



Berkeley Unified School District

Executive Summary

Comprehensive Review
January 2005

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INTRODUCTION

This report, dated July 1, 2005, is the fourth and final six-month progress report required by Assembly Bill 2859 (Aroner, 2002). The report reviews the continuing efforts of the Berkeley Unified School District Governing Board, administrators and staff to address the recommendations for improvement made in the Berkeley Unified School District Assessment and Improvement Plan, first presented to the district by the Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team (FCMAT) in July 2003. Six-month progress reports were presented to the district in January 2004, July 2004 and January 2005. This report provides data to the district, community, The California Department and Education and the State Legislature, updated for the six-month period since January 2005, to assist in facilitating effective collaboration and building the necessary capacity within the district to promote effective teaching and learning.

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

In its July 2003 comprehensive Assessment and Improvement Plan, FCMAT utilized 456 standards in its review of district operations and provided an analysis of the issues in the Berkeley Unified School District and a priority listing of those needs that were most pressing to address in the first six-month review period. The first six-month progress report issued in January 2004 provided an assessment of the progress made on 99 standards selected for the first six-month review period. The second six-month progress report provided an assessment of 103 standards selected for the second six-month review period. The third six-month progress report provided an assessment of 96 standards selected for the third six-month review period. This fourth and final six-month progress report provides an assessment of 104 standards: 21 in Community Relations/Governance, 22 in Personnel Management, 20 in Pupil Achievement, 22 in Financial Management, and 19 in Facilities Management. Identifying a smaller number of standards for the district to address during each six-month review period allowed the district to focus its improvement efforts. The smaller number of standards is selected collaboratively by FCMAT and the Berkeley USD administrators and staff.

The findings presented in this report represent a snapshot of the district, and these progress reviews are intended to assist the district in improving student learning.

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

Background

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

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

AB 2859 also required the district to allocate district funds to implement the recommendations in the improvement plan, and for FCMAT and the Alameda County Office of Education (ACOE) to verify that district funds were used for this purpose. The legislation stated that "Not later than June 30, 2005, the Alameda County Office of Education (ACOE), with the assistance and concurrence of FCMAT, shall review the expenditures made by the Berkeley USD of the funds provided in Paragraphs (a) and (2) of subdivision c) and determine the amount of expenditures made for purposes consistent with the improvement plans, and, if the expenditures are determined to be less than \$460,896, the difference shall be withheld from the district's 2005-06 first principal apportionment."

The district has provided FCMAT with a letter indicating the appropriate expenditure of the required funds to implement the recommendations in the improvement plan. FCMAT requested a financial activity report and copies of the paid invoices to validate the information in this letter. FCMAT will review the information with the ACOE and will issue a separate letter after the publication of this report, verifying the appropriateness of the district's expenditures or addressing the penalty accounting by June 30, 2005, as required by the law.

Study Guidelines

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

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

1. Use of Professional and Legal Standards

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

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

Not Implemented (Scaled Score of 0)

There is no significant evidence that the standard is implemented.

Partially Implemented (Scaled Score of 1 through 7)

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

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

Fully Implemented (Scaled Score of 8-10)

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

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

2. Conduct an External and Independent Assessment

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

3. Utilize Multiple Measures of Assessment

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

4. Empower Staff and Community

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

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

5. Engage Local, State and National Agencies

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

Study Team

The study team was composed of the following members:

For the Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team – Administration and Report Writing

Roberta Mayor

Leonel Martínez

For the Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team – Financial Management

Michelle Plumbtree

Philip Scrivano

Michele McClowry

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For the California School Boards Association – Community Relations and Governance

Martin Gonzales

Holly Jacobson

Marge Peterson

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For the Community Training and Assistance Center – Pupil Achievement

Donald Ingwerson

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For Schromm Associates – Personnel Management

Richard Schromm

Jack Weinstein

Charles Diggs

For School Services of California – Facilities Management

Ron Bennett

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Executive Summary

Overview

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

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

The district has also made progress in the management of its financial operations. FCMAT was appointed as Fiscal Advisor to the Berkeley Unified School District by the Alameda County Office of Education (ACOE) in October 2001. A financial recovery plan was developed by the district and approved by the board in February 2003. The plan required major cuts in expenditures to achieve fiscal solvency. The district closely monitored its expenditures over the last two years, updating the plan as necessary. With the approval of the district's 2004-05 budget by the ACOE in August 2004, FCMAT's role as the Fiscal Advisor to the district ended.

As FCMAT exited the district as Fiscal Advisor, FCMAT communicated several issues requiring the district's continued attention in order for the district to maintain fiscal solvency. One of these issues was the requirement of AB 2859 that the district expend \$230,448 for each of the two years 2003-04 and 2004-05 to implement the recommendations of the improvement plan. The district has provided FCMAT with a letter indicating that district funds have been appropriately expended to implement the improvement plan. FCMAT requested a financial activity report and copies of the paid invoices to validate the information in the letter. FCMAT and the ACOE will review the information provided by the district, and will issue a letter subsequent to this report to either verify the appropriateness of the expenditures or address any penalty accounting with the district.

Fiscal recovery is a lengthy and fragile process for any district. The Berkeley USD will need to remain vigilant to avoid fiscal insolvency. For example, the county office's approval of the district's 2004-05 budget in August 2004 ended the necessity of having a Fiscal Advisor assigned to the district. However, the district's first- and second-interim reports to the county office for 2004-05 were qualified certifications, indicating that the district may not be able to meet its financial obligations for the current or two subsequent fiscal years.

FCMAT's involvement with the district will cease with this fourth and final six-month progress report. However, because the district still faces significant fiscal challenges, the district should continue to self-monitor its fiscal operations regularly. The Alameda COE also should continue to provide follow-up support and assistance to the district. The following areas can affect the district's continued fiscal solvency.

- The district successfully passed Measure B in November 2004, a parcel tax for \$8 million. Measure B and Measure BSEP, the existing parcel tax for \$10 million, will both expire June 30, 2007. These two parcel taxes enrich the district's instructional programs and operations and indicate a high level of community support. Measure BB is a parcel tax for facilities, which will expire in 2011. District operations are greatly dependent on the continuation of these parcel taxes, and the district could not function without these additional resources.
- The district has just negotiated temporary agreements including salary adjustments with all employee bargaining units. The district needs to understand the multiyear cumulative effects of any bargaining agreement, and must not utilize onetime resources for ongoing costs of salaries or programs.
- A number of district programs significantly encroach upon the general fund, notably special education at more than \$9 million. The district should take steps to curtail the encroachment of its categorical programs on the general fund.
- The district needs to build the capacity of the staff to maintain the progress it has made. There is a high degree of personnel turnover, particularly in mid-management positions. The Superintendent administers the district with few cabinet-level administrators to provide support or to assume leadership roles.
- The district needs to continue its efforts to address several instructional issues: reducing the achievement gap for minority students, administering fair and equitable student discipline, building an articulated K-12 instructional program, and maintaining strong instructional offerings while reducing categorical program encroachment.
- The district needs accurate information to make appropriate fiscal decisions and should consider providing a full-time informational systems administrator for its management information systems.

Summary of Principal Findings and Recommendations

The following is a summary of the general findings and recommendations that are presented in greater detail by operational area later in the report. This assessment represents data collection and analysis at a specific point in time. The assessment team conducted this follow-up work in the district in April and May 2005.

Community Relations and Governance

In this fourth and final six-month progress report, the Berkeley Unified School District has continued to demonstrate steady progress or sustained implementation in nearly all of the identified standards. The governance team has continued to focus on areas related to communications, parent outreach and student achievement.

Communications

The district maintains a wide range of communications. Positive reactions continue to be received regarding the Public Information Office News that is distributed to all employees with their paychecks. The district continues to strongly promote programs and student and faculty accomplishments. The district is aware that engaging non-English-speaking and traditionally less-involved parents must continue to be a priority. The district will include programs to address such issues as part of future implementation plans for the Measure B funding.

Parent/Community Relations

Parent and community involvement remains high at most school sites within the district. Improved perceptions of the atmosphere at the high school are still mentioned by parents, staff and students. The district has continued its work to coordinate communications across school sites. School accountability report cards for all schools now appear on the district's Web site and in other locations, and include all mandated information.

Community Collaboratives, District Advisory Committees, School Site Councils

The district continues to utilize a streamlined structure for its committee, council and task force system, enhancing clarity and understanding for participants and staff about the functions of these various bodies. The board and Superintendent continue to highlight the importance of refining and improving school site plans.

Policy

The district has adopted all the policies mandated by law. The district needs to ensure a process is in place to adopt additional policies as necessary and to update or repeal outdated policies. As policies are adopted, the district must ensure that it consistently communicates key policy changes to the staff and public.

Board Roles/Boardsmanship

The strong working relationship among the members of the board and between the board and Superintendent continues to be positive. The governance team demonstrated the ability to work together as it addressed the district's fiscal situation. Individual board members continue to exhibit a deep commitment to the district and the community; all individuals on the board devote considerable time and effort to district and community events and their work on board subcommittees and other assignments. The board continues to demonstrate respect and support for district and site-level staff.

Board Meetings

Board meetings have consistently been constructive. The members of the board and the Superintendent have renewed their focus on matters related to student achievement. The board has continued the practice of opening its public meetings with a presentation highlighting an educational program in the district. Board meetings continue to emphasize matters of student achievement or instruction.

Conclusion

This six-month review of Community Relations and Governance included the assessment of 21 standards. Identifying a smaller number of standards for the district to address during each six-month review period allows the district to focus its improvement efforts.

The average rating of all 60 assessment standards for the operational area of Community Relations and Governance at this fourth six-month reporting period is **7.00** on a scale of 10, with 10 the highest score possible. The average rating in this operational area was 5.67 in the initial FCMAT Assessment and Improvement Plan report in July 2003, 6.03 in the first six-month progress report in January 2004, 6.55 in the second six-month progress report in July 2004 and 6.87 in the third six-month progress report in January 2005.

Personnel Management

A number of accomplishments have occurred over time in the Human Resources Department. Joint monthly meetings have continued among payroll, benefits, position control and personnel staff to clarify procedures and resolve employee problems; a full complement of Personnel Commissioners has been appointed to provide direction to the Merit System district for the first time in five years; the Personnel Commission and school district board members approved a classification study to be conducted for the 107 classified employee job descriptions; the local Measure B parcel tax was passed, which will result in the hiring of approximately 40 new certificated employees for some class size reduction and expanded library services.

The district and HR Department still face a number of issues. These include the need for sufficient staff resources to complete recruitment for the large number of certificated and administrative employee vacancies anticipated for the 2005-2006 school year and the need for formal written operational procedures for the HR Department.

Employee Recruitment

The Human Resources Department lacks a written comprehensive recruitment plan that identifies the projection of recruitment needs and costs. An attractive certificated hiring folder has been developed and includes information that promotes the Berkeley schools and community.

The Certificated Human Resources Department has not developed an annual written summary of its certificated recruitment efforts for presentation to the Governing Board. The summary report should include the recruitment sources, locations, number of applications, interviews, hires and costs.

Professional Development

The Human Resources Department continues to provide site administrators with a Principal's Human Resources Guide handbook that contains selected personnel procedures and forms.

The district does not have any program or plan that delivers diversity training to teachers and other professional staff. The district needs to develop a more systematic approach to providing this training to all professional staff.

Classified Employees

A wide variety of sources is used for recruitment of classified staff including written notices, district Web page flyers, online recruiting centers, mailings to selected agencies, and newspaper ads. The Personnel Commission finally has the requisite three members. Efforts now need to be directed toward updating the commission's rules.

The district is now enforcing the Education Code requirement for all new and continuing employees to provide proof that they are free of tuberculosis. Corrective action procedures are now in place to address delinquent testing of continuing employees

The department has fully implemented all of the education and testing requirements for instructional aides. The department is working with current instructional aides who do not meet the education requirements in the “No Child Left Behind” legislation, to either pass the proficiency test or to move into other assignments.

Technology

The conversion to the payroll/personnel computer system, Quintessential School System (QSS), has been ongoing since 2003. Credentialing data and information are still in the process of being moved to QSS. Excel spreadsheets are used to generate reports on credential information that is used by school site and district personnel.

Both the Classified and Certificated Personnel Departments have some form of applicant tracking in place.

Bargaining Unit Negotiations

The Certificated Personnel Department collects teacher salary and benefit information from surrounding districts for use in negotiations. The district has a board policy requiring the “sunshining” of all new initial proposals. Both union and district initial proposals are placed on a board agenda for public input prior to the start of negotiations.

The district negotiated temporary agreements with its five employee bargaining units just before publication of this report. The district has prepared disclosure statements for the county office to review.

Conclusion

This six-month review of Personnel Management included the assessment of 22 standards. Identifying a smaller number of standards for the district to address during each six-month review period allows the district to focus its improvement efforts.

The average rating of all 102 assessment standards for the operational area of Personnel Management at this fourth six-month reporting period is **5.65** on a scale of 10, with 10 the highest score possible. The average rating in this operational area was 4.40 in the initial FCMAT Assessment and Improvement Plan report in July 2003, 4.71 in the first six-month progress report in January 2004, 5.02 in the second six-month progress report in July 2004, and 5.31 in the third six-month progress report in January 2005.

Pupil Achievement

This fourth and final six-month progress report on pupil achievement continues the monitoring of the district's efforts to develop an effective system of schools.

The pupil achievement reviews conducted for the district focused on the following areas: a standards-aligned curriculum; an aligned and integrated professional development plan; an organizational structure for K-12 curriculum development under one division with written goals, policies, and procedures; a K-12 policy and practice for due process in student discipline; and development of classroom strategies for a diverse student body.

Student Discipline

A management process for student discipline has been developed for grades K-8. The Student Attendance and Review Team Program appears to function well at the K-8 level. The high school has not developed a Student Attendance and Review Board Program for 9-12 students. The district should pursue this as a way of supporting student achievement and decreasing the number of high school dropouts.

The district has updated its instructional policies, disaggregated student achievement data, provided formal board reports on student assessments and made these reports available to the community. The systematic approach to serving the schools is resulting in stronger support from the community and the University of California, Berkeley Campus. The community voted to increase the amount of revenues from the BSEP parcel tax.

Special Education

Two aspects of the special education program continue to be of concern to the review team. First, the district continues to show a high level of special education encroachment compared with statewide averages. 59 percent of the district's special education program expenditures are supported by the general fund. Statewide averages range from 25 percent to 40 percent. Second, the district's special education population is 12.75 percent of the total student K-12 population. This is an increase from previous site reviews and above current state averages, which usually are 10 percent or less. The fiscal encroachment of special education on the general fund is significant.

Assessment and Instruction

The district has talented and capable individuals working hard on behalf of students, including a competent person working in the area of research who is able to provide the board, administration and teachers with user friendly and meaningful data.

Instructional improvements over the last three years are evident. The district's English Learner redesignation rate has nearly tripled since the year of the original FCMAT comprehensive assessment. The instructional policies and regulations are no longer either outdated or unwritten. There is a plan in place for regular policy review and updates, and a policy service is being used to provide model policies to the district.

Many of the functions that deal with planning for and implementing standards and programs as well as providing staff development for principals and teachers are now in written form and are being evaluated in a systematic manner. This is especially notable at the elementary and middle school levels.

The high school, under new leadership, is beginning to address student issues and problems. For example, the high school has increased the percentage of students tested to 88 percent from 75 percent, but the API for this school and several others in the district continue to show a lack of schoolwide and comparable growth on the 2004 API. The district needs to build an integrated K-12 pupil achievement structure. The areas of student discipline, achievement gap, and special education need continued attention and a systemic approach in order to serve students effectively.

Conclusion

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

The average rating of all 79 assessment standards for the operational area of Pupil Achievement at this fourth six-month reporting period is **6.08** on a scale of 10, with 10 the highest score possible. The average rating in this operational area was 4.30 in the initial FCMAT Assessment and Improvement Plan report in July 2003, 4.96 in the first six-month progress report in January 2004, 5.51 in the second six-month progress report in July 2004, and 5.91 in the third six-month progress report in January 2005.

Financial Management

The district has made measurable progress in the majority of the financial management standards reviewed in this final and fourth six month progress report.

Budget Development Process

The district has continued to improve its technical budget development processes for the 2005-06 fiscal year. The budget development process has become standardized, which helps ensure that all principals and program/budget managers are receiving understandable information in a timely manner to ensure that budget development is appropriately completed.

A budget calendar has been developed, reviewed by the cabinet and approved by the Governing Board. The calendar is detailed and easy to understand, encompassing the period of time from January 5, 2005 to 45 days after state budget adoption. A written procedure/desk manual or other similar documentation needs to be developed and implemented to document the various steps in budget development, the specific staff members responsible for these steps and the procedures used to accomplish each individual task.

Internal Audit

Board policy 3410, adopted on April 21, 2004, provides for the formation of an audit committee to enhance audit functions, increase attention to audits and financial reporting, and prevent management erosion of internal controls. The policy should also focus on internal auditing practices and procedures.

The Director of Fiscal Services continues to review the district's internal control processes. The district still needs to develop and distribute an internal control manual so that a clear understanding of district processes exists, that internal controls are intact, and that accountability is increased.

Budget Monitoring

Budget monitoring has become consistently more detailed at both the district office and at sites/departments. Sites and departments now have the option of running their own budget reports, but also still receive reports from the district office on a monthly basis.

For the past several years, there have been significant differences between the amounts reported on the Estimated Actuals and the Unaudited Actual Reports. Budgets need to be updated throughout the year, especially at the time of first and second interim, so that these large changes do not occur at year end. Monitoring must be done continuously throughout the year as new funding data becomes available.

Payroll

The district's payroll procedures and practices have greatly improved. The position control system has been fully reconciled and is driving the budget for salary and benefit accounts for all contracted positions. A payroll procedures manual has been developed and is being utilized.

Time card submission has improved, and the number of time-sheet errors has decreased. Site and department leaders are being held more accountable for incorrect and late time cards. However, the error ratio remains high because the number of time sheets continues to be high.

Nutritional Services Fund

The nutritional services fund continues to operate at a deficit as it has for the past several years. The district will not be able to stop deficit spending unless the food restrictions are eased to permit the high school to serve a wider variety of foods, the campus is closed for lunch, or new innovative ways are found to increase revenues. At this time, district administration does not consider any of these options feasible.

FCMAT has concerns about the large deficit and general fund encroachment. The budget for 2004-05 indicates that deficit spending will exceed \$600,000, and similar deficits are planned for future years. It was anticipated that the new high school cafeteria food court, which opened in the 2004-05 fiscal year, would provide an increased daily participation of 700 meals per day, but only 350 to 400 additional lunches are now served.

Additional Fiscal Issues

The city of Berkeley sent a letter to the district more than one year ago, stating that the district owes the city \$1.4 million for past memorandums of understanding. The city charges 7 1/2 percent interest on all utilities. This potential liability to the district is still unresolved and needs to be addressed as soon as possible so that any impact on the general fund can be determined.

The 2004-05 year will be the first full fiscal year in which the district has been self-insured for worker's compensation. Because there are no past experience records or trends to review, the district must ensure that the activity and usage of worker's compensation benefits is monitored closely as the current activity will affect future rates.

Conclusion

This six-month review of Financial Management included the assessment of 22 standards. Identifying a smaller number of standards for the district to address during each six-month review period allows the district to focus its improvement efforts.

The average rating of all 104 assessment standards for the operational area of Financial Management at this fourth six-month reporting period is **5.70** on a scale of 10, with 10 the highest score possible. The average rating in this operational area was 3.08 in the initial FCMAT Assessment and Improvement Plan report in July 2003, 3.88 in the first six-month progress report in January 2004, 4.35 in the second six-month progress report in July 2004 and 4.95 in the third six-month progress report in January 2005.

Facilities Management

This fourth and last six-month follow-up report for the Berkeley Unified School District summarizes the overall progress the district has made in the area of facilities management.

The Berkeley Unified School District has made progress in the area of maintenance and operations in each of the reporting periods. The district's Measure BB funds continue to help the district keep up with the maintenance needs of schools. The additional maintenance staff provided by the measure has allowed the district to make progress in the abatement of graffiti, safety notifications to employees, and record keeping for important safety issues, including fire drills and fire extinguishers.

The absence of regular updates to board policy and administrative regulations, as well as the absence of departmental procedures, remains a concern. The absence of current directives has existed without correction for many years and hinders the execution of sound operational practices. An action plan to update all policies was initiated in response to the Community Relations and Governance standards.

The absence of a safety committee is also an issue, as is the attention provided to maintenance of grounds. The district should establish a rigorous self-inspection or community-based inspection program.

Safety Concerns

During the site visits in October 2004, the team observed several unsafe conditions for students while watching parents drop off their children for school. Some parents dropped off students at the curb, some across the street from the school, and some in the middle of the street. On two occasions, a child's door opened into traffic while the parent stayed in the car. During the May 2005 site visits, it was noted that many of these problems had been corrected. Adults were present at gates and bus loading zones. However, a few instances were observed of parents parking in places that put children in harm's way.

Previous reports noted that adult supervision of students during the main school day was adequate, but that students on the site for before- and after-hour activities had little adult supervision. During the visits in May 2005, no instances of this deficiency were observed.

The district has made significant progress in many areas related to school site safety, fire and chemical safety, and graffiti abatement. The review team attributes most of the progress made in this area to the efforts of the Director of Maintenance and Operations.

Operations

The Governing Board has not developed a policy regarding the proper handling of graffiti and vandalism at schools. However, no graffiti was observed at any of the sites visited. Site personnel indicated that the district's weekly painting program has been effective in controlling graffiti. This is a remarkable improvement.

All sites are conducting fire drills as evidenced by fire drill logs maintained in the school offices. The Director of Maintenance and Operations has now established an effective reporting procedure to report fire drill compliance to the central office. No fire hazards that required the

attention of site administration were observed. All of the buildings visited had appropriate fire extinguishers, and appropriate signage had been added in most areas. This will assist employees and the public in locating fire extinguishers in an emergency.

Facilities

The team reviewed the district's facilities plans for facilities improvements expected to be accomplished by means of local bonds. These plans cover a 5-10 year time frame, but they do not include all of the elements that would be found in a complete facilities master plan. The district's master plan needs to consider various factors, including the changing demographics of the future.

Conclusion

This six-month review of Facilities Management included the assessment of 19 standards. Identifying a smaller number of standards for the district to address during each six-month review period allows the district to focus its improvement efforts.

The average rating of all 111 assessment standards for the operational area of Facilities Management at this fourth six-month reporting period is **6.47** on a scale of 10, with 10 the highest score possible. The average rating in this operational area was 5.75 in the initial FCMAT Assessment and Improvement Plan report in July 2003, 6.08 in the first six-month progress report in January 2004, 6.12 in the second six-month progress report in July 2004, and 6.31 in the third six-month progress report in January 2005.

**TABLE OF
BERKELEY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT'S
PROGRESS OVER TIME**

This table depicts the growth in the averages of all of the standards in each operational area over time. FCMAT performed an initial assessment of the district in spring 2003 and reported initial baseline scaled scores on the district's operations in July 2003. Six-month progress reports were issued from January 2004 through July 2005 on the district's progress in implementing the recommendations in the Berkeley USD Assessment and Improvement Plan, July 2003.

OPERATIONAL AREA	July 2003 Rating	Jan. 2004 Rating	July 2004 Rating	Jan. 2005 Rating	July 2005 Rating
Community Relations/ Governance	5.67	6.03	6.55	6.87	7.00
Personnel Management	4.40	4.71	5.02	5.31	5.65
Pupil Achievement	4.30	4.96	5.51	5.91	6.08
Financial Management	3.08	3.88	4.35	4.95	5.70
Facilities Management	5.75	6.08	6.12	6.31	6.47

