



West Fresno Elementary School District

Pupil Achievement

Comprehensive Review
June 2003

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PUPIL ACHIEVEMENT

SUMMARY OF PRINCIPAL FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview

The West Fresno Elementary School District is emerging from a multiyear period of leadership turmoil. The fact that the 2002-03 school year has taken place is a testament to the resiliency and dedication of the district and school site staff that have stayed through the many transitions and difficulties.

The challenges that the district faces in the area of pupil achievement are significant, but the State Administrator and his team are well equipped for the work that lies ahead. The past three years have seen both increases and decreases in the district's academic performance, but generally show signs of upward progress. Nonetheless, the district's two schools remain in the bottom decile of schools in the state.

Factors that may have some influence on the performance of students include, but are not limited to the following:

- The students in the district are generally low income (over 90 percent qualify for free or reduced priced meals).
- Approximately 50 percent of the students attending school in the district are classified as English Language Learners.
- The demographics of the community are rapidly changing from predominately African American to a combination of African American, Hispanic, and Asian students.
- There is a relatively high mobility rate attributable to families that rely on agricultural work for income.
- The district has encountered difficulties in hiring qualified staff. Approximately 15 of the district's 50 teachers do not hold the proper credentials.
- The district has experienced financial difficulties due to poor management by past board members and superintendents.

In addition to the elementary and middle school sites, the district also serves as administrative agent to three charter schools. Data about the charter schools was not available to include in this report. Furthermore, the findings and recommendations presented in this report do not address the charter schools, as the district is not directly involved in the delivery of instruction at these schools.

This review serves as a baseline measure of the district's performance relative to FCMAT's standards in the area of Pupil Achievement. It is important to note that the scores reflect the district's current status. Past performance and future plans are acknowledged, but were not considered in the application of FCMAT's scoring rubric. It is expected that the district's actions to improve its planning to support pupil achievement will lead to significant gains in scores in the future.

This report categorizes the FCMAT standards in the following functional areas:

1. Planning Processes
2. Curriculum
3. Instructional Strategies
4. Assessment and Accountability
5. Professional Development

While each standard contains its own specific recommendations for improvement, those pertaining to planning processes have an overarching effect and are referenced throughout the report. For example, the goals, objectives, and benchmarks that are established through the district's planning processes should be referenced and guide the development and use of curriculum, assessments, and professional development. As a result, the recommendations in functional areas 2 through 5 reference standards and recommendations in the Planning Processes area when appropriate.

Findings and Recommendations

The district has shown positive signs of sincerely wanting to understand its weaknesses and challenges so that it might address them effectively. As with many districts in West Fresno's position, the list of improvement steps is quite long. To adequately address all areas of need, the district's efforts must be deliberate and measured. Below is an overview of findings and recommendations from each of the functional areas included in this review.

1. Planning Processes

The district has contracted with The Literacy Connection (LitConn), a Fresno-based education consulting and planning firm, to support the development of its Local Education Agency (LEA) Plan and also to support professional development and implementation of plan components. The district has worked with LitConn in the past, so there is a shared understanding of the district's past challenges and motivation to overcome them. The LEA Plan provides a good starting point for school improvement planning, but should not be the end of planning. The goals and objectives identified in the district's LEA Plan are too general to guide implementation and plan accountability. The district should consider developing a focus area that will guide all improvements. This area of focus should be developed with input from administrators, teachers, parents, and students. The area of focus and LEA Plan should be used to develop site-specific school improvement plans that will guide the day-to-day activities to support improvements in pupil achievement.

2. Curriculum

The district has done a good job ensuring that instructional materials are available for students. It is slightly behind the state's schedule for adopting standards-based curriculum, but it is in the process of selecting curriculum for science, reading/language arts, and English Language Development. The district should work on developing a curriculum management plan to guide its adoption and implementation of new curriculum. It will be critical to include input from teachers in this process.

3. Instructional Strategies

The district does not group or track students. Teachers are expected to address the learning needs of all students through differentiated instruction. Outside of the regular instructional day,

the district offers after school enrichment and summer programs. Low-performing students are encouraged or required to participate in these programs to make necessary academic gains. The district needs to improve how it identifies and supports students with special learning needs (such as English Language Learners, special education, and GATE students). The district needs to develop a consistent process for screening, placing, and serving students with special needs.

4. Accountability and Assessment

In addition to state-level assessments, the district also supports numerous local assessments. Teachers regularly assess students and share results with their grade-level teams and site administrator. As the district implements its LEA Plan and develops its school improvement plans, it should create benchmarks for student performance in each subject area that are grade-specific. The benchmarks should be correlated with assessments. While teachers are familiar with assessments and the data generated by assessments, they would benefit from additional professional development and support to truly use assessment data to make decisions related to the most effective instructional approach for each student.

5. Professional Development

Professional development has been a casualty of the absence of leadership. However, the district does recognize the importance of professional development. From March to May 2003 all teachers were required to attend “Teacher Basics” training to help improve classroom management skills. While this training could have been even more valuable at the beginning of the school year, it is a positive sign that training did occur at some point in the year. The district’s LEA Plan specifies several areas in need of professional development, including the support of teachers receiving their CLAD certification. In the future, professional development should be directly tied to the district’s strategic goals and plans.

Conclusion

Addressing improvements in pupil achievement will be a multiyear effort. While there are many areas on which the district must work to realize improvements, there are some areas that are higher priorities than others. The first priority for the district should be developing an area of focus and meaningful school improvement plans for each school site. The district’s LEA Plan provides a strong foundation for such planning. During the 2003-04 school year the district should concentrate its efforts on developing plans and introducing processes that value the input of teachers and parents. In the 2004-05 and following school years, the district should continue to refine its plans, but should be making significant progress on implementing improvements.

1.1 Planning Processes—Common Vision

Professional Standard

A common vision of what all students should know and be able to do exists and is put into practice.

Sources and Documentation

1. Interviews with district administrators, principals, teachers, and consultants
2. 2003-07 District Local Educational Agency (LEA) Plan

Findings

1. The district does not have a current strategic plan, but has been working on developing a Local Education Agency (LEA) Plan following the template provided by the California Department of Education (CDE). The district is preparing this plan with assistance from The Literacy Connection (LitConn), a Fresno-based firm specializing in providing professional development and school improvement planning assistance. The plan was to be ready to submit to CDE by June 1, 2003. Among the plan's action steps are the following provisions:
 - a. Administrators and teachers will receive training on how to align curriculum, instruction, and assessment with (state) standards.
 - b. Standards will be posted in every classroom for every student to see.
 - c. Teacher lesson plans will make explicit reference to standards-based objectives being taught.
2. According to district administrators, the district uses state standards to determine grade-level expectations. The district provided teachers with a copy of adopted state standards when they were first introduced. Each school year additional copies are ordered for new teachers. It is assumed that returning teachers have their original copies.
3. Principals indicated that teachers are required to submit lesson plans each week. At the middle school, teachers must reference state standards as part of their lesson plans. At the elementary school, not all teachers are consistently submitting lesson plans or using adopted curriculum.
4. The district does not have a process for communicating information about state standards to parents. However, some grade levels at the elementary school have taken steps to provide such information to parents.

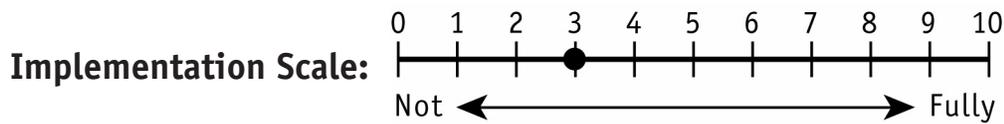
Recommendations and Improvement Plan

1. The district's LEA Plan is sufficient to meet state and federal reporting requirements. However, it should not be the only planning document that the district relies upon to inform student improvement. The district should build on the vision outlined in the LEA Plan through the following activities:
 - a. Identify a strategic focus for the district. The LEA Plan includes a vision for change based on the federal performance goals. The district should develop a concise statement of its vision or strategic focus, which will become the focal point of all activities. For example, based on what the district has outlined in its LEA Plan,

it may wish to identify “Literacy” as its focus area. The district would then need to establish specific benchmarks for how the strategic focus will be met over time, which include but are not limited to performance on assessments. Furthermore, all professional development and instructional resources must further the strategic focus.

- b. Develop School Improvement Plans (SIP) for each site. Once the strategic focus is identified, the district should facilitate the development of a SIP for each of the school sites. The LEA Plan provides a general vision for the district, but specific action steps at each site are needed to truly effect change. The SIP should clearly identify priorities and action steps and reinforce LEA Plan goals. The district should consider using the California Department of Education’s Single Plan template to guide its plan development. The SIP development process should be participatory and include administrators, principals, teachers, parents, and students. Once the plan is developed, it should be shared with the larger community of parents. School sites should prepare a new SIP each year.

Standard Implemented: Partially



1.2 Planning Processes—Administrative Structure

Professional Standard

The administrative structure of the district promotes student achievement.

Sources and Documentation

- 1. Interviews with district administrators, principals, and teachers

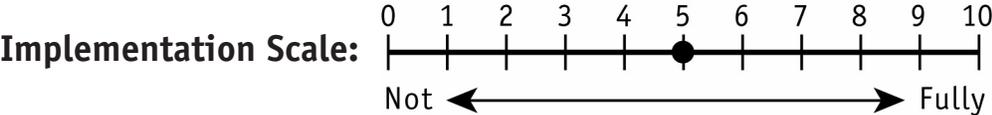
Findings

- 1. At the district level there are two staff members responsible for overseeing and managing all aspects of curriculum, accountability, and instructional services. One or both staff members must approve requests for instructional materials, classroom resources, and professional development.
- 2. The district is working on instituting a process where requests made by teachers are first made to principals, and, if approved, brought to the district for consideration.
- 3. The district has contracted with LitConn to provide school improvement planning and implementation support.

Recommendations and Improvement Plan

- 1. The district staff responsible for pupil achievement should provide ongoing mentoring to principals to support their development as site leaders.
- 2. As part of the district’s summer planning conference it should ensure that it clearly documents the roles and responsibilities of staff involved in improving pupil achievement. Furthermore, it should document how communication should be handled among staff at the district and school sites to support effective communication.

Standard Implemented: Partially



1.3 Planning Processes—Long-Term Goals

Professional Standard

The district has long-term goals and plans to support student achievement improvements.

Sources and Documentation

1. Interviews with district administrators, principals, teachers, and consultants
2. 2003-07 District Local Educational Agency (LEA) Plan

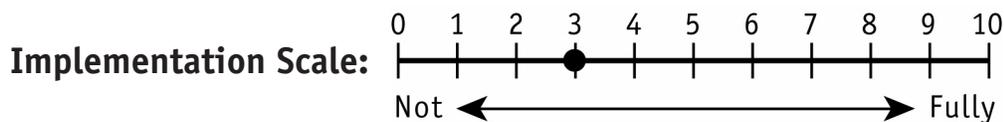
Findings

1. See Finding #1 for Standard 1.1.
2. The district's LEA Plan outlines several district goals, including:
 - a. All students will achieve proficiency or better in reading and mathematics by 2013-2014.
 - b. All limited English proficient students will become proficient in English and reach high academic standards, at a minimum attaining proficiency or better in reading/language arts and mathematics.
 - c. By 2005-06 all students will be taught by highly qualified teachers.
 - d. All students will graduate from high school.

Recommendations and Improvement Plan

1. See Recommendation #1 for Standard 1.1.

Standard Implemented: Partially



1.4 Planning Processes—Resource Allocation

Professional Standard

The district directs its resources fairly and consistently to accomplish its objectives.

Sources and Documentation

1. Interviews with district administrators, principals, and teachers
2. 2003-07 District Local Educational Agency (LEA) Plan

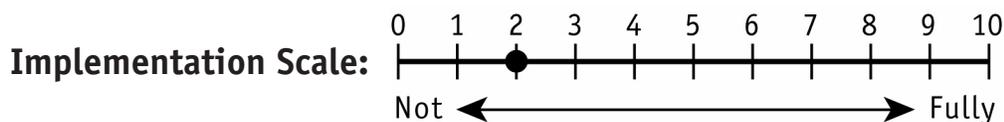
Findings

1. The district office handles all budget decisions. School principals and teachers may request materials or resources, but a district administrator must approve them. According to district staff, if resources are available, requests are generally approved.
2. The district does not currently maintain site budgets or review budgets with site councils.
3. In 2002-03 the district purchased mathematics textbooks and instructional materials for all classrooms. The district plans to order state-approved standards-based textbooks and related instructional materials for reading/language arts and science over the summer of 2003. These materials should be available for all students at the beginning of the 2003-04 school year.
4. The LEA Plan should identify the estimated cost and funding sources for all planned action steps. The draft plan reviewed by the study team did not include details about costs or funding sources. This information should be included in the final plan that is submitted to CDE.

Recommendations and Improvement Plan

1. The LEA Plan and School Improvement Plans should clearly identify how resources will be allocated to support improvements in pupil achievement.
2. The district should develop a process to track program information and resource allocation to the site level.
3. The School Site Council should be included in reviewing site budgets.

Standard Implemented: Partially



1.5 Planning Processes—Program Funds

Legal Standard

Categorical and compensatory program funds supplement and do not supplant services and materials to be provided by the district.

Sources and Documentation

1. Interviews with district administrators

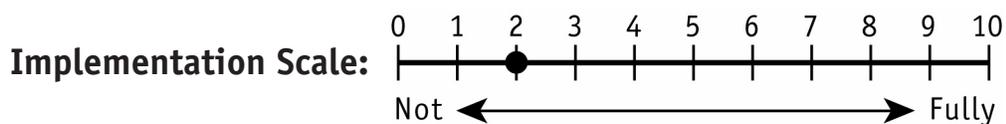
Findings

1. Currently, all activities related to the development and management of the instructional support budget are managed by the Directors of Curriculum and Instruction. The district does not maintain site-level budgets. Hence it is difficult to accurately determine the extent to which this standard is addressed.
2. Since both the elementary and middle school principals are relatively new administrators, they have not been involved in budget management. However, it is expected that as they gain experience they will become more involved in resource decisions and budget management.
3. The budget process does not include consultation with the school site council.

Recommendations and Improvement Plan

1. See Recommendations for Standard 1.4.

Standard Implemented: Partially



1.6 Planning Processes—Student Performance

Professional Standard

The district's planning process focuses on supporting increased student performance.

Sources and Documentation

1. Interviews with district administrators, principals, teachers, and consultants
2. 2003-07 District Local Educational Agency (LEA) Plan

Findings

1. See Finding #1 for Standard 1.1.
2. The district has convened a leadership team comprised of administrators and teachers to support the development of the LEA Plan. Each leadership team member disseminates information and collects feedback from the larger school community. The district's LEA plan states that this leadership team will meet three times each school year to update program effectiveness and to re-examine instructional strategies.
3. Each school has identified a committee of Teacher Leaders comprised of a teacher from each grade level. At the elementary school, this team meets weekly. At the middle school level, the team members met regularly, but due to Teacher Basics professional development sessions the meetings did not occur during the last trimester of the school year. District administrators indicated that many of these same Teacher Leaders also serve on the committee that is developing the LEA Plan. In the future the district will seek to form one group of Teacher Leaders for each campus who will attend to both site-level and district-level responsibilities.
4. In June 2003 district and site administrators will meet to discuss plans for the 2003-04 school year. LitConn will facilitate this meeting. Among the goals for the planning session are to develop a master calendar of events that will contribute to meeting LEAP goals.

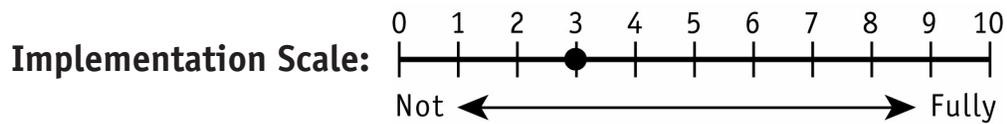
Recommendations and Improvement Plan

1. Prior to the beginning of the 2003-04 school year the district should identify subject area assessments and performance benchmarks for each grade level. Every teacher, parent and student should know what students must score on each local assessment in order to be considered performing "on grade level" at each trimester of the year. This will facilitate and standardize grading, intervention and retention practices throughout the district. The identified benchmarks should be directly related to the district's strategic focus and school improvement plans.
2. By the end of the second trimester of instruction the district should identify students that may benefit from summer school. This decision should be based on which students are not meeting grade level benchmarks. Parents should be notified promptly

of any decision to refer a student to summer school or retention. A cadre of teachers should be convened to determine what should be taught to students that have been identified in need of summer school. The decision of what to teach should be based on what students need to know relative to the area of focus and grade and subject level benchmarks.

3. The district should continue to utilize the after school enrichment opportunities to support student achievement. The district should ensure that after school enrichment activities support regular school day instruction and are consistent with subject and grade-level benchmarks.

Standard Implemented: Partially



2.1 Curriculum—Management

Professional Standard

The district, through its adopted policy, provides a clear operational framework for management of the curriculum.

Sources and Documentation

1. Interviews with district administrators and principals

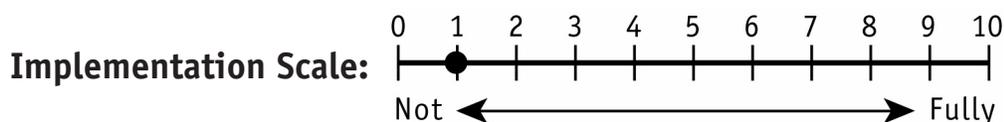
Findings

1. The district does not have written policy or plan for managing its curriculum.
2. In the past, a variety of processes have been used to adopt curriculum. This has included former Superintendents making decisions without consultation of site administrators or teachers. The current administration provides teachers with an opportunity to provide feedback about the materials that the district will adopt.
3. The district intends to follow a five-year adoption cycle.
4. The district is relying on LitConn to provide support as it adopts a new reading/language arts curriculum.

Recommendations and Improvement Plan

1. The district should develop and adopt a curriculum management plan that documents the district's curricular objectives, clarifies organizational responsibilities, provides a framework for curriculum design, and promotes consistency in curriculum delivery. The plan should be developed with the following attributes:
 - a. Involve teachers in the development of the plan. Ensure that once the plan is developed, teachers are well informed about the process for managing curriculum.
 - b. The plan should support the effective use of standards-based curriculum.
 - c. The plan should place a strong emphasis on the use of assessments.
 - d. Professional development needs should be identified as part of the plan, and professional development opportunities should be available to support the effective use of curriculum.
2. Once the plan is developed, appropriate board policies should be created to enforce the effective use of the plan.

Standard Implemented: Partially



2.2 Curriculum—Management

Professional Standard

Policies regarding curriculum and instruction are reviewed and approved by the school board.

Sources and Documentation

1. Interviews with district administrators

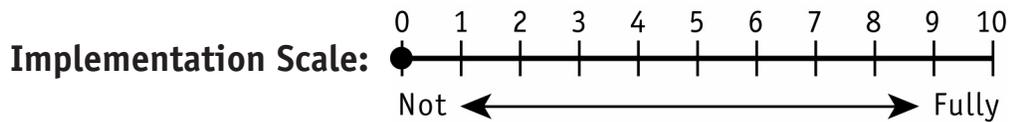
Findings

1. The board is currently serving in an advisory capacity. There is no evidence that in the past the board has adopted policies related to curriculum and instruction.

Recommendations and Improvement Plan

1. See Recommendations for Standard 2.1.

Standard Implemented: Not Implemented



2.3 Curriculum—Objectives

Professional Standard

The district has clear and valid objectives for students, including the core curriculum content.

Sources and Documentation

1. Interviews with district administrators, principals, and teachers
2. 2003-07 District Local Educational Agency (LEA) Plan
3. California State Content Standards

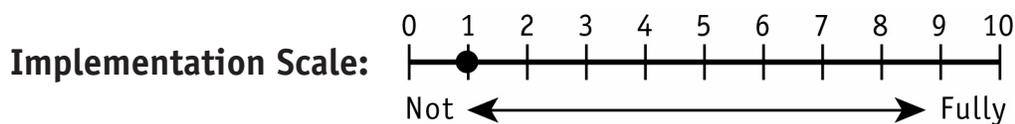
Findings

1. According to district administrators, the district uses state standards to determine grade-level expectations. The district provided teachers with a copy of adopted state standards when the standards were first introduced. Each school year additional copies are ordered for new teachers. It is assumed that returning teachers have their original copies.
2. Teachers who were interviewed expressed familiarity with standards in reading/language arts and mathematics, but less so with other subjects such as science.
3. The district plans to post standards on the walls of all classrooms in 2003-04.
4. The district's LEA Plan sets achievement goals in mathematics and reading/language arts for all students.

Recommendations and Improvement Plan

1. The district's strategic focus should be used to develop specific curricular objectives. The objectives should connect to goals included in the district's LEA Plan and each school site's School Improvement Plan.

Standard Implemented: Partially



2.4 Curriculum—Instructional Materials

Professional Standard

Sufficient instructional materials are available for students to learn.

Sources and Documentation

1. Interviews with district administrators, principals, and teachers
2. Classroom observations

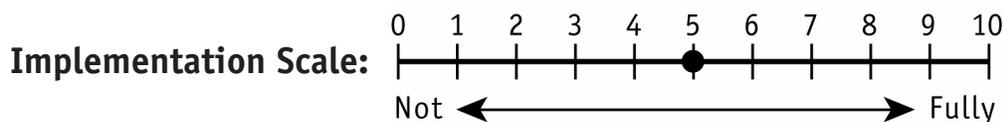
Findings

1. For the most part, teachers felt that they had enough materials to meet their students' learning needs. However, some lower grade teachers felt that they could use more "easy reader" decodable books for lower-level readers. At the middle school, some materials were misplaced or stolen during the renovation/modernization project.
2. Most elementary teachers felt that they did not have enough standards-based materials to meet the learning needs of their English Language Learner (ELL) students. The district has purchased sufficient materials, but many teachers do not feel that the curriculum meets the needs of their ELL students. The district is planning to review its English Language Development curriculum and adopt new curriculum during the 2003-04 school year.
3. According to the district's LEA Plan, every classroom needs to contain a minimum of 300 age-appropriate and interesting books for independent reading. The district does not have an inventory of the books in each classroom library.

Recommendations and Improvement Plan

1. Ensure that all available instructional materials are standards-based. The district should plan to phase out non-standards-based, non-state-approved instructional materials.
2. Evaluate whether existing materials are available in sufficient numbers to support the learning level of each student within a classroom. This may require that the district redistribute some materials to ensure that sufficient materials are available for all lower or higher achieving students.
3. Each School Site Plan should identify how instructional materials will be used to meet student learning needs.

Standard Implemented: Partially



2.5 Curriculum—Instructional Materials

Professional Standard

In subject areas for which the state has adopted standards, instructional materials are available to students that are aligned with state standards.

Sources and Documentation

1. Interviews with district administrators, principals, and teachers
2. 2003-07 District Local Educational Agency (LEA) Plan
3. List of State Board Approved standards-based textbooks

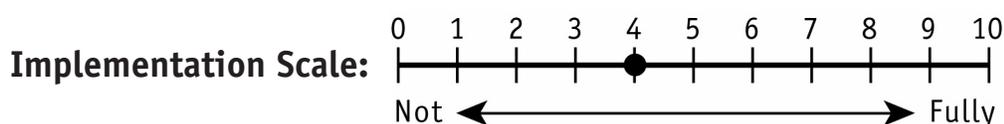
Findings

1. The district recently adopted curriculum aligned with state standards in phonics, English Language Development (ELD), and K-5 mathematics. The mathematics materials for grades 6 through 8 are not aligned to standards. The district plans to revisit the adoption for mathematics during the 2003-04 school year.
2. The district expects to adopt a standards-based reading/language arts curriculum in 2003-04, which is one year behind the state schedule.
3. The district does not currently have an adopted curriculum for science. A new standards-based curriculum will be adopted in the summer of 2003 and introduced during the 2003-04 school year. This is two years behind the state schedule.
4. The district's social science curriculum is not aligned to state standards. The district will consider adopting a standards-based social science curriculum in 2004-05.
5. According to the district's LEA Plan, all textbooks and supplementary materials will be aligned to state standards.

Recommendations and Improvement Plan

1. Continue with its plan to adopt and purchase new instructional materials.
2. Review the use of mathematics textbooks at the middle school, as it appears that some teachers may not be using standards-based materials.
3. Plan professional development opportunities to support the implementation of any new materials.

Standard Implemented: Partially



2.6 Curriculum—Education Technology

Professional Standard

The district has adopted a plan for integrating technology into curriculum and instruction at all grade levels.

Sources and Documentation

1. West Fresno Elementary School District Technology into Education, Five Year Plan
2. Interviews with district administrators

Findings

1. The district's five-year plan for technology has expired. Furthermore, the district has not used the plan to guide its educational technology activities. There are several reasons why the plan has not been successfully followed, including:
 - a. The district no longer employs the technology coordinator who helped create the plan.
 - b. The district lost equipment during the modernization of its facilities.
 - c. The modernization resulted in less wiring to classrooms.
2. At the elementary school there is no formal technology curriculum or instruction being implemented. At the middle school, teachers are required to use the computer lab once a month and to tie instruction to state standards. It is left to each teacher's discretion as to how to align computer use with curriculum.
3. According to the district administrators, the district is currently understaffed to support technology. Currently, the district has a system administrator but also needs a dedicated technology coordinator.
4. The district LEA Plan states that the district will meet No Child Left Behind goals by following its technology plan. Furthermore, the plan specifies that the following activities will take place:
 - a. Listening centers will be used in every primary classroom.
 - b. Videos will be used to stimulate student interest in standards-based topics.
 - c. Upper and middle grade students will learn word processing and simple database and spreadsheet applications as tools for problem solving.

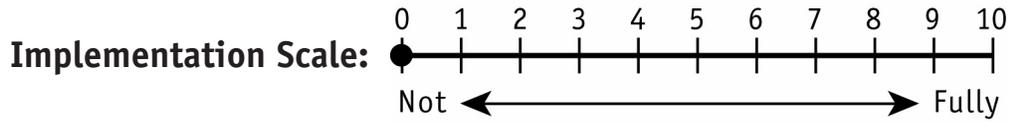
Recommendations and Improvement Plan

1. Develop an updated Education Technology plan based on the Recommended Guidelines for School District Educational Technology Planning developed by the Commission on Technology in Learning and approved by the State Board of Education in January 2001. This plan should identify professional development that will support its successful implementation.
2. Identify a part-time educational technology coordinator that will support professional development, development of educational technology strategies, and teachers using technology to meet learning goals. The technology coordinator must be equally fa-

miliar with technology and instructional strategies. The district may want to consider assigning a teacher or resource specialist to fulfill these responsibilities.

3. Develop a process to inventory and regularly track computers. Ensure that all computers are installed with theft-deterrent systems.

Standard Implemented: Not Implemented



2.7 Curriculum—Education Technology

Professional Standard

The district optimizes state and federal funding to install technology into schools.

Sources and Documentation

1. Interviews with district administrators, principals, and teachers

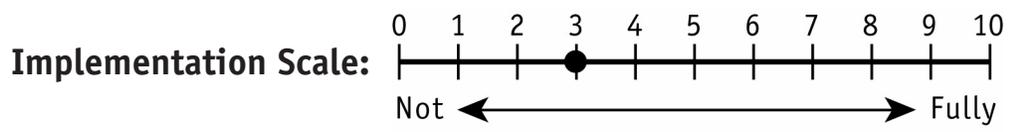
Findings

1. The district has purchased 35 computers for a lab at the middle school and 30 for the elementary school site. It has recently purchased additional computers to accommodate all 4th and 5th grade students.
2. Most classrooms have three computers.
3. Each site's library has two computers.
4. The district has purchased Reading Counts Literacy and Easy Tech software to support educational technology. All software is networkable and sufficient to support the needs of the district. The district is planning to purchase software to support mathematics.
5. Some teachers have attended professional development sessions on how to use the available software. However, not all teachers have participated in these trainings.
6. With exception of one classroom, all computers in the district are wired to the Internet.

Recommendations and Improvement Plan

1. Use the technology plan, as recommended in Standard 2.6, to drive technology grant application and implementation processes, so that grants function as a funding mechanism to serve district-wide goals. An effective technology plan will guide the district in how to maximize grant funds for curriculum integration and professional development opportunities and to establish accountability networks.
2. Institute an accountability system by which (1) schools demonstrate that they are utilizing technology, and (2) information is communicated centrally to the appropriate district administrators overseeing educational technology.
3. Use the technology plan to drive the professional development component of technology grants. Where teachers cannot demonstrate proficiency in the use of instructional technology, require computer and pedagogical training. Proficiency can be measured using the California Technology Assistance Project's (CTAP) online assessment tool.

Standard Implemented: Partially



2.8 Curriculum—Health

Legal Standard

AIDS prevention instruction occurs at least once in junior high or middle school and once in high school and is consistent with the CDE's 1994 Health Framework. (EC 51201.5)

Sources and Documentation

1. Interviews with district and site administrators

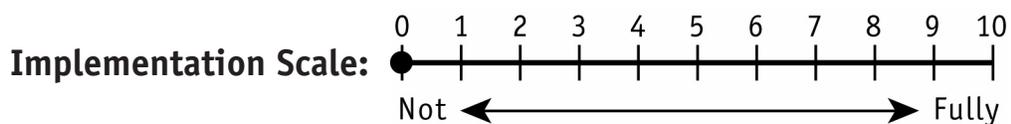
Findings

1. The district administrators and middle school principal were not aware of whether this instruction is occurring.
2. According to the middle school principal, the person that should be delivering instruction is the physical education teacher. Each year the physical education teacher attends a conference on health education.
3. The district office has a binder with supplementary materials on AIDS education, but no teacher has used the materials.

Recommendations and Improvement Plan

1. Ensure that the middle school physical education teacher is aware of the requirement to include instruction about AIDS during the school year.
2. Ensure that the middle school physical education teacher is aware of the supplementary resources available at the district office.
3. The middle school principal should require that the physical education teacher develop a lesson plan that includes instructing students about AIDS prevention in at least one of the middle school grades.

Standard Implemented: Not Implemented



3.1 Instructional Strategies—Learning Opportunities

Legal Standard

The district provides equal access to educational opportunities to all students regardless of race, gender, socioeconomic standing, and other factors. (EC 51007)

Sources and Documentation

1. Interviews with district staff, principals, and teachers
2. 2003-07 District Local Educational Agency (LEA) Plan

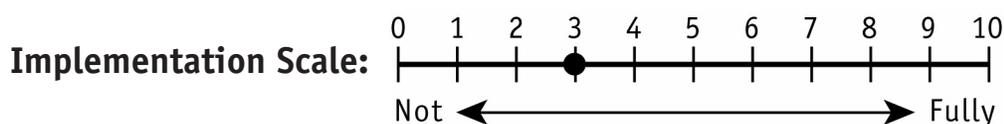
Findings

1. Students are placed in classrooms or learning situations without consideration of race, gender, socioeconomic status, or other factors.
2. Because the district is made up of only one elementary and one middle school, students of all demographics attend the same schools, and the racial integration and diversity of the student population reflects that of the community.
3. The district seeks to follow a practice of differentiated instruction, where all students within the classroom receive instruction appropriate to their distinct needs and levels. However, teachers have received little training in differentiated instruction in 2002-03, apart from some areas correlated with the Reading and Oral Language Assessment (ROLA). District staff expect that teachers know how to differentiate instruction from their teacher-training courses outside the district.
4. The district's LEA Plan indicates that in the future teachers will receive training that includes differentiation of instruction for English Language Learners (ELLs), struggling readers, advanced learners, and students in Special Education.

Recommendations and Improvement Plan

1. Each School Improvement Plan should outline specific strategies for how to meet the needs of all students. This could involve team teaching and grouping students for certain periods of the day based on language ability and academic level. See Recommendations for Standard 1.1 for additional discussion.
2. These changes must be supported by professional development for teachers, including targeted training opportunities on strategies for differentiating instruction.

Standard Implemented: Partially



3.2 Instructional Strategies—Learning Goals

Professional Standard

Challenging learning goals and instructional plans and programs for all students are evident.

Sources and Documentation

1. Interviews with district staff, principals and teachers.
2. 2003-07 District Local Educational Agency (LEA) Plan.

Findings

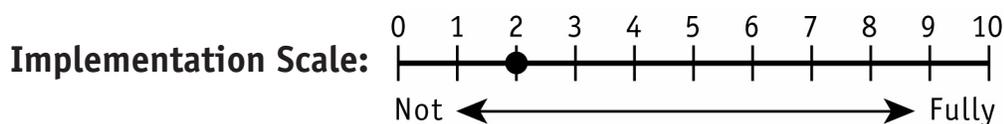
1. At the elementary school, teachers at each grade level developed plans for how to address standards in reading and mathematics throughout the academic year. The principal reviewed these plans. These plans listed applicable standards, but did not provide specific activities or a time line. It is the opinion of district staff and the elementary school principal that only some teachers are following these plans.
2. At both school sites, teachers are required to turn in a copy of the upcoming week's lesson plans to the principal each Friday. A majority of teachers follow this procedure. Some grade-level teams write their lesson plans together. At the middle school, teachers are required to identify which state standards are being addressed by each activity in their lesson plans. Some elementary teachers identify standards within their lesson plans and some do not.
3. There is no standardized district form for lesson plans.
4. The district does not have a documented procedure for assignment of homework.
5. The LEA Plan states that teacher lesson plans will make explicit reference to standards-based objectives being taught.

Recommendations and Improvement Plan

1. Learning goals and benchmarks to which teachers can align lesson plan objectives should be established. See Recommendations for Standard 1.1 for further discussion.
2. Principals should enforce that all teachers turn in lesson plans on a weekly basis.
3. Consider implementing a district-wide template for lesson plans. This discussion should involve ample input from teachers. See Exhibit 3.2a for an example of a lesson plan template.
4. Grade level Teacher Leaders should serve as the means to disseminate information discussed at the School Site Council and Leadership Team meetings. When these bodies determine and articulate what should be learned at each grade level, the Teacher Leaders should bring that information back to their colleagues, which will frame discussion on what to include in each week's lesson plans.

5. The Teacher Leaders should serve as the coaches for their grade-level teams. As such, they should receive training from the district on how to facilitate discussion and communicate information. They should also be made aware of what resources are available for supplementing curriculum. The district's plans to implement LitConn's peer-to-peer training procedures are a first step to this end.
6. Grade level teams should share ideas and strategies with one another when planning instruction. This is currently occurring at some grade levels but needs to become a district-wide practice. Dedicated time should be provided for grade level teams to consider assessment data and plan instruction together.
7. Develop, document, and disseminate guidelines on the amount and type of homework that should be assigned to students at each grade level. Creating policy standards to govern student homework should ensure that students are assigned appropriate quantities of work, and, at the same time, safeguard them against excessive amounts. Implementing this recommended policy should provide a systematic procedure for assigning homework and ensuring that the assigned homework is meaningful and complementary to in-school assignments. This policy should be part of the School Improvement Plan and communicated to parents at the beginning of every school year. Exhibit 3.2b shows a sample policy used by a school district for assigning students homework.
8. Reference http://www.wccusd.k12.ca.us/teachers/ct_main.htm, the West Contra Costa Unified School District English and Social Science Teacher Resource Web site, for an example of how curriculum and lesson plans can be vertically aligned to standards across subjects and grade levels.

Standard Implemented: Partially



3.3 Instructional Strategies—Learning Goals

Professional Standard

Expectations and practices exist to improve the preparation of students and to build a school structure with the capacity to serve all students.

Sources and Documentation

1. Interviews with district staff, principals, and teachers
2. 2003-07 District Local Educational Agency (LEA) Plan

Findings

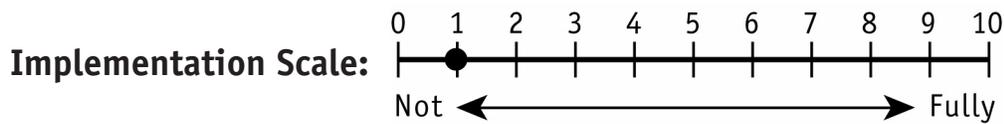
1. The district does not currently have a documented plan or procedure for assigning children to classrooms.
2. District staff expressed plans to assign English Language Learner (ELL) students to classrooms with “clusters” of other ELL students to better meet their needs.
3. The district offers after school tutoring classes to help meet the needs of low-achieving students. For the most part, these are at the teacher’s discretion and depend on whether the teacher puts in the extra effort to stay and teach after school. Some after-school teachers are compensated and some are not. There are no documented curricula, goals, or plans for after school classes.
4. The District LEA Plan states that: (1) services and programs will be targeted to lowest-performing student groups, including a “longitudinal language arts treatment,” a resource teacher, paraprofessionals, teacher training, and assessment usage and analysis; and (2) the district will offer after school and summer school programs for students having difficulties in reading and mathematics.

Recommendations and Improvement Plan

1. Each school’s improvement plans should include a structured approach for addressing the needs of all of its students. As discussed in Standard 1.1, this should begin by establishing benchmarks for each grade level in every subject. Specific strategies should be put in place for students who are not meeting those benchmarks, including:
 - a. Separate leveled groupings of students for targeted instruction. For a designated time period each day, or several days a week, students should be grouped according to their ability levels to receive specified instruction. These groupings should occur across classrooms and across grade levels. This will likely necessitate students switching classrooms for a period of the day and teachers dividing teaching responsibilities by levels. Teachers should use assessment data to group students in each subject, and collaborate with colleagues to establish differentiated instruction for each group. This leveled grouping exercise should take place a minimum of three days a week. This approach could be followed for reading/language arts, mathematics, and/or English Language Development (ELD). Students should be reassigned to appropriate groups throughout the course of the year based on assessment data. Teachers should be provided with time to discuss student assignments by grade level and by school.

- b. Align after school and summer school intervention classes with standards and school day instruction. After school and summer school classes should be structured to address the specific needs of students who are not meeting benchmarks (or, alternatively, those who are exceeding benchmarks and need additional enrichment). After school and summer school classes should be leveled by ability and address specific learning goals. Students should be placed in after school and summer school classes based on their assessment results. Teachers should be compensated for teaching after school and provided time to plan and map out goals and strategies.
2. Provide time for teachers to meet across grade levels to support vertical alignment of curriculum, goals and strategies within both schools.
 3. School sites should prepare school-wide Student Placement Forms to assist in assigning students to classrooms each year, and to provide teachers with information to prepare for instruction. Student Placement Forms should be filled out by the classroom teacher(s) in May so that the site administrator and/or teachers can plan for how to assign students and construct classes for the upcoming year. Documented information should include assessment scores, participation in special programs (such as after school intervention, GATE, RSP, Speech), English language level and behavior. Additional information could include: parental involvement, student attitude, special considerations for placement, and parental requests for a specific teacher. Sample Student Placement Forms for elementary students are included in Exhibit 3.3.

Standard Implemented: Partially



3.4 Instructional Strategies—Learning Goals

Professional Standard

Every elementary school has embraced the most recent California School Recognition Program Standards.

Sources and Documentation

1. Interviews with district staff, principals, and teachers

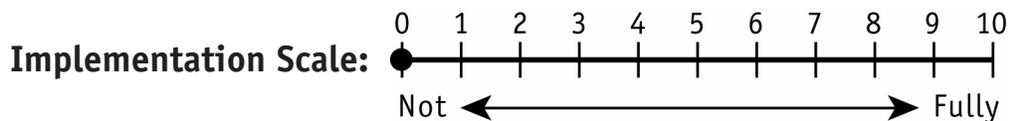
Findings

1. District staff are not aware of the California School Recognition Program Standards.

Recommendations and Improvement Plan

1. Use the most current California School Recognition Program rubric for middle schools to assist the district in enriching its strategic action plan and to benchmark its progress toward its goals. The most recent California School Recognition Program rubric for middle schools is located at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ope/csrp/>.
2. Use the California School Recognition Program rubric in the development of School Improvement Plans and the district-wide strategic plan and as an assessment tool of a school's ability to meet these plans' objectives.

Standard Implemented: Not Implemented



3.5 Instructional Strategies—Student Engagement

Professional Standard

Students are engaged in learning and they are able to demonstrate and apply their knowledge and skills.

Sources and Documentation

1. Student state required test data summaries and reports (SAT-9)
2. Interviews with district staff, principals, teachers, and students
3. 2003-07 District Local Educational Agency (LEA) Plan
4. Classroom visits

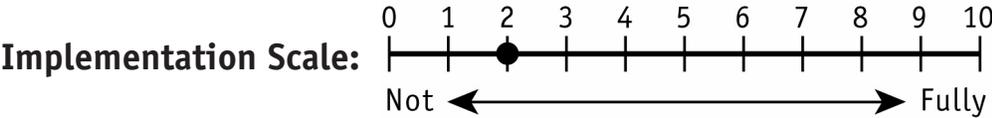
Findings

1. Since the 2000-01 school year, the percentage of students in the district who score at or above the 50th percentile on the STAR/SAT-9 exam has generally improved. Both schools met their Academic Performance Index Schoolwide growth targets, and the elementary school met its Comparable Improvement growth target for 2001-02. However, despite such gains, the district's overall performance is below the state average.
2. According to district staff, the students' engagement and learning potential is dependent on the quality and qualifications of the teacher. Some classes, particularly at the middle school, are being taught by substitutes who are underprepared for conducting instruction and for managing behavior. A large percentage of students in these classes are not engaged by what they are being taught, are not well behaved, and are not showing gains on assessments.
3. All district teachers are currently undergoing "Teacher Basics" training on classroom management. Teachers feel that this training has been helpful and is directly applicable to classroom practices.
4. The district's LEA Plan states that a "walk-through" analysis of classrooms conducted by LitConn, the district's consultant, found that on average 60 percent of students were not paying attention, and 80 percent were not engaged in focused interaction. The overall finding was that student learning and engagement need to improve.

Recommendations and Improvement Plan

1. Provide technical assistance and institute procedures to ensure that teachers are implementing the lessons learned in the "Teacher Basics" course. Improved classroom management will lead to more engaged students.
2. Take steps to employ qualified teachers. This will involve advertising the position and recruiting at colleges, universities, and other districts. The site administrators should be involved in interviewing and selecting new hires.
3. Consider developing grade level, school site or district-wide themes or projects for each quarter. Wide-scale themes can engage students in their learning and create school spirit and cohesion across the curriculum.

Standard Implemented: Partially



3.6 Instructional Strategies—Parental Involvement

Professional Standard

The district and school sites actively encourage parental involvement in their children’s education.

Sources and Documentation

1. Interviews with district staff, principals and teachers
2. 2003-07 District Local Educational Agency (LEA) Plan
3. District Parent Compact
4. School Site Council Membership list

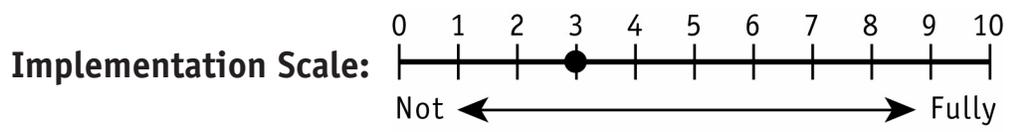
Findings

1. The district offers several evening events for families to attend on the school site, including Open House, concerts, and family activities such as Family Math.
2. Community Based English Tutoring (CBET) classes are held twice a week. They originally started with three groups (Spanish, Mien, and Hmong), but the classes were not well attended by Mien and Hmong parents.
3. The parent Advisory Committee organizes monthly “Meet and Greet” parent breakfasts. At the elementary school site these events are well attended, but middle school families attend less consistently. These breakfasts are funded with School Improvement and Parent and Teacher Involvement (Nell Soto) Funds.
4. The district has two annual parent-teacher conferences scheduled each academic year. Minimum day schedules for students are instituted to facilitate the scheduling of these conferences.
5. The district has a policy of having teachers conduct home visits at the beginning of each academic year for each of their students. At the middle school, the students’ homeroom teachers handle these visits. It is unclear whether these visits are happening consistently for every student.
6. At the home visits, parents are asked to sign a Parent Compact, agreeing that they will take an active role in their children’s education. Currently, Parent Compacts are not consistently signed or collected.
7. A district assessment conducted in preparation to write the LEA Plan found that parents need to be more involved at the school site level.
8. The LEA Plan states that: (1) Title III funds will pay for a minimum of two parent education classes per school year on how parents can support their children’s academic development at home. These classes will be conducted by teachers who are paid with a stipend; (2) translators will be provided at these classes, as well as at parent-teacher conferences; and (3) parents of English Language Learners will be invited to become members of the District English Learner Advisory Committee, a school-home communication forum.

Recommendations and Improvement Plan

1. School Improvement Plans should clearly delineate specific goals and policies related to parent involvement. These should include specific guidelines as to how teachers should recruit and use parent volunteers in the classrooms. These policies should be included in a parent handbook and discussed with parents at Back to School Night at the beginning of the year. School sites should consider implementing a “Classroom Parent” practice, where a parent is chosen from each classroom to serve as the school-home liaison.
2. Develop a parent handbook including: the school phone numbers, a list of the names of teachers and their classroom assignments, a school calendar, school policies including homework and discipline, the district’s strategic priorities, and cover letters from the principals.
3. Create a pamphlet for parents at each grade level listing academic standards, outlining how the district will assess student progress on meeting those standards, and strategies that parents can practice at home to assist their children in meeting standards.
4. Ensure that all students and parents sign Parent Compacts at the beginning of the school year.
5. The district, school sites, and classrooms should send home regularly scheduled parent newsletters informing parents of district, school, and classroom events. District newsletters should be sent on a trimester basis, school newsletters on a monthly basis, and classroom newsletters on a monthly or biweekly basis.
6. All district documents that go home should be translated into Spanish and any other language spoken by a large percentage of parents. Ensure that translators are available for all parent meetings. Seek assistance from the County Office of Education in translating documents and meetings.
7. Take steps to ensure that parent participation in leadership groups reflects the diversity of parents within the school community. This could be achieved by using “Classroom Parents,” as well as through active recruiting of underrepresented parent groups.
8. The elementary school should continue to have monthly “Meet and Greet” breakfasts. Since these events are not well attended at the middle school, this site should consider providing a different forum for regular parent participation, such as community meetings with the principal.
9. Implement the parent education classes described in the LEA Plan. Investigate whether it would be feasible to support parent training through adult education funds.

Standard Implemented: Partially



3.7 Instructional Strategies—Site Council

Professional Standard

Each school has a school site council or leadership team, comprised of teachers, parents, principal, and students, that is actively engaged in school planning.

Sources and Documentation

1. Interviews with district staff, principals and teachers.
2. 2003-07 District Local Educational Agency (LEA) Plan
3. School Site Council Membership list

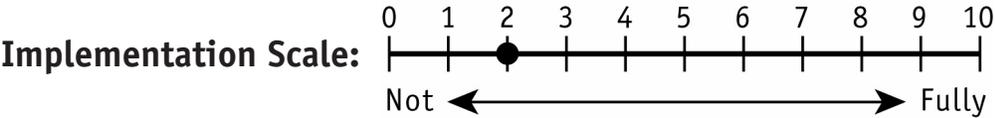
Findings

1. Due to its small size, the district has one site council for both schools. The district has plans to petition for a waiver to permit this consolidation. The council meets monthly and also serves to meet the advisory requirements for Migrant Education, Title I, and the Immediate Intervention/Underperforming Schools Program (II/USP).
2. Teachers and parents are elected to the council through peer nomination and selection.
3. The School Site Council has not been granted the decision-making power it is supposed to have. The council has not been given the opportunity to provide input on how categorical funds are spent.
4. The district's LEA Plan states that the council will receive a biannual report of student achievement and the school's implementation of the Professional Development plan, and that it will contribute input on how to improve school academic programs.

Recommendations and Improvement Plan

1. The School Site Council should be involved in reviewing and advising on budgets for the school sites.
2. If the district chooses to consolidate representatives from both school sites into one council, there should be time allotted at each meeting for the council to address and focus on issues specific to each of the campuses. Planning and expenditures should be considered separately for each school site.
3. The council should elect the School Site Council leader. Site principals can serve as administrative representatives; it is not necessary for additional district staff to serve on this council.
4. Develop a district "School Site Council Handbook" that outlines the council's responsibilities and procedures. Exhibit 3.7 provides an example of what this handbook should contain.

Standard Implemented: Partially



3.8 Instructional Strategies—Principal Leadership

Professional Standard

Principals make formal and informal visits to the classroom. Based on these visits, principals provide constructive feedback and assistance to teachers.

Sources and Documentation

1. Interviews with district staff, principals and teachers.

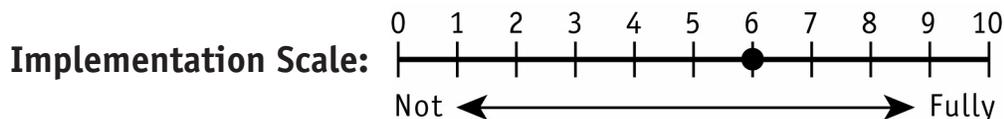
Findings

1. Site administrators visit classrooms and provide constructive feedback on a regular basis. The principals walk through all classrooms several times a week and provide feedback verbally or through written notes. If the principal thinks that further follow-up is necessary, she schedules a conference with the teacher. Teachers feel as though principals have a presence on the campus and are monitoring what is going on in the classrooms.
2. Principals state that they have an “open door” policy for teachers to come to them to discuss issues or concerns. Teachers agree that principals are available for support and assistance.
3. The district does not have a written policy as to how many minutes each day principals should spend visiting classrooms.

Recommendations and Improvement Plan

1. Continue to support training for principals. This may include training on how to conduct walk throughs to provide teachers with constructive feedback, time management, and data-driven decision making.
2. Include written documentation in School Improvement Plans regarding the district’s classroom visitation policy (how many minutes each day/week principals should visit classrooms, how feedback is to be provided, etc.).

Standard Implemented: Partially



3.9 Instructional Strategies—Learning Time

Legal Standard

Class time is protected for student learning. (EC 32212)

Sources and Documentation

1. Interviews with district staff, principals, and teachers

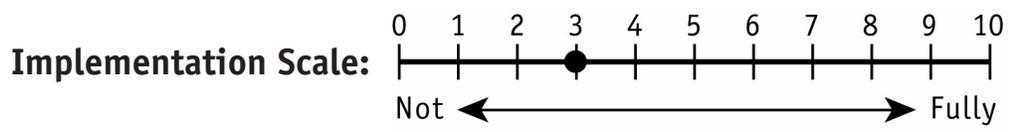
Findings

1. The district does not currently have a documented policy for protecting learning time from interruptions.
2. The district uses “block” instructional time at the middle school where students stay with one teacher for mathematics and science and another for English and Social Science. This practice minimizes student transition time in an effort to maximize instructional time.
3. The district has a strong emphasis on assessment. At the middle school, teachers assess every Wednesday, and at the elementary school, teachers are responsible for submitting assessment scores every six weeks. Several teachers indicated that they feel this assessment schedule is excessive and that they do not have enough time for instruction because they spend too much time assessing.

Recommendations and Improvement Plan

1. Document a policy that reinforces current district practices regarding block learning time and outlines the district’s approach to protecting learning time (for example, no prolonged interruptions for loudspeaker announcements, prohibited use of non-academic related videotapes, etc.). Ensure that administrators and teachers consistently honor these newly established goals.
2. Create a protected block of time for the district’s priority area of focus identified in strategic planning (Standard 1.1). When feasible, coordinate instruction so that all classrooms are teaching this subject area at the same time and consider it “protected time” that will not be interrupted by assemblies, announcements, special visits or other activities.
3. Work with teachers and LitConn consultants to eliminate unnecessary assessments and to develop a reasonable assessment schedule that allows for sufficient instructional time. Train teachers in activities and strategies for making effective use of class time when the teacher is occupied conducting one-on-one assessments. This could involve utilization of trained instructional aides or team-teaching to ensure that students remain productive even when the classroom teacher is busy assessing a student.
4. Communicate to parents via the parent handbook and Back to School Night that medical and dental appointments should not be scheduled during school hours.

Standard Implemented: Partially



3.10 Instructional Strategies—Learning Time

Professional Standard

Clearly defined discipline practices have been established and communicated among the students, staff, board, and community.

Sources and Documentation

1. Interviews with district staff, principals, and teachers
2. 2003-07 District Local Educational Agency (LEA) Plan
3. District Faculty Handbook 1998-1999

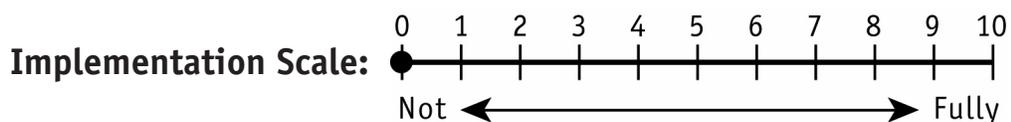
Findings

1. The district does not have an up-to-date, district-wide discipline plan. The most recent plan is five years old and is not widely familiar or distributed within the district.
2. Discipline issues are handled at the discretion of classroom teachers and site administrators.
3. Between September 2002 and March 2003 there were 80 suspensions at the elementary school and 101 suspensions at the elementary school.
4. A district assessment of environments conducive to learning conducted in preparation to write the LEA Plan found that: (1) the number of suspensions need to be reduced; (2) a school site discipline plan needs to be written; (3) a school safety/emergency plan needs to be written; (4) the whole staff needs training on positive discipline and behavior management; (5) parents need to be more involved at the school site level; and (6) opportunities for students to participate in the decision-making process and to have a voice in school climate issues need to be created.

Recommendations and Improvement Plan

1. Establish a district-wide discipline plan that incorporates input from teachers, parents, and students.
2. After the discipline plan has been vetted and written, establish a procedure for parents and students to review and sign it at the beginning of every year. Include it as part of the “Parent Compact.”

Standard Implemented: Not Implemented



3.11 Instructional Strategies—Learning Needs

Professional Standard

School class size and teacher assignments support effective student learning.

Sources and Documentation

1. Interviews with district staff, principals and teachers
2. 2003-07 District Local Educational Agency (LEA) Plan
3. Staff Qualifications and Assignment Records
4. California State GEAR-UP Program Professional Development Action Plan

Findings

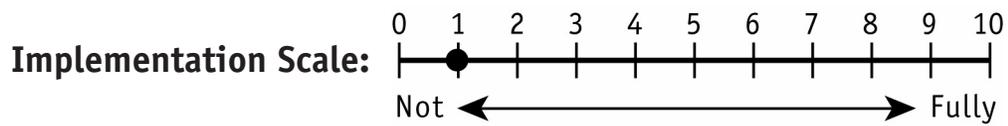
1. The district receives funding for class size reduction (20 students with one teacher) in kindergarten through grade three.
2. There is no explicit procedure for teacher assignment other than teacher preference.
3. The district currently has 15 out of 50 teachers teaching with emergency credentials.
4. Currently, every classroom has English Language Learner (ELL) students. However, only 22 out of 50 teachers have been trained to support ELL students (that is, only 22 teachers have CLAD credentials).
5. The middle school campus has three classes without a permanent teacher that have been staffed by a rotating assortment of substitute teachers.
6. At the middle school, college student volunteers from the Fresno State University GEAR-UP program are assigned to classrooms to serve as tutors. The principal seeks to assign one tutor to each classroom; tutors are not assigned based on specific student needs. Some elementary classrooms have district instructional aides assigned to them. However, several of these aides were recently reassigned to work at the new district preschool.
7. The district plans to reintroduce an Alternative Bilingual Program in 2003-04, beginning with one kindergarten class instructed in Spanish. This will necessitate the assignment of a teacher with a BCLAD credential, of which the district currently employs four.
8. The district's LEA Plan states that the district will enter into a partnership with local colleges and universities to train teachers and help them earn credit toward CLAD and BCLAD credentials.

Recommendations and Improvement Plan

1. When hiring new teachers, give highest priority to CLAD certified teachers.
2. Ensure that Beginning, Early Intermediate, and Intermediate level ELL students are placed in classrooms with CLAD certified teachers.

3. Take steps to employ qualified teachers. See Recommendation #2 for Standard 3.5.
4. Separate leveled groupings of students for targeted instruction and utilize Student Placement Forms to ensure appropriate assignment of students to classrooms. See Recommendations for Standard 3.3.

Standard Implemented: Partially



3.12 Instructional Strategies—Learning Needs

Professional Standard

Teachers use a variety of instructional strategies and resources that address their students' diverse needs.

Sources and Documentation

1. Interviews with district staff, principals and teachers
2. 2003-07 District Local Educational Agency (LEA) Plan

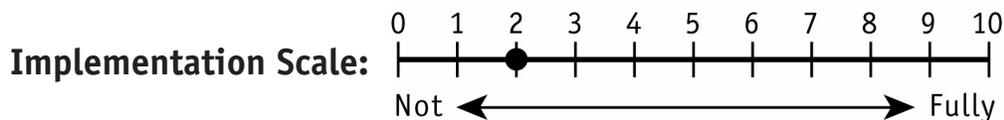
Findings

1. See Finding #3 for Standard 3.1.
2. Many teachers use “learning buddies,” collaborative learning and heterogeneous groupings so that peers can help each other to learn.
3. A district assessment conducted in preparation to write the LEA Plan indicated that the number of students instructed in small groups needs to increase.
4. The district’s LEA Plan indicates that teachers will receive training that includes differentiation of instruction for English Language Learners, struggling readers, advanced learners and students in Special Education.

Recommendations and Improvement Plan

1. Provide extensive professional development to teachers in how to differentiate instruction and how to appropriately group students for instruction. This training should be closely aligned to the adopted standards-based curriculum.
2. Separate leveled groupings of students for targeted instruction. See Recommendation #1 for Standard 3.3.

Standard Implemented: Partially



3.13 Instructional Strategies—Learning Needs

Professional Standard

Teachers modify and adjust instructional plans according to student needs and success.

Sources and Documentation

1. Interviews with district staff, principals, and teachers
2. School site visits

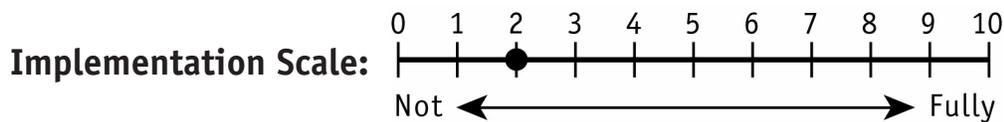
Findings

1. As discussed in Standard 3.12, the district seeks to follow the approach of differentiated instruction to meet the needs of a diverse group of students. However, there has been limited professional development in this practice.
2. In brief classroom visits, many outstanding teachers and visually exciting classrooms were observed. These teachers showed a strong dedication to their students. However, limited examples of students receiving differentiated instruction were observed.

Recommendations and Improvement Plan

1. See Recommendations for Standards 3.3 and 3.12.

Standard Implemented: Partially



3.14 Instructional Strategies—English Learners

Professional Standard

The identification and placement of English Learners into appropriate courses is conducted in a timely and effective manner.

Sources and Documentation

1. Interviews with district staff, principals, and teachers
2. 2003-07 District Local Educational Agency (LEA) Plan
3. District Enrollment Forms

Findings

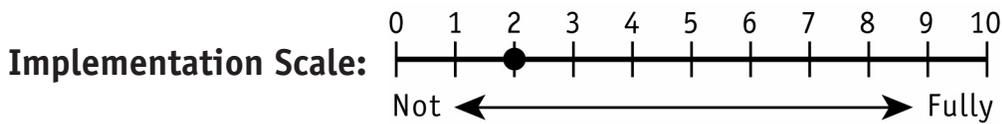
1. The district does not currently have a documented procedure on how English Language Learners are identified or placed.
2. Within 30 days of entering the district, students whose parents identify that they speak another language at home (via the Home Language Survey) are given the CELDT test to determine their English language ability. Students who transfer from another school and have a pre-existing CELDT score from the current academic year are not retested until the following year. The district has assigned a full-time teacher to conduct initial and annual CELDT assessments and provide classroom teachers with scores.
3. Midway through the 2002-03 school year, elementary school teachers were asked to select students designated as having Beginning and Early Intermediate level English abilities to be removed from their classrooms and placed in two Structured English Immersion (SEI) classes. Teachers were unhappy about this process, as they felt that their students had already “bonded” with their classmates and teachers and that it was disruptive to have students moved in the middle of the year. The SEI classes have had multiple instructors transferred in and out over the course of the few months that they have been in place. In addition, the two classes were not big enough to accommodate all of the Beginning and Early Intermediate students, so some of these students remained in their mainstream classes.
4. The district does not currently have enough Beginner students to create a “newcomer” class for those being introduced to English for the first time.
5. There is no SEI class for ELL students at the middle school level; all are placed into mainstream English classrooms regardless of their English abilities.
6. The district’s LEA Plans states that notification procedure for parents of ELL students will be: (1) upon initial enrollment parents will be notified within 30 days orally and in writing of their child’s designation, assessment information, and of their options and the school’s recommendation for placement (Structured English Immersion, Alternative Bilingual and English Language Mainstream); (2) parents of returning EL students will be given a Parent Notification form containing student information within

30 days of the beginning of the school year; (3) parents of ELLs who do not meet annual achievement goals will be notified within 30 days after such failure occurs.

Recommendations and Improvement Plan

1. Develop a master plan for English Language Learners that identifies how students will be identified, instructed and assessed, and benchmarks for how proficiency will be determined. This plan should include how schools will ensure that teachers are qualified to teach ELL students as well as what curriculum will be utilized. Teachers and parents should be consulted throughout the development of this plan.
2. Establish a plan for how various levels of ELL students will be placed in classrooms (e.g. Structured English Immersion, Newcomer, and/or ability level “clusters” within Mainstream English classrooms, etc.). Have this plan in place prior to the beginning of the school year. Make preparations for how the school sites will accommodate mid-year transfer ELL students.

Standard Implemented: **Partially**



3.15 Instructional Strategies—English Learners

Professional Standard

Curriculum and instruction for English Learners (EL) prepares EL students to transition to regular class settings and achieve at a high level in all subject matters.

Sources and Documentation

1. Interviews with district staff, principals and teachers
2. 2003-07 District Local Educational Agency (LEA) Plan

Findings

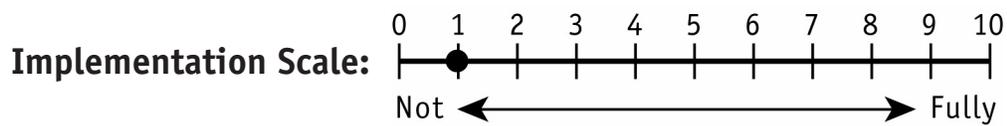
1. See Findings of Standard 3.14 for discussion of classroom settings.
2. The district has purchased an English Language Development curriculum (Santillana) but does not yet have a plan for how this curriculum should be implemented. Many teachers expressed unhappiness with the curriculum because they feel that it is ineffective and that they did not receive sufficient training in how to use it. District administrators plan to purchase a different set of curriculum. The LEA Plan identifies the new curriculum as Into English and English Now!
3. The district does not currently have an ELL Master Plan outlining how many hours of ELD instruction each student should receive.
4. The district hopes to offer additional staff development opportunities for teachers to become more skilled in meeting the needs of ELL students. District administrators would like to see all teachers CLAD certified. At this time, 22 out of 50 teachers are CLAD certified.
5. Other than annual CELDT testing, the district does not currently have a plan for monitoring students' English acquisition.
6. The district LEA Plan states that the district will: (1) use Title III funds to provide supplemental services such as an ELD resource teacher, supplementary materials, paraprofessionals and professional development to support services for ELLs; (2) provide an established number of minutes of dedicated English instruction to students in each of the three types of classes (SEI, Bilingual and English Mainstream); (3) establish a district relational database system to monitor and report the progress of ELL students over multiple school years; (4) hold one-on-one goal setting and progress monitoring conferences with ELL students; (5) provide ELD training for teachers and paraprofessionals.

Recommendations and Improvement Plan

1. Follow the recommendations in the LEA Plan for how many minutes of ELD instruction should take place every day. Develop even more specific guidelines for this time requirement. For example, the LEA Plan states that students in SEI classes should receive 30 to 45 minutes of dedicated ELD; this time frame should be defined more precisely.

2. Cluster students based on language ability.
3. Ensure that appropriate staff development is in place to support teachers during and following implementation of a new standards-based ELD curriculum and assessment.
4. Design and implement a standards based report card that indicates progress in English Language Development. See Recommendation #1 for Standard 4.3.
5. See Recommendations for Standard 3.14.
6. Take steps to employ qualified teachers. See Recommendation #2 for Standard 3.5.

Standard Implemented: Partially



3.16 Instructional Strategies—Special Education

Professional Standard

The identification and placement of special education students into appropriate courses is conducted in a timely and effective manner.

Sources and Documentation

1. Interviews with district staff, principals and teachers
2. Fresno County Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA)
3. District SST Information packet (2001)

Findings

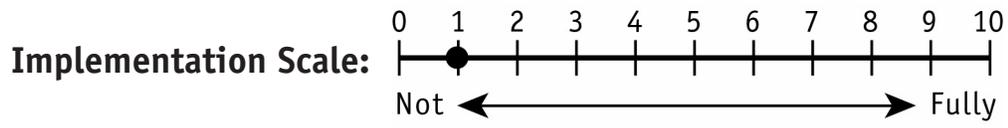
1. Teachers who feel that they have students who need special services go through the following process: (1) attempt and document intervention strategies; (2) meet with the Student Study Team (SST) to discuss; (3) implement suggested strategies; (4) reconvene SST; (5) refer student to psychologist for testing.
2. Student Study Teams have not been meeting regularly this year, and there is a backlog of students that teachers have recommended for SST discussion. Previously, a district administrator scheduled and ran SST meetings, but management of the process has been passed to a classroom teacher, and meetings have not been taking place. This is due in part to the fact that members of the SST were occupied by professional development classes after school each day between March and May 2003.
3. The district follows the Fresno County Office of Education's SELPA plan for special education. However, this plan does not stipulate a policy for how Student Study Teams should be managed, as this is a function of regular education.

Recommendations and Improvement Plan

1. Update, distribute, and implement the policies outlined in the SST Information packet from 2001.
2. Schedule a regular weekly or biweekly time for SST meetings to occur. Designate someone (preferably the Resource Teacher) as the SST Coordinator. Consider providing a stipend or prep time for this person to dedicate time to scheduling and planning for SST meetings. The principal is the overall supervisor and should monitor that the SST Coordinator is scheduling meetings in a timely and effective manner.
3. The SST should consist of the site principal, the referred student's classroom teacher, the resource teacher, and the psychologist and speech teacher (when appropriate). It is also helpful to have two experienced classroom teachers as permanent members of the SST. (Consider providing a stipend to teachers who take on this extra responsibility, especially if meetings occur after contract hours.)
4. If the SST decides that a student should be referred to the psychologist for testing, the Team should designate a "case manager" to ensure that testing, follow-up meetings

and follow-up placement and intervention procedures take place in a timely and effective manner.

Standard Implemented: Partially



3.17 Instructional Strategies—Special Education

Professional Standard

Individual education plans (IEPs) are reviewed and updated on time.

Sources and Documentation

1. Interviews with district staff, psychologist, principals, and teachers.
2. Fresno County Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA).

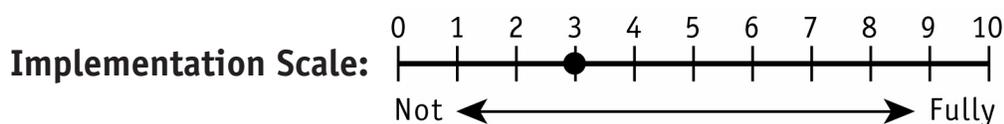
Findings

1. The case manager of the student is in charge of monitoring the status of his/her IEP and ensuring that review meetings are held in a timely manner. In most cases, the case manager is either the Resource Specialist Program teacher or the Special Day Class teacher. District office staff do not play an active role in the IEP review process.
2. The school psychologist is not involved in monitoring the schedule for reviewing IEPs. He is a member of the review team, but does not play an active role in managing or tracking files and time lines.
3. It is unclear whether all IEPs for students in the district have been reviewed and updated in a timely manner.
4. The school psychologist plans to recommend that the district's State Administrator hire a Program Specialist to monitor the IEP process. Responsibilities for this position would include managing files, keeping a calendar for when each IEP is due for review, submitting appropriate paperwork to the county and state, and coordinating IEP meetings.

Recommendations and Improvement Plan

1. Hire a Program Specialist to manage and monitor the IEP process as described in Finding #4.
2. The principal at each site should take an active role in monitoring which students have IEPs and the schedule for their reviews. She should have a calendar listing when each student's IEP is up for review and ensure that the Program Specialist has scheduled a meeting for the appropriate time. It is important that site administrators attend every IEP meeting and are aware of the interventions stipulated in students' individual education plans.

Standard Implemented: Partially



3.18 Instructional Strategies—Special Education

Professional Standard

Curriculum and instruction for special education students is rigorous and appropriate to meet special education students' learning needs.

Sources and Documentation

1. Interviews with district staff, principals and teachers.
2. Fresno County Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA).

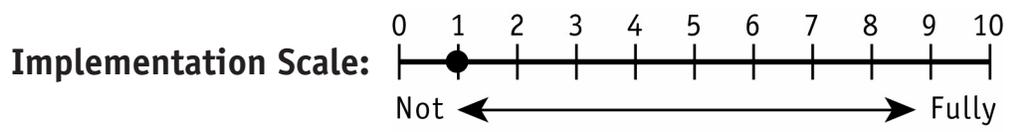
Findings

1. The district uses the SELPA plan of the Fresno County Office of Education as its master plan for special education.
2. Special education students are serviced through Special Day Classes (SDC) and Resource Specialist Program (RSP) teachers at both the elementary and middle schools. Students in RSP classes are mainstreamed for part of the day. Students in SDC classes at the middle school are with their mainstream peers for physical education and lunchtime; at the elementary school, SDC students are only with their mainstream peers for lunchtime.
3. Students in special education classes are instructed with the mainstream adopted curriculum using modifications, along with supplementary materials.
4. Students in special education take the state standards-based test (STAR) with the modifications specified in their individual education plans. The district has not used the California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA) this year, but will consider using it in future years.
5. The district's report card does not contain an area for teachers to show progress for special education students.

Recommendations and Improvement Plan

1. Re-evaluate students' IEPs and the structure of the district's instructional offerings to ensure that students are being educated in the least restrictive environments. Elicit assistance, resources and support from the County Office of Education. Structure opportunities for students in special education to be educated alongside their mainstream peers.
2. Use the CAPA exam for any students with significant cognitive disabilities as an alternative to the STAR test.
3. Design and implement a standards based report card that indicates progress in special education. See Recommendation #1 for Standard 4.3.

Standard Implemented: Partially



3.19 Instructional Strategies—Gifted and Talented Education

Professional Standard

The criteria for Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) identification are documented and understood by school site staff.

Sources and Documentation

1. Interviews with district staff, psychologist, principals and teachers
2. California Department of Education GATE policies
3. District SST information packet (2001)

Findings

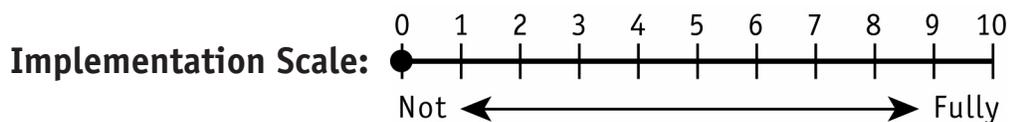
1. At the middle school, GATE-identified students attend a special class during their elective period that consists of accelerated work. They should also be assigned accelerated work in their other classes (through differentiated instruction).
2. There is currently no GATE programming at the elementary level because the teacher who was running the GATE program passed away.
3. When teachers wish to refer a student for GATE identification, they are to do so through the Student Study Team (SST) process. The SST will refer the student to the psychologist for screening. However, as discussed in the Findings for Standard 3.16, the SST has not been meeting consistently, so no students have been referred to GATE this year.
4. There is no documented district policy on the GATE referral, selection or identification procedures, nor on the types of services that GATE students are to receive. It is not clear that students who have been GATE-identified are receiving services or whether teachers are even aware if they have GATE-identified students in their classrooms. Teachers have not received any guidance on when, how or why to refer students for GATE selection.
5. The school psychologist uses an assortment of methods and tools to test students for GATE qualifications, with primary focus on intelligence (IQ) and achievement tests. African American students are not given IQ tests without parental permission.

Recommendations and Improvement Plan

1. Develop and document a district GATE policy, including:
 - a. What criteria teachers should use to refer students to the SST for GATE testing.
 - b. What criteria the SST should use to refer students to the psychologist for GATE testing.
 - c. What criteria the psychologist should use for GATE testing/screening (See recommendations below).
 - d. How to notify parents of their children's GATE testing/screening.
 - e. How to accurately test English Language Learner students for GATE using a format that is not wholly dependent on language skills.

- f. How to communicate students' GATE status to teachers (see Recommendation # 3 for Standard 3.3 regarding student placement forms).
 - g. How to communicate students' GATE status to parents.
 - h. How to meet the needs of GATE identified students.
5. Expand, develop and document the criteria used to select students for participation in GATE programming.
 - a. The California Department of Education Web site states that:
GATE identification should not be based on just one factor. Achievement and other test scores, motivation, parent, student and teacher recommendations, classroom observations, and portfolio assessment are several of the possible factors a district may use to identify GATE students. IQ tests measure a narrow subset of human characteristics and present only partial information about cognitive skills. They typically do not measure important characteristics such as effort, motivation, leadership, or creative ability, and they have been shown to be racially biased. You may use them under the following conditions: 1) we recommend that you not use IQ tests for racial or ethnic minority students unless the IQ test helps the student get into the GATE program; and 2) identification as gifted must never be based on IQ score only.
 - b. Consider applying Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences to the GATE identification process. Exhibit 3.19 contains information on this theory.
 6. Review suggestions for how to structure a GATE program at the California Department of Education Web site, <http://www.cde.ca.gov/cilbranch/gate/index.html>.
 7. Consider developing or acquiring a tool that teachers can use to screen and identify students for GATE. This could eliminate the need for the SST and psychologist to be involved in GATE referrals.
 8. Consider screening all students for GATE, focusing on selected grade levels. Not all grade levels would need to be screened each year.
 9. Cluster GATE students for instruction and enrichment. See Recommendation #1 for Standard 3.3.
 10. Ensure that funding allocated for GATE students is being directly applied to enrichment services for those students.

Standard Implemented: Not Implemented



3.20 Instructional Strategies—Gifted and Talented Education

Professional Standard

Students are regularly assessed or reassessed for GATE participation.

Sources and Documentation

1. Interviews with district staff, psychologist, principals and teachers
2. California Department of Education GATE policies

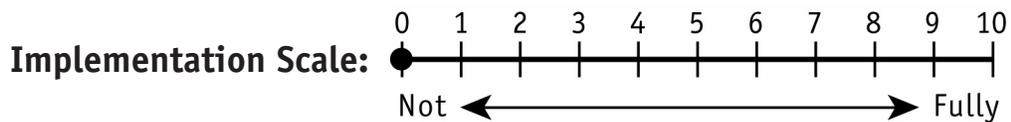
Findings

1. See Findings for Standard 3.20.

Recommendations and Improvement Plan

1. See Recommendations for Standard 3.20.

Standard Implemented: Not Implemented



3.21 Instructional Strategies—Kindergarten Enrollment

Legal Standard

All incoming kindergarten students will be admitted following board-approved policies and administrative regulations (EC 48000-48002).

Sources and Documentation

1. Interviews with district staff, principals and teachers
2. California School Board Association (CSBA) policy on kindergarten enrollment

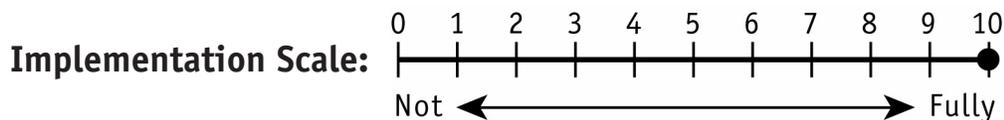
Findings

1. The district follows the CSBA's recommended policy for kindergarten enrollment.
2. Kindergarten enrollment dates and requirements are communicated through fliers in the office, notices sent home with current students, signs and banners posted in the front of the school, parent newsletters, parent events (such as Open House), and Parent Advisory Council meetings.
3. The district has recently opened a preschool on site, and information about kindergarten is also communicated to families through this program.

Recommendations and Improvement Plan

1. Document kindergarten admission policy in district strategic plan.
2. Continue with the current procedure.

Standard Implemented: Fully - Sustained



3.27 Instructional Strategies—General Instructional Program

Legal Standard

The general instructional program adheres to all requirements put forth in Education Code 51000-52950.

Sources and Documentation

1. Education Code 51000-52950
2. Interviews with district staff, principals and teachers
3. 2003-07 District Local Educational Agency (LEA) Plan

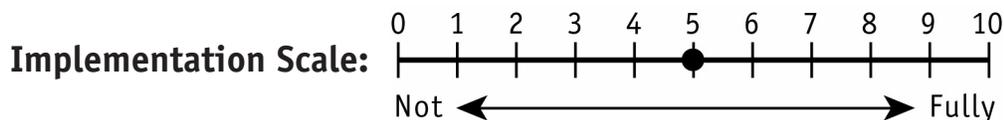
Findings

1. The degree to which the district complies with the provision of the specified Education Code varies from code section to code section. This report addresses areas in which the district is non-compliant or requires improvement with Standards 3.1 through 3.21. Generally, the district is meeting the curricular mandates, diplomas, parental involvement, class size, and patriotic exercises.

Recommendations and Improvement Plan

1. Continue activities to comply with the mandates included in EC 51000-52950.

Standard Implemented: Partially



4.1 Assessment and Accountability — Instructional Standards

Professional Standard

The district has developed content and learning standards for all subject areas and grades that are understood and followed by school site staff.

Sources and Documentation

1. Interviews with district staff, principals and teachers
2. 2003-07 District Local Educational Agency (LEA) Plan
3. State-adopted content standards for mathematics, language arts/reading, science, visual/performing arts, and social science/history (www.cde.ca.gov).

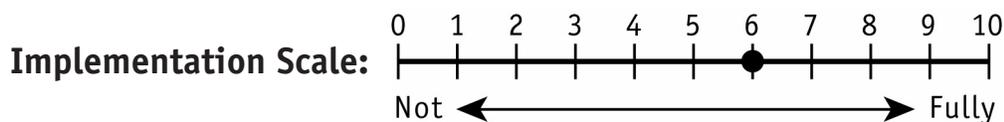
Findings

1. The district has adopted state standards in all subject areas where they exist.
2. The district has been using the standards for five years, but they have become more “real” to teachers within the past three years.
3. The district currently has no standards in areas where the state has not developed them, such as foreign language.
4. A copy of the state standards is passed out to all teachers at the beginning of the school year. (Teachers who have been with the district in previous years are not given new copies each year.)
5. At the middle school level, teachers must submit lesson plans that outline which standard is being taught with each lesson.
6. District staff and the LEA Plan state that teachers will post standards in their classrooms in 2003-04.

Recommendations and Improvement Plan

1. Continue to follow state standards.
2. Decide upon areas of focus. See Recommendations for Standard 1.1.

Standard Implemented: Partially



4.2 Assessment and Accountability — Measurement Tools

Professional Standard

Student achievement is measured and assessed through a variety of measurement tools (e.g. standardized tests, portfolios, projects, oral reports, etc.).

Sources and Documentation

1. Interviews with district staff, principals, teachers, and consultant
2. Reading and Oral Language Assessment kit
3. State-adopted content standards for mathematics, language arts/reading, science, visual/performing arts, and social science/history (www.cde.ca.gov)

Findings

1. The district utilizes assessments from the adopted curriculums in the subjects of mathematics, phonics, and language arts.
2. The district is beginning to implement a new “Reading and Oral Language Assessment” (ROLA) developed by LitConn. All teachers have been trained in how to conduct this standards-based assessment, which is given three times a year. Each student level is correlated to specific standards and strategies for instruction.
3. The district has plans to adopt a standards-based math assessment to be in place by 2003-04.
4. At the middle school level, assessments take place once a week and the results are submitted to the principal along with weekly lesson plans. At the elementary school level, teachers are responsible for submitting assessment results to the principal every six weeks. This is designed to correspond with the end of curricular units. However, if teachers have not yet completed the relevant unit, they turn in the most recent mid-unit assessment.
5. At this time, there is no district policy on using assessments other than those embedded in the curriculum, the state standardized tests (STAR and CELDT), and the ROLA. Several grade levels have developed their own local assessments and are using these to supplement the aforementioned assessments. The district has not developed assessments for science; individual teachers are responsible for developing and conducting science assessments.
6. The middle school principal mentioned that teachers maintain portfolios but district staff stated that these have “fallen by the wayside” because the teacher that was heading up the portfolio project left the district.
7. See Finding #3 for Standard 3.9.

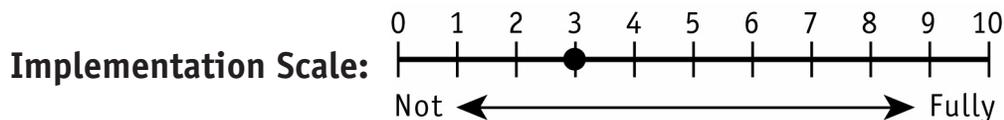
Recommendations and Improvement Plan

1. Work with teachers and LitConn consultants to ensure that assessments that are used are purposeful and helpful to teachers. This may include eliminating unnecessary

assessments and developing a reasonable assessment schedule that allows for sufficient instructional time. ROLA and the new standards-based mathematics assessment should be given once a trimester. The district should decide upon and implement standards-aligned ways to measure learning so that teachers do not need to develop their own grade-level assessments.

2. Develop a standards-based assessment for science. Consider using the assessment aligned with the district-wide science curriculum to be adopted 2003-04.
3. Ensure that ELL students and students in special education are using the appropriate assessments.
4. Develop a standard policy for how data is recorded and reported across all grade levels (such as an Excel spreadsheet or handwritten form). Standardization of data records will facilitate data analysis and vertical alignment of benchmarks.
5. Develop and utilize alternative ways to assess. In addition to paper and pencil tests, incorporate portfolios, rubrics, oral reports, projects and observations. See <http://www.uni.edu/profdev/assess.html> for further resources on authentic assessments.
6. Ensure that student assessments yield meaningful data to guide instruction. It is important to assess whether students are proficient (e.g., state STAR tests), but also to identify the precise level of the student's abilities. For example, if a fifth grade student is reading well below grade level, an exam based on a fifth grade reading text will not provide meaningful data on what specific skills the student is lacking. The results will indicate that the student is underperforming, but will provide little guidance as to what specific skills need to be taught. A third or fourth grade level assessment may be more appropriate for that purpose. Identify and use assessments that will accurately reflect exactly what students know and provide guidance as to what to teach. Leveled assessments like the ROLA are appropriate for this type of skills evaluation.
7. See Recommendations for Standard 1.6 regarding establishing benchmarks.

Standard Implemented: Partially



4.3 Assessment and Accountability — Measurement Tools

Professional Standard

The assessment tools are clear measurements of what is being taught and provide direction for improvement.

Sources and Documentation

1. Interviews with district staff, principals and teachers
2. District Retention Notification Form
3. Reading Oral Language Assessment kit

Findings

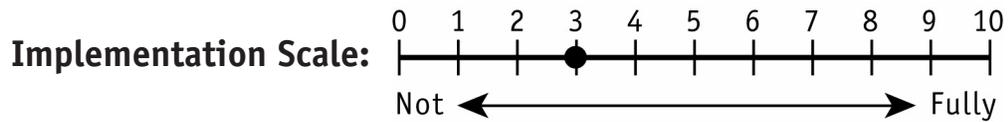
1. Assessments in reading and mathematics come from the curriculum series and are therefore directly tied to instruction.
2. Teachers have been trained in how to incorporate results from the ROLA into their instruction.
3. State law allows that non-English proficient students who have been in the country less than 12 months can be administered the SABE test rather than the CAT-6 test. However, the district did not order SABE tests this year. The district does not currently assess students in a language other than English.
4. Students in Special Education take the state standards-based test with the modifications specified in their individual education plans. The district has not used the California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA) this year, but will consider using it in future years.
5. The district has plans to move toward a standards-based report card. LitConn will assist with this development and implementation.
6. The district does not currently have a clearly defined plan for student promotion or retention. The district consists of a large percentage of low performing students so the decision of who to retain is complicated. The retention policy has been at the discretion of the Superintendent, of which the district has had many.
7. See Findings from Standard 4.2.

Recommendations and Improvement Plan

1. Convene a teacher committee to develop a standards-based report card. The full staff of teachers should be presented with samples and allowed to provide input on how the report card should be formatted. Include areas to measure growth in English language development and special education.
2. Develop and document a district policy on retention linked to student performance on grade-level benchmarks. See Recommendations for Standard 1.6.

3. See Recommendations for Standard 4.2.
4. Ensure that ELL students and students in Special Education are provided the opportunity to take alternative state assessments (that is, SABE/2 and CAPA) when appropriate.

Standard Implemented: Partially



4.4 Assessment and Accountability — Assessment Analysis

Professional Standard

The administration and staff utilize assessment information to improve learning opportunities for all students.

Sources and Documentation

1. Interviews with district staff, principals and teachers
2. 2003-07 District Local Educational Agency (LEA) Plan

Findings

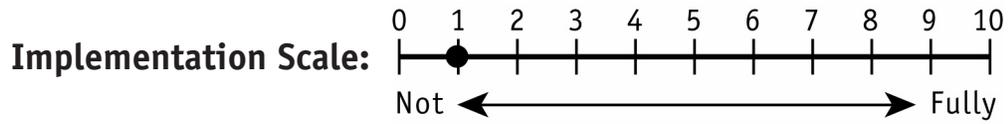
1. Principals review the assessment information submitted by teachers. At the elementary site this occurs every six weeks, and at the middle school site it occurs every week.
2. Staff and teachers report that assessments are slowly becoming a part of the district culture, but this is still in the implementation stage. It is unclear how much structured time teachers have for reviewing assessment data and planning instruction accordingly. Teachers have had little training on how to link instruction to assessment results.
3. The district has been unable to use state test data to plan. Student scores from 2000-01 did not arrive at the district until November 2002, and scores from 2001-02 have still not arrived because the disk containing the data was damaged.
4. The district's LEA Plan states that: (1) The principal will conduct grade level circles of inquiry around student achievement three times during the school year. The Superintendent will hold administrative circles of inquiry four times a year. At each meeting they will analyze and describe student data from multiple assessments and make instructional decisions based on their findings. (2) At least twice per school year LitConn will guide the staff to conduct a SARM (Student Accountability Review Matrix) review to monitor the accuracy of teachers' ongoing assessment and to determine the degree of student improvement in listening, speaking, writing and reading.

Recommendations and Improvement Plan

1. Analysis of assessment data should focus on student performance relative to benchmarks. See Recommendations for Standard 1.6.
2. Provide grade-level teams with ample opportunity to review assessment data, discuss what the data means, group students, share strategies and plan for instruction. See Recommendations for Standards 3.2 and 3.3.
3. Train teachers in how to use assessment data to guide instruction. Trainings should include specific instructional strategies and activities to meet the needs of students at varying levels of proficiency (that is, those exceeding, meeting and failing to meet benchmarks).
4. Ensure that "circles of inquiry" are structured around a series of questions that focus and drive discussion.

5. See Recommendation #4 for Standard 4.2. Standardization of data records will facilitate data analysis and vertical alignment of benchmarks. Prepare summary reports at the classroom, school site and district level. This information should be shared with teachers, board members, and parents.

Standard Implemented: Partially



4.5 Assessment and Accountability — Assessment Analysis

Professional Standard

The district has adopted multiple assessment tools, including diagnostic assessments, to evaluate, improve, or adjust programs and resources.

Sources and Documentation

1. Interviews with district staff, principals and teachers
2. 2003-07 District Local Educational Agency (LEA) Plan

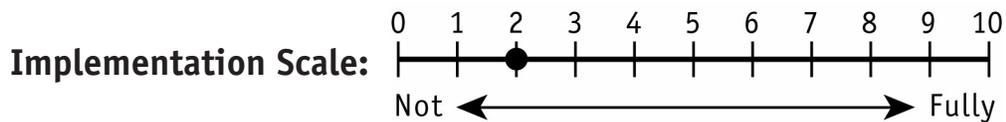
Findings

1. The district has adopted multiple assessment tools, but is still in the process of learning how to interpret and utilize results. See Findings for Standards 4.1-4.4 for additional details

Recommendations and Improvement Plan

1. Incorporate into the district's strategic action plan meaningful action steps to implement local district assessment tools and other measurement tools into day-to-day instructional practices. See Recommendations for Standards 4.1-4.4.

Standard Implemented: Partially



4.6 Assessment and Accountability — Evaluation

Professional Standard

The district shall be accountable for student results by using evaluative information regarding the various levels of proficiency and allocating educational resources to assure the maximum educational opportunities for all students.

Sources and Documentation

1. Interviews with district staff, principals and teachers
2. 2003-07 District Local Educational Agency (LEA) Plan

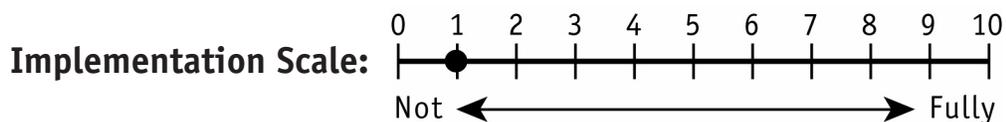
Findings

1. The district does not follow punitive measures with regard to student performance. Teachers and their classroom budgets are not penalized or rewarded monetarily for low or high performance.
2. See Findings #3 and #4 for Standard 3.3.

Recommendations and Improvement Plan

1. See Recommendation #1 for Standard 3.3 regarding grouping students and summer school and after school intervention classes.
2. Assign classroom aides and GEAR-UP tutors based on classroom needs. Analyze assessment data and determine how students are/will be grouped and which teachers will need the most support. Classrooms/groupings with high ratios of low-achieving and ELL students should receive extra staffing support.
3. See Recommendation #7 for Standard 3.19 regarding GATE funding.

Standard Implemented: Partially



4.7 Assessment and Accountability — Parental Notification

Professional Standard

The district informs parents of the test scores of their children and provides general explanation of these scores.

Sources and Documentation

1. Interviews with district staff, principals and teachers
2. 2003-07 District Local Educational Agency (LEA) Plan

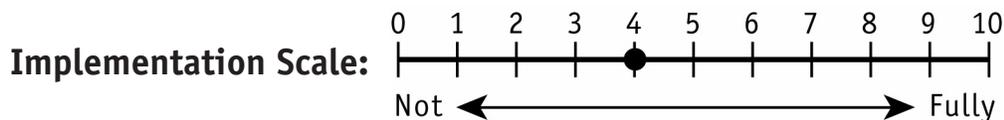
Findings

1. Teachers and site administrators are responsible for notifying parents regarding local site assessment results. This generally occurs by way of trimester report cards.
2. The district notifies parents of state assessment scores by sending the state's letters home along with a general letter of explanation. This letter is translated into Hmong and Spanish and encourages parents to come ask school staff for clarification regarding the scores. The district does not conduct follow-up to ensure that parents have received information.
3. The district's LEA Plan states that parents of ELLs who do not meet annual achievement goals will be notified within 30 days after such failure occurs.

Recommendations and Improvement Plan

1. Hold a special parent meeting to explain state test scores. This meeting should be conducted in multiple languages and take place soon after scores are mailed to parents (generally September or October).
2. See Recommendation #3 for Standard 3.6 regarding the development of a parent information pamphlet on assessment.

Standard Implemented: Partially



5.1 Professional Development and Training—General

Professional Standard

Staff development demonstrates a clear understanding of purpose, written goals, and appropriate evaluations.

Sources and Documentation

1. Interviews with district staff, principals and teachers
2. District training attendance sheets
3. Literacy Connection description of “Teacher Basics” curriculum
4. 2003-07 District Local Educational Agency (LEA) Plan

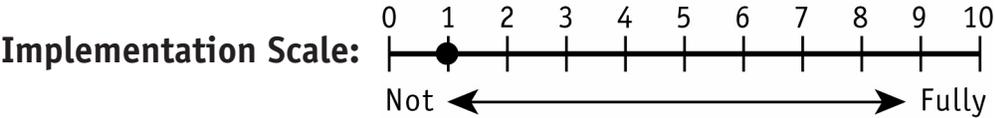
Findings

1. The district’s past superintendents have planned staff development activities. Due to the turnover of superintendents, professional activities have lacked continuity and structure. No written goals or evaluations have taken place.
2. The district has just completed a series of institutes called “Teacher Basics” run by the Literacy Connection (LitConn). These classes are mandatory and take place after students have been dismissed. Teachers must attend one day a week for two and a half months. The goal of these classes is to provide teachers with improved classroom management skills. This course has a clearly documented purpose and structure.
3. There is no evidence of evaluations being conducted for professional development activities.
4. The district’s LEA Plan states that school administrators will have annual retreats facilitated by LitConn for the specific purpose of planning professional development.

Recommendations and Improvement Plan

1. Create and document a staff development plan that is directly linked to the School Improvement Plans. Identify a focus as part of the strategic planning process (See Recommendations for Standard 1.1). All professional development activities should support this focus. For example, if the identified focus is literacy, district trainings should concentrate on activities, strategies, guest speakers, discussion and planning sessions based on improving students’ skills in literacy.
2. Conduct regular evaluations of professional development activities. These evaluations should focus on how effective the activities are at helping the district to achieve its learning goals, rather than on whether or not participants enjoyed the training.
3. Maintain a log of professional development activities, including the purpose, focus, attendance and learning outcomes of each workshop/training.

Standard Implemented: Partially



5.2 Professional Development and Training—General

Professional Standard

Staff development provides staff (for example, principals, teachers, and instructional aides) with the knowledge and skills to improve instruction and curriculum.

Sources and Documentation

1. Interviews with district staff, principals and teachers
2. District training attendance sheets
3. Literacy Connection description of “Teacher Basics” curriculum
4. 2003-07 District Local Educational Agency (LEA) Plan

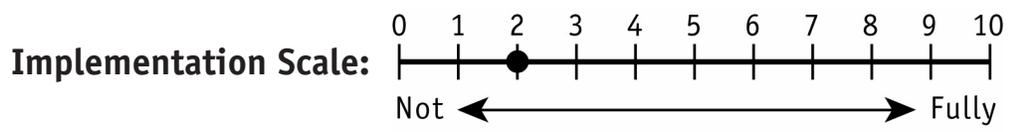
Findings

1. Past professional development activities have included “Best Practices” and “Reading and Oral Language Assessment (ROLA),” which provided training in how to give the ROLA assessment.
2. See Finding #2 for Standard 5.1.
3. The district’s LEA Plan states that LitConn will conduct a series of professional development activities for teachers over the course of three years, including: courses on specially designed instruction in important academic subjects; training on standards and assessment; guided reciprocal peer coaching; and coached individual practice of strategies learned.

Recommendations and Improvement Plan

1. See Recommendation #1 for Standard 5.1.
2. Train teachers in how to successfully implement the new adopted curriculums. While Teacher Leaders can serve as peer coaches in the follow-up implementation of these instructional materials, the initial training should be offered to all teachers and not limited to the Teacher Leaders. Conduct activities that will help teachers to make good use of planning time and curriculum. Consider having the curriculum publishers conduct these trainings.
3. Train principals on the new curriculum adoptions, as well as on how to monitor that curriculum is being implemented successfully, what to look for during “walk throughs,” and how to structure and facilitate “circles of inquiry” to discuss assessment data.
4. Ensure that new teachers who enter the district after May 2003 receive the “Teacher Basics” training.

Standard Implemented: Partially



5.3 Professional Development and Training—General

Professional Standard

The standards developed by the California Standards for the Teaching Profession (CSTP) are present and supported.

Sources and Documentation

1. Interviews with district staff, principals and teachers
2. 2003-07 District Local Educational Agency (LEA) Plan
3. District Certificated Evaluation Instrument
4. California Standards for Teaching Professionals (CSTP)

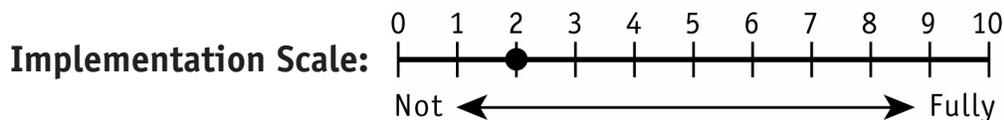
Findings

1. The district has plans to incorporate the CSTP into staff development activities and teacher evaluations, but they have not been addressed as of yet.
2. Copies of the standards have been distributed to teachers.
3. The district's LEA Plan states that teacher recruitment, hiring, evaluation and tenure decisions will be based on the CSTP.

Recommendations and Improvement Plan

1. Pass out copies of the CSTP to teachers at the beginning of the year with their employment information from the Personnel Department.
2. Create a new Certificated Evaluation Instrument based on the CSTP. Elicit teacher feedback in drafting this instrument.
3. Develop and document specific policies as to how the district is going to meet the LEAP goal described in Finding #3.

Standard Implemented: Partially



5.4 Professional Development and Training—Collaboration

Professional Standard

Teachers are provided time and encouraged to meet with other teachers.

Sources and Documentation

1. Interviews with district staff, principals and teachers
2. District daily schedule

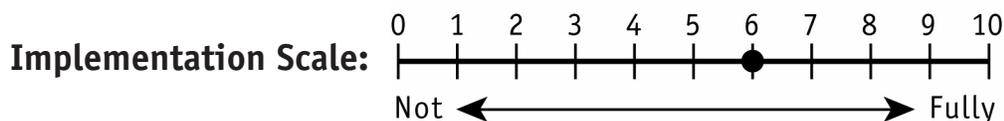
Findings

1. Kindergarten through third grades dismiss students one hour early to allow teachers time for collaboration. At times this slot is scheduled with staff meetings, professional development activities and planning activities, while other times it is left up to teachers' discretion.
2. Middle school teachers receive 50 minutes of preparation time each day when their students go to physical education, but this time slot is not coordinated with other teachers, so teachers are not able to spend it collaborating.
3. Fourth and fifth grade teachers are not provided with paid daily preparation/collaboration time.
4. The school district has three paid non-student work days at the beginning of the school year for teacher planning.
5. School is dismissed early on Monday afternoons to allow teachers time for collaboration and professional development.

Recommendations and Improvement Plan

1. Provide a period for fourth and fifth grade teachers to prepare and collaborate. Consider hiring/using middle school physical education teachers to teach fourth and fifth grade students for one period a day.
2. Consider coordinating the schedules of middle school teachers so that teachers in the same subject areas have preparation time during the same block, allowing for collaboration. See Recommendations #2 for Standard 3.9 regarding coordinating subject area instruction.

Standard Implemented: Partially



5.5 Professional Development and Training—Collaboration

Professional Standard

Collaboration exists among higher education, district, professional associations and community in providing professional development.

Sources and Documentation

1. Interviews with district staff, principals and teachers
2. California State GEAR-UP Program Professional Development Action Plan

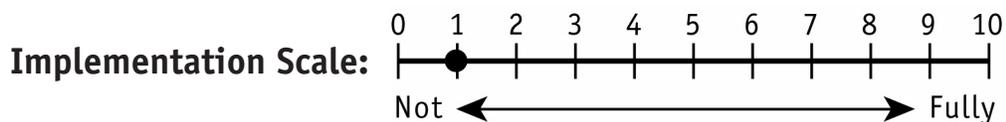
Findings

1. Fresno State University provides tutors to serve as teacher aides through the “GEAR-UP” program. This collaborative relationship does not currently extend to professional development for teachers.
2. The district makes teachers aware of professional development activities such as conferences or workshops by putting fliers in the teacher lounge.
3. The district has sent some teachers to conferences and workshops, but it has been difficult to do so this year because of restricted funding.
4. In general, not many teachers take advantage of these opportunities.

Recommendations and Improvement Plan

1. Take a more active role in advertising professional development activities. Make announcements at staff meetings, actively recruit teachers to attend workshops and trainings, and provide forums for attendees to share what they learned with the rest of the staff. Consider selecting a volunteer at each campus to serve as the professional development liaison, through whom information about workshops and opportunities can be disseminated.
2. Take advantage of the resources offered by the County Office of Education (COE). Distribute information to staff regarding the trainings and resources available through the COE.

Standard Implemented: Partially



5.6 Professional Development and Training—Collaboration

Professional Standard

The district has formed partnerships with state colleges and universities to provide appropriate courses accessible to all teachers.

Sources and Documentation

1. Interviews with district staff, principals and teachers
2. 2003-07 District Local Educational Agency (LEA) Plan

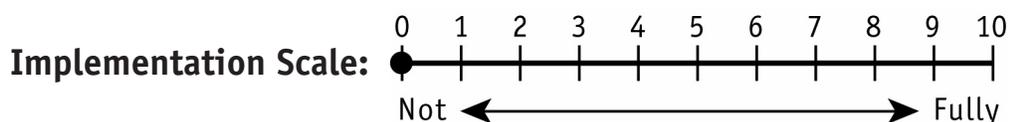
Findings

1. The district does not currently have any partnerships or interns in collaboration with any higher education institutions.
2. The district's LEA Plan states that: (1) the district will enter into a partnership with Alliant International University Fresno Pacific University to provide coursework for multiple and single subject CLAD and BCLAD credentials; (2) the district will enter into a partnership with three neighboring districts and local community colleges to provide coursework and tutoring; and (3) the district will provide local test preparation support for teachers.

Recommendations and Improvement Plan

1. Take advantage of the resources offered by the County Office of Education. Find out what courses and resources it offers, particularly with regard to helping teachers earn their CLAD certifications.
2. Clarify and document specific steps that will be taken to implement the partnerships discussed in the LEAP (Findings #2). Specifically, articulate who is responsible for initiating and establishing these partnerships with other districts and institutions of higher education and how the relationships will be managed, maintained, evaluated and utilized.
3. If the district is going to continue to employ teachers and administrators who do not hold proper credentials (that is, teachers with emergency, temporary, provisional or non-CLAD teaching credentials and administrators without administrative credentials), it should establish relationships with institutions of higher education to enroll teachers and administrators in intern programs and/or appropriate courses to ensure that they are actively pursuing the appropriate credentials.

Standard Implemented: Not Implemented



5.7 Professional Development and Training—Support

Professional Standard

Administrative support and coaching is provided to all teachers.

Sources and Documentation

1. Interviews with district staff, principals and teachers
2. 1998-1999 District Faculty Handbook

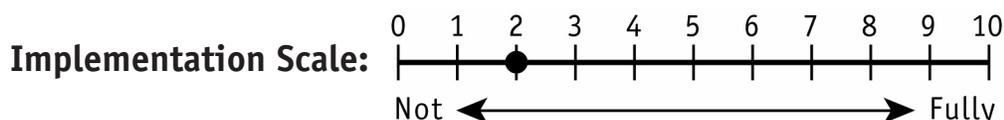
Findings

1. The district does not currently have a mentoring or coaching program. The Peer Assistance and Review Program (PAR) was planned in the past but is not currently being implemented.
2. The district plans to use the Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) framework, which based on the California Standards for Teaching Professionals (CSTP), as a model for implementing a PAR program.
3. See Findings #1 and #2 for Standard 3.8.

Recommendations and Improvement Plan

1. Provide staff development activities that support teachers' abilities to effectively plan instruction around the district's identified goals and adopted curriculum. See Recommendation #1 for Standard 5.1 and Recommendation #2 for Standard 5.2.
2. Institute a PAR program based on the CSTP which makes the most of the skills and knowledge of experienced teachers. Designate an experienced teacher to head and organize this program. Review guidelines and resources for establishing a model PAR program at www.newteachercenter.org.
3. Create an updated faculty handbook that outlines district and school site policies and procedures. Use the 1998-1999 District Faculty Handbook as a template.

Standard Implemented: Partially



5.8 Professional Development and Training—Support

Professional Standard

New teachers and principals are provided with training and support opportunities.

Sources and Documentation

1. Interviews with district staff, principals and teachers
2. 2003-07 District Local Educational Agency (LEA) Plan
3. Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment Program (BTSA) guidelines

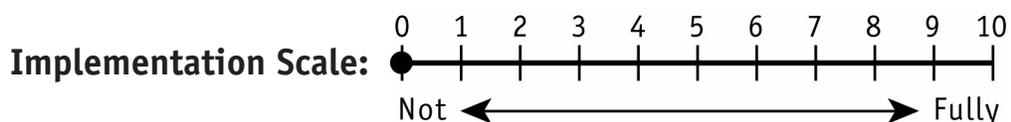
Findings

1. The middle school experienced an almost 50 percent turnover in staff from the 2001-02 to 2002-03 academic year. Several of the new teachers are on emergency credential or substitute status. The elementary staff was relatively stable.
2. Most new teachers receive support informally from their peers through their own initiative.
3. In prior years the district has offered a new teacher orientation/training day before the beginning of school, but that did not occur in 2002-03 due to the chaotic state of the district in September 2002.
4. All teachers who qualify to do so attend BTSA training through a partnership with the County Office of Education. Substitutes are provided for teachers and support providers who attend this training. However, most new teachers do not qualify to participate in BTSA because they are not fully credentialed.
5. Both principals are working on completing the requirements for their administrative credential. Aside from their training programs, they have not received formal training from the district.

Recommendations and Improvement Plan

1. Develop, document and implement a new teacher support plan at each site. This plan needs to include practices to support new teachers who do not qualify for BTSA. Pair new teachers with “buddy” experienced teachers at the same grade level or subject area to serve as mentors. Offer a new teacher orientation day in September 2003.
2. Develop, document and implement a new principal support plan. Establish partnerships with principals in neighboring districts to serve as mentors.

Standard Implemented: Not Implemented



5.9 Professional Development and Training—Evaluation

Professional Standard

Professional development is linked to personnel evaluation.

Sources and Documentation

1. Interviews with district staff, principals and teachers
2. District Certificated Evaluation Instrument

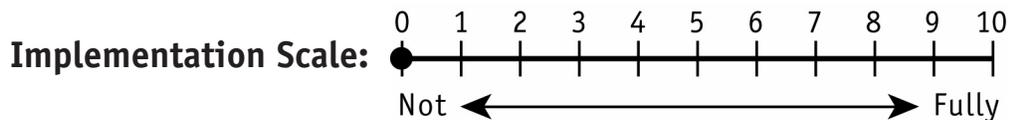
Findings

1. District administrators stated that professional development is linked to personnel evaluation. However, the current evaluation instrument does not contain a field for addressing professional development.

Recommendations and Improvement Plan

1. Link personnel evaluations to professional development as outlined in the California Standards for Teaching Professionals (CSTP). Use these standards in evaluating both teachers and administrators. See Recommendation #2 for Standard 5.3.
2. Set professional development goals as part of the school improvement planning process. Use these goals as the basis for evaluations. See Recommendations for Standard 1.1 and Standard 5.1.

Standard Implemented: Not Implemented



5.10 Professional Development and Training—Evaluation

Professional Standard

Evaluations provide constructive feedback for improving job performance.

Sources and Documentation

1. Interviews with district staff, principals and teachers
2. District Certificated Evaluation Instrument

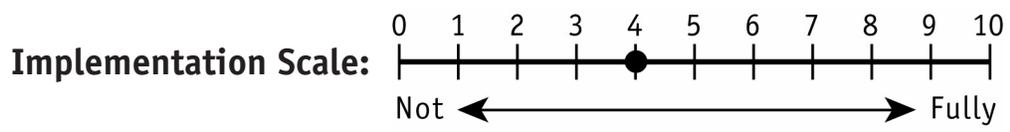
Findings

1. Site administrators visit classrooms and provide informal feedback on a regular basis. See Finding #1 for Standard 3.8.
2. Principals evaluate new teachers twice a year. More experienced teachers are evaluated once every two years. District staff assist the principals with evaluations, as neither principal holds the appropriate administrative credential to take sole responsibility for these reviews.
3. The evaluation process consists of a 15-minute previsit conference to discuss the teacher's goals, a 30-60 minute principal observation, and a 15-minute post-visit conference to discuss how the lesson went and to formulate an action plan for the future.
4. The district has plans to develop a new evaluation form based on the CSTP.
5. Teachers receive a copy of the evaluation form for their own records. According to district staff, copies of teacher evaluations are not kept on file in the district, so new site administrators do not have access to previous evaluation forms.

Recommendations and Improvement Plan

1. Site administrators should continue to conduct formal and informal evaluations.
2. Train principals on what to look for when evaluating teachers. See Recommendation #1 for Standard 3.8.
3. Update the evaluation instrument so that it aligns with the CSTP. See Recommendation #2 for Standard 5.3.
4. After the principal completes a teacher's evaluation, a copy of this form (signed by both the teacher and administrator) should be kept in personnel files in the district office. This will allow new site administrators to reference these forms and conference with teachers regarding their progress on goals set in previous years. If these forms are currently being kept by the Personnel Department, this information needs to be communicated to site administrators so that they know where to find them.
5. Principals should continue working to attain their administrative credentials. See Recommendation #3 for Standard 5.6.

Standard Implemented: Partially



Pupil Achievement

| Standard to be addressed | | July 2003 Rating | Focus for January 2004 |
|--------------------------|--|------------------|--------------------------|
| 1.1 | A common vision of what all students should know and be able to do exists and is put into practice. | 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 1.2 | The administrative structure of the district promotes student achievement. | 5 | |
| 1.3 | The district has long-term goals and plans to support student achievement improvements. | 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 1.4 | The district directs its resources fairly and consistently to accomplish its objectives. | 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 1.5 | Categorical and compensatory program funds supplement and do not supplant services and materials to be provided by the district. | 2 | |
| 1.6 | The district's planning process focuses on supporting increased student performance. | 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2.1 | The district through its adopted policy provides a clear operational framework for management of the curriculum. | 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2.2 | Policies regarding curriculum and instruction are reviewed and approved by the school board. | 0 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2.3 | The district has clear and valid objectives for students, including the core curriculum content. | 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2.4 | Sufficient instructional materials are available for students to learn. | 5 | |
| 2.5 | In subject areas for which the state has adopted standards, instructional materials are available to students that are aligned with state standards. | 4 | |
| 2.6 | The district has adopted a plan for integrating technology into curriculum and instruction at all grade levels. | 0 | |
| 2.7 | The district optimizes state and federal funding to install technology into schools. | 3 | |

Pupil Achievement

| Standard to be addressed | | July 2003 Rating | Focus for January 2004 |
|--------------------------|--|------------------------|------------------------------|
| 2.8 | AIDS prevention instruction occurs at least once in junior high or middle school and once in high school, and is consistent with the CDE's 1994 Health Framework (EC 51201.5). | 0 | |
| 3.1 | The district provides equal access to educational opportunities to all students regardless of race, gender, socioeconomic standing, and other factors (EC 51007). | 3 | |
| 3.2 | Challenging learning goals and instructional plans and programs for all students are evident. | 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.3 | Expectations and practices exist to improve the preparation of students and to build a school structure with the capacity to serve all students. | 1 | |
| 3.4 | Every elementary school has embraced the most recent California School Recognition Program Standards. | 0 | |
| 3.5 | Students are engaged in learning, and they are able to demonstrate and apply their knowledge and skills. | 2 | |
| 3.6 | The district and school sites actively encourage parental involvement in their children's education. | 3 | |
| 3.7 | Each school has a school site council or leadership team, comprised of teachers, parents, principal and students, that is actively engaged in school planning. | 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.8 | Principals make formal and informal visits to the classroom. Based on these visits, principals provide constructive feedback and assistance to teachers. | 6 | |
| 3.9 | Class time is protected for student learning (EC 32212). | 3 | |
| 3.10 | Clearly defined discipline practices have been established and communicated among the students, staff, board, and community. | 0 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.11 | School class size and teacher assignments support effective student learning. | 1 | |
| 3.12 | Teachers use a variety of instructional strategies and resources that address their students' diverse needs. | 2 | |

Pupil Achievement

| Standard to be addressed | | July 2003 Rating | Focus for January 2004 |
|--------------------------|--|------------------|--------------------------|
| 3.13 | Teachers modify and adjust instructional plans according to student needs and success. | 2 | |
| 3.14 | The identification and placement of English Learners into appropriate courses is conducted in a timely and effective manner. | 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.15 | Curriculum and instruction for English Learners prepares EL students to transition to regular class settings and achieve at a high level in all subject matters. | 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.16 | The identification and placement of special education students into appropriate courses is conducted in a timely and effective manner. | 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.17 | Individual education plans (IEPs) are reviewed and updated on time. | 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.18 | Curriculum and instruction for special education students is rigorous and appropriate to meet special education students' learning needs. | 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.19 | The criteria for Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) identification are documented and understood by school site staff. | 0 | |
| 3.20 | Students are regularly assessed or reassessed for GATE participation. | 0 | |
| 3.21 | All incoming kindergarten students will be admitted following board-approved policies and administrative regulations. (EC 48000-48002) | 10 | |
| 3.27 | The general instructional program adheres to all requirements put forth in Education Code 51000-52950. | 5 | |
| 4.1 | The district has developed content and learning standards for all subject areas and grades that are understood and followed by school site staff. | 6 | |
| 4.2 | Student achievement is measured and assessed through a variety of measurement tools (e.g., standardized tests, portfolios, projects, oral reports). | 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4.3 | The assessment tools are clear measures of what is being taught and provide direction for improvement. | 3 | |

Pupil Achievement

| Standard to be addressed | | July 2003 Rating | Focus for January 2004 |
|--------------------------|--|------------------|--------------------------|
| 4.4 | The administration and staff utilize assessment information to improve learning opportunities for all students. | 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4.5 | The district has adopted multiple assessment tools, including diagnostic assessments, to evaluate, improve, or adjust programs and resources. | 2 | |
| 4.6 | The district shall be accountable for student results by using evaluative information regarding the various levels of proficiency and allocating educational resources to ensure the maximum educational opportunities for all students. | 1 | |
| 4.7 | The district informs parents of the test scores of their children and provides general explanation of these scores. | 4 | |
| 5.1 | Staff development demonstrates a clear understanding of purpose, written goals, and appropriate evaluations. | 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5.2 | Staff development provides the staff (e.g., principals, teachers, and instructional aides) with the knowledge and the skills to improve instruction and curriculum. | 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5.3 | The standards developed by the California Standards for the Teaching Profession are present and supported. | 2 | |
| 5.4 | Teachers are provided time and are encouraged to meet with other teachers. | 6 | |
| 5.5 | Collaboration exists among higher education, district, professional associations, and the community in providing professional development. | 1 | |
| 5.6 | The district has formed partnerships with state colleges and universities to provide appropriate courses accessible to all teachers. | 0 | |
| 5.7 | Administrative support and coaching is provided to all teachers. | 2 | |
| 5.8 | New teachers and principals are provided with training and support opportunities. | 0 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5.9 | Professional development is linked to personnel evaluation. | 0 | |

Pupil Achievement

| Standard to be addressed | | July 2003 Rating | Focus for January 2004 |
|---------------------------------|--|------------------------|------------------------------|
| 5.10 | Evaluations provide constructive feedback for improving job performance. | 4 | |
| 5.11 | Human resources practices support the delivery of sound educational programs. | 3 | |
| 5.12 | A requirement is in place for passing of a basic skills proficiency examination by instructional aides (EC 45344.5, 545361.5). | 1 | |