training. A designee has been assigned to coordinate efforts in this regard.
2. The district contracted with CSBA to provide training to board members related to board's policy role; only two board members completed the July workshop. Two board members attended a training on CSBA Spokesperson Training and Boards Presidents' Workshop in March. Three attended the Coalition of California Black School Board Members Conference in March. Four attended the National School Board Association conference in April.

Standard Implemented: Partially

Previous Rating: 0
Self Rating: 3
New Rating: 1



4.3 Policy

Legal Standard

The board has adopted all policies mandated by state and federal law.

Progress on Recommendations and Recovery Steps

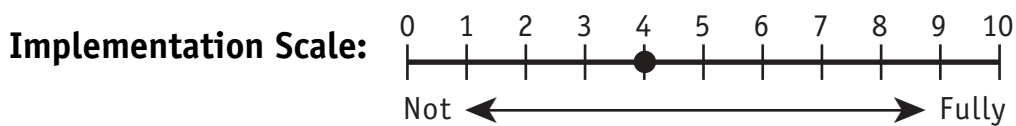
1. District staff is working with CSBA in preparation for an in-service in August. Divisions are preparing for the in-service with their appropriate policies. No evidence mandated policies have been separated.

Standard Implemented: Partially

Previous Rating: 4

Self Rating: 5

New Rating: 4



4.4 Policy

Legal Standard

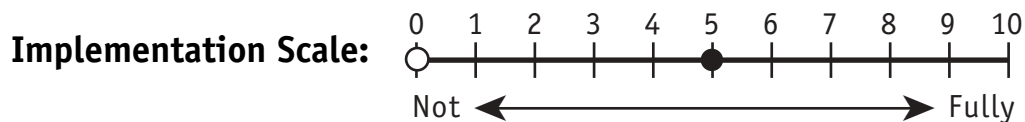
The board annually reviews its policies on intradistrict open enrollment and extracurricular/co-curricular activities.

Progress on Recommendations and Recovery Steps

- 1.a. The district annually reviews its policies on intradistrict open enrollment and extracurricular/co-curricular activities with the last review being on the June 1999 board agenda.

Standard Implemented: Partially

Previous Rating: 0
Self Rating: 5
New Rating: 5



5.2 Board Roles/Boardsmanship

Legal Standard

Board members participate in orientation sessions, workshops, conventions and special meetings sponsored by board associations.

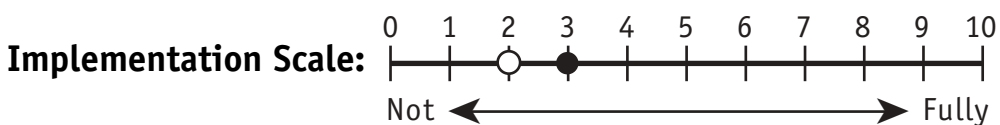
Progress on Recommendations and Recovery Steps

- 1.a. No evidence available concerning a change in stipend for board members, coordination of the board's staff development agenda, or evidence of an annual schedule of training aligned with board needs.
- b. CSBA has been contracted to provide a series of boardsmanship in-services. CSBA offered a weekend workshop in the district in July with two board members attending the entire workshop and two other board members attending partially.

In addition, four board members attended a CSBA Workshop in February; two board members attended the CSBA Annual Conference in December; two attended the CSBA Spokesperson Training and Boards Presidents' Workshop in March; three board members attended the Coalition of California Black School Board Members Conference in March; one board member attended the NSBA Annual Conference in April.

Standard Implemented: Partially

Previous Rating: 2
Self Rating: 4
New Rating: 3



5.3 Board Roles/Boardsmanship

Professional Standard

Pertinent literature, statutes, legal counsel and recognized authorities are available to and utilized by the board to understand duties, functions, authority and responsibilities.

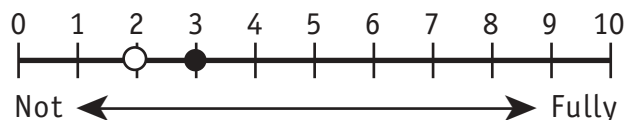
Progress on Recommendations and Recovery Steps

1. The duties of the governing board have been discussed at previous CSBA workshops and are planned to be reviewed at future CSBA boardsmanship workshops.
2. The governing board has not met in unison to review the needs of the board nor to set an agenda to address those needs in regards to duties, functions, authority and responsibilities of members. District Counsel represented by Barret Green attends all public and closed sessions of Board meetings. The state administrator strongly encouraged board members to participate on the communications committee and in the bylaws study session.

Standard Implemented: Partially

Previous Rating: 2
Self Rating: 4
New Rating: 3

Implementation Scale:



5.4 Board Roles/Boardsmanship

Professional Standard

Functional working relations are maintained among board members.

Progress on Recommendations and Recovery Steps

- 1.a. During the June and July board meetings, board members behavior indicated the beginning of a functioning working relations among board members. Such indicators extended into board closed sessions during the same months; signs of respectful relationships were evident.

All board members were present at the Dominguez Hills Boys Basketball celebration and all agreeably stood together with the team and staff in celebration of the of team’s achievements.

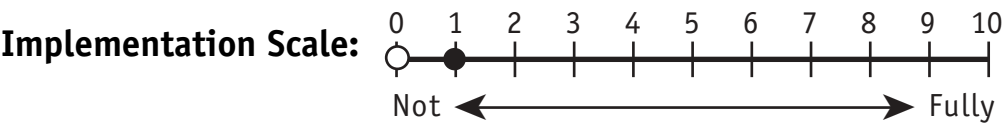
All board members joined together in celebrating the opening of the modernized Compton High School building.

Three board members attended the Classified Week Celebration activity honoring staff. Three board members attended the Teacher Day Celebration activity.

- 2.a. The Board President attended three CSBA workshops including one designed specifically for Board Presidents in March. The Board President models desirable behaviors in regards to leadership and support for district employees. At the September CSBA board workshop, where five board members attended, ground rules were established for board meetings.

Standard Implemented: Partially

Previous Rating: 0
Self Rating: 2
New Rating: 1



5.7 Board Roles/Boardsmanship

Professional Standard

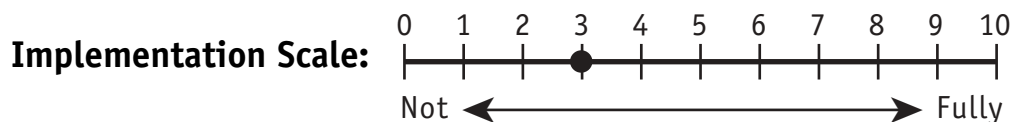
The board publicly demonstrates respect and support for district staff.

Progress on Recommendations and Recovery Steps

- 1.a. CSBA has been contracted to provide boardsmanship training. One weekend workshop was provided in July without the benefit of all board members being present at any time during the workshop.
- d. All board members have joined the state administrator in celebrating staff successes in the public recognition portion of the opening of board meetings. The board has recently demonstrated respect for staff through their behavior and public statements at these designated times. However, when staff have presented information and answered questions during the regular board meetings, the state administrator has had to appeal to individual board members to not publicly slander nor verbally abuse staff in such settings. The state administrator has had to intervene on behalf of the staff. One board member individually called a press conference to communicate criticism of the district's staff and how a fire was handled within the district.

Standard Implemented: Partially

Previous Rating: 3
Self Rating: 4
New Rating: 3



6.1 Board Meetings

Legal Standard

An adopted calendar of regular meetings exists and is published specifying the time, place and date of each meeting. (EC 35140)

Progress on Recommendations and Recovery Steps

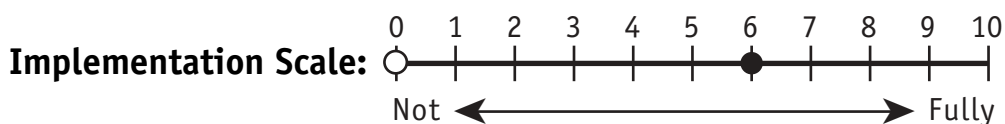
- 1.a. The board has published, publicly noted and made available its meeting schedule by distribution throughout the district by fax, in the press, and cable T.V. Copies were provided the review team.
- b. District staff has developed and posted its meeting schedule both in a hard copy and on the T.V. station.

Standard Implemented: Partially

Previous Rating: 0

Self Rating: 7

New Rating: 6



6.2 Board Meetings

Professional Standard

Agendas, minutes and other pertinent data are available to the public during regular working hours.

Progress on Recommendations and Recovery Steps

- 1.a. The district is now current in its publication and approval of board meeting minutes.

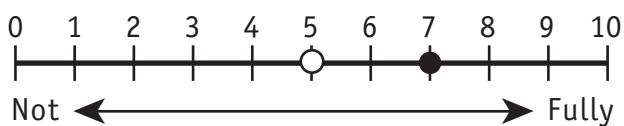
Standard Implemented: Partially

Previous Rating: 5

Self Rating: 9

New Rating: 7

Implementation Scale:



6.4 Board Meetings

Professional Standard

Board meetings are conducted according to a set of bylaws adopted by the board.

Progress on Recommendations and Recovery Steps

- 1.a. The district has contracted with CSBA to assist the district in updating its policies and regulations. The process of updating board bylaws had not begun as of the date of this review.
- b. According to a memo from CSBA representatives, at least two board retreats sponsored by CSBA were held in September 1998 and February 1999. At the September meeting, board members “developed ground rules for board meetings and discussed many of the difficult and emotional issues related to the state takeover.”
- d. Based on eyewitness reports and videotape evidence, there still remains a great deal of ill will on the part of some board members regarding how board meetings are conducted by the board president. At some board meetings when particular board members have protested an action by the board president, the board president has had to adjourn the meeting due to excessive disruptions.

Implementation Scale: Partially

Previous Rating: 0
Self Rating: 0
New Rating: 1

