



**Putting
Children
First**

**Sacramento City Unified School District
BOARD OF EDUCATION
Special Board Meeting**

Board of Education Members

Chinua Rhodes, President (Trustee Area 5)
Lavinia Grace Phillips, Vice President (Trustee Area 7)
Jasjit Singh, Second Vice President (Trustee Area 2)
Tara Jeane (Trustee Area 1)
Christina Pritchett (Trustee Area 3)
Jamee Villa (Trustee Area 4)
Taylor Kayatta (Trustee Area 6)
Liliana Miller Segura, Student Member

Tuesday, September 26, 2023
7:00p.m.-9:00p.m.

Serna Center
5735 47th Avenue
Sacramento, CA 95824

AGENDA
2023/24-8

- 7:00 p.m. **1.0 OPEN SESSION / CALL TO ORDER**
- 2.0 PUBLIC COMMENT REGARDING ITEMS TO BE DISCUSSED IN CLOSED AND OPEN SESSION**

NOTICE OF PUBLIC COMMENT AND DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION

Members of the public may address the Board on-agenda items only. Public comment may be (1) emailed to publiccomment@scusd.edu; (2) submitted in writing through the District's website at <https://www.scusd.edu/submit-public-comment>; or (3) provided in-person at the meeting. The submission deadline for written public comments shall be no later than noon on the day of the meeting. If you intend to address the Board in-person, please fill out a yellow card available at the entrance. Speakers may be called in the order that requests are received, or grouped by subject area. We ask that comments are limited to two (2) minutes with no more than 15 minutes per single topic so that as many people as possible may be heard. By law, the Board is allowed to take action only on items on the agenda. The Board may, at its discretion, refer a matter to district staff or calendar the issue for future discussion.

- 7:15 p.m. **3.0 CLOSED SESSION**
- 3.1 Government code 54957—Public Employee Discipline/Dismissal/Release/Complaint
- 3.2 Existing Litigation pursuant to subdivision (d)(1) of Government Code section 54956.9 (PERB Case No. SA-CE-3086-E.)
- 4.0 RECONVENE INTO OPEN SESSION**
- 5.0 ANNOUNCEMENT OF ACTION TAKEN IN CLOSED SESSION**
- 6.0 BOARD GOVERNANCE WORKSHOP**
- 6.1 Strategic Community/Board Priorities; Community Engagement and Outreach **Information**

7.0 CONSENT AGENDA

Action
2 minutes

Generally routine items are approved by one motion without discussion. The Superintendent or a Board member may request an item be pulled from the consent agenda and voted upon separately.

7.1 Items Subject or Not Subject to Closed Session:

7.1a Approve BPSB et al. v. SCUSD et al., U.S.D.C., E.D. Cal., Case no. 2:19-cv-01768-DJC-KJN Independent Monitor Services Contract (Yvonne Wright)

9:00 p.m. 8.0 ADJOURNMENT

NOTE: The Sacramento City Unified School District encourages those with disabilities to participate fully in the public meeting process. If you need a disability-related modification or accommodation, including auxiliary aids or services, to participate in the public meeting, please contact the Board of Education Office at (916) 643-9314 at least 24 hours before the scheduled Board of Education meeting so that we may make every reasonable effort to accommodate you. [Government Code § 54953.2; Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, § 202 (42 U.S.C. §12132)] Any public records distributed to the Board of Education less than 24 hours in advance of the meeting and relating to an open session item are available for public inspection at 5735 47th Avenue at the Front Desk Counter and on the District's website at www.scusd.edu



SACRAMENTO CITY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF EDUCATION

Agenda Item# 7.1a

Meeting Date: September 26, 2023

Subject: BPSB et al. v. SCUSD et al., U.S.D.C., E.D. Cal., Case No. 2:19-cv-01768-DJC-KJN
Independent Monitor Services Contract.

- Information Item Only
- Approval on Consent Agenda
- Conference (for discussion only)
- Conference/First Reading (Action Anticipated: _____)
- Conference/Action
- Action
- Public Hearing

Division: Special Education

Recommendation: The Academic Office recommends SCUSD governing board approve Independent Monitor Services Contract for the hiring of the role of Independent Monitor, pursuant to the Settlement Agreement executed between SCUSD and BPSB.

Background/Rationale: The Compromise and Release Agreement entered into between SCUSD and BPSB requires the execution of a services contract for the role of an Independent Monitor. SCUSD received a proposal from the Dr. Peters and Dr. Browne of the San Francisco Coalition of Essential Small Schools to address the key problems of: (1) segregation of students with disabilities; (2) failure to provide necessary supports and services to student with disabilities; (3) suspension of students for disability-based behaviors; and (4) bullying and harassment due to students' race and disabilities.

Financial Considerations: The Contract Price is a total of \$325,000.

LCAP Goal(s): N/A

Documents Attached:
Services Contract Agreement

Estimated Time of Presentation: N/A

Submitted by: Yvonne Wright, Chief Academic Officer
Geovanni Linares, SELPA Director

Approved by: Lisa Allen, Interim Superintendent

SERVICES AGREEMENT

Date: September 15, 2023 **Place:** Sacramento, California

Parties: Sacramento City Unified School District, a political subdivision of the State of California, (hereinafter referred to as the “District”); and Dr. Gregory Peters through the San Francisco Coalition of Essential Small Schools (hereinafter referred to as “Contractors”).

Recitals:

A. The District is a public school district in the County of Sacramento, State of California, and has its administrative offices located at the Serna Center, 5735 47th Avenue, Sacramento, CA 95824.

B. The District desires to engage the services of the Contractors and to have said Contractors render services on the terms and conditions provided in this Services Agreement (“Agreement”).

C. California Government Code Section 53060 authorizes a public school district to contract with and employ any persons to furnish to the District, services, and advice in financial, economic, accounting, engineering, legal, or administrative matters if such persons are specially trained, experienced, and competent to perform the required services, provided such contract is approved or ratified by the governing board of the school district. Said section further authorizes the District to pay from any available funds such compensation to such persons as it deems proper for the services rendered, as set forth in the contract.

D. The Contractors are specially trained, experienced and competent to perform the services required by the District, and such services are needed on a limited basis.

In consideration of the mutual promises contained herein, the parties agree as follows:

ARTICLE 1. SERVICES.

A. **Present Scope of Work.** The Contractors, through Dr. Peters as the Independent Monitor, hereby agree to provide to the District the services as set forth in this Article as outlined below, which is hereby defined as the “Scope of Work.”

1. **Independent Monitor Role.**

i. The Contractors shall serve in the role of Independent Monitor as described in the Compromise and Release Agreement (“Settlement Agreement”) attached and incorporated hereto as Exhibit A, to provide the services outlined in this Agreement and the Scope of Work as described below.

ii. The Independent Monitor role shall be impartial, neutral, and independent of the District. In carrying out their duties under this Agreement, the Independent Monitor shall act upon and otherwise exercise their independent professional judgment.

iii. For those components of the Scope of Work pertaining to special education, Dr. Browne shall be considered an expert in the field and shall provide such expertise related to the law and enforcement of obligations related to special education.

iv. The Contractors shall retain consultants, experts and/or other personnel reasonably necessary to fulfill the Contractors' duties and complete the Scope of Work required under this Agreement and the Settlement Agreement. Consistent with this requirement, Contractors shall involve, utilize, and rely upon Dr. Mildred Browne in relation to those components of the Scope of Work required under this Agreement which involve special education issues. Also consistent with this requirement, Contractors shall involve, utilize, and rely upon necessary consultants and/or subcontractors to assist in fulfilling and completing those components of the Scope of Work required under this Agreement pertaining to data gathering, data analysis, and the development of data systems, which may include but is not limited to consultation and subcontracting with RTI, International.

v. The Independent Monitor shall conduct bi-monthly status meetings for the first year of the Term of this Agreement, and on at least a quarterly basis thereafter, or more frequently if the Independent Monitor determines necessary and shall consider all reasonable feedback and input provided at these meetings or otherwise.

2. **Action Plan.**

i. **Timeline for Deliverable.** Within sixty (60) days of the Effective Date of this Agreement as set forth in Article 2 below, the Contractors shall provide the District in writing a proposed plan of action to address and respond to the issues and deficiencies identified in paragraph A.2.iv. below. The proposed written plan of action will be defined as the "Action Plan."

ii. **Development of Action Plan.** In developing the Action Plan, the Contractors shall:

a. Review the Expert's Report, attached hereto as Exhibit B;

b. Review the Capitol Suspensions Report, the Systemic Instructional Review ("SIR") Report, and the 2017 Council of the Great City Schools Report, all of which are attached hereto as Exhibit C;

c. Account for any District policy and practice changes in place or underway relevant to those areas addressed in the Expert's Report, and those which are subject areas and practices that may be addressed by the Action Plan;

d. Account for other data and information maintained by the District which the Contractors deem necessary or beneficial to the successful and complete preparation of the Action Plan;

e. Wherever practicable, the Action Plan shall build on current implementation of the District's Multi-Tiered System of Supports ("MTSS") program and Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, as well as those efforts underway as a result of the District's identification as Significantly Disproportionate by the California Department of Education and required steps and processes the District must complete as a result of that identification. In doing so, the Independent Monitor shall review the District's planned actions and may advise and make recommendations to the District about

actions that the District should undertake to align the District's action with the Action Plan;

f. Develop and include reasonable timelines on performing the steps and action identified in the Action Plan; and

g. Include a provision for the development or creation of a reliable data collection system and parameters on the measurement of progress of implementing the Action Plan, and, where determined applicable and necessary, any necessary metrics, including baseline metrics, that should be establishments for such measurement.

iii. **Equity Audit.** In support of the development of the Action Plan, Contractors shall also complete the following during the time period of September 2023 through December 2023:

a. Collect and triangulate data to include academic and experiential data, quantitative, and qualitative, including cultural proficiency surveys to be completed by each school site;

b. Collaboration with District for data collection and reporting in relation to litigation, and the establishment of weekly communications; and

c. The hosting of two meeting between Contractors and school representatives to calibrate information with members from each school site.

iv. **Outcomes and Considerations.** Based upon the Contractors' review of the information and documents identified in A.2.ii. above, the Contractors' Action Plan shall include steps intended to achieve the following outcomes, assuming the Contractors find that such steps are not already in place and/or such outcomes have not already been achieved, along with metrics intended to measure whether such steps are succeeding in achieving the desired outcomes. If the Contractors determine upon such review that any of the following outcomes are already in place or have been achieved, the Contractors shall state so in the Action Plan and may set forth an alternative degree or rate of change and an explanation for the same:

a. Substantial reduction of disciplinary referrals, including informal suspensions, and in disproportionate such discipline, of students with disabilities;

b. Substantial reduction in disciplinary referrals, including informal suspensions, and in disproportionate such discipline, of Black students with disabilities;

c. Substantial reduction in the placement of students with disabilities in segregated settings;

d. Substantial reduction in the placement and/or disproportionate placement of Black students with disabilities in segregated settings;

e. Substantial increase in the placement of students with disabilities, in particular Black students with disabilities, in inclusive

and integrated classrooms, schools, and school settings in the Least Restrictive Environment (“LRE”), as measured by the percentage of time outside of the general education setting;

f. Substantial reduction in incidence of and disproportionality in bullying and harassment of students with disabilities and Black students with disabilities and staffing and structures, including delineated staff responsibilities and duties, to support a functional and robust system that properly responds to, remediates, and prevents the bullying and harassment of students with disabilities and Black students with disabilities; analysis regarding the foregoing shall include addressing the effectiveness of school safety plans and their implementation;

g. Compliance with Child Find obligations, including in a manner that appropriately identifies Black students with disabilities without over-identifying or under-identifying Black students for special education and particular disability categories;

h. Compliance with obligation to refer students suspected of having a disability for special education assessment in a timely manner, analysis of which shall include the efficacy of and need for Student Study Teams;

i. Substantial reduction in over-identification or under-identification of Black students for special education;

j. Development of best practices, compliant with state and federal laws, to develop individualized education programs (“IEPs”), conduct IEP meetings, and related processes, including but not limited to, increased transparency (e.g., parents are notified in advance of participants, receive information about their rights, programs and services); accessibility, including language access; involvement of parents/guardians, and where appropriate, students, as equal participants with the District; contacting methods to maximize parent/guardian participation; a decision-making process/checklist geared toward placement in LRE and high academic standards; and the inclusion of District staff knowledgeable about and with the authority to identify and allocate appropriate programs, services, supports, and placements for students with IEPs;

k. Analysis of the District’s Educationally Related Mental Health Services (“ERMHS”) teams and processes to promote adequate, effective, timely and appropriate access to students;

l. Timely and appropriate Functional Behavioral Assessments (“FBAs”) and development and implementation of Behavioral Intervention Plans (“BIPs”);

m. Substantial reduction in the overall use of and disproportionality in use of restraints and seclusion for students with disabilities and Black students with disabilities;

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- n. Adequate and appropriate use of best practices regarding the District's/Special Education Local Plan Area's ("SELPA") Special Education Procedural Guide as a usable and accessible resource for parents/guardians and District staff;
 - o. The ratio of school psychologists to students to effectively provide and support MTSS interventions and comprehensive school support services;
 - p. Substantial implementation of data-driven programs and systems to recruit and retain diverse teaching staff and school site administrators;
 - q. Implementation of an ongoing professional development system (including training and coaching) based on students', teachers', and staff's needs, the effectiveness of which is measurable, including the goals of establishing and maintaining substantial competency among staff regarding obligations under special education laws consistently applying best practices and culturally responsive pedagogy for educating students with disabilities and Black students with disabilities;
 - r. Targeted outreach and recruitment focused on diversifying the District's workforce, specifically to reach measurable improvement in the hiring of and retention of the BIPOC employees and employees with disabilities in each of the following groups: teachers, classified staff, and service providers;
 - s. Implementation of a mechanism for the Independent Monitor to, in collaboration with the District, present at publicly agendized workshops before the District's Board of Education to provide an update to the District's Board of Education and community on the District's progress implementing the provisions of the Action Plan and outcomes, to occur at a minimum, biannually;
 - t. Identification and utilization of root cause analyses and reports, where appropriate, for any of the foregoing enumerated items, recognizing the likelihood of overlap on this subject with the District's ongoing Significant Disproportionality ("SIG-DISP") and MTSS efforts;
 - u. Establishment of a reliable data collection system; and
 - v. Mechanisms to gather and incorporate stakeholder input, i.e. students, teachers, classified staff, and parents, in development and implementation of policy and systems changes facilitated by the Action Plan.
- v. **Final Action Plan.** Within 60 days of receiving the Independent Monitor's Action Plan, the Independent Monitor shall collaborate with the District and Plaintiffs to reach agreement on a final agreed upon Final Action Plan.

In developing the Final Action Plan, the Parties and Independent Monitor shall meet and confer in accordance with the Settlement Agreement to develop ways to enable implementation of the Final Action Plan currently allowable under existing labor agreements and consistent with any bargaining obligations under the Educational Employment Relations Act (“EERA”), Government Code section 3453 et seq.

B. Future Scope of Work. Following completion of the Final Action Plan, as set forth in paragraphs B.1 through B.5. above, the Parties shall further delineate and specify the further scope of work and services to be provided by the Independent Monitor under the Settlement Agreement pertaining to the monitoring and implementation of the Final Action Plan and Dispute Resolution as set forth below, through mutually executed addendum(s) to this Agreement.

Such addendums shall provide for the scope of work and services including, but not limited to:

1. **Implementation of Final Action Plan.** The Independent Monitor shall have authority to compel the District to comply with the Final Action Plan. To capture and monitor the overall progress in the implementation of the Final Action Plan to effectuate the outcomes as set forth above, the Independent Monitor shall maintain and provide a chart or spreadsheet that tracks such progress which shall be provided on a bi-monthly basis; and

2. **Dispute Resolution.** The Independent Monitor shall facilitate resolution of disputes concerning the interpretation, implementation, monitoring of, and compliance with both the Settlement Agreement and the Final Action Plan in accordance with the Settlement Agreement. The Independent Monitor must issue a resolution determination regarding a dispute within thirty (30) days of receiving written notification of the dispute as to who is out of compliance, establish a recommended course of action to come into compliance by a reasonable date certain, and/or the development of a compliance plan.

ARTICLE 2. TERM AND EFFECTIVE DATE.

The Agreement shall commence upon the Effective Date of the Agreement and continue for three (3) years. The Scope of Work delineated by this Agreement, pursuant to the Settlement Agreement and as set forth in Article 1, paragraph A, above, is anticipated for completion on a much shorter timeline, and additional addenda as to the Scope of Work for purposes of implementation and dispute resolution are anticipated as set forth in Article 1, paragraph B, above. The District shall have the option to renew the Agreement for at least an additional two (2) years, for a total term of five (5) years following the approval of the Final Action Plan under paragraph D of the Settlement Agreement, and for purposes of the additional anticipated addenda to this contract as described in Article 1. All other-terms and conditions shall remain the same. Renewal shall be memorialized in a mutually executed addendum.

The Effective Date of this Agreement shall be upon Full Execution of this Agreement.

ARTICLE 3. PAYMENT.

District agrees to pay Contractors for services satisfactorily rendered pursuant to this Agreement as follows:

- Three Hundred and Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$325,000.00) for services rendered pursuant to Article 1 pertaining to the Present Scope of Work and development and completion of the Action Plan and Final Action Plan, as set forth in paragraphs A.1. through A.2. above.

Within fifteen (15) business days of completion of the Final Action Plan in accordance with Article 1 above, the Contractors shall provide to the District a budget proposal pertaining to the services to be provided related to the monitoring, compliance, and implementation of said Final Action Plan continuing through the Term of this Agreement, as well as dispute resolution. The Parties shall then negotiate and execute an addendum to this Agreement for purposes of payment for completion of such additional Scope of Work under the Settlement Agreement, as described in Article 1.

The schedule for payment to the Contractors will be agreed upon between the District and the Contractors. In no instance will the entirety of the Contract Price be paid to the Contractor unless or until the Scope of Work is complete. Payments shall be made within thirty (30) days upon submission of invoice(s) to the attention of District.

ARTICLE 4. EQUIPMENT AND FACILITIES.

District will provide Contractors with access to all needed records and materials during normal business hours upon reasonable notice. Contractors will provide all other necessary equipment and facilities to render the services pursuant to this Agreement. Nothing in this paragraph nor this Agreement shall be construed to limit the District's or Contractors' obligations under the Settlement Agreement to provide or facilitate access to all needed records and materials and access to District premises and personnel.

ARTICLE 5. WORKS FOR HIRE/COPYRIGHT/TRADEMARK/PATENT

The Contractors understand and agree that all matters specifically produced under this Agreement that contain no intellectual property or other protected works owned by Contractors shall be works for hire and shall become the sole property of the District and cannot be used without the District's express written permission. The District shall have the right, title and interest in said matters, including the right to secure and maintain the copyright, trademark and/or patent of said matter in the name of the District. The Contractors consent to the use of the Contractors' name in conjunction with the sale, use, performance and distribution of the matters, for any purpose in any medium.

As to those matters specifically produced under this Agreement that are composed of intellectual property or other protected works, Contractors must clearly identify to the District those protected elements included in the completed work. The remainder of the intellectual property of such completed works shall be deemed the sole property of the District. The completed works that include both elements of Contractors' protected works and the District's protected works, shall be subject to a mutual non-exclusive license agreement that permits either party to utilize the completed work in a manner consistent with this Agreement including the sale, use, performance and distribution of the matters, for any purpose in any medium.

ARTICLE 6. INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR.

Contractors' relationship to the District under this Agreement shall be one of an independent contractor. The Contractors and all of their employees shall not be employees or agents of the District and are not entitled to participate in any District pension plans, retirement, health and welfare programs, or any similar programs or benefits, as a result of this Agreement.

The Contractors and their employees or agents rendering services under this agreement shall not be employees of the District for federal or state tax purposes, or for any other purpose. The Contractors acknowledge and agree that it is the sole responsibility of the Contractors to report as income its compensation from the District and to make the requisite tax filings and payments to the appropriate federal, state, and/or local tax authorities. No part of the Contractors'

compensation shall be subject to withholding by the District for the payment of social security, unemployment, or disability insurance, or any other similar state or federal tax obligation.

The Contractors agree to defend, indemnify and hold the District harmless from any and all claims, losses, liabilities, or damages arising from any contention by a third party that an employer-employee relationship exists by reason of this Agreement.

The District assumes no liability for workers' compensation or liability for loss, damage or injury to persons or property during or relating to the performance of services under this Agreement.

Prior to entering into any additional contract(s) between the District and Contractors outside of this Agreement during the Term of this Agreement, the District and Contractors shall first notify Plaintiffs in writing and give Plaintiffs a reasonable opportunity to meet and confer over any concerns regarding such contract(s).

ARTICLE 7. FINGERPRINTING REQUIREMENTS.

Contractors agree that any employee it provides to the District shall be subject to the fingerprinting and TB requirements set forth in the California Education Code. Pursuant to Education Code §45125.1, Contractors shall certify in writing to the District that neither the employer nor any of its employees who are required to have their fingerprints submitted to the Department of Justice (DOJ), and who may come in contact with pupils, have been convicted of a felony as defined in §45122.1.

Contractors will provide a complete list to the District of all employees cleared by the DOJ who will provide services under this Agreement (or MOU). Contractors shall obtain subsequent arrest service from DOJ for ongoing notification regarding an individual whose fingerprints were submitted pursuant to §45125.1. Upon receipt of such a subsequent arrest notification from DOJ, Contractors shall, within 24 hours, notify the District of such a subsequent arrest notification. If an employee is disqualified from working for the District pursuant to the requirements of the California Education Code, Contractors agree to provide a replacement employee within 15 days of receiving notification that the previous employee has been disqualified. Failure to adhere to the terms of this provision is grounds for termination of the Agreement.

ARTICLE 8. MUTUAL INDEMNIFICATION.

Each of the Parties shall defend, indemnify, and hold harmless the other Party, its officers, agents, and employees from any and all claims, liabilities and costs, for any damages, sickness, death, or injury to person(s) or property, including payment of reasonable attorney's fees, and including without limitation all consequential damages, from any cause whatsoever, arising directly or indirectly from or connected with the operations or services performed under this Agreement, caused in whole or in part by the negligent or intentional acts or omissions of the Parties or its agents, employees, or subcontractors.

In performing their duties under this Agreement, the Contractors and any retained consultants, experts, or other personnel, shall be deemed an agent of the District and shall be entitled to all immunities applicable to the conduct of school district officials or personnel. The District shall defend, indemnify, and hold harmless the Contractors from and against any and all liability, action, or proceeding arising from or related to the performance of any act, obligation, or duty performed in connection with this Agreement except for any matter that involves or results from willful misconduct.

It is the intention of the Parties, where fault is determined to have been contributory, principles of comparative fault will be followed and each Party shall bear the proportionate cost of any

damage attributable to fault of that Party. It is further understood and agreed that such indemnification will survive the termination of this Agreement.

ARTICLE 9. TERMINATION.

The District may, upon written notification, terminate this Agreement for cause, including: (1) a material failure or refusal to perform the duties required pursuant to Article 1; (2) misconduct on the part of the Contractors, in accordance with the Settlement Agreement.

ARTICLE 10. ASSIGNMENT.

This Agreement is for personal services to be performed by the Contractors. Neither this Agreement nor any duties or obligations to be performed under this Agreement shall be assigned without the prior written consent of the District, which shall not be unreasonably withheld. In the event of an assignment to which the District has consented, the assignee or his/her or its legal representative shall agree in writing with the District to personally assume, perform, and be bound by the covenants, obligations, and agreements contained in this Agreement.

ARTICLE 11. NOTICES.

Any notices, requests, demand or other communication required or permitted to be given under this Agreement shall be in writing and shall be deemed to have been duly given on the date of service if served personally on the party to whom notice is to be given, or on the third day after mailing if mailed to the party to whom notice is to be given, by first class mail, registered or certified, postage prepaid, or on the day after dispatching by Federal Express or another overnight delivery service, and properly addressed as follows:

District:	Contractors:
Sacramento City Unified School District	San Francisco Coalition of Essential Small Schools
Attn: Geo Linares	Attn: Dr. Gregory Peters
Director, Special Education Local Plan Area	
5735 47 th Avenue	3750 18th St # 5
Sacramento, CA 95824	San Francisco, CA 94114

ARTICLE 12. ENTIRE AGREEMENT.

This Agreement contains the entire agreement between the parties and supersedes all prior understanding between them with respect to the subject matter of this Agreement. There are no promises, terms, conditions or obligations, oral or written, between or among the parties relating to the subject matter of this Agreement that are not fully expressed in this Agreement. This Agreement may not be modified, changed, supplemented or terminated, nor may any obligations under this Agreement be waived, except by written instrument signed by the party to be otherwise expressly permitted in this Agreement.

ARTICLE 13. CONFLICT OF INTEREST.

The Contractors shall abide by and be subject to all applicable District policies, regulations, statutes or other laws regarding conflict of interest. Contractors shall not hire any officer or employee of the District to perform any service covered by this Agreement. If the work is to be performed in connection with a Federal contract or grant, Contractors shall not hire any employee of the United States government to perform any service covered by this Agreement.

Contractors affirm to the best of their knowledge, there exists no actual or potential conflict of interest between Contractor’s family, business or financial interest and the services provided under this Agreement. In the event of a change in either private interest or services under this Agreement, any question regarding possible conflict of interest which may arise as a result of such change will be brought to the District’s attention in writing.

ARTICLE 14. NONDISCRIMINATION.

It is the policy of the District that in connection with all services performed under contract, there will be no discrimination against any prospective or active employee engaged in the work because of race, color, ancestry, national origin, disability, religious creed, sex, age or marital status. Contractors agree to comply with applicable federal and California laws including, but not limited to, the California Fair Employment and Housing Act.

ARTICLE 15. SEVERABILITY.

Should any term or provision of this Agreement be determined to be illegal or in conflict with any law of the State of California or the Settlement Agreement, the validity of the remaining portions or provisions shall not be affected thereby. Each term or provision of this Agreement shall be valid and be enforced as written to the full extent permitted by law. This Agreement shall be read to effectuate the terms of the Settlement Agreement as it pertains to the roles and responsibilities of the Independent Monitor under the Settlement Agreement. Nothing in this Agreement shall modify, terminate, or change the terms of the Settlement Agreement.

ARTICLE 16. RULES AND REGULATIONS.

All rules and regulations of the District’s Board of Education and all federal, state and local laws, ordinance and regulations are to be strictly observed by the Contractors pursuant to this Agreement. Any rule, regulation or law required to be contained in this Agreement shall be deemed to be incorporated herein.

ARTICLE 17. APPLICABLE LAW/VENUE.

This Agreement shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of California. If any action is instituted to enforce or interpret this Agreement, venue shall only be in the appropriate state or federal court having venue over matters arising in Sacramento County, California, provided that nothing in this Agreement shall constitute a waiver of immunity to suit by the District.

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ARTICLE 18. RATIFICATION BY BOARD OF EDUCATION.

To the extent the Agreement exceeds an expenditure above the amount specified in Education Code section 17605, this Agreement, as to any such exceeded amount, is not enforceable and is invalid unless and until the exceeded amount is approved and/or ratified by the governing board of the Sacramento City Unified School District, as evidenced by a motion of said board duly passed and adopted.

Executed at Sacramento, California, on the day and year first above written.

**SACRAMENTO CITY
UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT**

**SAN FRANCISCO COALITION OF SMALL
SCHOOLS
DR. GREGORY PETERS**

By: _____
Jesse Castillo, Interim Chief Business Officer

By:  _____
Dr. Gregory Peters

September 20, 2023
Date

Date

Sacramento City Unified School District

SERVICES AGREEMENT

EXHIBIT A

Compromise and Release Agreement

BPSB et al. v. SCUSD et al., U.S.D.C., E.D. Cal., Case No. 2:19-cv-01768-DJC-KJN

This Settlement Agreement (“Agreement”) is made and entered into, by and between the SACRAMENTO CITY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT; JORGE A. AGUILAR, Superintendent for Sacramento City Unified School District; YVONNE WRIGHT, Chief Academic Officer for the Sacramento City Unified School District; CHRISTINA PRITCHETT, JASJIT SINGH, CHINUA RHODES, TARA JEANE, JAMEE VILLA, TAYLOR KAYATTA, and LAVINIA GRACE PHILIPS, members of the Sacramento City Unified School District Board of Education; THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF SACRAMENTO CITY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT (“District or Defendants”) and BLACK PARALLEL SCHOOL BOARD; S.A., by and through his Next Friend, AMY A.; and C.S., by and through his General Guardian, SAMUEL S. (“Plaintiffs”) (hereinafter collectively referred to as the “Parties” or individually as “Party”) to resolve all claims, issues, disputes in *BPSB v. Sacramento City Unified School District et al.*, United States District Court, Eastern District of California, Case No. 2:19-cv-01768-DJC-KJN (“the Action”).

General Recitals

A. The Action is now pending in the United States District Court, Eastern District of California. Pursuant to agreement and stipulations by the Parties, and orders of the Court, the Action has been stayed for purposes of the Parties’ efforts to resolve this litigation pursuant to the terms of the Parties’ Structured Negotiations Agreement (“SNA”).

B. As part of the Parties’ efforts to resolve this litigation and pursuant to the Parties’ SNA, the Parties contracted for and received the Experts’ Evaluation Report for Sacramento City School District on Special Education, School Discipline, and Implicit Bias prepared and provided to the Parties in January 2022 (“Experts’ Report”).

C. Pursuant to the intentions of the SNA, this Agreement is intended to establish the terms and process through which, based upon the Experts’ Report and other information and data as may be appropriate, the Parties agree upon and the District implements a plan of action created by an Independent Monitor for responding to and improving outcomes in the relevant subject matter and practice areas, consistent with the claims and allegations raised in the Action, as described below.

D. By and through this Agreement the Parties hereby settle and compromise all disputes and controversies, claims and causes of action that were raised, or could have been raised, by the Parties in the Action including, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (“ADA”), 42 U.S.C. § 12101 et seq., Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (“Section 504”), 29 U.S.C. § 794, 42 U.S.C. § 1983, the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution (“Equal Protection Clause”), Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (“Title VI”), 42 U.S.C. § 2000d et seq., and California Government Code section 11135 et seq.

E. The Parties acknowledge that this Agreement aligns with the District’s mission statement and Equity, Access, and Social Justice Guiding Principle, as related to Districtwide inclusive practices and implementation of systems that support inclusive practices with regard to special education, school discipline, and addressing race- and disability-based discrimination, as well as the creation and maintenance of a culture of care for students with disabilities,

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particularly Black students with disabilities, and the commitment to personal, interpersonal, and systemic change through the implementation of reforms utilizing a data-based outcome-oriented approach.

F. The Parties agree that this Agreement, wherever practicable and consistent with the recitals set forth above, intends to implement plans and systems built upon current implementation of the District's Multi-Tiered System of Supports ("MTSS") program, Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports ("PBIS"), and the Experts' Report.

G. The Terms of this Agreement set forth below shall be understood to be consistent with the following aims; however, these aims do not create separate obligations on behalf of the Parties nor are they to be interpreted as explicit Terms of Agreement, as otherwise set forth below. (1) creation and maintenance of Districtwide inclusive practices and implementation of systems that support inclusive practices with regard to special education, school discipline, and addressing race- and disability-based bullying and harassment; (2) creation and maintenance of a culture of care for students with disabilities, particularly Black students with disabilities; (3) continuous promotion of identification and remediation of racial bias in all its forms, with an understanding that such bias is insidious and requires a long-term commitment to personal, interpersonal, and systemic change; and (4) the use and implementation of reforms utilizing a data-based outcome-oriented approach to reduce negative disproportionate outcomes for students with disabilities.

H. For and in consideration of the mutual promises and covenants herein, and for other good and valuable consideration, the Parties have agreed to resolve the Action, without any admission of liability or wrongdoing, and agree as follows.

Terms of Agreement

A. Parties' Selection of Independent Monitor.

1. The Parties will cooperate and work in good faith to select an agreed upon Independent Monitor to serve the purposes outlined in this Agreement, and to thereafter serve additional purposes agreed upon in anticipated subsequent agreements or addendum or addenda to this Agreement.
2. The Parties shall have forty-five (45) days from the Execution of this Agreement to mutually agree on an Independent Monitor.
3. The process for the Parties to select an Independent Monitor will be as follows:
 - i. Within 15 days of the Execution of this Agreement, each Party will nominate no more than two individuals for the role of Independent Monitor.
 - ii. The Parties' nominations for Independent Monitor must possess the following minimum qualifications unless the parties agree mutually to waive any of them:

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- a) Familiarity with the relevant federal and California statutes and regulations concerning special education rights of students with disabilities and rights against disability-based and race-based discrimination of students with disabilities and Black students with disabilities;
 - b) Substantial practical or field experience as an expert in designing and implementing programs or systems in public school districts that comply with and promote the aforementioned special education rights and anti-discrimination laws protecting students with disabilities and Black students with disabilities;
 - c) Familiarity and experience with a wide array of relevant data metrics, such as academic, social/emotional, behavioral, attendance, etc. and the corresponding expertise necessary to cross-tabulate/triangulate data metrics; and
 - c) Ability to be physically and virtually present in the City of Sacramento as needed to fulfill their obligations as Independent Monitor of this Agreement.
- iii. The Parties agree the Independent Monitor's projected fees and costs for completing the tasks set forth in this Agreement for the Independent Monitor shall be a factor in the selection of the Independent Monitor. By so agreeing, the Parties do not waive any of the minimum qualification requirements set forth in paragraph A.3.ii of this Agreement. The Parties further agree that, as part of the Independent Monitor nomination and selection process they will provide each other the projected fees and costs associated with the respective nominations for the Independent Monitor.
 - iv. Upon the Parties' nominating of individuals for Independent Monitor, the Parties will each separately conduct interviews of each of the individuals nominated for the role of Independent Monitor. Such interviews shall be scheduled so as to meet the 45-day deadline to select an Independent Monitor under paragraph A.2 above.
 - v. Upon completion of the respective, separate interviews by both Parties of each of the individuals nominated for the role of Independent Monitor, each Party shall notify the other Party in writing of who they have identified as their top two choices of the nominees. When selecting their top two nominees, the Parties will each rank said nominees in order of preference. If the Parties' selections for the top two nominees result in agreement (due to each selecting the same top-ranked nominee, or due to each nominating only one of two individuals that there is agreement on), that will constitute agreement on the choice for Independent Monitor. If the Parties' identification of their top two choices of the nominees does

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not result in agreement (including if the Parties each nominate the same two individuals but do not agree on ranking), the Parties will meet and confer in an effort to reach agreement. If the Parties' meet and confer efforts do not result in agreement over the selection of the Independent Monitor, the Parties may either: (a) reinitiate the selection process with the selection of new nominees; or (b) at the election of either Party, submit the issue to the Court for resolution, pursuant to the Dispute Resolution process set forth in paragraph E of this Agreement. If a Party elects to submit the issue to the Court for resolution, the running of the period during which the Court retains jurisdiction over this matter, as set forth at paragraph I of this Agreement, shall be tolled until such resolution.

- vi. Following completion of the interviews of the Parties' four (4) total nominees, the Parties shall meet and confer to select the agreed upon Independent Monitor.
4. The Parties agree that once selected and after entering into a service contract with the District, the Independent Monitor may be removed for cause upon the mutual written agreement of counsel for the Defendants and counsel for Plaintiffs setting forth the cause constituting the basis for such removal. Cause for removal shall include: (a) a material failure or refusal to perform duties required of the Independent Monitor under the terms and conditions of this Agreement; or (b) misconduct on the part of the Independent Monitor. If either Party identifies cause to remove the Independent Monitor, that Party shall notify the other Party of such cause immediately, after which the Parties shall meet and confer within thirty (30) days to try to reach agreement on whether the Independent Monitor should be removed. If the Parties are unable to reach mutual agreement, no later than thirty (30) days thereafter, either Party may move the Court for removal of the Independent Monitor. The Party making such a motion must demonstrate by clear and convincing evidence that cause of removal exists. In the event the Independent Monitor is removed pursuant to the provisions of this Section, the Parties shall select a replacement Independent Monitor pursuant to process set forth in paragraph A.3 above.
5. In the event the Parties are unable to mutually agree upon a replacement Independent Monitor within forty-five (45) days, the Parties shall jointly move the Court to appoint the Independent Monitor from among the nominations of the Parties. The Court shall select one of the candidates so nominated. During the process described in this paragraph, the running of the period during which the Court retains jurisdiction over this matter, as set forth at paragraph I of this Agreement, shall be tolled until the Court selects a replacement Independent Monitor.

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B. Independent Monitor Services Contract.

1. Within thirty (30) days of the Parties agreeing upon selection of the Independent Monitor or selection of the Independent Monitor by the Court, pursuant to paragraph A above, the District shall retain and enter into a services contract with the Independent Monitor.
2. In performing their duties under this Agreement, the Independent Monitor may retain such consultants, experts and other personnel as may be reasonably required by the Independent Monitor to assist in their duties under this Agreement.
3. The scope of work of the District's services contract with the Independent Monitor will be limited to that described as the Independent Monitor's duties as set forth in this Agreement in paragraph C below.
4. The District shall bear all costs for the retention of the Independent Monitor. The District shall in accordance with a services contract with the Independent Monitor: (a) compensate the Independent Monitor for professional services; (b) reimburse the Independent Monitor for all expenses incurred by the Independent Monitor in performing their duties under this Agreement; and (c) compensate and reimburse the expenses of any consultants, experts or other personnel retained to assist the Independent Monitor. The professional services contract with the Independent Monitor shall set forth the procedures, conditions, and frequency of payment to Independent Monitor.
5. Based upon the scope of work for the Independent Monitor as set forth in this Agreement in paragraph C below, the monetary amount of the service contract with the Independent Monitor shall be set at a reasonable amount. Should the time or expense for the Independent Monitor to complete the delineated scope of work need to be extended or increased, the Independent Monitor must notify the District immediately so that the District may consider an amendment to the service contract to increase the monetary amount approved for the contract.
6. In performing their duties under this Agreement, the Independent Monitor, and any retained consultants, experts, or other personnel, shall be deemed an agent of the District and shall be entitled to all immunities applicable to the conduct of school district officials or personnel. The District shall defend, indemnify, and hold harmless the Independent Monitor from and against any and all liability, action or proceeding arising from or related to the performance of any act, obligation or duty performed in connection with this Agreement except for any matter that involves or results from willful misconduct.

C. Duties of the Independent Monitor.

1. Within sixty (60) days of approval of the Independent Monitor's services contract, the Independent Monitor shall provide the Parties in writing a proposed plan of

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action to address and respond to the issues and deficiencies identified in paragraph C.3 below (“Action Plan”).

2. In developing the Action Plan, the Independent Monitor shall:
 - i. Review the Experts’ Report;
 - ii. Review the Capitol Suspensions Report, the Systemic Instructional Review (SIR) Report of the District, and the 2017 Council of the Great City Schools review and report;
 - iii. Consistent with paragraph C.9 below, account for any District policy and practice changes in place or that are underway relevant to those areas addressed in the Experts’ Report and those which are subject areas and practices that may be addressed by the Independent Monitor’s Action Plan; and
 - iv. Account for other data and information maintained by the District which the Independent Monitor deems necessary or beneficial to the successful and complete preparation of the Action Plan.
3. Based upon the Independent Monitor’s review of the information and documents identified in paragraph C.2 above, the Independent Monitor’s Action Plan shall include steps intended to achieve the following outcomes, assuming the Independent Monitor finds that such steps are not already in place and/or such outcomes have not already been achieved, along with metrics intended to measure whether such steps are succeeding in achieving the desired outcomes. If the Independent Monitor determines upon such review that any of the following outcomes are already in place or have been achieved, the Independent Monitor shall state so in the Action Plan and may set forth an alternative degree or rate of change and an explanation for the same:
 - i. Substantial reduction of disciplinary referrals, including informal suspensions, and in disproportionate such discipline, of students with disabilities;
 - ii. Substantial reduction in disciplinary referrals, including informal suspensions, and in disproportionate such discipline, of Black students with disabilities;
 - iii. Substantial reduction in the placement of students with disabilities in segregated settings;
 - iv. Substantial reduction in the placement and/or disproportionate placement of Black students with disabilities in segregated settings;

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- v. Substantial increase in the placement of students with disabilities, in particular Black students with disabilities, in inclusive and integrated classrooms, schools, and school settings in the Least Restrictive Environment, as measured by the percentage of time outside of the general education setting;
- vi. Substantial reduction in incidence of and disproportionality in bullying and harassment of students with disabilities and Black students with disabilities and staffing and structures, including delineated staff responsibilities and duties, to support a functional and robust system that properly responds to, remediates, and prevents the bullying and harassment of students with disabilities and Black students with disabilities; analysis regarding the foregoing shall include addressing the effectiveness of school safety plans and their implementation;
- vii. Compliance with Child Find obligations, including in a manner that appropriately identifies Black students with disabilities without over-identifying or under-identifying Black students for special education and particular disability categories;
- viii. Compliance with obligation to refer students suspected of having a disability for special education assessment in a timely manner, analysis of which shall include the efficacy of and need for Student Study Teams;
- ix. Substantial reduction in over-identification or under-identification of Black students for special education;
- x. Development of best practices, compliant with state and federal laws, to develop IEPs, conduct IEP meetings, and related processes, including but not limited to, increased transparency (e.g., parents are notified in advance of participants, receive information about their rights, programs and services); accessibility, including language access; involvement of parents/guardians, and where appropriate, students, as equal participants with the District; contacting methods to maximize parent/guardian participation; a decision-making process/checklist geared toward placement in Least Restrictive Environment and high academic standards; and the inclusion of District staff knowledgeable about and with the authority to identify and allocate appropriate programs, services, supports, and placements for students with IEPs;
- xi. Analysis of the District's Educationally Related Mental Health Services ("ERMHS") teams and processes to promote adequate, effective, timely and appropriate access to students;
- xii. Timely and appropriate Functional Behavioral Assessments and development and implementation of Behavioral Intervention Plans;

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- xiii. Substantial reduction in the overall use of and disproportionality in use of restraints and seclusion for students with disabilities and Black students with disabilities;
- xiv. Adequate and appropriate use of best practices regarding the District's/Special Education Local Plan Area's Special Education Procedural Guide as a usable and accessible resource for parents/guardians and District staff;
- xv. The ratio of school psychologists to students to effectively provide and support MTSS interventions and comprehensive school support services;
- xvi. Substantial implementation of data-driven programs and systems to recruit and retain diverse teaching staff and school site administrators;
- xvii. Implementation of an ongoing professional development system (including training and coaching) designed to achieve the goals of this Agreement based on students', teachers', and staff's needs, the effectiveness of which is measurable, including the goals of establishing and maintaining substantial competency among staff regarding obligations under special education laws consistently applying best practices and culturally responsive pedagogy for educating students with disabilities and Black students with disabilities;
- xviii. Targeted outreach and recruitment focused on diversifying the District's workforce, specifically to reach measurable improvement in the hiring of and retention of the BIPOC employees and employees with disabilities in each of the following groups: teachers, classified staff, and service providers;
- xix. Implementation of a mechanism for the Independent Monitor to, in collaboration with the District, present at publicly agendized workshops before the District's Board of Education to provide an update to the District's Board of Education and community on the District's progress implementing the provisions of the Agreement and outcomes that will be determined pursuant to paragraph D of this Agreement, to occur at a minimum, biannually starting at the six months after commencement of the compliance period under this Agreement;
- xx. Identification and utilization of root cause analyses and reports, where appropriate, for any of the foregoing enumerated items, recognizing the likelihood of overlap on this subject with the District's ongoing SIG-DISP and MTSS efforts; and
- xxi. Establishment of a reliable data collection system to track the metrics outlined in paragraph C.4 of this Agreement.

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- xxii. Mechanisms to gather and incorporate stakeholder input, i.e. students, teachers, classified staff, and parents, in development and implementation of policy and systems changes facilitated by the Action Plan.
4. The Independent Monitor's Action Plan and Final Action Plan described in paragraph D of this Agreement shall include a provision for the development of a reliable data collection system and parameters on the measurement of progress of implementing the Action Plan and, where determined applicable and necessary, any necessary metrics, including baseline metrics, that should be establishments for such measurement.
 5. The Independent Monitor's Action Plan shall include reasonable timelines on performing the steps and actions identified in the Action Plan.
 6. The Independent Monitor shall, in their relations with and conduct toward the District and Plaintiffs, be impartial, neutral, and independent of either Party. In carrying out their duties under this Agreement, the Independent Monitor shall act upon and otherwise exercise their independent professional judgment.
 7. In performing the efforts under paragraph C, the Independent Monitor and any retained personnel by the Independent Monitor shall be entitled to access to all District records and data, including student records, except for materials protected by the attorney-client privilege or attorney work product doctrine from either Party. The Independent Monitor and any retained personnel by the Independent Monitor shall have access to District premises, including to observe classroom instruction and speak with District staff, as necessary to perform the Independent Monitor's duties under this Agreement and subject to procedures required by the District of visitors to District premises. The Independent Monitor and any retained personnel by the Independent Monitor shall maintain the confidentiality of all confidential and privileged materials and shall not disclose their contents to any Party or person. The Independent Monitor and any retained personnel by the Independent Monitor shall enter into an agreement with the District, which shall be no more restrictive than comparable agreements the District enters into with other such persons or entities, that allows the Independent Monitor and their personnel to have access to student records in keeping with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA"), 20 U.S.C. § 1232g, 34 C.F.R. Part 99, Education Code section 49060 et seq., and similar state laws, and also sign an agreement acknowledging that they will comply with relevant privacy and confidentiality laws.
 8. In carrying out their duties under this Agreement, the Independent Monitor shall meet with the Parties on a bi-monthly (every other month) basis for the first year following execution of this Agreement and on at least a quarterly basis thereafter or more frequently if the Independent Monitor determines necessary, and shall consider all reasonable feedback and input from the Parties provided at these

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meetings or otherwise. The meetings with the Independent Monitor will be scheduled in such a way to share information and prepare for the required public presentations for the workshops before the Board of Education under paragraph C.3.xix.

9. The Action Plan developed by the Independent Monitor, wherever practicable, should build on current implementation of the District's MTSS program and PBIS, as well as those efforts underway as a result of the District's identification as Significantly Disproportionate by the California Department of Education and required steps and processes the District must complete as a result of that identification. To that end, during the period during which the Independent Monitor is developing the Action Plan, the District shall inform and consult the Independent Monitor regarding policy and practice changes in place or that are underway relevant to those areas addressed in the Experts' Report and those which are subject areas and practices that may be addressed by the Independent Monitor's Action Plan. The Independent Monitor shall review the District's planned actions and may advise and make recommendations to the District about actions that the District should undertake to align the District's actions with the Independent Monitor's Action Plan. The District shall review any such Independent Monitor's advice and recommendations and inform the Independent Monitor and Plaintiffs about whether the District will undertake the actions recommended by the Independent Monitor.
10. The Independent Monitor shall also facilitate resolution of disputes under this Agreement, as set forth in paragraph E of this Agreement.

D. Parties' Consideration and Agreement on Final Action Plan.

1. Within 60 days of receiving the Independent Monitor's Action Plan, the Parties shall collaborate with the Independent Monitor to reach agreement on a final agreed upon Action Plan ("Final Action Plan").
2. In developing the Final Action Plan, the Parties and Independent Monitor shall, wherever practicable, build on current implementation of the District's MTSS program and PBIS, as well as those efforts underway as result of the District's identification as Significantly Disproportionate by the California Department of Education and required steps and processes the District must complete as a result of that identification.
3. In developing the Final Action Plan, the Parties and Independent Monitor shall meet and confer to develop ways to enable implementation of the Final Action Plan that are currently allowable under existing labor agreements and consistent with any bargaining obligations under the Educational Employment Relations Act ("EERA"), Government Code section 3453 et seq. If, pursuant to the EERA, implementation of the Final Action Plan requires additional negotiations, the District will take necessary steps to negotiate on such issues as expeditiously as

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possible consistent with the EERA and the goals and objectives of this Agreement and the Final Action Plan. If a dispute results from such negotiations, the District will utilize all available mechanisms to resolve the dispute as expeditiously as possible, consistent with the provisions of the EERA and the goals and objectives of this Agreement and the Final Action Plan.

4. The Independent Monitor's and District's duties regarding implementation of the Final Action Plan shall be memorialized by addendum to this Agreement. The structure for implementing the Action Plan shall include a requirement that the District complete and provide to Plaintiffs and the public periodic written progress reports on discrete outcomes or topics relevant to this Agreement, as determined by the Independent Monitor. The anticipated future addendum to this Agreement that will memorialize implementation of the Final Action Plan shall include a provision that the Independent Monitor shall have full authority to compel the District to comply with the Final Action Plan, subject to paragraph D.3 of this Agreement. To capture and monitor the overall progress in the District's implementation of the plans to effectuate the agreed upon outcomes for this Agreement, the Independent Monitor shall maintain and provide to Plaintiffs on a bi-monthly (every other month) basis a chart or spreadsheet that tracks such progress.
5. If the District or Plaintiffs do not agree with the Independent Monitor's Final Action Plan, they may resolve that dispute through the procedures set forth under paragraph E of this Agreement.

E. Dispute Resolution.

The following terms shall govern resolution of Disputes under the Agreement, including with regard to compliance with the Agreement's terms, the agreement with the Independent Monitor's Final Action Plan, and the District's implementation of the Final Action Plan.

1. All disputes concerning the interpretation, implementation, monitoring of and compliance with this Agreement, including disputes related to the District's implementation of the matters described herein as the Independent Monitor's Final Action Plan, shall be subject to the dispute resolution process as follows:
 - i. Notification in writing. Any Party's dispute concerning this Agreement shall provide notice in writing to the attention of the other Party of the dispute. The other Party may provide a written response to the issues raised in the notice within ten (10) calendar days of receipt of the notice.
 - ii. Unless otherwise agreed to by the Parties with respect to any particular dispute, the Parties agree to engage in a meaningful meet and confer regarding the alleged noncompliance within twenty (20) calendar days after a dispute is raised in writing by one of the Parties, to attempt to resolve the dispute.

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- iii. If a Party fails to meet and confer or the Parties meet and confer and fail to resolve the dispute within twenty (20) days after the dispute is raised, a Party may immediately submit the matter to the Independent Monitor in writing for resolution. Unless agreed to otherwise by the Parties, the Independent Monitor must issue a resolution determination regarding the dispute within thirty (30) days of receiving written notification of the dispute as to whether the Party is out of compliance, establish a recommended course of action for the Party to come into compliance by a reasonable date certain and/or the development of a compliance plan. As detailed, such determination may include compelling a Party or Parties to take specific action.
 - iv. If the Independent Monitor is unable to resolve the dispute, either Party may seek enforcement of the Agreement before the Court on a proper and good faith motion, which must be filed within thirty (30) days after the Parties, or any Party, provide notice in writing that they believe they are unable to resolve the dispute at issue. In no case shall such a motion be filed more than sixty (60) days after the Independent Monitor issues their dispute resolution determination under paragraph E.2.iii above.
2. If the Court is asked to resolve a dispute under paragraph E.1.iv, the Court will retain authority upon a showing of good cause to order that the compliance period under this Agreement be tolled as to the specific issue or issues which are in dispute and which the Court has been asked to resolve.

F. Short-Term Measures.

1. **Town Hall:** Within 120 days of the effective date of this Agreement, the District, in collaboration with Plaintiffs, shall host a town hall delineating the outcome of the parties' Agreement, and the measures which will take place under the Agreement, including the role of the Independent Monitor, and the anticipated Action Plan subject areas. The town hall shall take place at a date and time designed to ensure maximum public participation and in a manner that provides maximum language access and maximum access to people with disabilities. The District shall record the public town hall and make the recording available on the District's website within 30 days of the town hall.
2. **Resolution on Rights of Students with Disabilities:** Within 60 days of the effective date of this Agreement, the District shall submit to the SCUSD Board of Education for adoption the resolution entitled "Recognition of the Rights of Students with Disabilities to a Quality and Inclusive Education" incorporated in and attached to this Agreement as Exhibit A. The District shall make such submission with the intent and taking all necessary action to facilitate the Board of Education's adoption of the resolution at the earliest date possible after submission.

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3. **Data Review:** Within 90 days of the effective date of this Agreement, the District shall implement the following with the understanding that any or all of the following may be changed, enhanced, or superseded by implementation of the Final Action Plan: (1) establish a norm/expectation regarding regular site level review of certain existing data points covering use of referrals, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension and “other means of correction,” disaggregated by disability status and race; and (2) led by the District, as a professional development exercise, conduct semi-annual data reviews with all site leaders reviewing the aforementioned data points and possible others determined by the District.
4. **De-Escalation Practices:** Within 3 months of the effective date of this Agreement, the District shall continue with ongoing efforts to make Crisis Prevention Intervention (CPI) non-verbal de-escalation trainings available to staff in an effort to address and reduce the use of restraint and seclusion more broadly.

G. Attorneys’ Fees and Costs.

Within sixty (60) days of the Effective Date of this Agreement, the District will pay Plaintiff’s counsel a total amount not to exceed Six Hundred and Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$650,000.00) for attorneys’ fees and Thirty Seven Thousand Nine Hundred Sixty Nine Dollars and Ten Cents (\$37,969.10) for costs, as full payment and satisfaction of attorneys’ fees and costs in the Action.

H. Dispute Resolution Fund.

Upon the Effective Date of this Agreement, the District shall establish a Dispute Resolution Fund (“Fund”) in the amount of One Hundred and Fifteen Thousand Dollars (\$115,000.00) from which prevailing party attorneys’ fees and costs may be sought and recovered in the event that the Court is asked to resolve a dispute under paragraph E. If Plaintiffs are the prevailing party in a dispute under paragraph E and are awarded fees or costs, the District shall pay prevailing party fees and costs to Plaintiffs from the Fund. If the District is the prevailing party in a dispute under paragraph E and are awarded fees or costs, the District shall reduce the Fund by the amount awarded. Any remaining monies in the Fund at the expiration of this Agreement shall revert to the District.

I. Dismissal of the Action and Continuing Court Jurisdiction.

Upon execution of this Agreement, the Plaintiffs’ will within five (5) days file a stipulation entered into by the Parties to conditionally dismiss the Action, pursuant to Rule 41 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. The Parties’ stipulation shall ask that the Court enter the Agreement as an order of the Court pursuant to Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 41(a)(2), that the Court retain jurisdiction over the Action to enforce the Agreement for a period of five (5) years following approval by the Parties of the Independent Monitor’s Final Action Plan under paragraph D of this Agreement; or until the date by which the District fully implements all provisions and fulfills all obligations under this Agreement and any addenda to the same, whichever is earlier, and that the Court conditionally dismiss the Action without prejudice pursuant to Rule 41(a)(2). The

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Parties' stipulation shall ask the Court to place the case on the Court's inactive docket subject to recall to the active docket should it be necessary for either party to move the Court for an order to enforce a term or terms of the Agreement. If the Court issues an order pursuant to the Parties' stipulation conditionally dismissing the Action, then a conditional dismissal will be followed by a final dismissal with prejudice either on: (1) performance of the terms of the Agreement at the end of the five (5) year term, or extended term should any tolling occur in accordance with the terms of this Agreement, following approval by the Parties of the Independent Monitor's Final Action Plan pursuant to paragraph D above, or (2) as stipulated to by the Parties, unless Plaintiffs successfully petition to extend the term of the Agreement. Such an extension shall be limited to those provisions of the Agreement that Plaintiffs successfully petition to have extended rather than the entire Agreement. The Parties will meet and confer before Plaintiffs file any motion to extend the Court's jurisdiction.

J. No Admission of Liability.

It is understood and agreed that this Agreement is a compromise of disputed claims and that nothing in this Agreement shall be construed as an admission of liability by any Party.

K. Ratification by Governing Board and Effective Date.

This Agreement shall be executed by the Parties as indicated below. This Agreement shall become binding and effective upon the execution by Plaintiffs and the District, and upon ratification by the District's Governing Board ("Effective Date").

L. Release of Claims.

Plaintiffs agree to accept said conditions in this Agreement herein in full settlement and compromise of the above-entitled matters described as the Action and agrees that same shall fully and forever discharge and release all claims and causes of action, or appeal rights, whether now known or now unknown, which Plaintiffs have, or might have or could have asserted, against the District, its officials, employees, or representatives or agents, in the Action, arising out of the incidents which are the subject thereof, including restitution, disgorgement, damages, incentive or enhancement award, attorneys' fees and costs, including but not limited to claims arising under Title II of the ADA, 42 U.S.C. § 12101 et seq., Section 504, 29 U.S.C. § 794, 42 U.S.C. § 1983, the Equal Protection Clause, Title VI, 42 U.S.C. § 2000d et seq., and California Government Code section 11135 et seq. through the Effective Date of the Agreement.

M. Civil Code section 1542.

This Agreement includes an express waiver by Plaintiffs of Civil Code section 1542, which states:

A general release does not extend to claims that the creditor or releasing party does not know or suspect to exist in his or her favor at the time of executing the release, and that if known by him or her, would have materially affected his or her settlement with the debtor or released party.

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Therefore, the Parties expressly acknowledge that this release is intended to include in its effect, without limitation, all claims and causes of action that they do not know or suspect to exist in their favor and that this release contemplates the extinguishment of all such claims and causes of action.

PLAINTIFFS' INITIALS (ALL PLAINTIFFS):

Baril ss l mlr

N. Representation by Counsel.

Each of the Parties acknowledges and agrees that they have been represented by independent legal counsel of their own choice throughout the negotiation of this Agreement and that they are executing this Agreement having had sufficient opportunity to investigate the facts and obtain advice of such counsel.

O. Voluntary Agreement.

Each Party affirms and acknowledges that she/he/it has read, fully appreciates, and understands the words, terms, and provisions of this Agreement, is entirely satisfied with the settlement described, and has duly executed this Agreement voluntarily and of her/his/its full free will and accord. Each Party had an opportunity to review and consult with their respective legal counsel on this matter.

P. Entire Agreement.

This Agreement constitutes the entire agreement between Plaintiffs and Defendants, in conjunction with the stipulation described in paragraph I herein. No other promises, agreements, or statements between the Parties shall be binding unless made in writing and signed by all Parties hereto.

Q. Amendments.

This Agreement cannot be changed or supplemented orally and may be modified or superseded only by written instrument executed by all Parties.

R. Interpretation.

Each of the Parties acknowledges and agrees that this Agreement is to be construed as a whole according to its fair meaning and not in favor of nor against any of the Parties as draftsman or otherwise.

S. Other Documents.

The Parties hereby agree to execute all such other documents and to take all such other action as may be reasonably necessary to effectuate the purpose of this Agreement.

Compromise and Release Agreement

BPSB et al. v. SCUSD et al., U.S.D.C., E.D. Cal., Case No. 2:19-cv-01768-DJC-KJN

T. Choice of Law.

This Agreement shall be governed by and interpreted under the laws of California applicable to instruments, persons, transactions, and subject matter which have legal contacts and relationships exclusively within the State of California.

U. Severability.

If any provision of this Agreement is held to be invalid, void, or unenforceable, the remaining portions of the Agreement shall remain in full force and effect.

V. Warranty of Authority.

Each of the persons signing this Agreement represents and warrants that such person has been duly authorized to sign this Agreement on behalf of the party indicated, and each of the Parties by signing this Agreement warrants and represents that such party is legally authorized and entitled to enter into this Agreement.

W. Binding Effect.

This Agreement is for the benefit of and shall be binding on all Parties and their successors, assigns, heirs, executors, administrators, predecessors, partnerships, employees, attorneys, insurers sureties, agents, representatives, directors, officers, receivers, trustees and/or stockholders.

X. Execution in Counterparts.

This Agreement may be executed in several counterparts and, subject to the requirements of paragraph K herein, shall be deemed legally effective at such time as counterparts thereof duly executed on behalf of all Parties have been furnished and delivered to the attorneys for all Parties to this Agreement. Signed copies and facsimile versions of this Agreement shall have the same force and effect as signature of the original. All Parties agree that electronic signatures, including but not limited to typewritten signatures, shall have the same force and effect as a wet signature.

Dated: 5/19/2023

Darryl White

Darryl White for Plaintiff Black Parallel School Board

Dated: 5/19/2023

Amy A.

Amy A., Guardian Ad Litem for Plaintiff S.A.

Dated: 5/18/2023

Samuel S.

Samuel S., General Guardian for Plaintiff C.S.

Compromise and Release Agreement

BPSB et al. v. SCUSD et al., U.S.D.C., E.D. Cal., Case No. 2:19-cv-01768-DJC-KJN

Dated: _____

Jorge A. Aguilar, Superintendent of Sacramento City
Unified School District, on Behalf of the District, the
District’s Governing Board, and all other District
Defendants

APPROVED AS TO FORM AND CONTENT:

Dated: 5/18/2023

DISABILITY RIGHTS CALIFORNIA

Munmeeth Soni

By: Munmeeth Soni
Attorneys for Plaintiffs

Dated: 5/18/2023

EQUAL JUSTICE SOCIETY

Mona Tawatao

By: Mona Tawatao
Attorneys for Plaintiffs

Dated: _____

NATIONAL CENTER FOR YOUTH LAW

By: Michael Harris
Attorneys for Plaintiffs

Dated: 5/18/2023

WESTERN CENTER ON LAW & POVERTY

Antionette Dozier

By: Antionette Dozier
Attorneys for Plaintiffs

Dated: _____

LOZANO SMITH

By: Sloan R. Simmons
Attorneys for Defendants

Compromise and Release Agreement

BPSB et al. v. SCUSD et al., U.S.D.C., E.D. Cal., Case No. 2:19-cv-01768-DJC-KJN

Dated: _____

Jorge A. Aguilar, Superintendent of Sacramento City
Unified School District, on Behalf of the District, the
District's Governing Board, and all other District
Defendants

APPROVED AS TO FORM AND CONTENT:

Dated: _____

DISABILITY RIGHTS CALIFORNIA

By: Munmeeth Soni
Attorneys for Plaintiffs


Dated: _____

EQUAL JUSTICE SOCIETY

By: Mona Tawatao
Attorneys for Plaintiffs

Dated: May 19, 2023

NATIONAL CENTER FOR YOUTH LAW



By: Michael Harris
Attorneys for Plaintiffs

Dated: _____

WESTERN CENTER ON LAW & POVERTY

By: Antionette Dozier
Attorneys for Plaintiffs

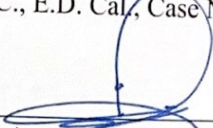
Dated: _____

LOZANO SMITH

By: Sloan R. Simmons
Attorneys for Defendants

Compromise and Release Agreement
BPSB et al. v. SCUSD et al., U.S.D.C., E.D. Cal., Case No. 2:19-cv-01768-DJC-KJN

Dated: 5/18/23



Jorge A. Aguilar, Superintendent of Sacramento City Unified School District, on Behalf of the District, the District's Governing Board, and all other District Defendants

APPROVED AS TO FORM AND CONTENT:

Dated: _____

DISABILITY RIGHTS CALIFORNIA

By: Munmeeth Soni
Attorneys for Plaintiffs

Dated: _____

EQUAL JUSTICE SOCIETY

By: Mona Tawatao
Attorneys for Plaintiffs

Dated: _____

NATIONAL CENTER FOR YOUTH LAW

By: Michael Harris
Attorneys for Plaintiffs

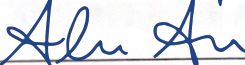
Dated: _____

WESTERN CENTER ON LAW & POVERTY

By: Antionette Dozier
Attorneys for Plaintiffs

Dated: 5/19/2023

LOZANO SMITH



By: Sloan R. Simmons
Attorneys for Defendants

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EXHIBIT C

Sacramento City Unified School District
Board of Education

RESOLUTION No. _____

Recognition of the Rights of Students with Disabilities to a Quality and Inclusive Education

WHEREAS, the Sacramento City Unified School District (SCUSD) serves approximately 6,573 students formally identified with disabilities, representing 16% of the total student population.

WHEREAS, despite the affirmative rights and appreciation for students with disabilities in our federal and state laws, students with disabilities suffer the worst academic and social emotional outcomes in our District, especially Black students and other students of color and English language learners; and

WHEREAS, October includes National Disability History Month, National Bullying Prevention Month, Worldwide Dyslexia Awareness Month, National Learning Disabilities Awareness Month, and National Disability Employment Awareness Month; and

WHEREAS, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in all areas of public life, including jobs, schools, transportation, and all public and private places that are open to the general public and assures that people with disabilities have the same civil rights protections and opportunities as everyone else, similar to those provided to individuals on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, age, and religion; and

WHEREAS, Section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act regulations requires a school district to provide related aids and services designed to meet the student's individual educational needs; and

WHEREAS, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires all public schools to address the needs of pupils with disabilities and develop Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) which provide a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) reflecting the specific needs of each pupil; and

WHEREAS, California has been a leader in furthering disability rights with the enactment of such pioneering legislation as the Disabled Persons Act, the Unruh Civil Rights Act, the Fair Employment and Housing Act, Section 11135 of the Government Code, the Lanterman-Petris-Short Act, and the Lanterman Developmental Disabilities Services Act; and

WHEREAS, the California Education Code requires California schools to adopt instructional materials that accurately portray the cultural and racial diversity of our society, including the role and contributions of Black people, persons with disabilities, among those of members of other groups; and

WHEREAS, the FAIR Education Act enacted January 1, 2012 requires that California schools provide Fair, Accurate, Inclusive and Respectful (FAIR) representations of people with disabilities and people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender in History and Social studies curriculum and mandates schools to include the contributions of people with disabilities and members of the LGBT community in the curriculum; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Education and SCUSD recognize the rights of students with disabilities and their parents/guardians under federal and state law, and are committed to ensuring compliance with federal and state laws and providing equal opportunity for all individuals in District programs and activities; and

WHEREAS, as educational leaders the Board of Education and SCUSD recognize that evidenced-based instructional methods, inclusive practices, restorative justice practices, social and emotional learning, bullying prevention and intervention, mental health supports, and authentic family engagement are proven to substantially improve the educational and equitable outcomes for all students, including students with disabilities, students of color, and English language learners; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Education and SCUSD recognize that our students with disabilities are general education students first, and that every educational, operational, and budget decision we make begins with the belief that students with disabilities have a right to and have the ability to learn alongside their non-disabled peers and equitable and meaningful opportunities to learn and grow; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Education and SCUSD recognize that school climate refers to the norms, values, and expectations that support people to feel physically, socially, and emotionally safe and connected. To be their best, students must feel a sense of connectedness and belonging to their school community. Specifically, schools that are committed to promoting a variety of positive relationships with caring adults will have more connected and engaged students with disabilities, including students of color and English language learners.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education and SCUSD remain committed to work towards equitable outcomes for students with disabilities, including Black students and other students of color and English language learners, and support a vision of high expectations for all students and a commitment to learning goals, standards, interventions, and supports that are strong, clear, understood, and put into practice; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education and SCUSD value and support diversity and inclusion and recognize both the legal right to and the reciprocal benefits of inclusive education; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education and SCUSD remain committed to ensuring the implementation and efficacy of a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), including an early identification and early intervention system to identify and document interventions for students whose performance and/or progress indicates they are at-risk for attendance, behavior, and/or course performance; and

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NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Superintendent transmit copies of this resolution to its administrators, teachers, staff, departments, and schools for appropriate distribution and implementation.

AYES: _____
NOES: _____
ABSTAIN: _____
ABSENT: _____

ATTESTED TO:

Jorge A. Aguilar
Secretary of the Board of Education

President of the Board of Education

Sacramento City Unified School District

SERVICES AGREEMENT

EXHIBIT B

Experts Evaluation Report for Sacramento City School District

Jean Gonsier-Gerdin, Ph.D., Sacramento State University (Special Education Lead)

Rozina Kapadia and Nancy Dome, Epoch Education (Implicit Bias Lead)

Jeffrey Sprague, Ph.D., The University of Oregon (School Discipline Lead)

Background

This report is designed to partially fulfill the requirements of the negotiated service agreement between Sacramento City Schools, plaintiff students and their representatives, and the Black Parallel School Board.

The format of the report is as follows:

- A brief literature review for each topic area to establish the evaluators understanding of best practice research
- A summary of the evaluation questions by topic area. Many of the questions cross topic areas so they are repeated to ease the burden for the reader
- Evaluation methods including a summary of documents and interviews used as data sources
- Findings from the evaluation activities
- Recommendations aimed at improving practices and outcomes
- Limitations of the evaluation activities

The language outlining the required content of this evaluation activity and reporting format is provided below.

Role of the Experts

The Expert Team worked in collaboration and coordination with one another, to complete their respective scopes of work and avoid any unnecessary duplication of effort. Three areas of investigation were identified, described below.

- **Special Education.** Dr. Jean Gonsier-Gerdin conducted an in-depth, data-driven analysis of the Sacramento City Unified School District's ("District's") special education services and delivery system.
- **Implicit Bias.** Dr. Nancy Dome ("Dr. Dome") conducted an in-depth, data-driven analysis of whether implicit and structural bias exists in the district's special education services and delivery system and school discipline system, with additional focus on the effectiveness of the district's professional development curriculum regarding implicit bias. This analysis included gauging the cultural competence levels across the district and the degree to which subsequent implicit and structural biases exist. The lead evaluator for Epoch education was Rozina Kapadia, as assigned by Dr. Dome

- **School Discipline.** Dr. Jeffrey Sprague (“Dr. Sprague”) conducted an in-depth, data-driven analysis of the district’s school discipline system.

Written Report. Dr. Gonsier-Gerdin, Dr. Sprague, Rozina Kapadia, and Dr. Dome (jointly, the “Experts”) present a single, unified report here, reflecting their respective areas of expertise, which contains the methods, findings and recommendations outlined below. The work was initiated after an extended discussion with representatives of the District and Plaintiffs and was guided by a detailed evaluation Table of Specifications (TOS). The TOS was modified throughout the project to allow novel questions from focus group (and other conversations) and discovery of data patterns, and in some cases logic errors considered normal when beginning a complex project. Final TOS questions and methods (Special Education, School Discipline, Implicit Bias) are embedded throughout within the content of the document to ease the burden on the reader.

Special Education

This section of the report responds to the questions in the evaluation plan related to Sacramento City Unified School District’s policies, services, activities, and delivery system for students with disabilities. They are presented below for ease of access.

This evaluation activity sought to review the district’s policies, procedures, and practices to detect if students with disabilities, particularly Black students with disabilities, had equitable access to adequate education, special education, related services, accommodations, and modifications. We paid particular attention to those factors (including implicit bias) that may contribute to disproportionate access of students from racial/ethnic minority groups, students with disabilities, and gender. While the evaluation team collaborated on all aspects of the evaluation, Dr. Jean Gonsier-Gerdin served as the lead to conduct an in-depth, data-driven analysis of the district’s policies and practices related to special education services to students with disabilities.

Evaluation Questions	Activities/Analysis	Measures and Data Sources (s)
<p>Does the district achieve timely identification, assessment, and access to services for students with disabilities and Black students with disabilities, including the district’s use of Student Study Team meetings?</p>	<p>Review and Analyze:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● District and school policies, procedures, and practices related to prereferral/SST process ● Consistency and overall implementation of policies, procedures, data collection and reporting and practices across school sites ● Review collective bargaining agreements and contract proposals impacting these areas ● Student records (plaintiff) ● Assessment processes and how they are used district wide. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Descriptive review of policies and procedures provided by the district—SST Best Practices Manual ● Collective bargaining agreements and contract proposals ● Timelines; special education, referrals, SST, etc.

Evaluation Questions	Activities/Analysis	Measures and Data Sources (s)
<p>Do students with disability have timely access to effective services, programs, and activities for disabilities in the least restrictive environment?</p> <p>What is the continuum of placements for students with disabilities, particularly Black students with disabilities?</p> <p>Is there appropriate placement (FAPE/LRE) of students with disabilities, particularly Black students with disabilities, in inclusive placements?</p> <p>What is influence of implicit, explicit, structural racial and disability bias and intersection of the two? (See Influence of Implicit Bias Section)</p>	<p>Analyze policies, systems, and practices related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Special Education disproportionality data ● Timelines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● IEP and Section 504 Plan records review ● Informal interviews with district staff members ● Focus group interviews
<p>What is the availability of a continuum of placements and inclusive placements for students with disabilities, particularly Black students with disabilities?</p> <p>If the continuum is not available in an equitable manner, what is influence of implicit bias? What is influence of implicit, explicit, and structural racial and disability bias and intersection of the two? (See Influence of Implicit Bias Section)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Review and analyze District-wide data on the continuum of placements and inclusive placements for students with disabilities, particularly Black students with disabilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● District LRE placement data ● IEP and Section 504 Plan records review ● Informal interviews with district staff members ● Focus group interviews
<p>What policies, procedures and practices are in place to ensure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Review of procedures and policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Descriptive review of

Evaluation Questions	Activities/Analysis	Measures and Data Sources (s)
<p>appropriate placement of students with disabilities, particularly Black students with disabilities, in inclusive placements?</p> <p>If such policies, procedures and practices are in place, are they uniformly implemented?</p> <p>If policies, procedures, practices are not in place or unclear, what is influence of implicit bias? (See Influence of Implicit Bias Section)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Review of IEPs ● Review current Inclusive Schools Model – in about 7-8 schools. 	<p>policies and procedures provided by the district</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Informal interviews with district staff members ● Focus group interviews
<p>Does the district monitor the alleged disproportionate impacts, based on race and type of disability, of previous non-inclusive placement?</p> <p>If so, how does the district monitor and address this?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● This means disproportionate impact by race and type of disability, e.g., emotional disturbance. (See Influence of Implicit Bias Section) 	<p>Review and Analyze:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● District and school policies, procedures, and practices related to monitoring disproportionality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Descriptive review of policies and procedures provided by the district ● Informal interviews with district staff members ● Focus group interviews
<p>What disparities exist in access to adequate education, special education, related services, accommodations, and modifications for students with disabilities and Black students with disabilities?</p> <p>If disparities exist, what is influence of implicit bias? (See Influence of Implicit Bias Section)</p>	<p>Review and Analyze:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● District and school policies, procedures, and practices related to special education, related services, accommodations, and modifications for students with disabilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● IEP and Section 504 Plan records review ● Informal interviews with district staff members ● Focus group interviews

Evaluation Questions	Activities/Analysis	Measures and Data Sources (s)
<p>How does the district provide reasonable accommodations and/or modifications, including through modifications to policies and procedures, to avoid discrimination against students with disabilities and Black students with disabilities?</p> <p>How does the district ensure that accommodations/modifications on a student’s IEP are provided?</p> <p>If insufficiencies identified, what role does implicit bias play? (See Influence of Implicit Bias Section)</p>	<p>Review and Analyze:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● District and school policies, procedures, and practices related to special education, related services, accommodations, and modifications for students with disabilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● IEP and Section 504 Plan records review ● Informal interviews with district staff members ● Focus group interviews
<p>What is the staff development plan?</p> <p>What is the effectiveness and sufficiency of training and ongoing development for the district’s personnel who instruct, support, and/or serve students with disabilities and Black students with disabilities?</p> <p>What is the effectiveness and sufficiency of training and ongoing professional development for District administrators who are involved in the development and implementation of IEPs and Section 504 Plans for students with disabilities?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Review District and school policies, procedures, and practices ● Review collective bargaining agreements and contract proposals impacting these areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Informal interviews with district staff members ● Focus group interviews

Evaluation Questions	Activities/Analysis	Measures and Data Sources (s)
<p>Is District staffing adequate, and effective in efforts to identify, instruct, and serve students with disabilities, including Black students with disabilities?</p> <p>Does the staffing pattern meet CDE standards for staffing (race; gender; grade level teaching; caseloads and staffing ratios)?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Review district and school policies, procedures, and practices ● Review collective bargaining agreements and contract proposals impacting these areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Informal interviews with district staff members ● Focus group interviews

Special Education Practices and Outcomes

This section outlines legal mandates related to special education services and research literature on outcomes of and evidence-based practices for inclusive education of students with disabilities. This background is provided to help the reader understand the context of the evaluation findings and resulting recommendations.

IDEA: FAPE and LRE. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), last amended and reauthorized in 2004, mandates that students who are determined to be eligible for special education services are entitled to receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE). These students have one of the thirteen federally recognized disabilities which adversely affects the student's educational performance. FAPE is defined as special education and related services which are provided without charge, meet state standards, are appropriate and meet the unique educational needs of the student. A student's individualized education program is a written legal document that details the program of special education instruction, goals, and benchmarks, supports, and services that the student needs to make educational progress.

Special education is defined in 34 CFR 300.39 as "specially designed instruction," at no cost to the parents, intended to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability. Special education is not limited to a typical school environment and must be provided in a variety of other settings, such as institutions and hospitals (34 CFR 300.39(a) (1)), to the extent necessary to provide a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). "Specially designed instruction" means adapting, as appropriate to the needs of an eligible child under Part B, the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction: (i) to address the unique needs of the child that result from the child's disability; and (ii) to ensure access of the child to the general curriculum, so that he or she can meet the educational standards within the jurisdiction of the public agency that apply to all children (34 CFR 300.39(b) (3); <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/regs/b/a/300.39>).

Least Restrictive Environment. An evaluation, as described in 34 CFR 300.301-300.306, will have been completed to determine if the student needs special education and related services because of her/his disability or disabilities. Everything provided, which must

be in the least restrictive environment, must allow this FAPE to be attained for this student, enabling the student “to make progress appropriate in light of the [student’s] circumstances” (Endrew, 2017, p.14).

The IEP team, including the parent/ is the authorized decision-making body in a school district as to what is the least restrictive environment (LRE) for a student with a disability. Legally, changes in placement due to a behavioral excess must be based on data analysis that determines academic or behavioral instruction can NOT be delivered in the least restrictive environment of the general education classroom. Least restrictive in legal terms, is that environment with the most access to peers without disabilities, not as some educators believe, the environment in which it would be the easiest to teach the desired curriculum or behaviors (<https://sites.ed.gov/idea/regs/b/b/300.114>). Current interpretations of LRE must include consideration of participation in the general education classroom and settings. This is often referred to as inclusion or inclusive education.

Inclusion/Inclusive Education. Over thirty years of research demonstrate that students with a variety of disabilities, including those with behavior challenges and intellectual disabilities, can effectively be educated in inclusive general education settings (Causton & Theoharis, 2014; Sauer & Jorgensen, 2016). Proven positive outcomes of inclusive education for students with disabilities are higher expectations and academically rich environment for student learning; increased student engagement and participation; improved communication skills and social skills and relationships; increased access to the general education curriculum; improved academic outcomes; improved adult outcomes in areas of post-secondary education, employment, and independent living; better quality IEPs and achievement of more IEP goals; and fewer absences from school and referrals for disruptive behavior. (Fisher & Frey, 2001; Henninger & Gupta, 2014; Hehir, Grindal, Freeman, Lamoreau, Borquaye, & Burke, 2016; Hunt & Goetz, 1997; Ryndak, Ward, Alper, Storch, & Montgomery, 2010; Sauer & Jorgensen, 2016). Researchers have also found positive outcomes for students without disabilities who are educated alongside their peers with disabilities (Hehir et al., 2016; Kalamouka, Farrell, Dyson, & Kaplan, 2007; Kishi & Meyer, 1994; Odom et al., 2004; Peck, Donaldson, & Pezzoli, 1990).

For students with disabilities, ongoing interactions with peers who do not have disabilities is essential to their academic and social, emotional development. Peers without disabilities serve as role models for students with disabilities by providing examples of age-appropriate academic and social behavior and language (Banda, Hart, & Liu-Gitz, 2010; Farmer & Cadwallader, 2000; Odom et al., 2004; Strain, McGee, & Kohler, 2001). Research further shows that exposure to peers without disabilities improves the self-esteem of students with disabilities and increases their motivation for learning (Gilberts, Agran, Hughes, & Wehmeyer, 2001; Hehir et al., 2016).

In addition to the research showing the positive impact of inclusive education on academic and social outcomes of students with and without disabilities, there is considerable literature available on evidence-based practices and service delivery models to implement effective inclusive education for all students at the site and classroom levels (e.g., Halvorsen & Neary, 2009). The focus of these practices and models is on prevention and pro-active intervention, rather than on separation and remediation. Moreover, for these practices to be implemented with fidelity, systems-wide changes within the district as a whole and across

school sites are necessary as opposed to the addition of initiatives to either general education or special education within a district.

Over the last decade, the federal government has recognized the need to research and provide resources to school districts throughout the U.S. to create the systems-wide changes essential to achieve effective inclusive education for all learners. The Schoolwide Integrated Framework for Transformation (SWIFT, <https://swiftschools.org/>) was a federally funded, national technical assistance Center on schoolwide systems change for inclusive education that today continues as the SWIFT Education Center at the University of Kansas to assist districts and schools in building capacity for equity-based inclusion to improve outcomes for all learners, including those with extensive support needs. The SWIFT framework notes that multi-tiered systems of support for academic instruction and behavioral and socio-emotional instruction are a foundational component, but not sufficient for effective inclusive practices for all students. An investigation of exemplar schools across the U.S. implementing effective inclusion for all their students revealed the following domains and features to be essential components in addition to and to support multi-tiered systems of support in place: 1) administrative leadership, including strong and engaged site leadership and strong educator support system; 2) integrated educational framework, including a fully integrated (non-categorical) organizational structure and strong, positive school culture; 3) family & community engagement, including trusting family partnerships and trusting community partnerships; and 4) inclusive policy structure and practice, including strong district and school relationship and district policy framework for inclusive education (SWIFT Education Center, n.d.) A research investigation of schools implementing the SWIFT framework found that the schools' rates of inclusive education for students with disabilities increased and predicted that with full fidelity implementation of the SWIFT framework more students with disabilities would be taught in general education settings for the full day (Kurth et al., 2018).

The SWIFT-Fidelity Integrity Assessment (SWIFT-FIA) is a self-assessment tool that schools and school districts can use to monitor their progress in relationship to the SWIFT domains and features (SWIFT Education Center, 2020). The SWIFT-FIA can guide school and school district teams through conversations directly related to the SWIFT domains and features and support their efforts to build capacity for equity-based inclusion. School teams score themselves in relationship to the implementation stage they are in for each feature (i.e., laying the foundation, installing, implementing, sustaining schoolwide).

More recently, the federal government funded another national technical assistance center on inclusive practices and policies, the TIES Center (<https://tiescenter.org/>), with the purpose is to create sustainable systems changes in kindergarten-grade 8 schools and districts educational systems to facilitate the meaningful participation of students with significant cognitive disabilities in general education activities while receiving instruction to meet their individual learning needs. The TIES Center provides resources to empower systems change in school districts that involves inclusive instruction and organizational leadership, system-wide learning, prioritizing teaching and learning, building capacity through support and accountability, and sustaining a culture of openness and inquiry (TIES Center, 2021)

Specific to California, in 2013, the State Board of Education commissioned the Statewide Special Education Task Force to study the causes of the state's poor outcomes for K-12 students with disabilities, including their continued exclusion from the general education

classroom. The Task Force issued a report of its findings and recommendations in March of 2015 titled *One System: Reforming Education to Serve ALL Students* (Statewide Special Education Task Force, 2015). The report called for a more unified, coherent, and integrated system of education that ends the separation between special and general education. This separation contributes to a special education system that the Task Force concluded was “siloes” in much of its implementation and less effective than it could be. The recommendation for a more unified system was not just intended for the state level, but also for the district and school levels.

Following this report, many local school districts and county offices of education launched initiatives and projects that grew out of the Task Force’s recommendations. One such initiative is the Supporting Inclusive Practices (SIP) Project. First launched by the Santa Clara County Office of Education, but now expanded across California, SIP provides support and technical assistance to school districts to increase the amount of time that students with disabilities are included in the general education environment, especially in preschool (California Department of Education, 2018). Many schools throughout California are now implementing, or receiving professional development to implement, the inclusive service delivery methods recommended by the Task Force. These methods include but are not limited to multi-tiered systems of supports (MTSS) (i.e., response to intervention, positive behavioral supports), universal design for learning, social-emotional learning, trauma informed practices, and culturally responsive teaching.

School Discipline Practices and Outcomes

This section of the report responds to the questions in the evaluation plan related to student **discipline practices and outcomes** with a focus on exclusionary discipline practices such as office referrals, and in and out of school suspensions. They are presented below for ease of access.

This evaluation activity sought to detect if the district’s preventive and responsive **discipline systems** function as intended and whether the districts’ procedures and policies are consistently implemented and effective in achieving equitable and fair outcomes for students. Particular attention was paid to those factors (including implicit bias) that may contribute to disproportionate use of disciplinary exclusion (office referrals, suspensions) with students from racial/ethnic minority groups, students with disabilities, and gender. While the evaluation team collaborated on all aspects of the evaluation, Dr. Jeffrey Sprague served as the lead in this content area to conduct an in-depth, data-driven analysis of the district’s student discipline policies and practices.

Evaluation Questions	Activities/Analysis	Measures and Data Sources (s)
How effective are District-wide and school-based student discipline and behavior management systems, policies, and	Review and Analyze: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● District and school policies, procedures, and practices on 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Descriptive review of policies and procedures provided by the district

Evaluation Questions	Activities/Analysis	Measures and Data Sources (s)
<p>practices?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Data collection and data-based decision-making practices? ● What fidelity assessments are currently used by the district? ● How equitable are exclusionary discipline outcomes? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Race/ethnicity ○ Gender ○ Disability ○ School attended ● What is influence of implicit bias? 	<p>disciplinary exclusion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● District and school policies, procedures, and practices on exclusionary discipline data entry, monitoring and reporting ● District and school policies, procedures, and practices on implementing disciplinary exclusion alternatives ● Consistency and overall implementation of policies, procedures, data collection and reporting and practices across school sites ● Review the discipline and behavior management systems, policies, and practices for possible procedural bias ● Review collective bargaining agreements and contract proposals impacting these areas ● Law enforcement presence and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Intervention Fidelity measures and Kelvin surveys ● Collective bargaining agreements and contract proposals ● Law enforcement records by school (summary of contact

Evaluation Questions	Activities/Analysis	Measures and Data Sources (s)
	<p>reason for calls/interactions and enforcement by officers in or outside of the district</p>	<p>by type of offense/issue, disaggregated by race)</p>
<p>Is the use of discipline and behavior management approaches for students with disabilities (and without identified disabilities) equitable, clear, and fair?</p> <p>Is discipline and exclusion used instead of providing students with disabilities supports and service they need?</p> <p>What is influence of implicit bias?</p>	<p>Analyze policies, systems, and practices related to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The use of informal removals from the classroom ● Teacher class suspensions ● Teacher referrals to the office ● Site administrator on-campus and off-campus suspensions ● Expulsions ● Restraint and seclusion ● The manifestation determination process ● Involuntary transfers ● Voluntary transfers ● Interview site administrators to determine the extent to which they include or do not include informal suspension information from their overall suspension data. 	<p>District/site-based discipline data:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Office referrals, in school and out of suspension, “soft suspensions,” expulsion disaggregated by race, gender, and disability (Discipline Data Collection and Reporting System Feature, CDE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Referral, suspension, expulsion disaggregated by race, gender, and disability ● Suspensions and expulsions by the district and by teachers; on-campus suspensions; the manifestation determination process; involuntary transfers; and voluntary transfers. ● IEP and Section 504 Plan review ● Accumulate and categorize data to determine whether school sites are including all suspension data (student removal from classrooms) in their full data analysis. ● Informal interviews with district staff members

Data-Use and Reporting in Schools Regarding Disciplinary Practices and Outcomes

This section outlines evidence-supported best practices in discipline data reporting, data use, and data-based decision making. A review of the evidence related to use of exclusionary discipline such as office referrals and suspensions is also provided along with a brief review of what is known to be effective in preventing the need for disciplinary actions, and alternative methods to disciplinary exclusion. This background is provided to help the reader understand the context of the evaluation findings and resulting recommendations.

Discipline Data Collection and Reporting. Schools that are safe, effective, and equitable are not accidents. They are environments where considerable effort has been made to build and maintain supportive and positive school cultures and give clear guidance to staff members and administrators regarding the use and reporting of discipline data, disciplinary procedures, and other means of correction. Part of the effort consists of monitoring and evaluating the types and patterns of behaviors students are exhibiting.

Data use must begin with the adoption and use of a reliable (two or more people would agree that the event happened) (L.K. Irvin, Tobin, Sprague, Sugai, & Vincent, 2004a) and valid (the data align with other sources of information about the student, and predict other outcomes such as academic achievement, behavioral ratings of the student by the teacher and others) data collection and reporting system (L.K. Irvin et al., 2006; Pas, Bradshaw, & Mitchell, 2011).

Data-Collection and Reporting Methods. Counting and summarizing office discipline referrals (ODRs), out of class suspensions (OCSS), and out of school suspensions (OSS) is used by schools for monitoring and reporting disruptive behavior. In some schools, teachers handle minor behavior incidences without sending the student to the office with a referral (this is preferred). The teacher may remove the student from the group or send the student to another classroom or a reflection area. Students may lose a privilege for displaying inappropriate behavior. It is important that these incidences are recorded so that the staff members can analyze the data and help get the student on the right track as soon as possible. Reliable reporting of behavioral incidences and the school's response is essential for characterizing consistency of use, and equitable treatment of students by gender, disability, and racial/ethnic identity. Many schools use behavioral incidence reports (an informal record) for the types of infractions that do not end up as office referrals or suspensions (out of class or school) (Larry K. Irvin, Tobin, Sprague, Sugai, & Vincent, 2004b; Smith & Sprague, 2004).

Validity Concerns. Office discipline referral (ODR) and suspension data have received much attention in research and state/federal monitoring systems, yet some have noted that these archival data are not ideal from a reliability and validity perspective (C.R. Cook, Fiat, et al., 2018). Referrals/incident reports are more than an index of student behavior. They are an index of the consistency and quality of the school discipline system and represent what the student did, how the teacher/adult coded or labeled the behavior, and what administrative rule is applied to determine the action or "consequence". The major advantage of using office discipline referral data is that they are already collected in many schools and provide a source of information to document whether interventions result in positive change (L.K. Irvin et al., 2004a; R.J. Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002; Spaulding, Vincent, & Horner, 2009).

However, we must remain cautious when using discipline referral and suspension data as a source of information and decision making.

Without clear district-level guidance, each school can define and apply discipline referral and suspension procedures differently (Irvin et al., 2006). Just because a school has a high rate of referrals does not necessarily mean that students are less well behaved than the students at another school with fewer referrals. There is a need from more studies that test the validity parameters of the ODR/suspension datasets, and research suggests that office referral data can be of moderate validity if clear protocols and procedures are followed (Bottiani, Larson, Debnam, Bischoff, & Bradshaw, 2017). Without clear guidance and protocols, the same student may evoke different responses from teachers and administrators in different schools, and different relationships between teachers and administrators will affect the use of discipline referrals and suspension across schools. This reminds us again of the importance of consistency of implementation within and across schools. Despite these cautions, office referral and suspension data are considered useful in identifying discipline patterns of students, identifying the effects of school-wide and classroom interventions (Sprague, Cook, Wright, & Sadler, 2008; Sprague & Swain-Bradway, 2021) and staff training needs related to effectiveness and equity of application (Simonsen et al., 2019).

Data Summary and Reporting. School personnel may be accustomed to looking at data on individual student performance. It also is critical to look at data on the performance of the whole school or a particular classroom (or teacher/staff member) regarding discipline referral and suspension patterns (L.K. Irvin et al., 2006; Simonsen et al., 2019). Key indicators have been identified to examine discipline referral and suspension patterns (Sprague & Golly, 2013). Each indicator requires that the reporting form (or other data-gathering system) collect the relevant data. The basic elements that must be included on a school's referral/suspension reporting form are listed below.

Recommended Referral/Suspension Form Elements

- Date and time
- Student name
- Student grade
- Student demographics (may be automatically filled from school records database)
- Cause of the referral (the behavior)
- Possible motivation for the referral behavior
- Location of the referral
- Referring staff member
- Re-teaching opportunity, consequence, or another follow-up for the student

Summary statistics are easy to derive and tell a lot about what is happening in the school. These should be summarized and publicly reported *monthly* to staff members, district personnel, and other stakeholder groups. These types of summaries need to be derived from the discipline database (in the case of SCUSD it is Infinite Campus) and should be easy to produce at the school level. The following list provides a summary of each recommended

indicator.

- Total number of office discipline referrals/in and out of school suspensions and expulsions (year to date and at the same point in previous years)
- Referrals per enrolled student
- Average referrals per school day per month
- Location of referrals (e.g., common areas or classrooms)
- Percentage of students with 0–1 referral
- Percentage of students with 2–5 referrals
- Percentage of students with 6 or more referrals
- Number and type of suspensions and expulsions
- Proportion of referrals/suspensions by race/ethnicity, gender, and special education status.

CDE dashboard elements. California's accountability system is based on multiple measures that assess how local educational agencies (LEAs) and schools are meeting the needs of their students. Performance on these measures is reported on the [California School Dashboard](https://www.caschooldashboard.org/) (<https://www.caschooldashboard.org/>). For discipline, this measure is subsumed under Priority 6: School Climate and Suspension Rate is used as the State Indicator, and local districts are to administer a Local Climate Survey every other year.

Suspension data (as an outcome) vary by local education agency (LEA) and school type. For example, rates at the middle school level are generally higher than at the elementary school level. Therefore, different sets of cut scores are used to determine performance for this measure. LEAs and schools receive the appropriate cut scores and five-by-five colored table based on their school type (elementary, middle, and high) or LEA type (elementary, high, and unified). Another distinguishing feature of this measure is that the **goal is reversed**. For most of the other measures, the desired outcome is a high number or percent in the current year and an increase from the prior year. For this measure, however, the desired outcome is a low suspension rate, which means a low percent in the current year and a decline from the prior year rate. The box below summarizes how the outcome data are summarized from this data source.

Calculations. Performance on this measure is determined by (1) the percent of students in a school or district or student group who were suspended for an aggregate total of one full day anytime during the school year, and (2) whether results (i.e., the suspension rate) increased or declined from the prior year.

Suspension Rate Formula. Number of Students Suspended for an Aggregate Total of One Full Day in Current Year **divided by** Cumulative Enrollment.

Difference from Prior Year Suspension Rate Formula. Current Year Suspension Rate **minus** Prior Year Suspension Rate

Determining a Performance Level on the CDE Dashboard. Based on the current year and prior year data, a performance level (or color) is given for this measure. The performance level is determined by using a five-by-five colored grid (see below).

Example: Little League Elementary School has the following suspension rate data:

- In the current year, its suspension rate was 4.0 percent
- From the prior year to the current one, the suspension rate declined by 1.6 percentage points

Using the five-by-five grid for Elementary School Suspension Rate, we see that suspension rate of 4.0 percent is considered “High” (see left column). At the same time, a decline of 1.6 percentage points from the prior year is significant (see top row). On the grid, "High" and "Declined Significantly" intersect at the yellow performance level.

Performance Level	Increased Significantly from Prior Year (by greater than 2.0%)	Increased from Prior Year (by 0.3% to 2.0%)	Maintained from Prior Year (declined or increased by less than 0.3%)	Declined from Prior Year (by 0.3% to less than 1.0%)	Declined Significantly from Prior Year (by 1.0% or greater)
Very Low 0.5% or less	N/A	Green	Blue	Blue	Blue
Low Greater than 0.5% to 1.0%	N/A	Yellow	Green	Green	Blue
Medium Greater than 1.0% to 3.0%	Orange	Orange	Yellow	Green	Green
High Greater than 3.0% to 6.0%	Red	Orange	Orange	Yellow	Yellow
Very High Greater than 6.0%	Red	Red	Red	Orange	Yellow

Staff Development (Training and Coaching) to Support Consistency in Data Collection and Reporting. Reliability, or consistency is needed to obtain comprehensive data (i.e., nothing left out), and to have useful (valid – reliable and predictive) data. If everyone fills out the form under different situations, at different thresholds, or interprets how to complete the form differently, the data gathered will be of dubious or limited use. How do we reduce these

inconsistencies so that our well-conceived forms and systems are put to good use, efforts to complete them pay off, and the data can be used to drive improvement?

Consistency in data collection, via the referral form, should become part of staff education and staff member expected behaviors. To achieve consistency amongst the staff, consider the following:

1. When is it appropriate to complete the form?
2. Which form is appropriate (if there is more than one)? Consider the threshold for a behavior incident versus a referral.
3. Are administrators and teachers aware of the differences between all the listed behaviors on the form(s)?
4. Are there areas that need to be clarified or cause confusion?
5. Is there specific data needed to be hand-entered where multiple categories have a single check box? (For example, do they need to write in "social exclusion" or "racial harassment" if the "bullying/harassment" box was checked?)
6. What constitutes minor versus major infractions?
7. Where do completed forms go?
8. Can you present examples of correctly completed forms for common scenarios?
9. Can you present non-examples, of incorrectly completed forms?
10. Are staff members aware of how forms influence later decision making?

The Critical Importance of Measuring Fidelity of Use. Intervention fidelity refers to the notion that interventions or data collection systems being implemented in an MTSS model for behavior (aka MTSS-B) should be implemented as intended to enable appropriate and legally defensible decision-making. Intervention fidelity, sometimes referred to as treatment fidelity or procedural reliability in the applied behavior analysis literature, refers to the extent to which an intervention plan or (data collection and reporting) system is implemented as planned. Research has demonstrated that poor intervention fidelity often undermines the effectiveness of interventions and the reliability and validity of the data collected and reported. As a result, when the data indicates that a particular system of supports results in poor outcomes, one cannot leap to conclusions, particularly about specific students. The first question that the school team must address before any other conclusion can be reached is, "Was the intervention implemented with integrity?" Data must be collected on fidelity of implementation (including progress monitoring data), as well as student outcomes. Without the collection of intervention fidelity data, it is impossible for the school team to determine whether the lack of response on the part of the student was due to poor implementation of an otherwise effective system, or whether there was resistance on the part of the student to a high-quality intervention implemented with fidelity.

There are two dimensions that are important when examining the extent to which an intervention or data collection system is implemented as planned. These two dimensions are consistency and accuracy.

- **Consistency:** Refers to whether the intervention or data collection system is routinely implemented day-to-day.
- **Accuracy:** Refers to whether intervention or data collection system is implemented as intended (as described in policy and procedural guidelines).

For example, if an administrator or teacher used the data system correctly on Monday through Wednesday, but did poorly later in the week, then there would be a problem with consistency. On the other hand, if the administrator or teacher regularly failed to implement components of an intervention every day of the week or implemented it differently with different types of students (gender, disability, race/ethnicity) then there would be a problem with accuracy. Similarly, if discipline data are collected and reported as specified in policy and procedure differently by different individuals, there would be a problem with consistency (in the case of data collection it would be referred to as reliability).

There are several different methods for collecting data on system fidelity:

- Direct observation
- Fidelity Checklists
- Self-report (checklist)
- Permanent product (e.g., examining products such as the office referral form or summary data reports for quality or completeness)

The tables below include the fidelity items from the School Wide Information System Readiness Checklist (<https://www.pbisapps.org/resource/swis-readiness-checklist>) and the PBIS Tiered Fidelity Inventory (Algozzine et al., 2014) and illustrate critical features of a high-fidelity discipline data collection system. These items were used to assess fidelity of the data collection and decision-making practices of schools in the district.

PBIS Data Collection Readiness Criteria. These fidelity items were adapted from <https://www.pbisapps.org/Pages/Default.aspx> and <https://www.pbisapps.org/resources/swis%20publications/forms/allitems.aspx>.

Feature	Data Source	Scoring Criteria
Building administrator supports the implementation and use of the Discipline Data Collection and Reporting System.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Administrator Interview 	0 = Not in place 1 = Partially in Place 2 = In Place
A school/facility-wide behavior support team exists and reviews the Discipline Data Collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Team Roster & Meeting Schedule 	0 = Not in place 1 = Partially in Place 2 = In Place

Feature	Data Source	Scoring Criteria
and Reporting System referral data at least monthly.		
The school/facility has an incident referral form and definitions for behaviors resulting in administrative-managed (major) vs. staff-managed (minor) incidents in place that is compatible with the Discipline Data Collection and Reporting System data entry.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Incident Referral Form(s) • - Problem Behavior Definitions 	0 = Not in place 1 = Partially in Place 2 = In Place
Within three months of adopting the data collection and reporting system, the school is committed to having in place a clearly documented, predictable system for managing disruptive behavior (e.g., School-wide PBIS).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written Guidelines 	0 = Not in place 1 = Partially in Place 2 = In Place
Data entry time and staffing are scheduled to ensure that incident referral/suspension data will be always current to within a week. Data entry staff have access to all necessary information (e.g., student records).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data Entry & Report Generation Schedule 	0 = Not in place 1 = Partially in Place 2 = In Place
The school/facility agrees to maintain technology (i.e., internet browsers, district permissions) compatible with Discipline Data Collection and Reporting System.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infinite Campus 	0 = Not in place 1 = Partially in Place 2 = In Place
The school/facility agrees to both initial and ongoing coaching on the use of Discipline Data Collection and Reporting System for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrator/Coordinator Interview 	0 = Not in place 1 = Partially in Place 2 = In Place

Feature	Data Source	Scoring Criteria
school/facility-wide decision making.		
The school/facility agrees to maintain Discipline Data Collection and Reporting System compatibility and maintain communication with a certified Facilitator who agrees to provide ongoing support to the school/facility on the use of the System.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administrator/ Coordinator Interview 	0 = Not in place 1 = Partially in Place 2 = In Place

PBIS TFI Data System Fidelity Measures (Algozzine et al., 2014)

Feature	Data Source	Scoring Criteria
1.5 Problem Behavior Definitions School has clear definitions for behaviors that interfere with academic and social success and a clear policy/procedure (e.g., flowchart) for addressing office-managed versus staff-managed problems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff handbook Student handbook School policy Discipline flowchart 	0 = No clear definitions exist, and procedures to manage problems are not clearly documented 1 = Definitions and procedures exist but are not clear and/or not organized by staff-versus office-managed problems 2 = Definitions and procedures for managing problems are clearly defined, documented, trained, and shared with families
1.6 Discipline Policies: School policies and procedures describe and emphasize proactive, instructive, and/or restorative approaches to student behavior that are implemented consistently.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discipline policy Student handbook Code of conduct Informal administrator interview/focus group 	0 = Documents contain only reactive and punitive consequences 1 = Documentation includes and emphasizes proactive approaches 2 = Documentation includes and emphasizes proactive approaches AND administrator reports

Feature	Data Source	Scoring Criteria
<p>1.12 Discipline Data: Tier 1 team has instantaneous access to graphed reports summarizing discipline data organized by the frequency of problem behavior events by behavior, location, time of day, and by individual student.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School policy • Team meeting minutes • Student outcome data 	<p>consistent use</p> <p>0 = No centralized data system with ongoing decision making exists 1 = Data system exists but does not allow instantaneous access to full set of graphed reports 2 = Discipline data system exists that allows instantaneous access to graphs of frequency of problem behavior events by behavior, location, time of day, and student</p>
<p>1.13 Data-based Decision Making: Tier 1 team reviews and uses discipline data at least monthly for decision-making.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data decision rules • Staff professional development calendar • Staff handbook • Team meeting minutes 	<p>0 = No process/protocol exists, or data are reviewed but not used 1 = Data reviewed and used for decision-making, but less than monthly 2 = Team reviews discipline data and uses data for decision-making at least monthly. If data indicate a problem, an action plan is developed to enhance or modify Tier 1 supports</p>
<p>2.11 Student Performance Data: Tier 2 team tracks proportion of students experiencing success (% of participating students being successful) and uses Tier 2 intervention outcomes data and decision rules for progress monitoring and modification.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student progress data (e.g., %of students meeting goals) • Intervention Tracking Tool • Daily/Weekly Progress Report sheets • Family Communication 	<p>0 = Student data not monitored 1 = Student data monitored but no data decision rules established to alter (e.g., intensify or fade) support 2 = Student data (% of students being successful) monitored and used at least monthly, with data decision rules established to alter (e.g., intensify or fade) support, and shared with stakeholders</p>

Feature	Data Source	Scoring Criteria
<p>3.14 Data System: Aggregated (i.e., overall school-level) Tier 3 data are summarized and reported to staff at least monthly on (a) fidelity of support plan implementation, and (b) impact on student outcomes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports to staff • Staff meeting minutes • Staff report 	<p>0 = No quantifiable data 1 = Data are collected on outcomes and/or fidelity but not reported monthly 2 = Data are collected on student outcomes AND fidelity and are reported to staff at least monthly for all plans</p>
<p>3.15 Data-based Decision Making: Each student’s individual support team meets at least monthly (or more frequently if needed) and uses data to modify the support plan. to improve fidelity of plan implementation and impact on quality of life, academic, and behavior outcomes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student progress data • Tier 3 team meeting minutes 	<p>0 = School does not track proportion, or no students have Tier 3 plans 1 = Fewer than 1% of students have Tier 3 plans 2 = All students requiring Tier 3 supports (and at least 1% of students) have plans</p>

Approaches to achieving greater disciplinary equity

There are two logical approaches to achieving greater disciplinary equity. First is to prevent the need for exclusion in the first place by preventing the onset and development of problem behavior. This approach would be preferred, and yet there is no evidence that prevention approaches alone will be 100% effective (Sprague, Whitcomb, & Bear, 2019). In the cases where exclusion is viewed as appropriate or needed, it is critical to give clear guidance and training to teachers and administrators in due process protections and exclusion alternatives, and to use data to correct any emerging patterns such as disproportionate racial/ethnic representation. This section illustrates the prevention logic.

Interventions Aimed at Preventing the Need for Disciplinary Exclusion. Having an organized, school wide system for behavior management combined with teaching social behavior is the foundation for effective prevention efforts. In addition to the direct benefit, it has on student behavior in school, such a system creates the context for school-based efforts to advocate and provide support for effective parenting as well (Biglan, Wang, & Walberg, 2003). When school personnel have a shared vision of the kind of social behavior, they want to promote among students along with a shared understanding of the type of social environment that is needed to achieve this goal, which is also shared by most families they can inform and support them in creating the same kind of supportive environment at home. When educators are clear about how to use rules, positive reinforcement, and mild, consistent negative consequences to support behavioral development, they are better able to coordinate their efforts with those of parents (Epstein et al., 2008). As a result, parents will

know more about their children’s behavior in school and will be able to provide the same supports and consequences that the school is providing.

School Wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports. To prevent minor discipline problems, as well as more serious antisocial and violent incidents, many schools have turned to a school wide positive discipline approach, commonly referred to as School Wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) (R. H. Horner, Sugai, Todd, & Lewis-Palmer, 2005; Sprague & Horner, 2012) (see www.pbis.org) as a foundation response. The SWPBIS approach assumes that when all school staff members across all school settings actively teach and consistently recognize and reinforce appropriate behavior, the number of students with serious behavior problems will be reduced and the school’s overall climate will improve (R. H. Horner & Sugai, 2015; Sugai, Horner, & Gresham, 2002). Sacramento City Schools attempted to adopt these practices in the past and have met with resistance from multiple groups. We will comment more about this in our results section.

SWPBIS schools aim to create a positive school climate, by establishing and teaching behavioral expectations school-wide and by teaching mastery and demonstration of behavioral skills (e.g., compliance to school rules, safe and respectful peer to peer interactions, academic effort/engagement) that will alter the trajectory of at-risk children toward destructive outcomes as well as prevent the onset of risk behavior in typically developing children. We expect that its effective and sustained implementation will create a more responsive school climate that supports the twin goals of schooling for all children: academic achievement and social development (Algozzine, Putnam, & Horner, 2010; Gresham, Sugai, Horner, Quinn, & McInerney, 2000). The box below provides a summary of the main features of SWPBIS.

School Wide PBIS features

- A **systems-based** strategy to create a “host environment” in schools to reduce problem behaviors
 - Three-tiered intervention logic
 - Behavioral interventions
 - Team-based planning and implementation
 - Systematic use of student-level behavior data to support decisions and improve program implementation
 - Systematic use of intervention fidelity assessments to guide implementation
 - **NOT a single “program” but rather the “vessel” for many approaches**

What do we know about SWPBIS effectiveness? Evaluation reports, rigorous single-case studies, and randomized controlled trials demonstrate that effective implementation of the primary prevention tier of SWPBIS (R. Horner, Sugai, & Anderson, 2010; Sprague, Biglan, Rusby, Gau, & Vincent, 2017) is associated with fidelity of implementation in a wide range of contexts and by typical implementation agents; improved organizational health; reduction in reports of problem behavior, improved perception of school safety; and, improved academic outcomes (promising but not definitive) (C. P. Bradshaw & Pas, 2012). Implementation of Tier 2 and 3 of SWPBIS results in improved student engagement and social and academic outcomes, along with a reduced likelihood of dropout (Anderson, Christenson, Sinclair, &

Lehr, 2004); reduced problem behavior (Dunlap et al., 2010; Hawken, MacLeod, & Rawlings, 2007); and, improved teacher ratings of student behavioral competence (Walker et al., 2009). Although SWPBIS systems and practices have been shown to reduce problem behavior, the evidence is less clear regarding impact on disciplinary inequity, with some studies showing mixed or even negative results in this regard (Gregory, Skiba, & Mediratta, 2017; C. G. Vincent, Sprague, CHiXapkaid, Tobin, & Gau, 2015).

Interventions Aimed at Reducing Disciplinary Exclusion. Four innovative approaches to intervening with antisocial and/or violent behavior are profiled, followed by guidelines for choosing and implementing these methods. The research presented below used scientific methods to test and promote basic human values such as equity and promoting the wellbeing of students (Hammond & Adelman, 1976; Ruiz & Roche, 2007; Skinner, 1953), while ensuring the safety of the school community (students, staff members, families). The exploration of the best methods to achieve those values is central to the purpose of this body of work, not only for children and families, but also for practitioners. These interventions are intended to illustrate the features of effective prevention approaches, and it is up to the district and local stakeholders to decide which interventions to adopt.

Recent studies by Bradshaw et al., (Double Check) (2018), Cook et al., (Greet Stop Prompt) (2018), Gregory et al., (2018) (restorative practice), and Cornell et al. on (threat assessment) (2018) offer insights into how clear guidance in intervention procedures can be effective in reducing overall use of disciplinary exclusion, as well as impacting their disproportionate use. The collective work presented in these studies can guide adults and students to “slow it down,” consistent with the available research on addressing implicit bias, stereotype threat, and racial anxiety (Godsil, Tropp, Goff, & powell, 2014; K. McIntosh, Girvan, Horner, Smolkowski, & Sugai, 2014).

Greet, Stop, Prompt. A study by Cook et al., (2018) focused on reducing the influence of implicit bias using the Greet-Stop-Prompt approach. This intervention involves proactive classroom behavior management strategies, a self-regulation technique to minimize the impact of teacher implicit bias in classroom decision-making during disciplinary encounters, and reactive behavior management strategies designed to generate more empathic responses to problem behavior. Through a single case experimental design, they reported data suggesting that the Greet-Stop-Prompt approach is associated with reductions in disproportionality in office disciplinary referrals for Black males, as well as concomitant improvements in Black males’ self-report of belonging and connection at school, suggesting the potential effectiveness of the interventions’ focus on addressing the influence of implicit bias.

Double Check. Double Check is a professional development and coaching framework that builds on School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SW-PBIS) to help teachers enhance five core components of culturally responsive practices. The overarching goal of Double Check is to address the overrepresentation of students of color in disciplinary referrals, suspensions, and special education referrals (Hershfeldt et al., 2009). A randomized controlled trial (RCT) tested the impact of a novel coaching approach utilized as one element of the Double Check cultural responsiveness and student engagement model. The RCT included 158 elementary and middle school teachers randomized to receive coaching or serve as comparisons; all were exposed to school-wide professional development activities. post

comparisons of self-reported culturally responsive behavior management indicated improvements for teachers in both conditions following professional development exposure. Fewer office discipline referrals were issued to Black students by teachers assigned to receive coaching relative to comparison teachers. Similarly, trained observers recorded significantly more teacher proactive behavior management and anticipation of student problems, higher student cooperation, less student non-cooperation, and less disruptive behaviors in classrooms led by coached teachers relative to comparison teachers. These findings suggest the school-wide activities were associated with improved teacher self-efficacy. Teachers who were additionally coached demonstrated significantly lower disproportionality in ODRs among Black students and improved classroom management practices.

Restorative Practices in Schools. In addition to its being used in the juvenile justice system, some schools have adopted a restorative justice approach in dealing with school-based juvenile problem behaviors, such as peer conflict, bullying, and possession of substances (Reimer, 2020). And in addition to the overall goals of the practice discussed above, the main goal of restorative justice in a school-based setting is to reduce student disengagement that is associated with exclusionary discipline such as suspension and expulsion. Through restorative justice approaches, the aim is for the student to be reintegrated into the school community instead of being isolated from it (González, 2012). Restorative justice programs in schools aim to encourage a change in students' behavior by emphasizing a healthy school community that relies on relationships and a sense of belonging over a fear of punishment (Todić, Cubbin, Armour, Rountree, & González, 2020).

Conferences are one approach used in schools that implement restorative justice practices and can be used to address a range of behaviors, such as truancy, chronic disruption, and misbehaviors (both with and without direct victims). Like family group conferences in the juvenile justice system, people most affected by the behavior—including the student, the student's parents/guardians and teachers, school staff, and the victim (if applicable)—meet and discuss the action and how it affects others and the school climate (Lieberman & Katz, 2020). This not only allows for students to understand the effect their actions had on others but also gives them an opportunity to take responsibility for them. Further, it gives them a sense of autonomy in their environment, for they have a chance to voice their opinion of proper punishment (Sumner, Silverman, & Frampton, 2010).

Circles may also be used, especially in larger classroom settings. Classroom circles, like circle sentencing, focus on the sense of community in the classroom, rather than on specific individuals (Anyon et al., 2016). Classroom circles are viewed as a space for open discussion and problem-solving. While most circles use teachers or other school staff as circle leaders, some schools provide opportunities for students to lead the discussion among their peers to encourage leadership and autonomy (Todić et al., 2020).

The underlying theory and logistics of implementing Restorative Practices in schools incorporates preventive as well as reactive approaches to promoting adaptive behavior. Positive outcomes from this approach have been reported (Lee, 2011; Lewis, 2009; Sumner et al., 2010), but using mostly quasi-experimental designs (Song & Swearer, 2016). Some studies have reported reduced rates of office disciplinary referrals and out-of-school suspensions and expulsions associated with this approach. Anecdotal reports also document increased satisfaction with the disciplinary process by all stakeholders, including students (Fronius et al.,

2019). More rigorous research, reported below, leaves some questions about the overall effectiveness of using RP as a suspension alternative.

Gregory and colleagues (2018) examined discipline records for one academic year in the Denver public schools ($N = 9,039$ discipline-referred students) to identify the factors associated with equitable assignment of out-of-school suspension (OSS). Multilevel logistic regression found that student participation in restorative interventions substantially reduced the odds of individual students receiving out of school suspensions. However, use of restorative interventions was only marginally associated with more comparable assignment of OSS to Black students relative to their White peers.

Interventions aimed at changing adult “mindset”. Educators’ explicit or implicit biases about Black students contribute to the discipline gap (Losen & Martinez, 2020). Those biases are present even in preschools. As an example, researchers fit 132 early education teachers with eye trackers and asked the teachers to watch video vignettes of four children — a Black girl, a Black boy, a White girl, and a White boy seated around a table. The researchers told the teachers to look for misbehaviors.

In truth, none of the children misbehaved, but the eye trackers revealed that the teachers spent more time gazing at the Black boy (Gilliam, Maupin, Reyes, Accavitti, & Shic, 2016). The teachers were given a questionnaire that asked which child required the most attention and 42 percent of respondents chose the Black boy, 34 percent chose the white boy, 13 percent chose the white girl and 10 percent chose the Black girl.

Another study demonstrated how such biases contribute to teachers disciplining Black students more harshly than White students. Researchers asked 191 teachers of K–12 students to imagine teaching at a middle school depicted in a photograph. The teachers then read a series of vignettes about a student who got in trouble twice, once for insubordination and again for disrupting class. Researchers told half the teachers that the student’s name was Darnell or Deshawn, stereotypically Black male names; for the other half, the boy was named Greg or Jake, stereotypically white male names. After each incident, the teachers answered questions on a seven-point scale. Questions included, “How severe was the student’s misbehavior?” and “How severely should the student be disciplined?” After the first incident of misbehavior, the teachers were equally lenient toward the Black and white boys. But after the second misbehavior, the teachers rated Black boys as 25 percent more troublesome than White boys and recommended 30 percent harsher disciplinary responses (Okonofua & Eberhardt, 2015).

Anne Gregory and colleagues have combined a race-conscious version of restorative justice with social and emotional learning (SEL). The latter aims to help children regulate their emotions by teaching self- and social awareness and responsible decision making. During 25 hours of training, teachers come together in circles like those used in restorative practice. The prompt, however, asks teachers to consider how structural racism hurts children. After that initial training, coaches also work with the teachers one-on-one. This facilitated dialog around race helped teachers speak freely about their worries (Manassah, Roderick, & Gregory, 2018). For instance, during the training circles, teachers often express concern that nonpunitive approaches are too soft or unstructured. When that happened, Gregory and her colleagues walked teachers through scenarios of alternative responses to students misbehaving.

In a follow-up study, Okonofua and colleagues asked a different group of U.S. teachers to read vignettes about hypothetical students named Deshawn or Greg. First, about half of the 243 teachers read a passage on the growth mind-set, specifically how teachers can change a student's life. Second, the teachers read about how their relationship to students could grow. Third, they read about the student's initial misbehavior. Fourth, they read about the student's love of music and struggles outside school. And finally, the teachers read about the student's second misbehavior, then answered a set of questions. Teachers in a control group read only the misbehavior vignettes interspersed with unrelated or subversive readings, such as a passage on how relationships cannot change.

The intervention resulted in responses to both Black and White students more positive. Compared with teachers in the control group, those who read the additional vignettes about Deshawn were less likely to label him as a troublemaker or expect him to get suspended in the future and were more likely to feel they could build a strong relationship with him (Okonofua, Paunesku, & Walton, 2016). Though those teachers were also less willing to see Deshawn receive harsh discipline, that finding did not reach statistical significance.

Background: Using Alternatives to Suspension and other forms of exclusionary discipline

Using disciplinary exclusion such as office referrals, suspensions and expulsions has been the subject of significant concern related to student and family civil rights, school policy, and their negative impact on short and long-term outcomes for students since the 1970's (R. J. Skiba, 2001; R. J. Skiba & Knesting, 2001). The indications and effectiveness of exclusionary discipline policies that demand automatic or rigorous application of exclusion from school are increasingly questionable. Embedded in this phenomenon is the documentation of significant and persistent disproportionality of application to traditional racial and ethnic minority groups, with black males experiencing the highest rates.

Schools cannot allow unacceptable behavior to interfere with the school district's primary mission of education. To this end, school districts adopt codes of conduct for expected behaviors and policies to address unacceptable behavior. In developing these policies, school boards must weigh the severity of the offense and the consequences of exclusion and the balance between individual and institutional rights and responsibilities. Out-of-school suspension and expulsion are the most severe consequences that a school district can impose for unacceptable behavior. Traditionally, these consequences have been reserved for offenses deemed especially severe or dangerous and/or for students who repeat the unacceptable behavior. However, the implications and consequences of out-of-school suspension and expulsion and "zero-tolerance" are of such severity that their application and appropriateness for a developing child require periodic review.

While there has been much concern about the issue of disproportionality from equity, societal, and legal perspectives, few researchers have documented outcomes associated with effective or promising practices aimed at reducing these disparities. Over the decades since these gaps were first identified, much of the research on this topic has continued to focus on documenting the existence of discipline disproportionality and exploring factors that contribute to it (Gregory, Skiba, & Noguera, 2010). Research providing empirical support of the efficacy of specific interventions to reduce and eliminate the racial/ethnic gap remains

scarce (Bottiani et al., 2017), and little is known about the impact of these approaches on school safety.

Overuse and disproportionate application of exclusionary discipline as a response to antisocial and dangerous behavior is often traced to the Gun Free Schools Act of 1994 (Kim, Losen, & Hewitt, 2010). On face value, it makes sense to some that disciplinary exclusion is a logical and appropriate consequence for threatening or engaging in violent behavior, and yet the evidence of the effectiveness of these approaches is not available (Fabelo et al., 2011). The question to be answered in this debate is whether the exclusion functions as intervention (i.e., would prevent future behavior) or as a safeguard protocol to allow time for developing a more comprehensive plan of action to hold the individual student accountable and keep others safe in the future (Cornell et al., 2017).

The field has not yet reached consensus regarding the theories, research methods, measures, policies, and practices that will move us closer to closing the racial/ethnic, gender and disability discipline gap (Catherine P. Bradshaw et al., 2018). Even less is known about the effectiveness of using alternatives to out of class and school suspension as a consequence for violent behavior (or threats thereof) on improving school safety outcomes (Cornell et al., 2017). These phenomena are an embarrassment to our field and our nation, and the urgency to respond cannot be overstated from a civil rights perspective and concern for the long-term wellbeing and life outcomes of those youth affected by these practices.

Disciplinary exclusion is typically described as a “punishment” strategy, yet from a behavioral perspective, these practices do not produce the functional outcome of punishment, which is to provide a consequence that reduces the future probability of an undesired behavior. Bradshaw et al., (2018) stated “Office discipline referrals, suspensions, and expulsions are considered exclusionary disciplinary practices because they remove and exclude students from schools and classroom learning time as a punitive consequence to an infraction of school or classroom rules or expectations.” This type of statement merits clarification as we often see this assertion in research papers and book chapters.

Informed behavioral theory defines punishment as a process wherein the systematic delivery of a consequence (by either removing or presenting a stimulus) results in a reduced probability of that behavior in the future. The view of the authors is that the field would be better served if we make clear that although these practices are likely unpleasant for all involved, they do not result in “punishment” (C.G. Vincent, Tobin, Swain-Bradway, & May, 2011), (whose functional effect, as noted, is to reduce the likelihood of a behavior or action), but rather the long term effect seems to be an increased use of exclusion without evidence of effectiveness in reducing the likelihood of problem behavior in the future. School administrators, teachers, and researchers should clearly distinguish retribution (Wachtel, Costello, & Wachtel, 2009) from functional punishment as defined above. It should also be noted that exclusion may be used as a temporary measure to assure safety and allow learning to continue if a student becomes significantly disruptive but should not be considered therapeutic intervention.

If the role of punishment can be framed as an evidence-supported family of procedures derived from behavioral theory, it is possible to develop and use intervention practices from that position. For example, removal from a classroom should be guided by what we know about how to implement “procedural time out” (Sulzer-Azaroff & Mayer,

1994; Wolery, Bailey Jr., & Sugai, 1988). Some educators understand that if the classroom or peer social environment is “aversive” (e.g., poorly matched instruction, ineffective or coercive classroom management, poor teacher-student or student-student relationships, micro-aggressions), some students will be reinforced (increased probability of removal) by escaping these aversive conditions, while others will find the exclusion aversive, changing the future probability of the problematic behavior.

Research on suspension alternatives focuses primarily on changing teacher (e.g., classroom management, cultural competence) and administrator behavior (e.g., threat assessment), as a prevention strategy and less on directly teaching students behaviors that might replace those that get them in trouble in the first place. Future research should also address the effectiveness of training for school administrators in designing and selecting alternatives to out of school suspension or even expulsion. In the authors’ experience, most school policies and procedures are predominately designed to promote exclusion, and little to no guidance is given in when and how to choose and implement an “alternative” (Peterson, 2005).

The role of functional behavior assessment (O’Neill, Albin, Storey, Horner, & Sprague, 2014) methods to specifically (at a more micro level) the antecedents (e.g., poor teacher student relationships, overreaction by a teacher in a vulnerable situation, etc.) behaviors (e.g., possibly those that are culturally typical for a student and aversive to the teacher) and consequences (e.g., reprimands, warnings, removals) that are occasioning and maintaining student behaviors that may result in exclusion. This set of practices, combined with training in classroom management and culturally responsive teaching, may be especially beneficial for students whose behaviors persist after high fidelity “tier 1 and 2” supports are provided.

Other Means of Correction. In 2012 the California legislature passed AB 1729 requiring that all students in California are provided appropriate due process protections before they are expelled or suspended. The legislative goal in enacting the discipline code was to:

- “[S]afeguard the constitutional and statutory right of California children to a free education . . . by establishing fair procedures which must be followed before that right is withdrawn.”
 - *Slayton v. Pomona Unified Sch. Dist.*, 207 Cal. Rptr. 705, 713 (1984)

This bill authorized school districts to document the other means of correction used and place that documentation in the pupil’s record. The bill also specified that other means of correction include, but are not limited to, among other things, a positive behavior support approach with tiered interventions that occur during the school day on campus, a conference between school personnel, the pupil’s parent or guardian, and the pupil, participation in a restorative justice program, and after-school programs that address specific behavioral issues or expose pupils to positive activities and behaviors. A summary of the legislation is included in the box below. It is the view of the expert team that this legislation provides the legal and policy basis for implementing a consistent system of alternatives to traditional exclusionary discipline practices. Recommendations for establishing this in SCUSD will be provided later in this report.

Other Means of Correction

EDUCATION CODE - EDC

TITLE 2. ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION [33000 - 64100] (Title 2 enacted by Stats. 1976, Ch. 1010.)

DIVISION 4. INSTRUCTION AND SERVICES [46000 - 65001] (Division 4 enacted by Stats. 1976, Ch. 1010.)

PART 27. PUPILS [48000 - 49703] (Part 27 enacted by Stats. 1976, Ch. 1010.)

CHAPTER 6. Pupil Rights and Responsibilities [48900 - 49051] (Chapter 6 enacted by Stats. 1976, Ch. 1010.)

ARTICLE 1. Suspension or Expulsion [48900 - 48927] (Article 1 repealed and added by Stats. 1983, Ch. 498, Sec. 91.)

48900.5.

(a) Suspension, including supervised suspension as described in Section 48911.1, shall be imposed only when other means of correction fail to bring about proper conduct. A school district may document the other means of correction used and place that documentation in the pupil's record, which may be accessed pursuant to Section 49069.7. However, a pupil, including an individual with exceptional needs, as defined in Section 56026, may be suspended, subject to Section 1415 of Title 20 of the United States Code, for any of the reasons enumerated in Section 48900 upon a first offense, if the principal or superintendent of schools determines that the pupil violated subdivision (a), (b), (c), (d), or (e) of Section 48900 or that the pupil's presence causes a danger to persons.

(b) Other means of correction include, but are not limited to, the following:

(1) A conference between school personnel, the pupil's parent or guardian, and the pupil.

(2) Referrals to the school counselor, psychologist, social worker, child welfare attendance personnel, or other school support service personnel for case management and counseling.

(3) Study teams, guidance teams, resource panel teams, or other intervention-related teams that assess the behavior and develop and implement individualized plans to address the behavior in partnership with the pupil and the pupil's parents.

(4) Referral for a comprehensive psychosocial or psychoeducational assessment, including for purposes of creating an individualized education program, or a plan adopted pursuant to Section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. Sec. 794(a)).

(5) Enrollment in a program for teaching prosocial behavior or anger management.

(6) Participation in a restorative justice program.

(7) A positive behavior support approach with tiered interventions that occur during the school day on campus.

(8) After school programs that address specific behavioral issues or expose pupils to positive activities and behaviors, including, but not limited to, those operated in collaboration with local parent and community groups.

(9) Any of the alternatives described in Section 48900.6.

(Amended by Stats. 2019, Ch. 497, Sec. 61. (AB 991) Effective January 1, 2020.)

Bullying and Harassment

In the last several decades, the mean-spirited bullying and harassment of vulnerable peers in schools has emerged as an urgent public health concern (C.P. Bradshaw, 2015). Bullying and harassment have always existed in contexts where diverse groups of individuals are grouped together for extended periods of time. However, as we have gradually become more socially divided, diverse, tribal, and confrontational in our beliefs and actions, the opportunities for bullying and harassment have grown. This cultural shift seems to have spilled over into schools and has negatively impacted both peer to peer and staff to student relationships. The attitudes, beliefs, and behavioral inclinations that students now display in school can be highly destructive and supportive of bullying and harassment.

Bullying and harassment is critical to address in the context of this report both because of its critical influence on the emotional safety of students (particularly those with disabilities, and other forms of “difference” such as racial/ethnic or gender identity) and most of the families we interviewed in focus groups described experiences where bullying and harassment incidences resulted in exclusionary discipline.

Emotional safety infers a healthy psychological state where individuals are a) free of excessive fear from events, situations or others, b) are confident and able to assert themselves, and c) can easily form attachments with others. Emotional safety is damaged and constrained by intimidation, harassment, humiliation, relational aggression, threats, and cyber abuse. These social toxins are commonly part of the bullying process and can lead to severe, long-term emotional damage for victims of them (Cantone et al., 2015). Every student has a right to expect that their physical and emotional safety is assured in their schooling.

Given the ramp up of public concern about school bullying and harassment, many school districts and school staff members face complex, and often unfamiliar challenges when attempting to intervene with this problem. School administrators and staff members have faced a steep learning curve over the past decade in this regard. The often-covert nature of bullying and harassment makes them difficult to detect and limits our ability to analyze them and prevent their occurrence. When they do occur, school staff members and parents usually learn about them after the fact and only via student reports. However, despite these limitations, we have learned a great deal about the dynamics of bullying and harassment and how to confront them in schools. In this chapter, we share important elements of this information. Some key issues to be aware of and to consider in addressing school bullying and harassment are described below.

There are numerous constraints that can be obstacles for screening, identification and intervention efforts regarding bullying and harassment. For instance, many students are often

reluctant to speak out or seek adult help when they have been victimized. Similarly, teachers, other school staff members, and parents may be reluctant, unwilling, or unable to initiate and pursue the actions necessary to effectively address and intervene with bullying and harassment. School personnel sometimes may find that some parents are defensive, and reluctant or unwilling, to address the student's problem behavior if they are a perpetrator or victim of these actions.

The current social climate within schools places considerable stigma on youth who are accused of engaging in harassment of any kind. The determination that harassment (including harassment associated with bullying) is a criminal and civil offense, with the attendant legal ramifications, attaches a substantial accountability factor to the actions taken by school officials. The district, school, and/or individual staff members may incur both legal liability and financial risk, both institutionally and personally, if found negligent in cases involving harassment of any type.

Interventions for bullying and harassment can also be quite difficult, complex, and costly depending on the nature and severity of the problems involved. Historically, some educators have not viewed these events as legitimate targets of school ownership or as worth the effort to address them since peer harassment and bullying have been regarded as peer-owned problems to be worked out ideally within the peer group in the absence of adult involvement. Recent court cases, however, have now rendered this option moot. The risks of not doing something about serious bullying and peer harassment currently outweigh the risks involved in formally addressing these problems.

Addressing the perpetrator's behavior is only half the task. Ongoing victim intervention and support must be part of any effective and lasting solution. (Smith & Sprague, 2003). In fact, effective intervention in a bullying/harassment context should address the specific needs of a variety of impacted individuals including the victim, the bully, peers, parents, school staff, and others negatively affected by the problem behavior. A comprehensive and effective bullying intervention, initiated in response to ongoing, widespread, and /or pervasive bullying and harassment, may well stress school and district financial resources.

Reactionary (after the fact) interventions that have a crisis focus to them can be costly and are often ineffective. They are difficult to implement successfully as they usually involve making changes in an established and long held set of school practices. These interventions typically are punishment based and focus on one or two individuals: the perpetrator(s), perhaps the victim(s), and occasionally selected bystanders. Conversely, proactive or "preventive" interventions aimed at addressing bullying through education (social skills training) and providing positive behavioral interventions and supports, are typically less expensive to implement, are generally acceptable to most school personnel—particularly if they are universal in nature, and are less socially stigmatizing (Bradshaw, 2015). These programs can be used to address a wide range of problem behavior types in addition to bullying and harassment. They are usually focused on all students in the school, and are based on proven principles of teaching, reinforcing, and recognizing positive, expected forms of behavior including empathy, respect, positive regard for others, and responsibility.

Recommended Steps in Designing and Implementing a School-Wide Anti-Bullying Program. Schools seeking to reduce or eliminate bullying and peer harassment problems

should follow a series of steps to introduce and infuse a school-wide intervention program that has solid administrative support and is acceptable to important stakeholders such as parents, students, and staff members. Some recommendations for implementation are listed below and will be included in our recommendations later in this report.

- Develop and implement an anti-bullying and harassment policy at the district level that individual schools can use as a referent or standard.
- Systematically assess the nature and extent of the problem via surveys.
- Develop, discuss, and adopt a school-wide response to solve the problem.
- Solicit family support and involvement as well as solicit student input on the issue.
- Train all staff members, students, and families in the selected protocol.
 - What is the proper response if a student reports a socially aggressive behavior or bullying incident to you?
 - What should you say to the student?
 - What information do you need to collect and report?
 - Who do you report the socially aggressive behavior or bullying to?
 - What is the follow up safety plan and who is responsible for monitoring the plan?
- Promote the importance of active supervision of students in common and low traffic areas.
- Respond to chronic bullying and harassment with appropriate supports, needed sanctions and proven intervention methods.
- Assist and support chronic victims to avoid dangerous situations and to learn bully/harassing response skills.
- Track instances of bullying and harassment and adjust the intervention program as needed based on this information.

The Influence of Implicit Bias

This section of the report responds to the questions in the evaluation plan related to implicit bias and whether bias is evident in the district’s policies and procedures, relevant discipline, student records, and special education referral process. They are presented below for ease of access.

This evaluation activity sought to detect if there is an influence of implicit bias on the district’s procedures and policies that are consistently implemented and effective in achieving equitable and fair outcomes for students.

Activities/Analysis	Measures and Data Sources (s)
<p>Review and Analyze:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● District and school policies, procedures, and practices ● Consistency and overall implementation of policies, procedures, data collection and reporting and practices across school sites ● Review collective bargaining agreements and contract proposals impacting these areas ● Student records (plaintiff) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A descriptive review of policies and procedures provided by the district ● Collective bargaining agreements and contract proposals ● Timelines; special education, referrals, SST, etc. ● Implicit Bias Survey (July 2021)
<p>Analyze policies, systems, and practices related to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Special Education disproportionality data ● Timelines ● MTSS ● Discipline 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● IEP and Section 504 Plan review ● Accumulate and categorize data to determine whether school sites are including the same procedures when it comes to evaluation and timelines ● Informal interviews with district staff members

Background: Implicit Bias. Implicit bias refers to unconscious negative thoughts, attitudes, stereotypes, perceptions, or behaviors of which the person is neither aware nor believes that he or she possesses against members of another ethnic or racial group essentially because of their membership in that group (Dovidio, Kawakami, Smoak, & Gaertner, 2009). As implicit bias is held in the subconscious, it can show up when least expected and can show up in certain decision-making, such as discipline, especially for students of color. A large body of social science evidence has shown that implicit biases can be activated by any number of various identities we perceive in others, such as race, ethnicity, gender, or age (Staats, 2015-2016). Embedded in our institutions and public systems, it may appear as either a conscious, but masked, expression or a nonconscious cognitive process. The conscious expression of covert racism is considered explicit racism or racial bias, and the non-conscious expression is defined as implicit racism or racial bias. (Martin, p. 7 2014). Whether implicit bias is held by a person or built into certain policies and procedures, the impact is there. Students of color, specifically Black students will have a

higher rate of disciplinary issues, referrals, and suspension and expulsions and will more likely be referred to special education for behavior issues.

Because the implicit associations we hold arise outside of conscious awareness, implicit biases do not necessarily align with our explicit beliefs and stated intentions. This means that even individuals who profess egalitarian intentions and try to treat all individuals fairly can still unknowingly act in ways that reflect their implicit—rather than their explicit—biases. Thus, even well intentioned individuals can act in ways that produce inequitable outcomes for different groups (Staats, 2015-2016). As implicit biases are stored in our subconscious, it is imperative that we learn to identify implicit biases, how they come about, and certain biases we all hold so that we can identify them when they show up.

Implicit Bias in Special Education. Implicit bias can be identified in many aspects of the school systems, including but not limited to the referrals for discipline and other programs, like special education. Referrals by school staff members may be subject to implicit bias that these educators have against students of color and/or students with disabilities. The educators may not even be aware that they hold biases against students of color or students with disabilities, but these biases become evident in the referral process (Rynders, 2019). These biases can show up at any time during the referral process and many times have been missed by those reviewing the process and protocols. Redfield and Kraft (2012) asserted, “Color is a likely factor considered implicitly when finding and making those first critical referrals and subsequent educational decisions as to 2 minority children” (p. 133). They further contended “black boys” received the label in high incidence categories, such as mild intellectual disability; although in recent years, new eligibility categories are disproportionate, thus resulting in disproportionate placements (Whatley, 2017).

According to Losen and Orfield (2002), African American students 37 are overrepresented in nine of thirteen categories and more likely than their White peers to be placed in highly restrictive educational settings. The U.S. Department of Education (2009) revealed that the identification and placement of African American students in special education programs occurs at a significantly higher rate than their White peers. A 2015 study found that the symptomatology of autism may predispose individuals to activate negative implicit biases, particularly individuals who are not familiar with autism and hold negative stereotypes (Yull, 2015). These biases may be conflated if the student is part of a racial minority group. For example, if a person holds an implicit bias against people of color, and if the same person holds an implicit bias against people with disabilities, then the two forms of bias can compound upon each other if the person meets a person of color with a disability (Redfield, 2012). It is important that staff working with students can identify the various types of biases not only in others but also within themselves.

Implicit Bias in Discipline. The school discipline gap demonstrates a ravine between the exclusionary discipline (any discipline that removes a student from the learning environment) rates of these populations of students, with Black and Hispanic students receiving many more incidents of exclusionary discipline than White students (Gullo, 2017). This gap could result from many different issues including implicit bias of those making behavioral consequence decisions (Carter, Skiba, Arredondo, & Pollock, 2014; Kahn, Goff, & Glaser, 2016). It is important to note that high levels of exclusionary discipline were associated with academic decline for both students receiving discipline and their incident-free

counterparts (Perry & Morris, 2014; Rausch & Skiba, 2004, 2005). Exclusionary discipline has many detrimental effects on students, beyond academic decline, such as social development. By excluding students from the classroom, we are taking away the peer support, accountability, social skills, and other important access points for students. The utilization of exclusionary practices can lead to feelings of school disengagement (Brown, 2007) and perceptions of the education system as being unsupportive (Sekayi, 2001). As a result, students experience alienation from the educational community and begin to lose interest in learning (Brown, 2007; Wald & Kurlaender, 2003).

African American males suffer from less time in an academic classroom due to exclusionary discipline as a result of zero tolerance policies, but research also indicates that involvement in exclusionary discipline leads to feelings of alienation from school, elevated dropout rates, and alarming incarceration rates (Brown, 2007; Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Petterson, 2000; U.S. Department of Justice, 2003) contributing to the overrepresentation of African American males in exclusionary discipline that potentially lead to the School to Prison Pipeline. Considering students of Color experience much higher rates of exclusionary discipline, the School to Prison Pipeline disproportionately impacts students who already suffer from school discipline discrepancies with initiation into the prison system (Gullo, 2017). The repercussions of disciplining Black students at a higher rate than White students has a devastatingly long-term impact.

For this report, the experts sought to identify whether implicit bias played a role in the decision-making of the staff in Sacramento City School District, specifically when it came to discipline and placement of Black students. As implicit bias shows up in various ways, it is important to look at multiple points of engagement, such as interactions with students, parents, and staff, policies and procedures, and student records. As such, the findings are a result of these, and the recommendations are based on the findings to support the school district in preventing future issues.

This introductory section provided a brief literature review and description of the research related to the evaluation questions addressed by the expert team. It is critical for the reader of this report to understand the background and basis for the methods and results of this evaluation project. Next, we will briefly describe the evaluation methods, then results, then a summary of recommendations moving forward.

Methods

In this section we describe the evaluation methods used across the three major topic areas. Adjustments were made to the initial TOS to accommodate logistics of carrying out this project during the COVID pandemic and to correct any errors in logic or consistency made during the evaluation planning discussions. We start with Special Education, followed by School Discipline. Implicit Bias methods and questions are embedded in the two major topic areas.

Special Education

Evaluation Questions. The questions (also listed above) are:

- Does the district achieve timely identification, assessment, and access to services for students with disabilities and Black students with disabilities, including the district's use of Student Study Team meetings?
- Do students with disabilities have timely access to effective services, programs, and activities for disabilities in the least restrictive environment?
 - What is the continuum of placements for students with disabilities, particularly Black students with disabilities?
 - Is there appropriate placement (FAPE/LRE) of students with disabilities, particularly Black students with disabilities, in inclusive placements?
 - What is influence of implicit, explicit, structural racial and disability bias and intersection of the two?
- What is the availability of a continuum of placements and inclusive placements for students with disabilities, particularly Black students with disabilities?
 - If the continuum is not available in an equitable manner, what is influence of implicit bias? What is influence of implicit, explicit, and structural racial and disability bias and intersection of the two?
- What policies, procedures and practices are in place to ensure appropriate placement of students with disabilities, particularly Black students with disabilities, in inclusive placements?
 - If such policies, procedures, and practices are in place, are they uniformly implemented?
 - If policies, procedures, practices are not in place or unclear, what is influence of implicit bias?
- Does the district monitor the alleged disproportionate impacts, based on race and type of disability, of previous non-inclusive placement?
 - If so, how does the district monitor and address this?
This means disproportionate impact by race and type of disability, e.g., emotional disturbance.
- What disparities exist in access to adequate education, special education, related services, accommodations, and modifications for students with disabilities?
 - If disparities exist, what is the influence of implicit bias?

- How does the district provide reasonable accommodations and/or modifications, including through modifications to policies and procedures, to avoid discrimination against students with disabilities and Black students with disabilities?
 - How does the district ensure that accommodations/modifications on a student's IEP are provided?
 - If insufficiencies identified, what role does implicit bias play?
- What is the staff development plan?
 - What is the effectiveness and sufficiency of training and ongoing development for the district's personnel who instruct, support, and/or serve students with disabilities and Black students with disabilities?
 - What is the effectiveness and sufficiency of training and ongoing professional development for District administrators who are involved in the development and implementation of IEPs and Section 504 Plans for students with disabilities?
- Is District staffing adequate, and effective in efforts to identify, instruct, and serve students with disabilities, including Black students with disabilities?
 - Does the staffing pattern meet CDE standards for staffing (race; gender; grade level teaching; caseloads and staffing ratios)?

Procedures and Data Sources. To address these questions, we reviewed and analyzed the following:

- District policies, procedures and practices related to prereferral/SST process
 - SCUSD BP 6164.6 - Identification and Education Under Section 504 (SC2489....)
 - SCUSD BP 6164.5 - Student Study Teams (SC248950xAAE13)
 - SCUSD BP 6162.5 - Student Assessment (SC248954xAAE13)
 - SCUSD AR 6164.6 - Identification and Education Under Section 504 (SC2489....)
 - SCUSD AR 6162.5 - Student Assessment (SC248953xAAE13).
- District policies, procedures and practices related to special education services
 - SCUSD BP 6164.4 - Identification of Individuals for Special Education
 - SCUSD BP 6162.5 - Student Assessment (SC248954xAAE13)
 - SCUSD BP 6159.3 - Appointment of Surrogate Parent for Special Education
 - SCUSD BP 6159.2 - Nonpublic Nonsectarian School and Agency Services for Special Education
 - SCUSD BP 6159.1 - Procedural Safeguards and Complaints for Special Education
 - SCUSD BP 6159 - Individualized Education Program (SC248963xAAE13)
 - SCUSD BP 5145.3 - Nondiscrimination Harassment (SC248970xAAE13)
 - SCUSD AR 6164.5 - Student Study Teams (SC248949xAAE13)
 - SCUSD AR 6164.4 - Identification of Individuals for Special Education

- SCUSD AR 6162.5 - Student Assessment (SC248953xAAE13)
- SCUSD AR 6159.4 - Behavioral Interventions for Special Education Students
- SCUSD AR 6159.3 - Appointment of Surrogate Parent for Special Education Students
- SCUSD AR 6159.2 - Nonpublic Nonsectarian School and Agency Services for Special Education
- SCUSD AR 6159.1 - Procedural Safeguards and Complaints for Special Education
- SCUSD AR 6159 - Individualized Education Program (SC248962xAAE13)
- SCUSD AR 5145.3 - Nondiscrimination Harassment (SC248969xAAE13)
- SCUSD AR 5144.2 - Suspension and Expulsion Due Process (Students with Disabilities)
- Consistency and overall implementation of policies, procedures, data collection and reporting and practices across school sites. These were assessed using informal interviews with selected district personnel. A fidelity of implementation survey was to be administered to building-level administrators, but the survey contractor omitted these items in the survey. This was also true for the School Discipline items.
- Collective bargaining agreements and contract proposals related to special education
- IEPs of Represented Students
 - Student records for DRC and non- DRC clients
- Informal interviews with Christine Beata, Chief Academic Officer; Jennifer Kretschman, Director of MTSS; Sadie Hedegard, Assistant Superintendent of Special Education, Innovation, & Learning; Geovanni Linares, Director, Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA)
- A focus group interview with SCTA leadership (<https://sacteachers.org/>)
- Interview with Brian Gaunt, MTSS consultant/trainer
- Focus groups
 - Plaintiff parents and those represented by Disability Rights California
 - BIPOC administrators group
 - Black Parallel School Board (“BPSB”)
 - The African American Advisory Board (“AAAB”)
 - Community Advisory Council (Special Education)
 - The Coalition for Students with Disabilities
 - Sacramento City Teachers Association (SCTA) leadership

The evaluation team had designed a Special Education survey to be delivered by an organization called Kelvin (<https://kelvin.education/features/>) along with fidelity items related to School Discipline and Implicit Bias. Unfortunately, the Special Education items were omitted from the survey when sent out to all school administrators in the district in late Spring, 2021. The evaluation team did not learn about this error until late summer due to long intervals between replies from Kelvin, and we chose to complete our report based on

available data and information rather than attempt to readminister the surveys. We believe strongly that these fidelity measures are collected and will include this as a recommendation resulting from our work. Those surveys/fidelity measures are included as Attachment A

School Discipline

Evaluation Questions. The questions (also listed above) were:

- How effective are District-wide and school-based student discipline and behavior management systems, policies, and practices?
 - Data collection and data-based decision-making practices?
 - What fidelity assessments are currently used by the district?
- Is the use of discipline and behavior management approaches for students with disabilities (and without identified disabilities) equitable, clear, and fair?
- How equitable are exclusionary discipline outcomes?
 - Race/ethnicity
 - Gender
 - Disability
 - School attended
- What is influence of implicit bias?

Procedures and Data Sources. To address these questions, we reviewed and analyzed the following:

- District policies, procedures, and practices on disciplinary exclusion. These were provided by various district personnel identified as responsible for a particular area of practice or compliance.
 - SCUSD AR 5144 - Discipline (SC248975xAAE13)
 - SCUSD AR 5144.1 - Suspension and Expulsion Due Process (SC248972xAAE13)
 - SCUSD AR 5144.2 - Suspension and Expulsion Due Process (Students with Disabilities)
 - SCUSD AR 5145.4 - Anti-Bullying (SC248964xAAE13)
 - Informal interview and discussion with Jessica Wharton, (currently Director I, Behavior and Re-Entry)
 - SCUSD BP 5131 - Conduct (SC248979xAAE13)
 - SCUSD BP 5131.1 - Bus Conduct (SC248978xAAE13)
 - SCUSD BP 5131.2 - Use of Electronic Signaling Device (SC248966xAAE13)
 - SCUSD BP 5144 - Discipline (SC248976xAAE13)
 - SCUSD BP 5144.1 - Suspension and Expulsion Due Process (SC248974xAAE13)
 - SCUSD BP 5145.4 - Anti-Bullying (SC248968xAAE13)
 - SCUSD Exhibit 5144.2 - Suspension and Expulsion Due Process Form (Students with disabilities)

- District policies, procedures, and practices on implementing disciplinary exclusion alternatives.
 - SCUSD AR 5144 - Discipline (SC248975xAAE13)
 - <https://naacpsac.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/2020-Suspension-Capitol-of-Suspensions-II-Dec-2020.pdf>
- District policies, procedures, and practices on exclusionary discipline data entry, monitoring and reporting. These were provided by district personnel identified as responsible for this area of practice or compliance.
 - Ed Eldridge Director III, Strategy, and Innovation
 - Rhonda Rode, Director, Student and Data Systems
- Consistency and overall implementation of policies, procedures, data collection and reporting and practices across school sites. These were assessed using informal interviews with selected district personnel. A fidelity of implementation survey was to be administered to building-level administrators, but the survey contractor omitted these items in the survey. This was also true for the Special Education items.
 - Ed Eldridge Director III, Strategy and Innovation
 - Rhonda Rode, Director, Student and Data Systems
- Collective bargaining agreements and contract proposals related to use of disciplinary exclusion
 - LIMITS ON SUSPENSION FOR VIOLATION OF EDUCATION CODE § 48900(k) 2/3/2020
 - Distance Learning Discipline Protocol 8/25/2020
 - 2020-2021 Standards of Behavior Document
 - Affective Statements Memo
 - Memo to Staff on Discipline 2-11-21
- A focus group interview with SCTA leadership (<https://sacteachers.org/>)
- District/site-based discipline data:
 - Office referrals, in school and out of suspension, “soft suspensions,” expulsion disaggregated by race, gender, and disability. Summary for all schools provided by Ed Eldridge
 - California Dashboard data
 - Infinite campus data provided by the district (Rhonda Rode)
- IEPs of Represented Students
 - Student records for DRC and non- DRC clients
- Focus groups
 - Plaintiff parents and those represented by Disability Rights California
 - BIPOC administrators group
 - Black Parallel School Board (“BPSB”)
 - The African American Advisory Board (“AAAB”)
 - Community Advisory Council (Special Education)
 - The Coalition for Students with Disabilities
- Law enforcement presence and reason for calls/interactions and enforcement by officers in or outside of the district

- Informal Interview with Raymond Lozada
- SCUSD Reports August 2019 to May 2020 Law Enforcement Activities by School
- SACRAMENTO CITY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF EDUCATION RESOLUTION NO. 3157
 - RESOLUTION TO REIMAGINE SCHOOL SAFETY AND WORK TO DISMANTLE STRUCTURAL RACISM IN SACRAMENTO CITY UNIFIED SCHOOLS 7/16/2020

Implicit Bias

This section will describe in detail the procedures, and results of the evaluation plan regarding Implicit Bias.

Evaluation Questions. The questions were:

- Does the district achieve timely identification, assessment, and access to services for students with disabilities and Black students with disabilities, including the district's use of Student Study Team meetings?
- Do students with disabilities have timely access to effective services, programs, and activities for disabilities in the least restrictive environment?
- What is the continuum of placements for students with disabilities, particularly Black students with disabilities?
- Is there appropriate placement (FAPE/LRE) of students with disabilities, particularly Black students with disabilities, in inclusive placements?
- What is the influence of implicit, explicit, structural racial, and disability bias and the intersection of the two?
- What is the availability of a continuum of placements and inclusive placements for students with disabilities, particularly Black students with disabilities?
- If the continuum is not available in an equitable manner, what is the influence of implicit bias? What is the influence of implicit, explicit, and structural racial and disability bias and the intersection of the two?
- What policies, procedures, and practices are in place to ensure appropriate placement of students with disabilities, particularly Black students with disabilities, in inclusive placements?
- If such policies, procedures, and practices are in place, are they uniformly implemented?
- If policies, procedures, practices are not in place or unclear, what is the influence of implicit bias?
- Does the district monitor the alleged disproportionate impacts, based on race and type of disability, of previous non-inclusive placement?
- If so, how does the district monitor and address this?
- How effective are District-wide and school-based student discipline and behavior management systems, policies, and practices?

- Data collection and data-based decision-making practices?
- How equitable are exclusionary discipline outcomes?
 - Race/ethnicity
 - Gender
 - Disability
- Is there evidence that students improve? Is the improvement equitable?
- What is the influence of implicit bias?
- Is the use of discipline and behavior management approaches for students with disabilities (and without identified disabilities) equitable, clear, and fair? Are discipline and exclusion used instead of providing students with disabilities supports and services they need? If any, what is the influence of implicit bias?
- What disparities exist in access to adequate education, special education, related services, accommodations, and modifications for students with disabilities and Black students with disabilities?
 - If disparities exist, what is the influence of implicit bias?
- Do students have access to safe and inclusive learning environments, which includes effective and appropriate measures to address bullying and harassment of students with disabilities and Black students with disabilities?
 - If not, what is the influence of implicit bias?
- What type of PD has been offered relative to bullying and harassment? Policy and Practice (Do they exist)
 - How does it impact students with disabilities?
 - How is it implemented across race and gender?
- How does the district provide reasonable accommodations and/or modifications, including through modifications to policies and procedures, to avoid discrimination against students with disabilities and Black students with disabilities?
- How does the district ensure that accommodations/modifications on a student's IEP are provided?
 - If insufficiencies are identified, what role does implicit bias play?
- What is the staff development plan?
- What is the effectiveness and sufficiency of training and ongoing development for the district's personnel who instruct, support, and/or serve students with disabilities and Black students with disabilities?
- What is the effectiveness and sufficiency of training and ongoing professional development for District administrators who are involved in the development and implementation of IEPs and Section 504 Plans?
- Is District staffing adequate, and effective in efforts to identify, instruct, and serve students with disabilities, including Black students with disabilities?
- Does the staffing pattern meet CDE standards for staffing (race; gender; grade-level teaching; caseloads and staffing ratios)?

Procedures and Data Sources. To address these questions, we reviewed and analyzed the following:

1. District policies, procedures, and practices on disciplinary exclusion. These were provided by district personnel.
2. Consistency and overall implementation of policies, procedures, data collection and reporting, and practices across school sites. These were assessed using informal interviews with selected district personnel and fidelity of implementation survey administered to building-level administrators.
3. IEPs of Represented Students
 - Student records for DRC and non- DRC clients.
 - Collective bargaining agreements and contract proposals
 - Focus groups
 - Plaintiff parents and those represented by Disability Rights California
 - BIPOC administrators group
 - Black Parallel School Board (“BPSB”)
 - The African American Advisory Board (“AAAB”)
 - Community Advisory Council (Special Education)
 - The Coalition for Students with Disabilities
 - Sacramento City Teachers Association (SCTA) leadership
 - Administrator Survey, July 2021

Results

Checklist Manifesto (Gawande, 2010)

- The volume and complexity of knowledge today has exceeded our ability to effectively deliver it to people -- consistently, correctly, safely. We train longer, specialize more, use ever advancing technologies and we still fail.
- Failure type 1: Ignorance
 - We do not know what to do
- Failure type 2: Ineptitude
 - We have the knowledge and do not apply it properly

Special Education

Is there timely identification and assessment of students with disabilities and Black students with disabilities?

Interviews with families, focus group interviews with parent groups and other stakeholder groups, and a review of students' records revealed a pattern of students exhibiting behavior, social and academic challenges over time, often with multiple suspensions, prior to referrals to the Student Study Team process or formerly be assessed for eligibility to receive special education services. Parents reported delays in responses to their multiple requests for assessment and in following required timelines. Furthermore, there does not appear to be a consistently implemented proactive, preventative "child find" approach to identifying and supporting students who demonstrate academic and behavioral challenges.

There is lack of clarity of how the district's Student Study Team process and its Response to Intervention efforts interface. Currently, the district has begun a new initiative and professional development for a Multi-tiered Systems of Support for academics and behavioral interventions (discussed further later); however, it is not clear how the MTSS initiative involves and is aligned with special education processes and services.

Is there timely access to effective services, programs, and activities for students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment?

There is variability in terms of access to services and availability of a continuum of placements, in particular inclusive placements across school sites in the district. A relatively small number of school sites implement inclusive practices. There does not appear to be a consistent process used throughout the district to determine the least restrictive environment for individual students; rather placement appears to be determined by a student's eligibility category

Interviews with families, focus group interviews with parent groups and other stakeholder groups, and review of student records indicated that access to supports to facilitate students' success in the least restrictive environment were limited. There does not appear to be a consistent process used throughout the district to determine the least restrictive environment for individual students; rather placement appears to be determined by students exhibiting challenging behaviors, and functional behavioral assessments with the

subsequent development and implementation of positive behavioral support plans were not done proactively. There was a pattern of student suspensions and multiple parent requests prior to functional behavioral assessments being completed. When plans were developed, there is no evidence that the students' teachers received training on implementation or that plans were implemented with fidelity. There were also reports that clear offers of FAPE were not offered in a timely manner and situations where no services were provided when a student was in transition between settings, especially when the student was suspended and/or awaiting placement in a more restrictive setting.

Is there the availability of a continuum of placements and inclusive placements for students with disabilities, particularly Black students with disabilities?

As previously mentioned, a relatively small number of school sites implement inclusive practices. There is currently no district wide plan to increase and strengthen inclusive service delivery. School sites vary in terms of culture, politics, procedures, and expectations for students with disabilities to receive services in the general education classroom setting. Based on data reported to the state for the annual performance report, 57.67% of students with disabilities receive their education services in the general education classroom setting 80% or more of the school day. Interviews with families, focus group interviews with parent groups and other stakeholder groups, and review of student records revealed that there is inequitable access to inclusive services and placements and access to inclusive services and placements was associated with strong parent advocacy.

According to the district disproportionality study conducted by the CDE approved facilitator, Black students with disabilities are approximately 2 times more likely to receive educational services in a segregated, special day classroom (i.e., less than 40% in the general education classroom setting) and over 2 times more likely to receive educational services 40% to 79% in general education classroom settings. This data indicates that Black students are more likely placed in a more restrictive placement.

Are policies, procedures, and practices in place to ensure appropriate placement of students with disabilities, particularly Black students with disabilities, in inclusive placements and to monitor any disproportionate impacts, based on race and type of disability, of previous non-inclusive placement?

The district has a history of disproportionality in relation to race/ethnicity, type of disability, and placement of special education services. The district reports the data to the state in terms of racial/ethnic group and disability eligibility category and of type of disability and placement of special education services. However, there is no existing, systemic plan to assess the impact of disproportionate (underrepresentation or overrepresentation) identification of students from racial/ethnic groups in a disability eligibility category or disproportionate placement in more restrictive placements based on race/ethnicity. Sadie Hedegard, Assistant Superintendent of Special Education, Innovation, and Learning shared that the district over the last six months has begun work on developing a district plan to address the significant disproportionality that exists. Specifically, the district has developed a relationship with a CDE approved facilitator/coach, Geovanni Linares, Director of Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA) has organized a Significant Disproportionality Leadership

and Stakeholder group, and there have been some meetings with stakeholder groups.

Of note, the district board policies and administrative regulations related to special education are outdated with most not revised or reviewed since 2002. As a result, the policies and procedures do not reflect current guidelines or evidence-based practices. There is a draft of proposed changes to the district special education-related policies and procedures, but these have yet to be reviewed or adopted by the school board. Sadie Hedegard shared that she is developing a timeline for when the revised policies and procedures will be presented to the school board for first reading, second reading, and vote for adoption.

Are there disparities in access to adequate education, special education, related services, accommodations, and modifications for students with disabilities and Black students with disabilities?

As mentioned previously, there is variability in timely access to effective services, programs, and activities for students with disabilities and Black students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment. Interviews with families, focus group interviews with parent groups and other stakeholder groups, and review of student records indicated disparities in timely access to special education, related services, accommodations, and modifications. One issue raised was that not all IEP team members were present and/or fully participating in the IEP process, including the meetings and implementation.

Currently, the district does not have in place a process for ensuring that the accommodations and/or modifications on a student's IEP are provided in a timely manner. In addition, there are no specific modifications to policies and procedures to avoid discrimination against students with disabilities and Black students with disabilities. As discussed above, the district is developing a plan to address the significant disproportionality that exists. This plan could also include a process for monitoring and reviewing IEPs to ensure that reasonable accommodations and/or modifications as well as services are provided to support student's individual needs.

Is district staffing adequate and effective in efforts to identify, instruct, and serve students with disabilities, including Black students with disabilities?

As is throughout the situation throughout the state, there continues to be a need to hire special education staff, including credentialed teachers and paraeducators.

Based on available CDE data, there continues to be a discrepancy between the student population, including those with disabilities, and the teaching staff population in terms of race/ethnicity. Most of the teaching staff are white, while most students are people of color.

During interviews with stakeholder groups, there was concern raised about the number of school psychologists currently available to support interventions. The current ratio of school psychologist to students is 1 school psychologist for 2,200 students. For context, the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) recommends a ratio of 1 school psychologist per 500 students. This ratio creates challenges for school psychologists to be actively involved in the SST and IEP development and implementation processes, to collaborate on a student's functional behavior assessment and positive behavior support plan development and ongoing implementation. Interviews with stakeholder groups and review of

student records noted that outside district providers were often contracted to conduct functional behavior assessments.

What is the staff development plan?

Other than the professional development plan for Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (discussed in the subsequent section), there is no evidence of a professional development plan to provide ongoing and sustained learning opportunities for administration, teaching staff, related service providers that are consistent with a district vision and goals to meet the diverse needs of all students, including those with disabilities. There is no current plan for professional development for all school site administrators and personnel to implement evidence-based inclusive education strategies, including but not limited to co-teaching. There is also no evidence of ongoing training for district administrators related to implementation of IEPs and 504 plans to provide FAPE in the LRE.

MTSS and other prevention initiatives in the district

SCUSD has in recent years attempted and did not sustain nor fully implement a series of prevention initiatives. These include PBIS (known as SPARK in the district) and restorative practice (also referred to as Restorative Justice in some policy documents and reports (Wood, Harris III, & Howard, 2018)). The most recent initiative is focused on Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS), and it is addressed here briefly as the discussion of planned work arose in multiple focus group conversations.

MTSS is mentioned in federal legislation, but it not required. The Every Student Succeeds Acts (ESSA), which is the federal legislation for public education, references “multi-tiered system of support” five times, and most importantly about its use in literacy in kindergarten through grade 12 as an allowable use of grant funds [Sec 2224(e)(4)]. Furthermore, ESSA language indicates that a multi-tiered system of support is an approach for improving outcomes for students with disabilities and English language learners [Sec 2103 (b)(3)(F)]. The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) prioritizes the need for expanded access to comprehensive school-based psychological and behavioral and social-emotional support services within multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS). With a focus on improving outcomes for all students, especially those who have been historically underserved, ESSA suggests that schools and districts implement a tiered system of support and allow states flexibility in developing their MTSS model for both behavior and academic needs (Education, 2019).

SCUSD has a history of incomplete implementation of different prevention initiatives (SEL, RP, PBIS) and there is no clear district wide coordination of these efforts. These initiatives were driven at least in part by grant funding and then stalled when the funding was used up.

There is a new MTSS staff development initiative that reportedly has support from SCTA (<https://cee-ca.org/services/systemic-instructional-review/sir-reports/>), but their representatives are not aware of the scope and sequence or dissemination plan. This would suggest that the SCTA is not adequately involved in the planning or implementation of the

MTSS initiative. We cannot verify the level of communication or agreement with SCTA given the information we had.

Initial implementation of the MTSS professional development with Cohort 1 did not include representative special education staff members on school sites' MTSS teams. Given the special education focus of the current evaluation activity, the omission of special education staff members on the MTSS teams is a serious oversight. It was reported that inclusive practices coaches are part of Cohort 2, but it is not clear that special education teachers are part of the school site teams receiving this professional development.

While the MTSS initiative is underway (some staff development has been provided), no fidelity assessments have been conducted to guide practice moving forward. Brian Gaunt, MTSS consultant for the district reported that implementation of the fidelity assessments has been delayed (Stockslager, Castillo, Brundage, Childs, & Romer, 2016).

School Discipline

How equitable are exclusionary discipline outcomes?

- Race/ethnicity
- Gender
- Disability
- School attended

SCUSD has a very high suspension rate overall and disproportionate use. Multiple state reports and citations note a high suspension rate with disproportionality higher in some schools than others (California Dashboard, District Provided Discipline Data Summaries for the years specified in this evaluation project, <http://bmmcoalition.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Capital-of-School-Suspensions-II.pdf>). This is also observed for the reported office referrals in data submitted by the District to the evaluation team.

Given our findings about the reliability and validity of the data collection and reporting system (described below), discipline data reports as reflected in Infinite Campus, and the California Dashboard should be considered inaccurate and unreliable. In the absence of written protocols and public review of the data, it is likely that some sites over-report and others under-report actual behavior incidences. As such, at least some of the variability in outcomes from school to school is a function of poor guidance and follow up by the district in a timely matter to emerging patterns of disproportionality.

How effective are District-wide and school-based student discipline and behavior management systems, policies, and practices, including data collection and data-based decision-making practices?

- Data collection and data-based decision-making practices?
- What fidelity assessments are currently used by the district?

Use of reporting policies and practices (Infinite Campus) is inconsistent from school to school and administrator to administrator

Data fidelity survey. The evaluation team had designed a survey to be delivered by an organization called Kelvin (<https://kelvin.education/features/>) along with fidelity items related to Special Education and Implicit Bias. Unfortunately, it was omitted from the survey when sent out to all school administrators in the district in late Spring, 2021. The evaluation team didn't learn about this error until late summer due to long intervals between replies from Kelvin, and we chose to complete our report based on available data and information rather than attempt to readminister the surveys. We believe strongly that these fidelity measures are collected and will include this as a recommendation resulting from our work. Those surveys/fidelity measures are included as Attachment A.

--Insert Attachment A Here--

Administrators have received written guidance for reporting exclusionary discipline but adoption and use of the reports is low. Administrators receive guidance on “data-based decision making” for reviewing exclusionary discipline data (Illuminate usage report) and there is a system for monitoring Illuminate usage by school/administrator discipline but use of the reports is low.

The ABC reports, which were implemented in 2018-19, are an outgrowth of PBIS (Spark) implementation and early warning (school failure risk) research (Rumberger et al., 2017). The district's student support services and academic offices had invested significant resources to track student engagement data and requested additional district support to automate their processes as much as possible to increase their ability to “see” and “support” all students across multiple measures.

In keeping with the vision of adopting and implementing formative reporting measures aligned to the district's Performance and Targeted Action Index (PTAI) performance management system, district personnel collaborated with UC Merced to develop the Attendance, Behavior, and Course performance (ABC) Reports within Illuminate (<https://www.scusd.edu/illuminate>). These reports are designed to be a collection of easy-to-use tools that incorporate early warning system research regarding the importance of attendance, behavior, and course performance as essential indicators for identifying and intervening with at-risk students (Balfanz, Bridgeland, Moore, & Fox, 2010; Rumberger et al., 2017). The reports are designed to help individual educators, site instructional leaders, school site councils, and other members of the school community identify trends and patterns across grade levels, ethnic and racial groups, and student programs.

The strength of the system is that data elements are linked to California Dashboard summary data and a planning/goal setting function is built into the system. This could be a powerful information management tool and has potential to link to the MTSS staff development project reportedly underway in the district. Ed Eldridge Director III, Strategy and Innovation provided a personal observation that most schools do not utilize the reports, and even when a report is generated for a site administrator, it is unlikely to be used. In addition, in an interview with Brian Gaunt, MTSS trainer and consultant for the district, he stated he was unaware of this system, even though the “year 1” MTSS training is focused data use, and data-based decision making.

Sites report and use Office Discipline Referral data differently (some are paper, computer, etc.). The district has adopted Infinite Campus (<https://www.scusd.edu/infinitecampus>) as the central data entry point for discipline (and other) data. Rhonda Rode, Director, Student and Data Systems, was very helpful in describing how the system is designed to work, and she and Ed Eldridge provided the exclusionary discipline summaries for review in this evaluation project. Informal discussions with Rhonda and Dr. Eldridge revealed that while schools are encouraged to use the data entry system for office referrals, there is not universal adoption of the system. Some sites use paper forms for some types of disciplinary actions and others make fuller use of the Infinite Campus system. Obviously, an equity lens would dictate that all sites use the system in the same manner, using the same protocol (see our recommendations later in this report).

Administrators receive limited guidance for implementing “other means of correction”. Non-reportable offenses become “other means of correction” (locally defined behaviors). There is a policy allowing use of “cool down” rooms or in school suspension but there is no common approach or clear guidance for administrators

Written Protocols for implementing Suspension Alternatives are Absent. While there are policies encouraging the use of disciplinary alternatives (see Other Means of Correction in the background section), there is little guidance in effective or equitable implementation of these practices, and no fidelity of implementation data were reported or found.

Recently (before the COVID pandemic), a Behavior subcommittee was working on consistent discipline protocols. These were shared with all principals and assistant principals for feedback 2 years ago. This committee was in the process of responding to the feedback and were asked by the Chief Academic Officer to pause. The pause coincided with the introduction of the MTSS staff development work, and the district has not returned to the Climate/Behavior workgroup. The working draft of the discipline protocols can be viewed here: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1kZF3MtNZlx99BKqarQF2twmVDH0trvNKvK1IhJAXRI/edit?usp=sharing>. This document illustrates a sequence of “suspension alternatives” and it is recommended that this document be completed, and it’s use required and adopted district wide.

Some parents and administrators are reluctant to record exclusionary discipline events for fear of negatively impacting the student in the future. A troubling finding that emerged in our focus groups with parents and administrators is a reluctance to report and record the use of disciplinary incidences (refer to lack of clear guidance or data entry protocols) due to the belief that juvenile court judges will use these data to provide stronger sanctions for justice-involved youth.

What fidelity assessments are currently used by the district?

As described in the background section of this document, routine use of fidelity assessments is considered a critical best practice for assuring the consistency and quality of service delivery, including how exclusionary discipline (or other means of correction) is used,

and how the data are reported and used for decision making. We found no evidence of the use of such fidelity tools, and this likely contributes to inconsistent and biased use of exclusionary discipline. It is also likely to contribute to either over- or under-reporting of disciplinary incidents, making the data systems used by the district (and reported to the state) unreliable and as such, invalid.

Bullying and Harassment policies, procedures, and data collection

Policies and Procedures for Bullying Reporting are in place. In October 2009, SCUSD’s Integrated Support Services Department, Safe Schools Office and Youth Development Department convened a district-wide Bullying Prevention Task Force with the goal of developing a strategic plan to help reduce bullying across the district by addressing critical policy, program, training, and funding issues. The result was a report and a 15-point plan addressing policy, program, and training, education, and awareness activities. Many of these strategies have been put in place and the table below summarizes this progress. We observe that the system has mainly achieved methods for reporting and responding to bullying and harassment and there is a need to achieve a more coherent, district wide prevention approach.

Strategy	Progress
Develop District Bullying Policy	Administrative Regulations Approved 4/12/12, Revised 3/16/15, Revised September 2021 Board Policy adopted: June 2, 2011
Create District-Wide Committee Focused on Bullying and Harassment	Bullying Prevention Advisory Committee was changed to School Climate Collaborative (parents, district staff, community members) met regularly from 2013-2020
Create Position to Oversee Bullying Prevention and Intervention	Position hired in 2011 Position not filled since 2/2020
Develop Best Practices and Mandatory Actions for School Staff and Administrators	Each school creates a Bullying Prevention Plan that is attached to the Comprehensive School Safety Plan. Comprehensive School Safety Plans are overseen by Ray Lozada, Director of Safe Schools School Climate plans outlining a three-tiered were developed at select schools
Develop a Variety of Mechanisms for Reporting Bullying , Including a District Hotline	Bullying prevention website at SCUSD includes information and reporting procedures (https://www.scusd.edu/school-climate-and-bullying-prevention) Report of Suspected Bullying in place (paper form, on website, at school sites) We Tip Anonymous Line Text reporting system is under consideration
Support Research Connected to Bullying, Harassment and Cyber safety	Bully Prevention Specialist attended several conferences and trainings – ongoing SCUSD has partnered with bullying prevention data analysis with Sacramento County office of Education

Strategy	Progress
Implement Bullying Prevention Programs at all Schools	<p>Several prevention curricula have been utilized by various schools in the district (admin training materials include a longer list of recommended practices)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Second Step ● Steps to Respect ● eVIBE Stop and Think ● eVIBE Too Good for Violence ● Safe School Ambassador Program ● School Connect ● Leader in Me ● Caring School Community <p>*Annual Rally at the Capital/Unity Center each year “Stand Up, Speak Out youth rally”</p>
Create a Youth Action Team to Provide Leadership on District Bullying Prevention Efforts	Youth participated on the school climate collaborative
Focus on Populations at High Risk for Bullying	<p>Training and information provided specific to High Risk Populations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Annual Conference (No Time to Lose) ● LGBTQ/Bullying Prevention presentations given annually to interns from local universities ● LGBTQ/Other High Risk populations outlined in training events and materials ● Ongoing collaboration with the Connect Center on LGBTQ support services https://www.scusd.edu/connect-center
Enrich and Expand Partnerships with City, County and Community organizations	<p>Student Support and Health Services has over 120 community partners, many of which were for utilized for bullying prevention:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● District Attorney’s Office ● Victims of Crime Resource Center (Legal presentations about cyberbullying) ● Sacramento County Office of Education ● Regional Coalition for Tolerance ● BRAVE Society ● STORM (Special Team of Role Models) ● Sacramento Children’s Home ● Health Education Council ● Sacramento Youth Minority Violence Prevention Collective
Provide Counseling and Other Support Services to Victims and Perpetrators of Bullying	<p>Approximately 30 schools have Student Support Centers SCUSD has a district wide support center called “Connect Center” (https://www.scusd.edu/connect-center).</p>
Provide Education and Training to Students	<p>Select schools have provided training and information, via curriculum, community partners, or a direct training. All schools are provided with “Be Internet Awesome” a free curriculum that teaches kids the fundamentals of digital citizenship and safety.</p>

Strategy	Progress
Provide Training and Support to Parents	Ongoing – at select schools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● PowerPoint for Parents ● Attendance log is taken
Provide Professional Development Training for all SCUSD Staff	Ongoing – classified, school staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● PowerPoint for Staff ● Attendance log is taken
Provide Training and Consultation to Administrators	Administrator training is given annually. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Two hours ● Every administrator must be trained every two years ● Administrators are to provide one hour of training to teachers and any additional admin ● Sign in sheet to document attendance at the training

There is limited evidence of a clear and consistent approach to bullying and harassment prevention. While there are district-level policies in place to manage bullying and harassment response, there appears to be no consistent adoption of a comprehensive bullying prevention approach, such as those described in the background section above. In many of our focus group interviews, Jessica Wharton (currently Director I, Behavior and Re-Entry, and currently overseeing bullying prevention activities) was described by parents as helpful in achieving more consistency in responding to bullying incidences and development and implementation of Safety Plans. There also is a Title IX Coordinator, who oversees harassment for the district. Although the district has committed to hiring a Bullying Prevention Specialist to be housed in the Student Hearing and Placement Department, the position has not been filled yet. For such a critical area of need, the districts’ capacity to reduce the harm done from bullying and harassment is severely under-resourced. This appears to result in a mostly reactive approach, where investigations of bullying reports are compromised, and failure to develop or implement high quality safety plans is common.

Use of reporting policies and response practices is inconsistent. Given the lack of a systematic approach, it appears administrators are allowed to decide which reports are recorded, and such are the final judge of whether bullying occurred. While this may seem logical on its face, the lack of consistency from building to building and situation to situation leaves open the influence of implicit bias, and other forms of bias. Safety Plans, required to be developed to protect bullying victims, are inconsistently written, sometimes not completed, and not consistently implemented. This inconsistency was also apparent in our parent interviews, where it was common for black students to be accused of “starting a fight” (and ultimately suspended) where a competing perspective what that those students were actually bullied first, the classic “bully-victim” (Sprague & Walker, 2021).

Influence of Implicit Bias

District Policies and Procedures

Findings indicated that the district policies and procedures that are currently being used have not been updated for many years, some as far back as 2002. State and federal

guidelines have since changed and the Sacramento City Schools have yet to adopt these changes. The guidelines have not been updated to reflect the new policies on bullying, suspension, and expulsion. It is imperative that the district review its current policies to ensure they reflect the new law. There is a lack of procedural clarity around policies and procedures. School sites vary in terms of culture, policies, procedures, and expectations for students with disabilities to receive services in the general education setting. Policies and procedures are very outdated and do not reflect current guidelines or evidence-based practices and this does not support the students and staff of the district.

Implicit Bias in Special Education

The findings indicate that timely access is not evident to students and families of color. Parent, various parent group interviews, and student records indicated that access to services to facilitate success in LRE was limited and offers of FAPE often were not presented to parents. Findings also indicated that functional behavioral assessments (FBA) were not done proactively to develop and implement behavior intervention and support plans. Evidence also indicated that many times, plans were written but not followed. Student records and parent interviews indicate students were referred to NPS due to the district's inability to provide the necessary support to stay in LRE. Various interviews indicated there is limited access to less restrictive placements; reliance on Special Day Classes.

Also, school sites vary in terms of the quality of services. Parents, various parent group interviews, and student records also indicated not all students are treated with equity. They mentioned that access was related to parent involvement and advocacy for inclusive placements. Parents and various parent group interviews indicated that there is an influence of Implicit Bias when determining placement for Black and brown students. There is no evidence that the district has a plan for ensuring that accommodations/modifications on IEPs are provided. Parents and various parent group interviews reported that there is an influence of Implicit Bias when determining access, accommodations, and modifications for Black and Brown students. Also, it was indicated that IEPs are not always shared with all members of the students' team and if shared, not implemented by all the staff (i.e., general education staff).

Implicit Bias in Discipline

According to the student records and interviews with various groups, there is an indication that bias does play a role in disciplining students of color, particularly Black boys in Sacramento City Schools. Parents reported that their children were pulled out of class or sent home frequently for behavior issues. Many parents also reported that they were not informed of the consequences until it escalated to the principal and many times their child was the only one punished.

According to the District Disproportionality survey for Sacramento City, Black students are the fourth large subgroup in enrollment, however, they represent the most students in special education. SCUSD has a history of incomplete implementation of different prevention initiatives (SEL, RP, PBIS) and there is no coherent district-wide coordination of these efforts. They seem to be driven by grant funding and then stall when the funding is gone. There is a new MTSS staff development initiative that reportedly has support from SCTA, but their representatives are not aware of the scope and sequence or dissemination plan. The SCTA is

not adequately involved in the planning or implementation of the MTSS initiative, and this is important for the district. There are many stakeholders within the district who are aware of the work that needs to be done and are willing to do so; having them lead the charge would be beneficial for the district.

Summary of Administrator survey

The experts worked with Kelvin, the company the district has contracted for surveys to create a survey for site administrators assessing their knowledge of the district's policies and procedures regarding discipline, special education, and implicit bias. All the experts created questions and only the following questions had responses. The survey was sent to administrators at all 75 school to provide their input, however, only 33% of the participants responded to the survey, which is a very low percentage.

The following questions were asked to the site administrators to help gain their perspective regarding implicit bias (see Appendix *):

1. My school provides family engagement activities for Black families and other marginalized communities that are at risk of academic probation.
 - 1 In place: 11/32 (34%)
 - 2 Partially in place: 15/32 (46%)
 - 3 Not in place: 2/32 (6%)
 - 4 No Response: 4/32 (12.5%)
2. The district provides staff development trainings discussing systemic racism and cultural diversity and the impact on Black students and other students of color.
 - 1 In place: 12/32 (37.5%)
 - 2 Partially in place: 12/32 (37.5%)
 - 3 Not in place: 4/32 (12.5%)
 - 4 No Response: 4/32 (12.5%)
3. The district has a process to identify patterns with referrals and suspensions of Black students and other students of color.
 - 1 In place: 9/32 (28%)
 - 2 Partially in place: 13/32 (40.6%)
 - 3 Not in place: 6/32 (18.75%)
 - 4 No Response: 4/32 (12.5%)
4. My school has processes and practices in place to ensure Black students, and other students of color, have equitable access to honors, AP, and STEM classes.
 - 1 In place: 16/32 (50%)
 - 2 Partially in place: 9/32 (28%)
 - 3 Not in place: 1/32 (3%)
 - 4 No Response: 6/32 (18.75%)
5. The district encourages the representation of Black teachers and teachers of color in their hiring and retention practices.
 - 1 In place: 4/32 (12.5%)
 - 2 Partially in place: 12/32 (37.5%)

- 3 Not in place: 10/32 (31.25%)
- 4 No Response: 6/32 (18.75%)

The participants were asked to determine whether the district had certain trainings and processes in place by providing the rating of 1) in place, 2) partially in place, and 3) not in place. These specific questions were asked to understand if the site representatives feel that the district has supports in place for marginalized families, specifically Black families. The responses were confidential.

The result of the survey is a snapshot of the district as it only represents a small population of the district and should be interpreted with caution. According to the responses given by the administrator, the district does have supports in place for families, however, the survey results indicate that this is not the case for all school sites. Parent interviews and student records corroborate that each school site varies in terms of service, discipline, and parental interaction. The results of the survey indicate that the administrators that did respond to the survey do not feel that there are supports in place for the underrepresented, marginalized, groups, specifically the Black community. Perhaps, the most notable response is to question five, regarding the representation of Black teachers and teachers of color in hiring and retention. Only 12.5% of the administrators felt that the district encourages representation in their hiring and retention practices. This is an area of need for the district to focus on as the student population in the district is incredibly diverse compared to the teaching staff.

It is recommended that the district send out a survey to the staff with all the questions to understand the mindset of the staff and the supports that are needed. A survey will provide input from the staff directly in contact with the students and the parents of the district. This information can assist the district in understanding current initiatives in place and identify areas of opportunity for the district.

Recommendations

Special Education Recommendations

This section details the recommendations regarding special education services resulting from our evaluation activities. Attachment B provides a table aligning the main findings and recommendations.

A vision and plan for inclusive education/service delivery. The district should develop a comprehensive vision and plan for providing equitable inclusive education practices that values and celebrates student diversity and strengths and facilitates meaningful access and participation. The vision and plan development should be a collaborative effort between general education and special education administration and staff as well as all relevant stakeholders, including but not limited to students, family members, community leaders, SCTA representatives. The plan should include actionable steps to increase opportunities to all students with disabilities, particularly Black students with disabilities, to receive special education services and supports within general education settings in their home school. In addition, the plan should include a realistic timeline to scale-up implementation of inclusive service delivery across the district. As part of this plan, the district should provide professional development, including coaching, for all staff (general and special education teachers, administrators, related services personnel) on appropriate definitions, models, and evidence-based practices for inclusive service delivery. All professional development opportunities provided should be considered complementary and not viewed as parts of separate initiatives.

As the district moves forward with implementation of the plan, it should develop their own fidelity assessment tool or modify existing tools (e.g., SWIFT-FIA; SAM Fidelity Assessment) to monitor and evaluate progress in relationship to inclusive service delivery. The current MTSS initiative can be part of this comprehensive vision and plan. (See additional recommendations related to the current MTSS initiative later in this recommendations section.)

District policies, procedures, and guidelines. The district should continue to update policies, procedures, guidelines, handbooks, etc. to reflect the most up-to-date state and federal mandates and the district's vision. In addition, the district should develop and implement a clear process (Special Education Handbook) by which a student who has been placed in a more restrictive placement can return to the least restrictive environment of the general education classroom and to help the staff understand the various strategies and practices to support the student. This process needs to be shared and reinforced with all employees to ensure that all employees and all school sites follow procedures to limit potential bias at specific school sites.

Identification and assessment for special education services. To ensure the timely and equitable identification and assessment of students with disabilities, the district can create and consistently implement district-wide systems and policies for identification and assessment of students with disabilities. These systems and policies should support clear

processes for referring students to be evaluated for special education eligibility (i.e., when during the MTSS process it becomes evident that the student may qualify for special education services). Furthermore, the district should develop routine and consistently implemented monitoring and review of referral, evaluation, and eligibility decisions

The district should provide training on timelines and evidence-based practices for all processes, including “child find”; referral to assess for eligibility; initial, annual, and triennial assessments; and IEP development and implementation. In addition, procedures that facilitate timely response to parental requests for assessment should be developed and implemented as well as evaluated on a regular basis.

Equitable access to effective implementation of FAPE (i.e., IEPs, services, programs, activities, etc.) for students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment. The district should continue its efforts to create a district-wide system to address issues and problems that arise related to disproportionate impact of race, type of disability, etc. The goal is to create an equitable process that ensures all students receive access based on their individual strengths and needs. Therefore, increase opportunities to all students with disabilities, particularly Black students with disabilities, to receive special education services and supports within general education settings in their home school.

Based on the findings of this evaluation, additional, specific recommendations include:

- Develop a process for routine monitoring and review of IEPs to ensure that reasonable accommodations and/or modifications are provided to support student’s learning and individual needs in the least restrictive environment.
- Develop a process to determine the least restrictive environment for individual students to be used consistently across IEP teams and schools. An example of a checklist that could be used can be found at <https://famielstogetherinc.org/least-restrictive-environment-lre-checklist/>
- Ensure all IEP team members (including family members, general education teachers) are involved when determining special education and supplementary services for students.
- Ensure that functional behavior assessments are conducted, and positive behavioral interventions and support plans are developed and implemented in a timely manner to support students' access to the least restrictive environment.
- Provide training to all staff to help identify bias in the IEP process and placement of students of color.
- Provide ongoing professional development for all areas of need, including but not limited to implicit bias, inclusive practices, IEP and 504 processes, etc. for all personnel who interact with students who have disabilities.

Adequate and effective district staffing. The district will want to develop a plan to recruit and retain staff of color. This recruitment can be done at Historically Black Universities (HBU), Hispanic Universities, and other organizations that support students of color. Moreover, the district can implement community outreach to foster relationships with the members of the community who can support students of color and can assist with efforts to recruit staff of

color. The district also can develop and implement a plan to improve the ratio of school psychologists to students, such that they can provide and support MTSS and special education interventions.

Continued implementation of the MTSS initiative. The district should continue to implement the proposed MTSS plan to include ongoing professional development for school site administrators and staff to build the capacity of schools to implement data-based decision-making. It is essential that stakeholders that represent special education (e.g., special education teachers, inclusion practices coaches, school psychologists, related service providers, etc.) are part of this professional development plan, in terms of providing input and receiving the training and on-going coaching. The district needs to collaborate with SCTA and other stakeholder groups to ensure school staff buy-in to implementation of MTSS.

The plan for MTSS implementation also needs to ensure collaboration between general education and special education staff so that the MTSS process is followed through and exhausted prior to special education referral. As part of MTSS implementation, each school should have monthly reviews of student progress data and problem-solving around outcomes. However, the MTSS process should not stand in the way of a referral for eligibility to receive special education services. MTSS can enhance but cannot supplant special education services.

School Discipline Recommendations

This section details the recommendations regarding school discipline resulting from our evaluation activities. Attachment B provides a table aligning the main findings and recommendations.

Reporting policies and practices. Given the lack of clarity and consistency regarding discipline incident reporting, data entry, and data use, the following recommendations are offered:

- **Produce a detailed guide (Data Discussion Guide) for recording and using Infinite campus with standardized behavior definitions and protocols for using “other means of correction”, and criteria for use of other consequences.** While the California Education code provides definitions of behaviors covered by that statute, other data elements related to Office Discipline Referrals are included in Infinite Campus but there are no operational definitions of those behaviors or the corrective actions that may result. The district should also provide detailed staff development and coaching for administrators on data entry and use and require consistent and common use of data entry protocols across all schools.
- **Provide a guidance document and monthly on-site review of the use of, referrals, ISS, OSS and “other means of correction”. The monthly reviews should be in person and include problem-solving discussions around data patterns of concern, such as disproportionate outcomes.** To impact the practices leading to over- and disproportionate use of exclusionary practices such as OSS, teacher suspensions, and

office referrals we recommend a monthly review of these data for each school. These reviews should preferably be in person with the admin team (or building leadership team for discipline) and involve problem-solving discussions around areas of concern. Response plans should be updated using the SPSA CCI tool described in this document and managed by Ed Eldridge.

- **Provide guidance for implementing “cool down” room procedures, including data collection and decision-making practices.** While the policy describing and allowing the use of “cool down” rooms in schools, it is unclear (or was not provided) if there is any procedural guidance regarding use of these rooms/procedures. It is recommended that all schools follow a common protocol for use of these rooms, aligned with research-supported protocols for implementation and data collection. In the absence of this guidance, it is likely that some schools will over-use and/or underreport the frequency and duration of time children and youth spend in these conditions. The protocol should include rules for when to modify or abandon the procedure if there is no evidence of improvement.

- Schools should use a “cool down room” data sheet to supplement the office discipline referral form.
 - Documentation elements should include:
 - Date
 - When cool-down occurred
 - Start/stop/duration of the cool down period
 - Student’s name
 - Target behavior that resulted in “cool down”
 - Type of cool down used
 - Who gave cool down?
 - Student’s behavior and any emotional reactions during or after cool down
 - Types of Data Summaries:
 - Effects on target behavior
 - Use of the cool down procedure
 - Frequency
 - Duration

- **Conduct routine fidelity assessments of data use and reporting at the school level. Report these results to the school board.** We found no evidence of systematic, district-wide use of fidelity assessments related to school discipline practices. Brian Gaunt (MTSS consultant) reported that a fidelity tool designed by his team was available but had not been used yet. Our review of the items in this instrument (Stockslager, Castillo, Brundage, Childs, & Romer, 2016) suggests there is insufficient detail around school discipline practices to fully assess the implementation of disciplinary alternatives and data-based decision making.

- **Contact local juvenile authorities and develop an agreement about how student-level discipline data are used.** Many parents in our focus groups and the

administrator group we interviewed mentioned a reluctance to record disciplinary actions because there is a belief that juvenile court judges may unfairly use the information in sentencing or other forms of disposition for justice involved youth. It is critical that an interagency agreement be made and followed by all schools (Teske, 2012).

Bullying Prevention and Response. As described earlier, the district appears to have a huge range of implementation of the anti-bullying policy (SCUSD AR 5145.4 - Anti-Bullying (SC248964xAAE13). There also appears to be no coherent or formal adoption of any evidence-based bullying prevention approaches. This puts schools and district personnel in a mainly reactive mode.

- Adopt a formal bullying prevention curriculum or approach that clarifies when and when not to use “restorative justice” (C.P. Bradshaw, 2015)
- STOP Provide a clear written policy and training for administrators and staff members in bullying prevention and response procedures
- Conduct a monthly review of all bullying incidents, including how the data were reported, and whether the anti-bullying protocol was followed
- Conduct a systematic review and follow up of all safety plans for comprehensiveness and consistency of implementation
- Align the work of the Title IX coordinator and the Bullying Prevention Specialist (yet to be hired)

Procedures to reduce the use of and need for exclusionary discipline. This report described in the background section some of the evidence-supported interventions shown to have an impact on disproportionate outcomes. It is not the role of this evaluation team to specify which interventions are adopted and there is concern about the district’s recent history of adopting intervention approaches (e.g., PBIS, Restorative Justice/Practice) and then abandoning the initiative due to union or administrator resistance, or loss of grant funding.

If the MTSS staff development plan is to continue, there must be a focus on adopting evidence-supported interventions and provide staff development and coaching support. I very recent example of this approach is Implementing PBIS to Achieve More Equitable Outcomes: The ReACT Process (Kent McIntosh et al., 2021). With ReAct, the process is as follows:

- Meet with district administrators
- Meet with school administrator(s)
- Meet with school leadership teams
- Meet with SCTA (added by the author of this report)
- Attend staff and team meetings
- Complete awareness-building activities (as needed)
- Assess data to identify root causes
- Select Culturally responsive behavior support strategies
- Teach about implicit bias and strategies to neutralize it

- Develop and use a follow-up plan for each school
- Provide individual coaching (as needed)

Facilitators of Success include:

- Focus on implementing Tier 1 PBIS with fidelity (Algozzine et al., 2014)
- Monthly school based PBIS team meetings focused on using data to problem solve (not only on “acknowledgements”)
- Use a data system that allows for disaggregation, especially by race/ethnicity (e.g., SWIS <https://www.pbisapps.org/products/swis>). Our view is that if the district enhances use of the Infinite Campus and the SPSA CCI Tool it can potentially meet those criteria (see findings and recommendations above)
- Provide specialized training/coaching to PBIS/MTSS data specialists
- Monthly district level PBIS/MTSS coaches’ meetings to provide TA and coaching in a structured manner
- Consistent District Leadership Team meetings with senior leadership (Superintendent, Assistant Superintendents, etc.)
- Decision making process that allows for stakeholder input and ownership

Implicit Bias Recommendations

District Policies and Procedures

It would behoove the district to ensure policies and procedures are updated to meet State and Federal Mandates supporting all students. There have been many changes regarding discipline, suspension, and expulsion, etc. that should be updated. The updated policies and procedures should be viewed through a lens of equity and should eliminate any bias that may be embedded into them. In one of the previous reports, a recommendation for District-wide training on Implicit Bias was given but has not been done. During the interviews, it was noted that all union team members acknowledge this was recommended, however, no one has ensured the training has been implemented. Ideally, the Implicit Bias training should be done by a professional 3rd party group that does Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) training. The training should identify and define implicit biases and how it should be addressed when it shows up in disciplinary actions, especially towards Black students and students of color. In addition, having a training regarding debiasing techniques and culturally relevant pedagogy to help learn about the various types of techniques to support staff and students. These trainings should be available to all members of the district so that there can be consistent language and learning across the board.

Implicit Bias in Special Education

As shown in the findings, there is a strong indication that Implicit Bias is present during the referral process and special education placement. There are many ways the district can rectify this and ensure this does not continue to occur. The district should provide professional development, including coaching, for all staff (general and special education teachers, administrators, related services personnel) on appropriate definitions, models, and evidence-based practices for inclusive service delivery. The district should develop and

implement a clear process (Special Education Handbook) by which a student who has been placed in a more restrictive placement can return to a less restrictive placement and to help the staff understand the various LREs and placement options. The district should work to ensure that functional behavior assessments are conducted, and positive behavioral interventions and support plans are developed and implemented in a timely manner to support students' access to LRE.

Implicit Bias training specifically, bias in the IEP and process, should be done for the Special Education staff members to understand how our own biases show up in the IEP. The district would benefit from Increasing opportunities for all students with disabilities, particularly Black students with disabilities, to receive special education services and supports within the general education settings in their home school. Also, the district should develop a plan to scale up the implementation of inclusive service delivery across the district. To support students, it would be beneficial to create an equitable process that ensures all students receive access based on their individual strengths and needs. Also, it is important to ensure all IEP team members are involved when determining special education and supplementary services for students.

Implicit Bias in Discipline

Based on the findings, it is important that the district look at its current discipline policies to see how they impact all students. It is important that the district support policies that support student learning and are equitable for all students. As each school site has its own policies, it would behoove the district to create a district-wide initiative to ensure fair and equitable treatment for all students. The district has a plan that needs to be put into place and should include all stakeholder's input. There should be collaboration between District, SCTA, and other entities needs to occur for the school staff to buy-in to implementation. There needs to be collaboration between general education and special education staff to ensure MTSS is followed through and exhausted prior to special education referral. For MTSS to be successful, each school will have monthly reviews of student progress data and problem-solving around outcomes.

To specifically support the exclusionary discipline that impacts Black boys in the district, including mental health professionals when working on the policies can ensure an objective lens of support. Proposed intervention strategies that school-based mental health professionals can use to change the trajectory of African American males within the educational system include a) the review of discipline data to make informed decisions about whether student interventions are necessary; and b) an assessment to determine whether teacher consultations would better address issues surrounding disproportionate discipline practices towards African American males. (Darensbourg, et al. 2010). Providing cultural competency trainings for staff members and community members would help ensure anyone who has access to the diverse student population would know how to work with them. Training should be provided by a 3rd party organization that supports working with students of color, specifically Black students to help understand cultural differences and they can be used to support the student, rather than punish them.

Limitations of This Evaluation Activity

It is important to note some limitations to this evaluation project:

- The project was carried out during the COVID pandemic.
- We were not able to visit any school sites in person, nor conduct in person interviews
- The comments on policy and student records were derived only from material provided by the district. It is possible that some of our findings are limited by lack of access or discovery of important information.

As stated in the previous section on limitations, this evaluation activity was completed during the ongoing COVID pandemic, creating numerous difficulties in data collection, particularly the opportunity to visit families, teachers, administrators, and district staff members face to face. That said, we collectively found all district staff members to be very willing to help with honest responses to our question and by providing data as available. We are most grateful for that.

We also acknowledge that the solutions proposed from our findings represent a complex set of choices and activities that will require cooperation from all stakeholders in the district (students, families, union, administrative personnel) to have any chance for improving the negative outcomes that led to the implementation of this evaluation activity and the two other major reports (Great City Schools and the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence).

List of Attachments

Attachment A: Discipline Data Collection and Reporting System And Special Education Practices Fidelity Assessment

Attachment B: Summary of Findings and Recommendations

Attachment C: Administrator Survey Results

Attachment A: Discipline Data Collection and Reporting System Fidelity

PBIS TFI Data System Fidelity Measures		
Feature	Possible Data Source	Scoring Criteria
<p>1.5 Problem Behavior Definitions School has clear definitions for behaviors that interfere with academic and social success and a clear policy/procedure (e.g., flowchart) for addressing office-managed versus staff-managed problems.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff handbook • Student handbook • School policy • Discipline flowchart 	<p>0 = No clear definitions exist, and procedures to manage problems are not clearly documented 1 = Definitions and procedures exist but are not clear and/or not organized by staff-versus office-managed problems 2 = Definitions and procedures for managing problems are clearly defined, documented, trained, and shared with families</p>
<p>1.6 Discipline Policies: School policies and procedures describe and emphasize proactive, instructive, and/or restorative approaches to student behavior that are implemented consistently.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discipline policy • Student handbook • Code of conduct • Informal administrator interview/focus group 	<p>0 = Documents contain only reactive and punitive consequences 1 = Documentation includes and emphasizes proactive approaches 2 = Documentation includes and emphasizes proactive approaches AND administrator reports consistent use</p>
<p>1.12 Discipline Data: Tier 1 team has instantaneous access to graphed reports summarizing discipline data organized by the frequency of problem behavior events by behavior, location, time of day, and by individual student.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School policy • Team meeting minutes • Student outcome data 	<p>0 = No centralized data system with ongoing decision making exists 1 = Data system exists but does not allow instantaneous access to full set of graphed reports 2 = Discipline data system exists that allows instantaneous access to graphs of frequency of problem behavior events by</p>

PBIS TFI Data System Fidelity Measures		
Feature	Possible Data Source	Scoring Criteria
		behavior, location, time of day, and student
1.13 Data-based Decision Making: Tier 1 team reviews and uses discipline data at least monthly for decision-making.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data decision rules • Staff professional development calendar • Staff handbook • Team meeting minutes 	<p>0 = No process/protocol exists, or data are reviewed but not used</p> <p>1 = Data reviewed and used for decision-making, but less than monthly</p> <p>2 = Team reviews discipline data and uses data for decision-making at least monthly. If data indicate a problem, an action plan is developed to enhance or modify Tier 1 supports</p>
2.11 Student Performance Data: Tier 2 team tracks proportion of students experiencing success (% of participating students being successful) and uses Tier 2 intervention outcomes data and decision rules for progress monitoring and modification.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student progress data (e.g., %of students meeting goals) • Intervention Tracking Tool • Daily/Weekly Progress Report sheets • Family Communication 	<p>0 = Student data not monitored</p> <p>1 = Student data monitored but no data decision rules established to alter (e.g., intensify or fade) support</p> <p>2 = Student data (% of students being successful) monitored and used at least monthly, with data decision rules established to alter (e.g., intensify or fade) support, and shared with stakeholders</p>
3.14 Data System: Aggregated (i.e., overall school-level) Tier 3 data are summarized and reported to staff at least monthly on (a) fidelity of support plan implementation, and (b) impact on student outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports to staff • Staff meeting minutes • Staff report 	<p>0 = No quantifiable data</p> <p>1 = Data are collected on outcomes and/or fidelity but not reported monthly</p> <p>2 = Data are collected on student outcomes AND fidelity and are reported to staff at least monthly for all plans</p>
3.15 Data-based Decision Making: Each student's	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student progress data 	<p>0 = School does not track proportion, or no students</p>

PBIS TFI Data System Fidelity Measures		
Feature	Possible Data Source	Scoring Criteria
individual support team meets at least monthly (or more frequently if needed) and uses data to modify the support plan. to improve fidelity of plan implementation and impact on quality of life, academic, and behavior outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tier 3 team meeting minutes 	have Tier 3 plans 1 = Fewer than 1% of students have Tier 3 plans 2 = All students requiring Tier 3 supports (and at least 1% of students) have plans

This checklist was adapted from <https://www.pbisapps.org/Pages/Default.aspx>
 (<https://www.pbisapps.org/resources/swis%20publications/forms/allitems.aspx>)

Discipline Data Collection and Reporting System Feature	Possible Data Source	Scoring Criteria
1. Building administrator supports the implementation and use of the Discipline Data Collection and Reporting System.	Administrator Interview	1 = Not in place 2 = Partially in Place 3 = In place
2. A school/facility-wide behavior support team exists and reviews the Discipline Data Collection and Reporting System referral data at least monthly.	Team Roster & Meeting Schedule	1 = Not in place 2 = Partially in Place 3 = In place
3. The school/facility has an incident referral form and definitions for behaviors resulting in administrative-managed (major) vs. staff-managed (minor) incidents in	-Incident Referral Form(s) -Problem Behavior Definitions	1 = Not in place 2 = Partially in Place 3 = In place

Discipline Data Collection and Reporting System Feature	Possible Data Source	Scoring Criteria
<p>place that is compatible with the Discipline Data Collection and Reporting System data entry.</p>		
<p>4. Within three months of adopting the data collection and reporting system , the school is committed to having in place a clearly documented, predictable system for managing disruptive behavior (e.g., School-wide PBIS).</p>	<p>Written Guidelines</p>	<p>1 = Not in place 2 = Partially in Place 3 = In place</p>
<p>5. Data entry time and staffing are scheduled to ensure that incident referral/suspension data will be always current to within a week. Data entry staff have access to all necessary information (e.g., student records).</p>	<p>Data Entry & Report Generation Schedule</p>	<p>1 = Not in place 2 = Partially in Place 3 = In place</p>
<p>6. The school/facility agrees to maintain technology (i.e., internet browsers, district permissions) compatible with Discipline Data Collection and Reporting System.</p>		<p>1 = Not in place 2 = Partially in Place 3 = In place</p>

Discipline Data Collection and Reporting System Feature	Possible Data Source	Scoring Criteria
7. The school/facility agrees to both initial and ongoing coaching on the use of Discipline Data Collection and Reporting System for school/facility-wide decision making.	Administrator/ Coordinator Interview	1 = Not in place 2 = Partially in Place 3 = In place
8. The school/facility agrees to maintain Discipline Data Collection and Reporting System compatibility and maintain communication with a certified Facilitator who agrees to provide ongoing support to the school/facility on the use of the System.	Administrator/ Coordinator Interview	1 = Not in place 2 = Partially in Place 3 = In place

SCUSD Administrator Survey Questions Regarding Special Education

Adapted from SWIFT—Fidelity Integrity Assessment (FIA)

Scale: **Not in place/Partially in place/In place**

1. Our school has a school-wide system to promote academic success for all students and responds with additional supports for all students when warranted.
2. Our school personnel use instructional strategies for both reading and math to include all students with various needs in the general education curriculum and coursework.
3. All students in our school including those with IEPs have equal access to the general education curriculum and extra-curricular learning activities with appropriate supports.
4. All students in our school participate in the general education curriculum/coursework and activities of their peers in grade level and/or content courses.
5. Our school embraces non-categorical service delivery to support diverse needs of students.
6. All school personnel in instructional and other roles share responsibility to educate all students in our school and employ culturally appropriate and sustaining practices.
7. Our district has a clear vision for inclusive practices that values and celebrates student diversity and facilitates meaningful access and participation of all students in general education curriculum and settings.
8. Our district has guidance for IEP teams to ensure placements decisions are in the students' least restrictive environment (LRE).
9. Our district actively and adequately supports our school's implementation of equity-based multi-tiered systems.
10. Our district supports equity-based MTSS by linking multiple initiatives, revising policies, and extending the practice to other schools.
11. Our district uses school level information to support and ensure professional development regarding research or evidence based practices.

Attachment C: Summary of Findings and recommendations

Evaluation Component	Findings	Recommendations
<p>District-wide and school-based student discipline and behavior management systems, policies, and practices</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use of reporting policies and practices (Infinite Campus) is inconsistent from school to school and administrator to administrator 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Produce a detailed guide (Data Discussion Guide) for recording and using Infinite campus with standardized behavior definitions and protocols for using “other means of correction”, and criteria for use of other consequences
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sites report and use Office Discipline Referral data differently (some are paper, computer, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide detailed staff development and coaching for administrators on data entry and use ● Require consistent and common use of data entry protocols
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Administrators have received written guidance for reporting exclusionary discipline but use of the reports is low <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ABC Report ○ SBAC ● Administrators receive guidance on “data-based decision making” for reviewing exclusionary discipline data (Illuminate usage report) and there is a system for monitoring Illuminate usage by school/administrator discipline but use of the reports is low <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ABC Report ○ SBAC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide a guidance document and monthly on-site review of the use of, referrals, ISS, OSS and “other means of correction” ● Conduct routine fidelity assessments of data use and reporting at the school level. Report these results to the school board

Evaluation Component	Findings	Recommendations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Administrators receive limited guidance for implementing “other means of correction”. Non-reportable offenses become “other means of correction” (locally defined behaviors) ● There is a policy allowing use of “cool down” rooms or in school suspension but there is no common approach or clear guidance for administrators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide a guidance document and monthly review of the use of “in school suspension” ● Need more consistency and guidance for implementing “cool down” room procedures, including data collection and decision-making
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Some parents and administrators are reluctant to record exclusionary discipline events for fear of negatively impacting the student in the future 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Contact local juvenile authorities and develop an agreement about how student-level discipline data are used
Equity of Exclusionary Discipline Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Discipline data reports as reflected in Infinite Campus, and the California Dashboard should be considered inaccurate and unreliable ● Multiple state reports and citations note a high suspension rate with disproportionality higher in some schools than others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Implement monthly data reviews with each school regarding exclusionary discipline practices and problem solving around outcomes ● Adopt evidence-supported interventions and provide staff development and coaching to prevent the need for disciplinary exclusion
Bullying and Harassment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Many strategies from the 2010 Creating Caring Schools document are in place, mostly focused on 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Maintain strategies in place and expand a focus to a unified district wide response to bullying prevention

Evaluation Component	Findings	Recommendations
	<p>reporting and response to bullying and harassment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Limited evidence of a clear and consistent approach to bullying and harassment prevention (no formal program has been adopted) ● Use of reporting policies and practices is inconsistent ● Administrators are allowed to decide which reports are recorded ● Administrators appear to be the final judge of whether bullying occurred ● Safety Plans are inconsistently written, sometimes not completed, and not consistently implemented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Adopt a formal bullying prevention curriculum or approach that clarifies when and when not to use “restorative justice” (C.P. Bradshaw, 2015) ● Provide a clear written policy and training for administrators and staff members in bullying prevention and response procedures ● Monthly review of all bullying incidents, including how the data were reported, and whether the protocol was followed ● Systematic review and follow up of all safety plans for comprehensiveness and consistency of implementation
Influence of Implicit Bias	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lack of procedural clarity and guidance ● No training on Implicit Bias 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensure policies and procedures are updated to meet State and Federal Mandates supporting all students. ● District wide training on Implicit Bias should be done by a professional 3rd party group that does Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) training.
MTSS and other prevention initiatives in the district	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● SCUSD has a history of incomplete 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● District has a plan that needs to be put into

Evaluation Component	Findings	Recommendations
	<p>implementation of different prevention initiatives (SEL, RP, PBIS) and there is no coherent district wide coordination of these efforts. They seem to be driven by grant funding and then stall when the funding is gone</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There is a new MTSS staff development initiative that reportedly has support from SCTA, but their representatives are not aware of the scope and sequence or dissemination plan ● SCTA is not adequately involved in the planning or implementation of the MTSS initiative 	<p>place and should include all stakeholder's input.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Collaboration between District, SCTA, and other entities needs to occur for the school staff to buy-in to implementation ● Collaboration between general education and special education staff to ensure MTSS is followed through and exhausted prior to special education referral ● As part of MTSS implementation, each school should have monthly reviews of student progress data and problem-solving around outcomes
<p>Special Education systems, policies, and practices</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● MTSS may enhance, but cannot supplant Special Education Practices ● No clear, comprehensive vision and/or plan for district wide inclusive practices ● Focus on compliance versus commitment to inclusive practices ● Poor communication systems for general education and special education staff members ● No specific interventions are advocated for adoption, increasing the risk of poor implementation and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensure policies and procedures are updated to meet State and Federal Mandates supporting all students. ● Develop a clear process for referring students for Special Education eligibility in a timely manner (i.e., when during the MTSS process it becomes evident that the student may qualify for special education services) ● Develop a vision for providing inclusive practices that values

Evaluation Component	Findings	Recommendations
	<p>inconsistent implementation from site to site</p>	<p>and celebrates student diversity and facilitates meaningful access and participation of all students in general education curriculum and settings</p>
<p>Timely identification and assessment of students with disabilities and Black students with disabilities, including the district's use of Student Study Team meetings?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Not evident that there is timely identification and assessment ● Clear "child find" process not evident ● Parent interview indicated delays in response to request for assessment and following timelines ● Student files showed that parents requested SST multiple times prior to a meeting being set ● No evidence of the use of RTI/MTSS or consistent interventions implemented prior to referral and placement in restrictive placement. ● No consistent assessment system used across the district. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide training on timelines for all processes, including "child find"; referral to assess for eligibility; initial, annual and triennial assessments; IEP development and implementation ● Develop and implement procedures that promote/facilitate timely response to parent request ● Create and consistently implement district wide systems and policies for identification and assessment of students with disabilities

Evaluation Component	Findings	Recommendations
<p>Timely access to effective services, programs, and activities for disabilities in LRE</p> <p>What is the continuum of placements for students with disabilities, particularly Black students with disabilities?</p> <p>Is there appropriate placement (FAPE/LRE) of students with disabilities, particularly Black students with disabilities, in inclusive placements?</p> <p>What is the influence of implicit, explicit, structural racial and disability bias and intersection of the two?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Timely access is not evident ● Clear offers of FAPE often were not presented to parents. ● Parent, various parent group interviews, and student records indicated that access to services to facilitate success in LRE was limited. ● Functional behavioral assessments were not done proactively to develop and implement behavior intervention and support plans. ● Evidence that plans were written but not followed. ● Students referred to NPS due to the district's inability to provide necessary support to stay in LRE. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide professional development, including coaching, for all staff (general and special education teachers, administrators, related services personnel) on appropriate definitions, models, and evidence-based practices for inclusive service delivery ● Develop and implement a clear process by which a student who has been placed in a more restrictive placement can return to a less restrictive placement. ● Ensure that functional behavior assessments are conducted, and positive behavioral interventions and support plans are developed and implemented in a timely manner to support students' access to LRE. ● Provide training to all staff to help identify bias in the IEP process and placement of students of color.
<p>What policies, procedures and practices are in place to ensure appropriate placement of students with disabilities, particularly Black students with disabilities, in inclusive placements?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Clear offers of FAPE often were not presented to parents ● No services provided when the student was in transition between settings, specifically when 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Adopt updated policies (reports show policies and procedures have been drafted but not adopted) as most policies and procedures

Evaluation Component	Findings	Recommendations
<p>If such policies, procedures, and practices are in place, are they uniformly implemented?</p> <p>If policies, procedures, practices are not in place or unclear, what is the influence of implicit bias?</p>	<p>students were suspended or awaiting placement in a more restrictive setting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● No district wide plan for inclusive education service delivery ● School sites vary in terms of culture, policies, procedures, and expectations for students with disabilities to receive services in the general education setting. ● Policies and procedures are very outdated and do not reflect current guidelines or evidence-based practices 	<p>haven't been updated since 2002.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● State and Federal guidelines have been updated to identify the role of Implicit Bias in education that need to be adopted and implemented by the district
<p>What is the availability of a continuum of placements and inclusive placements for students with disabilities, particularly Black students with disabilities?</p> <p>If the continuum is not available in an equitable manner, what is the influence of implicit bias? What is the influence of implicit, explicit, and structural racial and disability bias and intersection of the two?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There is limited access to less restrictive placements; reliance on Special Day Class ● School sites vary in terms of quality of services ● Parents, various parent group interviews, and student records indicated not all students are treated with equity. ● Access was related to parent involvement and advocacy for inclusive placements ● Parents and various parent group interviews indicated that there is an influence of Implicit Bias when determining placement for Black and brown students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increase opportunities to all students with disabilities, particularly Black students with disabilities, to receive special education services and supports within the general education settings in their home school ● Develop a plan to scale-up implementation of inclusive service delivery across the district ● Share the process for LRE with all employees and ensure all school sites follow procedures to limit potential bias at specific school sites
<p>Does the district monitor the alleged disproportionate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● No evidence that there is a plan to monitor 	

Evaluation Component	Findings	Recommendations
<p>impacts, based on race and type of disability, of previous non-inclusive placements?</p> <p>If so, how does the district monitor and address this?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This means disproportionate impact by race and type of disability, e.g., emotional disturbance. 	<p>disproportionate impact of race and/or type of disability.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> District did request the Council of the Great City Schools to review services for students with disabilities, but does not appear to have implemented recommendations related to disproportionality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a process for routine monitoring and review of referral, evaluation, and eligibility decisions Create a district wide system to address issues and problems that arise related to disproportionate impact of race, type of disability, etc.
<p>What disparities exist in access to adequate education, special education, related services, accommodations, and modifications for students with disabilities and Black students with disabilities?</p> <p>If disparities exist, what is the influence of implicit bias?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of disparities in terms of timely access to appropriate services and accommodations Parents, various parent group interviews, and student records indicated that not all IEP members were present and/or fully participating in the meetings. Parents and various parent group interviews reported that there is an influence of Implicit Bias when determining access, accommodations, and modifications for Black and Brown students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create an equitable process that ensures all students receive access based on their individuals strengths and needs Ensure all IEP team members are involved when determining special education and supplementary services for students
<p>How does the district provide reasonable accommodations and/or modifications, including through modifications to policies and procedures, to avoid discrimination against students with disabilities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No evidence that the district has a plan for ensuring that accommodations/modifications on IEPs are provided. IEPs not always shared with all members of the students' team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adopt updated policies (reports show policies and procedures have been drafted but not adopted) as most policies and procedures haven't been updated since 2002.

Evaluation Component	Findings	Recommendations
<p>and Black students with disabilities?</p> <p>How does the district ensure that accommodations/modifications on a student's IEP are provided?</p> <p>If insufficiencies are identified, what role does implicit bias play?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● If shared, not implemented by all the staff (i.e., general education staff). ● Parents and various parent group interviews reported that there is an influence of Implicit Bias when determining access, accommodations, and modifications for Black and Brown students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● State and Federal guidelines have been updated to identify the role of Implicit Bias in education that need to be adopted and implemented by the district ● Develop a process for routine monitoring and review of IEPs to ensure that reasonable accommodations and/or modifications are provided to support student's learning and individual needs.

Evaluation Component	Findings	Recommendations
<p>What is the staff development plan?</p> <p>What is the effectiveness and sufficiency of training and ongoing development for the district’s personnel who instruct, support, and/or serve students with disabilities and Black students with disabilities?</p> <p>What is the effectiveness and sufficiency of training and ongoing professional development for District administrators who are involved in the development and implementation of IEPs and Section 504 Plans for students with disabilities?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● No evidence of consistent and sustained PD for inclusive education and providing FAPE in the LRE. ● History of separate PD efforts for SEL, restorative practices, co-teaching, etc. ● High rate of turnover of staff and lack of sufficient training for new staff ● No follow-up trainings to support efforts, such as co-teaching ● No evidence of specific or ongoing training for District administrators related to implementation of IEPs and Section 504 plans ● There is a new MTSS staff development initiative that reportedly has support from SCTA, but their representatives are not aware of the scope and sequence or dissemination plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide ongoing PD for all areas of need, including but not limited to implicit bias, inclusion, IEP and 504 processes, etc. for all personnel who interact with students with disabilities ● Implement the proposed MTSS plan to include ongoing professional development for administrators and staff to build capacity of school to implement data-based decision-making ● Provide professional development, including coaching, for all staff (general and special education teachers, administrators, related services personnel) on appropriate definitions, models, and evidence-based practices for inclusive service delivery ● Ensure that the professional development opportunities provided are complementary and not viewed as parts of separate initiatives
<p>Is District staffing adequate, and effective in efforts to identify, instruct, and serve students with disabilities,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Concern expressed about the number of school psychologists available to support interventions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensure the ratio of school psychologists to students is such that they can provide and

Evaluation Component	Findings	Recommendations
<p>including Black students with disabilities?</p> <p>Does the staffing pattern meet CDE standards for staffing (race; gender; grade level teaching; caseloads and staffing ratios)?</p>	<p>(ratio 1 school psychologist to 2200 students)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Evidence that the district is under-staffed. ● Based on CDE data, there continues to be discrepancy between the student population and the teaching population in terms of race, with most teachers being White. 	<p>support MTSS interventions (NASP recommends a ratio of one school psychologist per 500 students to provide comprehensive school psychological services)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To hire and retain staff of color, recruitment should be done at Historic Black Universities (HBU), Hispanic Universities, and other organizations that support educators of color. ● Community outreach to foster relationships with members of the community who can support students and staff of color

Attachment D: Admin Survey Responses July 2021

Schools	My school provides family engagement activities for Black families and other marginalized communities that are at risk of academic probation.	The district provides staff development trainings discussing systemic racism and cultural diversity and the impact on Black students and other students of color.	The district has a process to identify patterns with referrals and suspensions of Black students and other students of color.	My school has processes and practices in place to ensure Black students, and other students of color, have equitable access to honors, AP, and STEM classes.	The district encourages representation of Black teachers and teachers of color in their hiring and retention practices.
Matsuyama Elementary	Partially in place	Partially in place	In place	In place	In place
Will C Wood MS	Partially in place	In place	In place	In place	Partially in place
Leataata Floyd Elementary	In place	In place	In place	Partially in place	In place
Golden Empire Elementary	In place	Not in place	Partially in place	In place	Not in place
Hollywood Park Elementary	Not in place	In place	In place		
O W Erlewine Elementary					
Crocker/Riverside Elementary	Partially in place	Partially in place	Partially in place	Partially in place	Partially in place
Pony Express Elementary	Partially in place	In place	In place	In place	In place
NO NAME	Partially in place	In place	In place	Partially in place	Not in place
Caleb Greenwood Elementary	Partially in place	In place	Partially in place	In place	Partially in place
John D Sloat Elementary	Not in place	Not in place	Not in place	Partially in place	Not in place
Peter Burnett Elementary	Partially in place	Partially in place	Not in place	In place	Not in place
Washington Elementary	In place	Not in place	Not in place	In place	Not in place
Nicholas Elementary	Partially in place	In place	In place	In place	Not in place
Bowling Green Elementary	In place	Partially in place	Not in place	Partially in place	Partially in place

David Lubin Elementary	Partially in place	Partially in place	Partially in place	In place	Not in place
Leonardo da Vinci K - 8 School					
Pacific Elementary	Partially in place	Partially in place	Not in place	Partially in place	Partially in place
Ethel Phillips Elementary	Partially in place	In place	In place	In place	Partially in place
Sequoia Elementary	Partially in place	In place	Partially in place	Not in place	Partially in place
Phoebe A Hearst Elementary	In place	In place	Partially in place	In place	Partially in place
Oak Ridge Elementary	Partially in place	Not in place	Partially in place		Partially in place
Bowling Green-Chacon	In place	In place	Partially in place	In place	Partially in place
Rosa Parks K-8 School	Partially in place	Partially in place	Not in place	Partially in place	Not in place
John H. Still K-8					
Woodbine Elementary	Partially in place	Partially in place	Partially in place	Partially in place	Partially in place
Edward Kemble Elementary	In place	Partially in place	Partially in place	Partially in place	Not in place
Fern Bacon MS	In place	Partially in place	Partially in place	In place	Not in place
Hiram W Johnson HS	In place	In place	In place	In place	In place
C K McClatchy HS					
West Campus HS	In place	Partially in place	Partially in place	In place	Partially in place
The Met High School	In place	Partially in place	Partially in place	In place	

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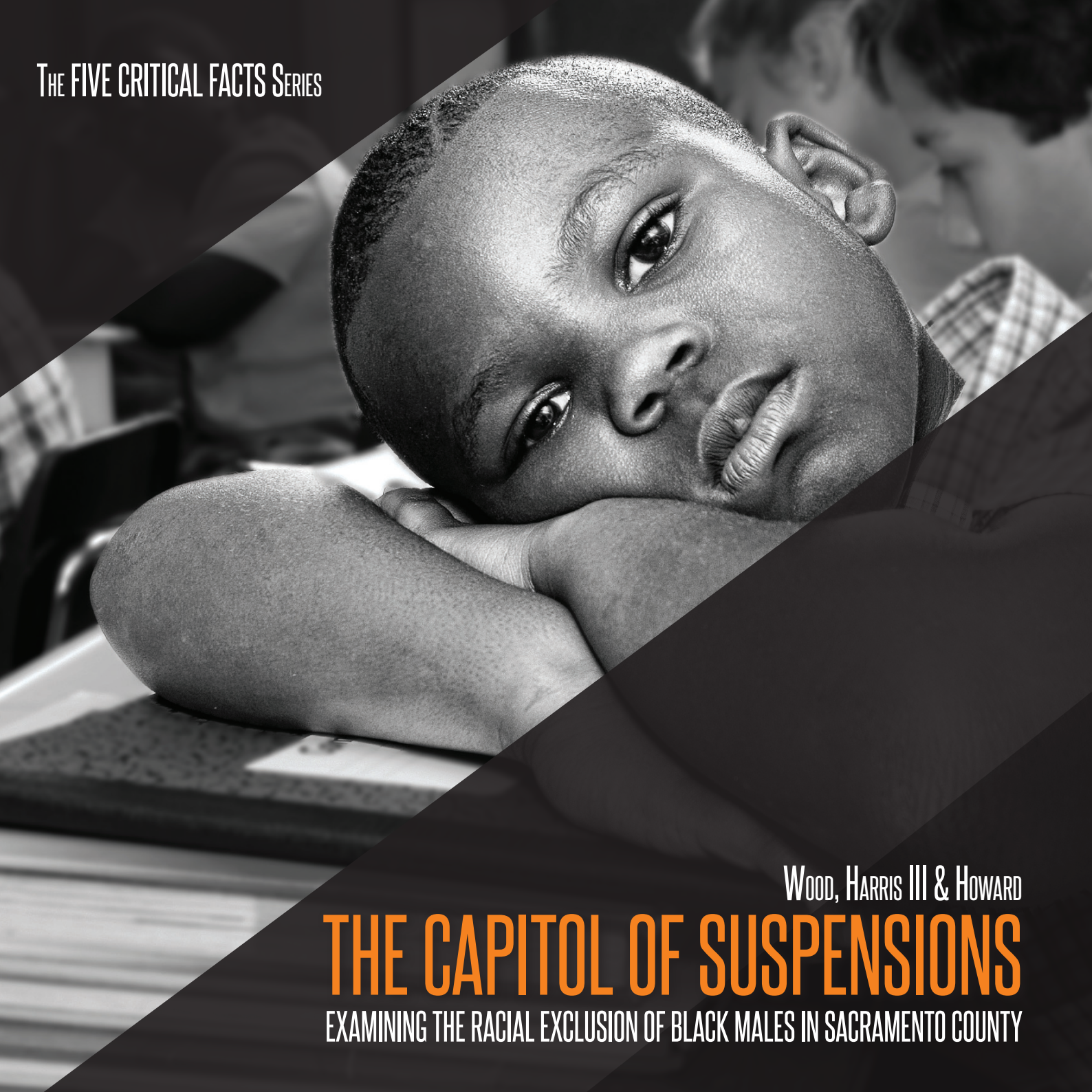
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Sacramento City Unified School District

SERVICES AGREEMENT

EXHIBIT C

THE FIVE CRITICAL FACTS SERIES



WOOD, HARRIS III & HOWARD

THE CAPITOL OF SUSPENSIONS

EXAMINING THE RACIAL EXCLUSION OF BLACK MALES IN SACRAMENTO COUNTY

A young person with curly hair is sitting in a locker room, looking thoughtful. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent orange filter. The person is wearing a light-colored shirt and has their hand resting on their chin. The background shows rows of lockers.

The FIVE CRITICAL FACTS Series

The FIVE CRITICAL FACTS Series is designed to inform practitioners and researchers about emerging findings relevant to the success of underserved students in education. Data presented in this brief are derived from the California Department of Education (CDE) DataQuest and are publicly accessible via this system. This series is sponsored by the Community College Equity Assessment Lab (CCEAL) at San Diego State University (SDSU) and is inspired by the NASPA “Five Things” Brief Series.

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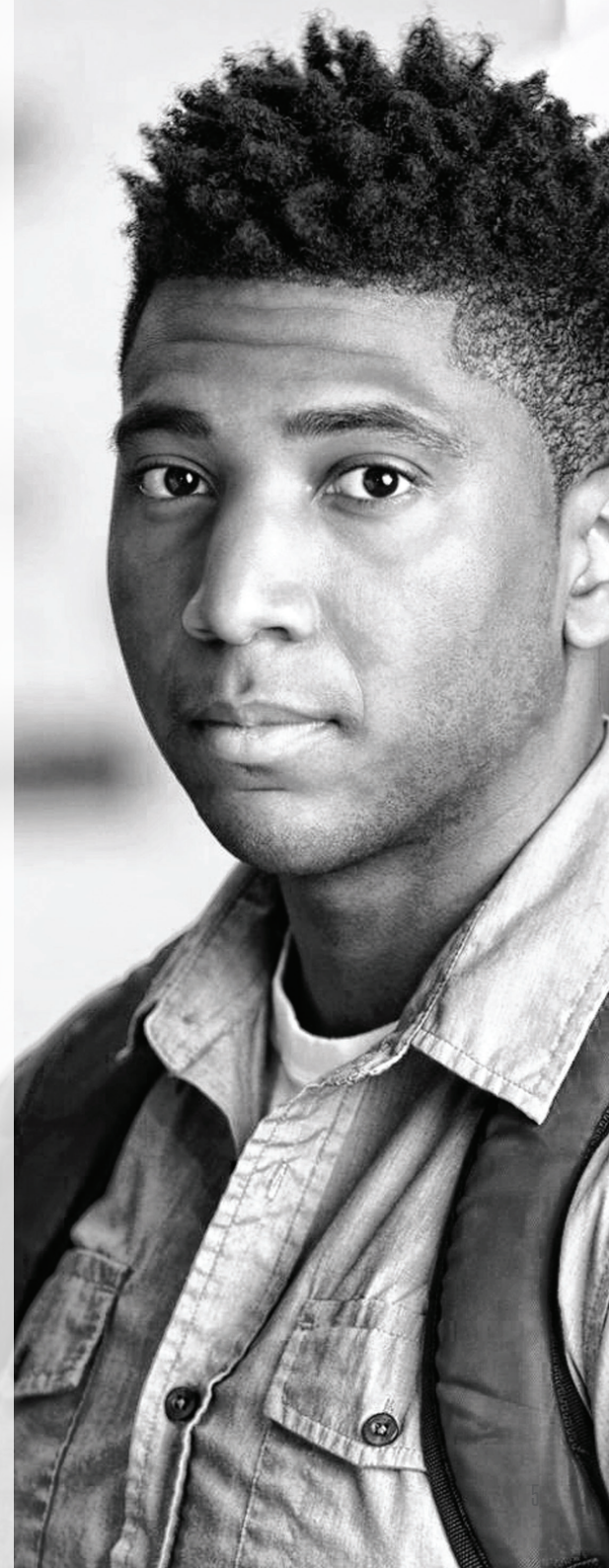


THE BRIEF WAS COMMISSIONED ON FEBRUARY 26, 2018
BY THE GREATER SACRAMENTO NATIONAL ASSOCIATION
FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This brief details the exposure of Black males to exclusionary discipline in Sacramento County. In particular, this report highlights the high suspensions of Black boys and young men in Sacramento County public schools. Some of the key findings include:

- Black males are 5.4 times more likely to be suspended in Sacramento County than the statewide average.
- Nearly 18 Black males were suspended, per day, in the county.
- Sacramento County has four school districts in the top 20 suspension districts for Black males in the State of California.
- Sacramento City Unified is the most egregious suspension district for Black males in the State of California.
- Black males in early childhood education (kindergarten through third grade) are 9.9 times more likely to be suspended than their peers (statewide).
- One third of all Black male foster youth are suspended in Sacramento County.



INTRODUCTION

Across the nation, Black males are routinely exposed to exclusionary practices that remove them from learning environments (Howard, 2008, 2013; Wood, 2017; Wood, Essien, & Blevins, 2017). These practices include over-placement in special education, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, and even expulsion (Losen & Skiba, 2010). Among these forms of exclusionary discipline, suspensions have been a topic of continued interest in the past several years, with numerous reports and studies demonstrating that California is home to some of the most egregious suspension patterns in the country. As detailed in a recent report, GET OUT! Black Male Suspensions in California Public Schools, Sacramento County is ground zero for some of the highest total suspensions in the State. In fact, Sacramento county has the second highest total suspensions in California, falling only behind Los Angeles County. This rate exceeds those in other urban counties, such as San Bernardino, Riverside, Contra Costa, Alameda, and San Joaquin (Wood, Harris III, & Howard, 2018).

Prior research has demonstrated that students who are regularly suspended are being tracked into the prison industrial complex, a pattern often referred to as the school-to-prison pipeline. Thus, while some students are being socialized by schools for college-going and entering into the workforce, others are being socialized for prison. Moreover, research has also shown that those subjected to suspensions are more likely to enter into the permanent underclass and to have a reliance upon social services (Darensbourg, Perez, & Blake, 2010; Fenning & Rose, 2007; Skiba, Arredondo, &

Williams, 2014). Bearing this in mind, this brief sought to highlight key facts about suspensions in Sacramento County. These facts are meant to generate conversations around issues of racial injustice and educational inequities that permeate the region's educational institutions that fortify the economic and social health of the region.

METHOD

This brief analyzed data derived from the California Department of Education's (CDE) DataQuest. This publicly available resource allows targeted analyses of specific subgroups based on county, district, and school-level exposure to exclusionary discipline. The two primary forms of exclusionary discipline are suspensions and expulsions. Suspensions involve temporarily removing students from learning environments. Suspensions can be served both in-school (or in-house) as well as out-of-school (or out-of-house). Expulsions permanently remove students from learning environments and are typically enforced when severe infractions of school policy occur. In this brief, we focus on suspensions, including both in- and out-of-school suspensions, for students in Sacramento County. The data presented are inclusive of public schools, this includes traditional public schools as well as charter schools. Please note that the analyses does not include data on blind-in-school suspensions (suspensions that are not documented), therefore, these suspension data are based on conservative numbers reported by the local education agencies themselves.



THE CAPITOL OF
SUSPENSIONS

FINDINGS

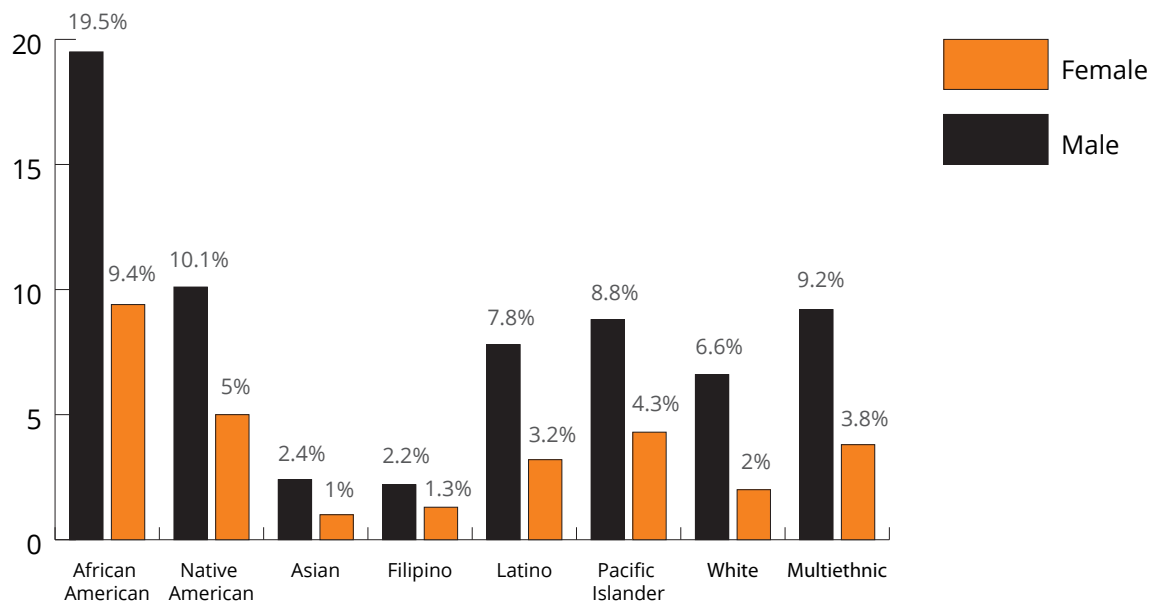
FACT 1

BLACK MALES ARE 5.4 TIMES MORE LIKELY TO BE SUSPENDED THAN THEIR PEERS

The suspension rate in Sacramento county exceeds the State average across groups. For instance, in California, 3.6% of all students were suspended during the 2016-2017 academic year. An even higher rate of suspension occurs in Sacramento County, where the average suspension rate is 5.7%. That being said, in Sacramento County, Black boys and young men represent the group that is most likely to be suspended (at 19.5%) (see Table 1). In fact, they are 5.4 times more likely to be suspended than the State average. This rate is followed by Native American males (at 10.1%), Multiethnic males (at 9.2%), and Pacific Islander males (at 8.8%). In contrast, the suspension rate for Asian and White males was 2.4% and 6.6%, respectively. The high rate of suspension for Black males in the county has remained relatively constant over the past 5 years, hovering between 19 and 21%. In fact, in the 2016-2017 academic year, there were 3,171 Black males suspended (unduplicated) in that academic year alone. Given that the average school year is 180 days, this suggests that nearly 18 Black males were suspended, per day, in the county.

Table 1

Suspensions rate in Sacramento County by Race and Gender, 2016-2017



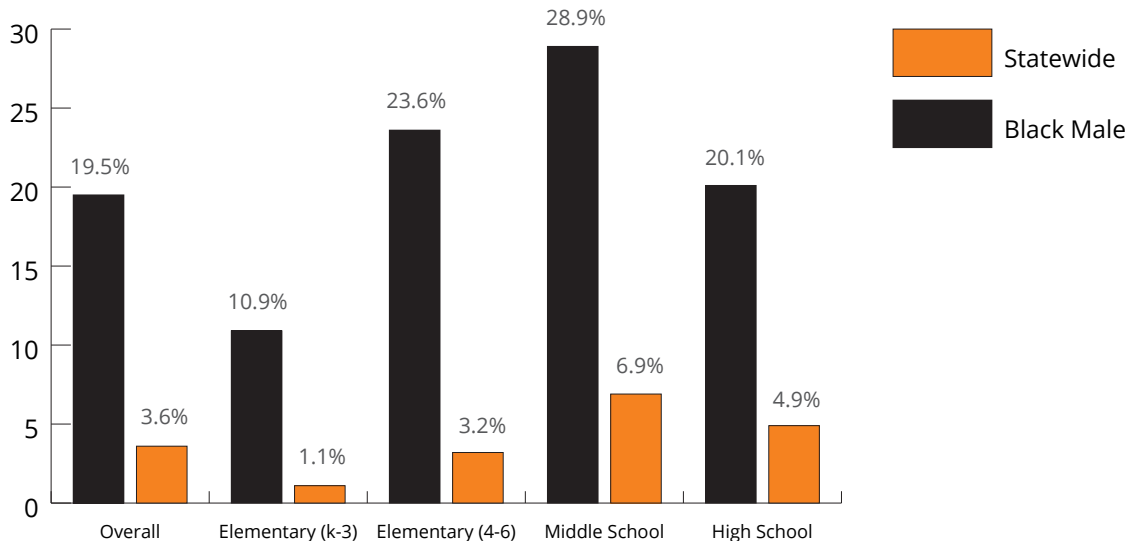
FACT 2

BLACK MALES IN EARLY CHILDHOOD ARE 9.9 TIMES MORE LIKELY TO BE SUSPENDED THAN THEIR PEERS

While the overall suspension rate for Black males in the county is 19.5%, this rate varies across grade levels. For example, the highest suspension rate occurs in Grades 7 and 8 (middle school), where 28.9% of Black males are suspended (see Table 2). This rate is 4.2 times that of the State average for these grades. That being said, the grade band for early childhood education (kindergarten through third grade) represents the highest level of disparity. Specifically, in early childhood education, Black males in Sacramento County are 9.9 times more likely to be suspended in comparison to the State average. This is followed by the disparity evident in the latter stages of elementary school (Grade 4-6) where Black males are 7.4 times more likely to be suspended than their peers. In addition, the increasing suspension rates of Black males across grade levels decline in high school. By high school, the rate drops from 28.9% from middle school to 20.1% in high school. It is possible that decreased suspensions are a function of attrition (students dropping out) between middle school and high school.

Table 2

Suspensions rate in Sacramento County by Grade Level, 2016-2017



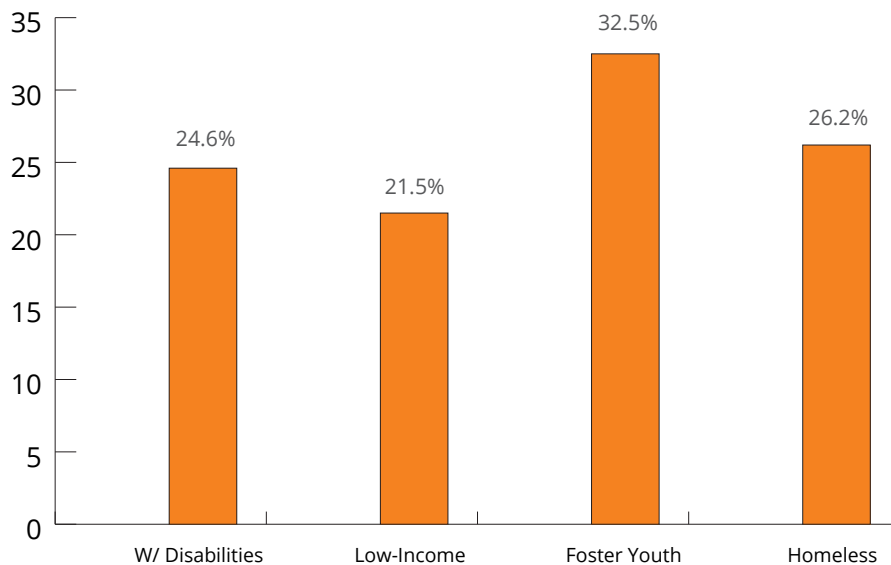
FACT 3

ONE THIRD OF ALL BLACK MALE FOSTER YOUTH ARE SUSPENDED IN SACRAMENTO COUNTY

There are a number of subpopulations that have varying suspension rates. For example, while the countywide suspension average for Black males was 19.5%, the rate for low-income Black males is slightly higher, at 21.5% (see Table 3). Moreover, Black male students with disabilities also have noticeably higher suspension rates. In fact, in 2016-2017, 24.6% of these students were suspended at least once. However, the subgroup with the highest suspension rate was foster youth. The suspension rate for these males was 32.5%. In other words, more than 3 out of every 10 were suspended in the academic year. Beyond this, there are also intersections between subgroup populations and grade levels. The Black male subgroup in Sacramento County most likely to be suspended are those who are foster youth and in middle school (Grade 7 and 8). Shockingly, the suspension rates for Black males in this designation is 59%. This rate should serve as a clarion call to all educators, policymakers, and school officials in the region to address the systemic disparities facing Black male learners in the county.

Table 3

Black Male Suspensions rate in Sacramento County by Subgroup, 2016-2017



FACT 4

SACRAMENTO COUNTY IS HOME TO FOUR OF THE TOP 20 SUSPENSION DISTRICTS FOR BLACK MALES IN THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

The County's position as a high suspension locale is reinforced by suspensions in four key districts, with Sacramento City Unified presiding as the highest suspension district in the State of California. In fact, in 2016-2017 alone, the district had 1,859 total suspensions of 887 students (see Figure 1). This is particularly notable, as these exceeded the suspensions levied in Los Angeles Unified, which has nearly 7 times more Black males than Sacramento City Unified. Elk Grove Unified has the second highest number of suspensions of Black males in Sacramento County with 1,476 total and 745 unduplicated. As such, Sacramento County has the #1 and #3 districts with the highest suspensions in the State. In addition, the county has two more districts in the top 20 suspension districts in the State: Twin Rivers Unified (#11) and San Juan Unified (#18). See Appendix A for an overview of suspension data for these four districts.

Figure 1. Districts with the highest total suspensions (unduplicated) of Black males, 2016-2017. Reprinted from GET OUT! with permission.

District	Cumulative Enrollment	Total Suspensions	Total (unduplicated) Suspensions	Suspension Rate
Sacramento City Unified	4,286	1,859	887	20.70%
Los Angeles Unified	29,275	1,107	849	2.90%
Elk Grove Unified	4,527	1,476	745	16.50%
Fresno Unified	3,639	1,650	729	20.00%
Oakland Unified	6,921	1,174	711	10.30%
San Diego Unified	6,431	1,178	653	10.20%
Long Beach Unified	5,642	981	619	11.00%
San Bernadino City Unified	3,786	1,225	597	15.80%
Antelope Valley Union High	2,530	1,249	595	23.50%
Stockton Unified	2,606	1,512	584	22.40%
Twin Rivers Unified	2,745	1,224	553	20.10%
Lancaster Elementary	2,670	1,141	539	20.20%
Vallejo City Unified	2,282	1,055	518	22.70%
West Contra Costa Unified	2,944	975	497	16.90%
Antioch Unified	2,478	1,336	487	19.70%
Moreno Valley Unified	2,843	943	452	15.90%
Palmdale Elementary	2,077	933	433	20.80%
San Juan Unified	2,233	1,054	430	19.30%
L.A. County Office of Education	1,694	1,061	396	23.40%
Fairfield-Suisun Unified	1,927	702	334	17.30%

FACT 5

SACRAMENTO CITY UNIFIED IS LIKELY THE MOST EGREGIOUS SUSPENSION DISTRICT FOR BLACK MALES IN THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

There are two different ways to determine districts with the most egregious suspension rates for Black males. The first way is to examine the total number of suspensions—this approach represents districts with the most Black males suspended. The second is to identify districts with the highest suspension rate—this approach accounts for districts that suspend the highest proportion of enrolled Black males. For Sacramento County, these districts are identified in Tables 4 and 5, respectively. The districts with the highest total suspensions of Black males was Sacramento City Unified. As previously noted, this was followed by Elk Grove, Twin Rivers Unified, and San Juan. Beyond these, Natomas Unified rounded out the top five suspension districts for Black males in the county. One notable pattern is that San Juan Unified has a higher percentage of multiple suspension than the other top five districts (at 50.7%). This suggests that a higher proportion of Black males are being recurrently suspended in this district (see Table 4).

Table 4

The Top 5 Worst Suspension Districts by Total Suspension

	School District	Total Suspensions	Unduplicated Suspensions	Total Black Male Enrollment	Suspension Rate	One Time Suspensions	Multiple Suspensions
1	Sacramento City Unified	1,859	887	4,286	20.70%	55.10%	44.90%
2	Elk Grove unified	1,476	745	4,527	16.50%	58.00%	42.00%
3	Twin Rivers Unified	1,224	553	2,745	20.10%	54.10%	45.90%
4	San Juan Unified	1,054	430	2,233	19.30%	49.30%	50.70%
5	Natomas Unified	506	273	1,440	19.00%	56.80%	43.20%

FACT 5 - CONTINUED

Table 5 presents the districts with the highest proportion of Black males who are suspended. The district with the highest suspension rate is Sacramento City Unified (at 20.7%). As such, this district has both the highest total suspensions and the highest suspension rate in the County. Given that this district has the second most suspensions in the State, while having a higher rate than Los Angeles Unified and any other district in Sacramento County, it is clear that Sacramento City Unified may represent the most egregious suspension district for Black males in the State of California. The suspension rate for Sacramento City Unified is closely followed by Twin Rivers Unified at 20.1% and thereafter by Folsom-Cordova Unified (at 20.0%), San Juan Unified (at 19.3%), and Natomas Unified (at 19.0%). See Appendix E for a listing of the most egregious suspension schools in the County and Appendix F for a complete listing of Black male suspensions in County schools.

Table 5

The Top 5 Worst Suspension Districts by Suspension Rate

	School District	Unduplicated Suspensions	Total Black Male Enrollment	Suspension Rate	One Time Suspensions	Multiple Suspensions
1	River Delta Joint Unified	5	20	25.00%	40.00%	60.00%
2	Sacramento City Unified	887	4,286	20.70%	55.10%	44.90%
3	Twin Rivers Unifed	553	2,745	20.10%	54.10%	45.90%
4	Folsom-Cordova Unified	136	681	20.00%	55.10%	44.90%
5	San Juan Unified	430	2,233	19.30%	49.30%	50.70%

CONCLUSION



The data presented herein provide an initial picture of the bleak educational conditions that some Black males in Sacramento County must navigate. It is clear that some districts are far too reliant upon suspension as a form of discipline. This fact is worsened in light of research that suggests that Black male overrepresentation in exclusionary discipline is a function of bias and stereotypes that can be harbored (often unconsciously) by educators. Given this, it is recommended that school and school districts in the county begin to develop new programs, policies, and practices to reduce the suspensions of Black males.

In the GET OUT! report, Wood, Harris III, and Howard (2018) offered recommendations for improving suspension rates for Black males across the State of California. In a similar fashion, we extend those recommendations to educators and policymakers in Sacramento County. These recommendations represent a strategic framework for redressing the large disparities in discipline within the region. With this in mind, we recommend the following:

- Implement intensive, ongoing professional development for all educators on unconscious bias, racial microaggressions, culturally mediated behaviors, and teaching practices for boys and young men of color.
- Eliminate the use of suspension as a form of discipline for young boys in early childhood education (preschool through third grade).
- Conduct analyses of school and school district data that can be used to guide discourse between school leaders, parents, policymakers, and other stakeholders on reducing the prevalence of exclusionary discipline in the region.
- Initiate district-level plans to reduce suspensions that identify areas in need of attention, specify planned interventions, and track the effectiveness of these interventions over time.
- Establish a countywide exclusionary discipline taskforce that can investigate districts and schools in the county with egregiously high levels of suspensions for Black males.
- Require that advocates be involved as independent representatives for any foster youth who is subject to suspension.
- Provide avenues for students to report educators who they feel are unduly “targeting” them for discipline with follow-up with students afterwards.
- Employ restorative justice as an alternative to school suspension in an effort to build communities and “restore” relationships between all affected parties after an incident has occurred.
- Enhance school resources to identify and support students who have experienced personal trauma.
- Recognize the role that cultural misunderstanding and differences have in producing disparities in suspension.

Taken together, these recommendations can help to improve the educational conditions of Black males who attend school in Sacramento County. We urge all stakeholders in the county to receive the findings presented here with a sense of urgency.

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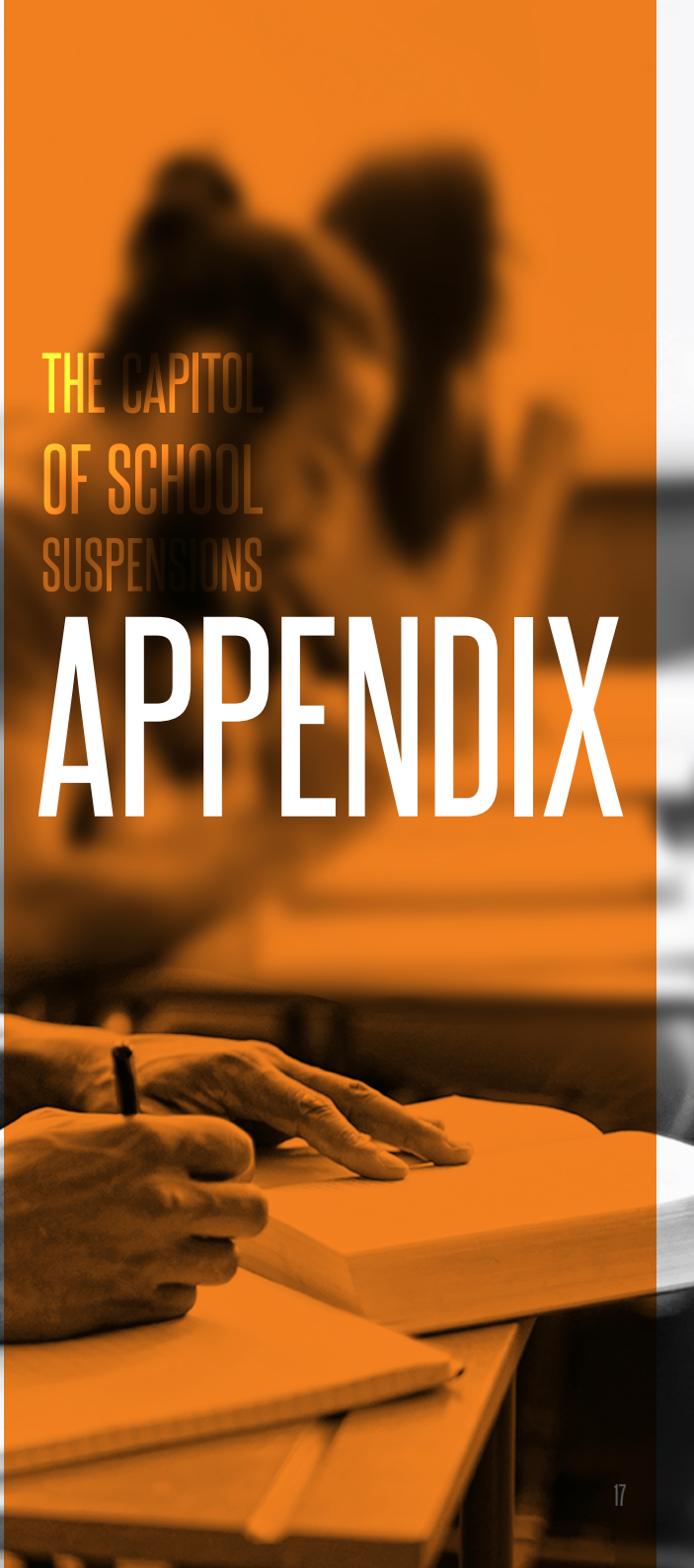
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² Note: We have modified their recommendation for a statewide taskforce to focus more on county-specific issues.



THE CAPITOL
OF SCHOOL
SUSPENSIONS

APPENDIX



APPENDIX A

Elk Grove Unified School District

District Report on African American Males

Cumulative Enrollemt	Total Suspensions	Unduplicated Count of Students Suspended	Suspension Rate	Percent of Students Suspended with One Suspension	Percent of Students Suspended with Multiple Suspensions
4,527	1,476	745	16.5%	58.0%	42.0%

Violent Incident (Injury)	Violent Incident (No Injury)	Weapons Possession	Illicit Drug Related	Defiance Only	Other Reasons
1.83%	63.4%	2.1%	5.1%	20.4%	7.3%

All Grades	K-3	4-6	7-8	9-12	Ungraded
16.5%	7.8%	15.1%	29.2%	18.7%	0%

Students with Disabilities	Low-Income	Foster	Homeless
20.9%	18.5%	28.6%	14.8%

Traditional	Charter
16.6%	2.3%

In-School	Out-of-School
2.1%	15.7%

APPENDIX B

San Juan Unified School District

District Report on African American Males

Cumulative Enrollemt	Total Suspensions	Unduplicated Count of Students Suspended	Suspension Rate	Percent of Students Suspended with One Suspension	Percent of Students Suspended with Multiple Suspensions
2,233	1,054	430	19.3%	49.3%	50.7%

Violent Incident (Injury)	Violent Incident (No Injury)	Weapons Possession	Illicit Drug Related	Defiance Only	Other Reasons
10%	45.7%	1.3%	3.7%	35.1%	4.2%

All Grades	K-3	4-6	7-8	9-12	Ungraded
19.3%	10.8%	23.9%	22.4%	21.9%	-

Students with Disabilities	Low-Income	Foster	Homeless
23.1%	21.6%	29.4%	27.4%

Traditional	Charter
24.4%	2.1%

In-School	Out-of-School
7.7%	15.7%

APPENDIX C

Twin Rivers Unified

District Report on African American Males

Cumulative Enrollemt	Total Suspensions	Unduplicated Count of Students Suspended	Suspension Rate	Percent of Students Suspended with One Suspension	Percent of Students Suspended with Multiple Suspensions
2,745	1,224	553	20.1%	54.1%	49.9%

Violent Incident (Injury)	Violent Incident (No Injury)	Weapons Possession	Illicit Drug Related	Defiance Only	Other Reasons
27.53%	39.54%	1.88%	4.00%	23.44%	3.59%

All Grades	K-3	4-6	7-8	9-12	Ungraded
20.1%	13.0%	27.5%	31.5%	17.4%	*

Students with Disabilities	Low-Income	Foster	Homeless
24.0%	21.3%	26.5%	23.1%

Traditional	Charter
23.1%	6.9%

In-School	Out-of-School
1.5%	19.5%

APPENDIX D

Sacramento Unified

District Report on African American Males

Cumulative Enrollemt	Total Suspensions	Unduplicated Count of Students Suspended	Suspension Rate	Percent of Students Suspended with One Suspension	Percent of Students Suspended with Multiple Suspensions
4,286	1,859	887	20.7%	55.1%	44.9%

Violent Incident (Injury)	Violent Incident (No Injury)	Weapons Possession	Illicit Drug Related	Defiance Only	Other Reasons
10.97%	57.72%	1.67%	4.68%	19.90%	5.06%

All Grades	K-3	4-6	7-8	9-12	Ungraded
20.7%	11.8%	23.9%	28.2%	23.0%	4.5%

Students with Disabilities	Low-Income	Foster	Homeless
25.4%	21.9%	32.2%	16.1%

Traditional	Charter
19.6%	24.7%

In-School	Out-of-School
3.4%	19.4%

APPENDIX E

County Schools With Suspension Rates of 30% or Higher (Ranked)

School	Cumulative Enrollemnt	Suspension Rate
Success Academy	31	64.50%
Prospect Community Day School	15	60.00%
La Vista Center	22	54.50%
Mesa Verde High	37	54.10%
Natomas Gateways Middle	78	52.60%
James Rutter Middle	80	51.30%
Palmiter Special Education	43	51.20%
Mather Heights Elementary	10	50.00%
Rio Tierra Junior High	41	48.80%
Del Campo High	77	46.80%
Kit Carson Middle	42	45.20%
Martin Luther King Jr. Technology Academy	67	44.80%
Ethel Phillips Elementary	27	44.40%
El Camino Fundamental High	82	43.90%
W. E. Mitchell Middle	32	43.80%
St. HOPE Public School 7	205	42.00%
Albert Einstein Middle	66	40.90%
Mills Middle	71	40.80%
Thomas Edison Language Institute K-8	77	40.30%
Natomas Middle	121	39.70%
Rio Linda Preparatory Academy	18	38.90%

APPENDIX E - CONTINUED

County Schools With Suspension Rates of 30% or Higher (Ranked)

School	Cumulative Enrollemnt	Suspension Rate
John H. Still	129	38.80%
Mira Loma High	83	38.60%
Village Elementary	50	38.00%
Encina Preparatory High	166	38.00%
Will C. Wood Middle	45	37.80%
Arcade Fundamental Middle	19	36.80%
Kohler Elementary	60	36.70%
Edward Harris, Jr. Middle	99	36.40%
Dyer-Kelly Elementary	51	35.30%
Capitol Collegiate Academy	63	34.90%
Anna Kirchgater Elementary	79	32.90%
John D. Sloat Elementary	31	32.30%
Samuel Jackman Middle	114	31.60%
Highlands High	70	31.40%
White Rock Elementary	32	31.30%
Foothill High	144	31.30%
Nova Opportunity	16	31.30%
T. R. Smedberg Middle	99	31.30%
Hiram W. Johnson High	145	31.00%
Rio Linda High	82	30.50%
John Morse Therapeutic Center	23	30.40%
Carriage Drive Elementary	10	30.00%
Gold River Discovery Center K-8	10	30.00%

APPENDIX F

Suspension Rates by School District

District	School	Cumulative Enrollment	Suspension Rate	Percent Suspended (One Time)	Percent Suspended (Multiple Times)
Arcohe Union Elementary District	Arcohe Elementary	*	*	*	*
California Education Authority (CEA) Headquarters	Johanna Boss High	68	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
California Education Authority (CEA) Headquarters	Mary B. Perry High	62	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
California Education Authority (CEA) Headquarters	N.A. Chaderjian High	127	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
California Education Authority (CEA) Headquarters	Pine Grove Youth Conservation Camp	19	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Center Joint Unified	Cyril Spinelli Elementary	*	*	*	*
Center Joint Unified	Global Youth Charter	*	*	*	*
Center Joint Unified	McClellan High (Continuation)	*	*	*	*
Center Joint Unified	Nonpublic, Nonsectarian Schools	*	*	*	*
Center Joint Unified	Wilson C. Riles Middle	44	25.00%	72.70%	27.30%
Center Joint Unified	Oak Hill Elementary	65	24.60%	50.00%	50.00%
Center Joint Unified	North Country Elementary	31	22.60%	57.10%	42.90%
Center Joint Unified	Center High	86	15.10%	92.30%	7.70%
Center Joint Unified	Arthur S. Dudley Elementary	57	7.00%	25.00%	75.00%
Elk Grove Unified	C. W. Dillard Elementary	*	*	*	*
Elk Grove Unified	Pleasant Grove Elementary	*	*	*	*
Elk Grove Unified	Transition High (Continuation)	*	*	*	*
Elk Grove Unified	James Rutter Middle	80	51.30%	48.80%	51.20%
Elk Grove Unified	Edward Harris, Jr. Middle	99	36.40%	50.00%	50.00%
Elk Grove Unified	Anna Kirchgater Elementary	79	32.90%	61.50%	38.50%
Elk Grove Unified	Samuel Jackman Middle	114	31.60%	50.00%	50.00%
Elk Grove Unified	T. R. Smedberg Middle	99	31.30%	54.80%	45.20%
Elk Grove Unified	Florin High	115	27.80%	56.30%	43.80%

APPENDIX F - CONTINUED

Suspension Rates by School District

District	School	Cumulative Enrollment	Suspension Rate	Percent Suspended (One Time)	Percent Suspended (Multiple Times)
Elk Grove Unified	Valley High	180	25.60%	50.00%	50.00%
Elk Grove Unified	John Reith Elementary	65	24.60%	62.50%	37.50%
Elk Grove Unified	Florin Elementary	33	24.20%	62.50%	37.50%
Elk Grove Unified	Harriet G. Eddy Middle	101	23.80%	54.20%	45.80%
Elk Grove Unified	Joseph Kerr Middle	35	22.90%	12.50%	87.50%
Elk Grove Unified	Katherine L. Albiani Middle	37	21.60%	62.50%	37.50%
Elk Grove Unified	Herman Leimbach Elementary	107	21.50%	56.50%	43.50%
Elk Grove Unified	Mary Tsukamoto Elementary	76	21.10%	37.50%	62.50%
Elk Grove Unified	Union House Elementary	132	20.50%	37.00%	63.00%
Elk Grove Unified	Sheldon High	197	20.30%	55.00%	45.00%
Elk Grove Unified	Franklin High	189	20.10%	68.40%	31.60%
Elk Grove Unified	Laguna Creek High	213	18.80%	65.00%	35.00%
Elk Grove Unified	Toby Johnson Middle	92	18.50%	70.60%	29.40%
Elk Grove Unified	Robert J. Fite Elementary	45	17.80%	75.00%	25.00%
Elk Grove Unified	Monterey Trail High	186	17.70%	57.60%	42.40%
Elk Grove Unified	Samuel Kennedy Elementary	97	17.50%	64.70%	35.30%
Elk Grove Unified	Pleasant Grove High	91	16.50%	73.30%	26.70%
Elk Grove Unified	Elizabeth Pinkerton Middle	76	15.80%	83.30%	16.70%
Elk Grove Unified	Prairie Elementary	111	15.30%	52.90%	47.10%
Elk Grove Unified	Elk Grove High	64	14.10%	44.40%	55.60%
Elk Grove Unified	Calvine High	53	13.20%	100.00%	0.00%
Elk Grove Unified	Maeola E. Beitzel Elementary	69	13.00%	77.80%	22.20%
Elk Grove Unified	Cosumnes Oaks High	218	11.90%	76.90%	23.10%
Elk Grove Unified	Sierra-Enterprise Elementary	34	11.80%	75.00%	25.00%
Elk Grove Unified	Daylor (William) High (Continuation)	35	11.40%	100.00%	0.00%

APPENDIX F - CONTINUED

Suspension Rates by School District

District	School	Cumulative Enrollment	Suspension Rate	Percent Suspended (One Time)	Percent Suspended (Multiple Times)
Elk Grove Unified	David Reese Elementary	90	11.10%	60.00%	40.00%
Elk Grove Unified	James A. McKee Elementary	18	11.10%	100.00%	0.00%
Elk Grove Unified	Rio Cazadero High (Continuation)	46	10.90%	80.00%	20.00%
Elk Grove Unified	Edna Batey Elementary	38	10.50%	0.00%	100.00%
Elk Grove Unified	Isabelle Jackson Elementary	78	9.00%	85.70%	14.30%
Elk Grove Unified	Charles E. Mack Elementary	69	8.70%	83.30%	16.70%
Elk Grove Unified	Arthur C. Butler Elementary	58	8.60%	60.00%	40.00%
Elk Grove Unified	Stone Lake Elementary	49	8.20%	0.00%	100.00%
Elk Grove Unified	Sunrise Elementary	37	8.10%	66.70%	33.30%
Elk Grove Unified	Cosumnes River Elementary	13	7.70%	0.00%	100.00%
Elk Grove Unified	Elliott Ranch Elementary	41	7.30%	33.30%	66.70%
Elk Grove Unified	Irene B. West Elementary	71	7.00%	80.00%	20.00%
Elk Grove Unified	California Montessori Project - Elk Grove Campus	15	6.70%	0.00%	100.00%
Elk Grove Unified	Arlene Hein Elementary	47	6.40%	100.00%	0.00%
Elk Grove Unified	John Ehrhardt Elementary	65	6.20%	75.00%	25.00%
Elk Grove Unified	Raymond Case Elementary	55	5.50%	100.00%	0.00%
Elk Grove Unified	Barbara Comstock Morse Elementary	112	5.40%	50.00%	50.00%
Elk Grove Unified	Arnold Adreani Elementary	19	5.30%	100.00%	0.00%
Elk Grove Unified	Carroll Elementary	77	5.20%	50.00%	50.00%
Elk Grove Unified	Roy Herburger Elementary	59	5.10%	100.00%	0.00%
Elk Grove Unified	Franklin Elementary	43	4.70%	100.00%	0.00%
Elk Grove Unified	Florence Markofer Elementary	26	3.80%	100.00%	0.00%
Elk Grove Unified	Elk Grove Elementary	30	3.30%	0.00%	100.00%
Elk Grove Unified	Marion Mix Elementary	75	2.70%	100.00%	0.00%
Elk Grove Unified	Helen Carr Castello Elementary	50	2.00%	100.00%	0.00%

APPENDIX F - CONTINUED

Suspension Rates by School District

District	School	Cumulative Enrollment	Suspension Rate	Percent Suspended (One Time)	Percent Suspended (Multiple Times)
Elk Grove Unified	Foulks Ranch Elementary	57	1.80%	0.00%	100.00%
Elk Grove Unified	Elitha Donner Elementary	65	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Elk Grove Unified	Elk Grove Charter	40	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Elk Grove Unified	Ellen Feickert Elementary	36	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Elk Grove Unified	Jessie Baker	21	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Elk Grove Unified	Joseph Sims Elementary	54	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Elk Grove Unified	Las Flores High (Alternative)	60	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Elk Grove Unified	Nonpublic, Nonsectarian Schools	69	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Elverta Joint Elementary	Elverta Elementary	*	*	*	*
Elverta Joint Elementary	Alpha Technology Middle	10	20.00%	100.00%	0.00%
Elverta Joint Elementary	Alpha Charter	13	7.70%	0.00%	100.00%
Folsom-Cordova Unified	Blanche Sprentz Elementary	*	*	*	*
Folsom-Cordova Unified	Carl H. Sundahl Elementary	*	*	*	*
Folsom-Cordova Unified	Empire Oaks Elementary	*	*	*	*
Folsom-Cordova Unified	Folsom Hills Elementary	*	*	*	*
Folsom-Cordova Unified	Folsom Lake High	*	*	*	*
Folsom-Cordova Unified	Gold Ridge Elementary	*	*	*	*
Folsom-Cordova Unified	Natoma Station Elementary	*	*	*	*
Folsom-Cordova Unified	Oak Chan Elementary	*	*	*	*
Folsom-Cordova Unified	Riverview STEM Elementary	*	*	*	*
Folsom-Cordova Unified	Russell Ranch Elementary	*	*	*	*
Folsom-Cordova Unified	Sandra J. Gallardo Elementary	*	*	*	*
Folsom-Cordova Unified	Theodore Judah Elementary	*	*	*	*
Folsom-Cordova Unified	Walnutwood High (Independent Study)	*	*	*	*
Folsom-Cordova Unified	Prospect Community Day School	15	60.00%	11.10%	88.90%

APPENDIX F - CONTINUED

Suspension Rates by School District

District	School	Cumulative Enrollment	Suspension Rate	Percent Suspended (One Time)	Percent Suspended (Multiple Times)
Folsom-Cordova Unified	Mather Heights Elementary	10	50.00%	60.00%	40.00%
Folsom-Cordova Unified	W. E. Mitchell Middle	32	43.80%	50.00%	50.00%
Folsom-Cordova Unified	Mills Middle	71	40.80%	27.60%	72.40%
Folsom-Cordova Unified	White Rock Elementary	32	31.30%	60.00%	40.00%
Folsom-Cordova Unified	Cordova High	131	25.20%	87.90%	12.10%
Folsom-Cordova Unified	Sutter Middle	19	21.10%	50.00%	50.00%
Folsom-Cordova Unified	Rancho Cordova Elementary	17	17.60%	100.00%	0.00%
Folsom-Cordova Unified	Williamson Elementary	41	17.10%	28.60%	71.40%
Folsom-Cordova Unified	Cordova Gardens Elementary	36	16.70%	66.70%	33.30%
Folsom-Cordova Unified	Folsom Middle	14	14.30%	100.00%	0.00%
Folsom-Cordova Unified	Cordova Villa Elementary	52	13.50%	71.40%	28.60%
Folsom-Cordova Unified	Cordova Meadows Elementary	40	12.50%	60.00%	40.00%
Folsom-Cordova Unified	Kinney High (Continuation)	21	9.50%	50.00%	50.00%
Folsom-Cordova Unified	Peter J. Shields Elementary	24	4.20%	0.00%	100.00%
Folsom-Cordova Unified	Folsom High	50	4.00%	50.00%	50.00%
Folsom-Cordova Unified	Navigator Elementary	30	3.30%	100.00%	0.00%
Folsom-Cordova Unified	Folsom Cordova K-8 Community Charter	14	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Folsom-Cordova Unified	Nonpublic, Nonsectarian Schools	14	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Folsom-Cordova Unified	Vista del Lago High	12	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Galt Joint Union Elementary	Lake Canyon Elementary	*	*	*	*
Galt Joint Union Elementary	Marengo Ranch Elementary	*	*	*	*
Galt Joint Union Elementary	Nonpublic, Nonsectarian Schools	*	*	*	*
Galt Joint Union Elementary	River Oaks Elementary	*	*	*	*
Galt Joint Union Elementary	Robert L. McCaffrey Middle	*	*	*	*
Galt Joint Union Elementary	Valley Oaks Elementary	*	*	*	*

APPENDIX F - CONTINUED

Suspension Rates by School District

District	School	Cumulative Enrollment	Suspension Rate	Percent Suspended (One Time)	Percent Suspended (Multiple Times)
Galt Joint Union Elementary	Vernon E. Greer Elementary	*	*	*	*
Galt Joint Union High	Estrellita Continuation High	*	*	*	*
Galt Joint Union High	Galt High	*	*	*	*
Galt Joint Union High	Nonpublic, Nonsectarian Schools	*	*	*	*
Galt Joint Union High	Liberty Ranch High	20	5.00%	100.00%	0.00%
Natomas Unified	Nonpublic, Nonsectarian Schools	*	*	*	*
Natomas Unified	Natomas Gateways Middle	78	52.60%	43.90%	56.10%
Natomas Unified	Natomas Middle	121	39.70%	47.90%	52.10%
Natomas Unified	Jefferson Elementary	53	28.30%	86.70%	13.30%
Natomas Unified	Leroy Greene Academy	53	20.80%	36.40%	63.60%
Natomas Unified	Natomas High	145	20.00%	51.70%	48.30%
Natomas Unified	Two Rivers Elementary	47	19.10%	77.80%	22.20%
Natomas Unified	Bannon Creek Elementary	82	18.30%	40.00%	60.00%
Natomas Unified	Witter Ranch Elementary	67	17.90%	66.70%	33.30%
Natomas Unified	Discovery High	45	15.60%	42.90%	57.10%
Natomas Unified	Inderkum High	262	15.60%	73.20%	26.80%
Natomas Unified	H. Allen Hight Elementary	132	15.20%	75.00%	25.00%
Natomas Unified	Natomas Park Elementary	72	13.90%	50.00%	50.00%
Natomas Unified	Heron	61	11.50%	57.10%	42.90%
Natomas Unified	American Lakes Elementary	86	9.30%	50.00%	50.00%
Natomas Unified	Natomas Pacific Pathways Prep Middle	25	4.00%	100.00%	0.00%
Natomas Unified	Natomas Charter	63	3.20%	50.00%	50.00%
Natomas Unified	Natomas Pacific Pathways Prep	27	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Natomas Unified	Natomas Pacific Pathways Prep Elementary	21	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Natomas Unified	Westlake Charter	51	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

APPENDIX F - CONTINUED

Suspension Rates by School District

District	School	Cumulative Enrollment	Suspension Rate	Percent Suspended (One Time)	Percent Suspended (Multiple Times)
River Delta Joint Unified	Bates Elementary	*	*	*	*
River Delta Joint Unified	Clarksburg Middle	*	*	*	*
River Delta Joint Unified	D. H. White Elementary	*	*	*	*
River Delta Joint Unified	Delta Elementary Charter	*	*	*	*
River Delta Joint Unified	Delta High	*	*	*	*
River Delta Joint Unified	Isleton Elementary	*	*	*	*
River Delta Joint Unified	Mokelumne High (Continuation)	*	*	*	*
River Delta Joint Unified	Nonpublic, Nonsectarian Schools	*	*	*	*
River Delta Joint Unified	Rio Vista High	*	*	*	*
River Delta Joint Unified	River Delta Community Day	*	*	*	*
River Delta Joint Unified	River Delta High/Elementary (Alternative)	*	*	*	*
River Delta Joint Unified	Riverview Middle	*	*	*	*
River Delta Joint Unified	Walnut Grove Elementary	*	*	*	*
Robla Elementary	Taylor Street Elementary	71	29.60%	47.60%	52.40%
Robla Elementary	Glenwood Elementary	44	22.70%	40.00%	60.00%
Robla Elementary	Robla Elementary	22	18.20%	75.00%	25.00%
Robla Elementary	Main Avenue Elementary	35	14.30%	80.00%	20.00%
Robla Elementary	Bell Avenue Elementary	31	9.70%	66.70%	33.30%
Robla Elementary	Paseo Grande Charter	44	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Sacramento City Unified	California Montessori Project-Capitol Campus	*	*	*	*
Sacramento City Unified	Crocker/Riverside Elementary	*	*	*	*
Sacramento City Unified	District Office	*	*	*	*
Sacramento City Unified	Earl Warren Elementary	*	*	*	*
Sacramento City Unified	Phoebe A. Hearst Elementary	*	*	*	*
Sacramento City Unified	The Language Academy of Sacramento	*	*	*	*

APPENDIX F - CONTINUED

Suspension Rates by School District

District	School	Cumulative Enrollment	Suspension Rate	Percent Suspended (One Time)	Percent Suspended (Multiple Times)
Sacramento City Unified	Success Academy	31	64.50%	40.00%	60.00%
Sacramento City Unified	Kit Carson Middle	42	45.20%	42.10%	57.90%
Sacramento City Unified	Ethel Phillips Elementary	27	44.40%	66.70%	33.30%
Sacramento City Unified	St. HOPE Public School 7	205	42.00%	45.30%	54.70%
Sacramento City Unified	Albert Einstein Middle	66	40.90%	22.20%	77.80%
Sacramento City Unified	John H. Still	129	38.80%	40.00%	60.00%
Sacramento City Unified	Will C. Wood Middle	45	37.80%	47.10%	52.90%
Sacramento City Unified	Capitol Collegiate Academy	63	34.90%	36.40%	63.60%
Sacramento City Unified	John D. Sloat Elementary	31	32.30%	50.00%	50.00%
Sacramento City Unified	Hiram W. Johnson High	145	31.00%	40.00%	60.00%
Sacramento City Unified	John Morse Therapeutic Center	23	30.40%	85.70%	14.30%
Sacramento City Unified	Cesar Chavez Intermediate	47	29.80%	64.30%	35.70%
Sacramento City Unified	Rosa Parks Elementary	126	29.40%	45.90%	54.10%
Sacramento City Unified	American Legion High (Continuation)	78	28.20%	72.70%	27.30%
Sacramento City Unified	Luther Burbank High	228	28.10%	53.10%	46.90%
Sacramento City Unified	Sacramento Charter High	277	27.10%	72.00%	28.00%
Sacramento City Unified	California Middle	61	26.20%	75.00%	25.00%
Sacramento City Unified	Elder Creek Elementary	31	25.80%	87.50%	12.50%
Sacramento City Unified	Isador Cohen Elementary	40	25.00%	60.00%	40.00%
Sacramento City Unified	Fern Bacon Middle	71	22.50%	62.50%	37.50%
Sacramento City Unified	Bret Harte Elementary	47	21.30%	60.00%	40.00%
Sacramento City Unified	John F. Kennedy High	227	21.10%	58.30%	41.70%
Sacramento City Unified	Rosemont High	147	21.10%	54.80%	45.20%
Sacramento City Unified	New Joseph Bonnheim (NJB)	24	20.80%	80.00%	20.00%
Sacramento City Unified	Ethel I. Baker Elementary	49	20.40%	50.00%	50.00%

APPENDIX F - CONTINUED

Suspension Rates by School District

District	School	Cumulative Enrollment	Suspension Rate	Percent Suspended (One Time)	Percent Suspended (Multiple Times)
Sacramento City Unified	George Washington Carver School of Arts and Science	15	20.00%	100.00%	0.00%
Sacramento City Unified	New Technology High	20	20.00%	100.00%	0.00%
Sacramento City Unified	Hubert H. Bancroft Elementary	42	19.00%	62.50%	37.50%
Sacramento City Unified	Abraham Lincoln Elementary	48	18.80%	44.40%	55.60%
Sacramento City Unified	Oak Park Preparatory Academy	38	18.40%	71.40%	28.60%
Sacramento City Unified	Pacific Elementary	49	18.40%	66.70%	33.3
Sacramento City Unified	Arthur A Benjamin Health Professions High	11	18.20%	100.00%	0.00%
Sacramento City Unified	John Cabrillo Elementary	57	17.50%	80.00%	20.00%
Sacramento City Unified	Sam Brennan Middle	71	16.90%	66.70%	33.30%
Sacramento City Unified	Woodbine Elementary	31	16.10%	40.00%	60.00%
Sacramento City Unified	H.W. Harkness Elementary	50	16.00%	75.00%	25.00%
Sacramento City Unified	Parkway Elementary	120	15.80%	68.40%	31.60%
Sacramento City Unified	Yav Pem Suab Academy-Preparing for the Future Charter	26	15.40%	75.00%	25.00%
Sacramento City Unified	Martin Luther King Jr.	67	14.90%	70.00%	30.00%
Sacramento City Unified	O.W. Erlewine Elementary	27	14.80%	100.00%	0.00%
Sacramento City Unified	Oak Ridge Elementary	55	14.50%	37.50%	62.50%
Sacramento City Unified	Hollywood Park Elementary	21	14.30%	100.00%	0.00%
Sacramento City Unified	Pony Express Elementary	35	14.30%	60.00%	40.00%
Sacramento City Unified	The MET	15	13.30%	100.00%	0.00%
Sacramento City Unified	Nicholas Elementary	53	13.20%	71.40%	28.60%
Sacramento City Unified	Leataata Floyd Elementary	94	12.80%	66.70%	33.30%
Sacramento City Unified	C.K. McClatchy High	106	12.30%	69.20%	30.80%
Sacramento City Unified	Tahoe Elementary	49	12.20%	50.00%	50.00%
Sacramento City Unified	Sutter Middle	44	11.40%	100.00%	0.00%

APPENDIX F - CONTINUED

Suspension Rates by School District

District	School	Cumulative Enrollment	Suspension Rate	Percent Suspended (One Time)	Percent Suspended (Multiple Times)
Sacramento City Unified	Aspire Capitol Heights Academy	100	11.00%	81.80%	18.20%
Sacramento City Unified	Edward Kemble Elementary	79	10.10%	75.00%	25.00%
Sacramento City Unified	Matsuyama Elementary	63	9.50%	66.70%	33.30%
Sacramento City Unified	Peter Burnett Elementary	34	8.80%	66.70%	33.30%
Sacramento City Unified	Sequoia Elementary	35	8.60%	33.30%	66.70%
Sacramento City Unified	Caleb Greenwood Elementary	12	8.30%	100.00%	0.00%
Sacramento City Unified	David Lubin Elementary	37	8.10%	66.70%	33.30%
Sacramento City Unified	Theodore Judah Elementary	25	8.00%	50.00%	50.00%
Sacramento City Unified	Alice Birney Waldorf-Inspired	14	7.10%	100.00%	0.00%
Sacramento City Unified	School of Engineering & Sciences	62	6.50%	75.00%	25.00%
Sacramento City Unified	James Marshall Elementary	34	5.90%	100.00%	0.00%
Sacramento City Unified	Father Keith B. Kenny	72	5.60%	100.00%	0.00%
Sacramento City Unified	Sutterville Elementary	18	5.60%	100.00%	0.00%
Sacramento City Unified	Golden Empire Elementary	37	5.40%	50.00%	50.00%
Sacramento City Unified	John Bidwell Elementary	60	5.00%	33.30%	66.70%
Sacramento City Unified	Bowing Green Elementary	64	4.70%	66.70%	33.30%
Sacramento City Unified	Sol Aureus College Preparatory	68	4.40%	66.70%	33.30%
Sacramento City Unified	A.M. Winn Waldorf-Inspired	31	3.20%	100.00%	0.00%
Sacramento City Unified	Camellia Elementary	17	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Sacramento City Unified	Capital City Independent Study	63	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Sacramento City Unified	Caroline Wenzel Elementary	59	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Sacramento City Unified	Genevieve Didion	28	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Sacramento City Unified	Leonardo Da Vinci	22	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Sacramento City Unified	Mark Twain Elementary	22	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Sacramento City Unified	Nonpublic, Nonsectarian School	106	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

APPENDIX F - CONTINUED

Suspension Rates by School District

District	School	Cumulative Enrollment	Suspension Rate	Percent Suspended (One Time)	Percent Suspended (Multiple Times)
Sacramento City Unified	Susan B. Anthony Elementary	18	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Sacramento City Unified	Washington Elementary	11	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Sacramento City Unified	West Campus	21	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Sacramento City Unified	William Land Elementary	12	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Sacramento County office of Education	Palmiter Special Education	43	51.20%	22.70%	77.30%
Sacramento County office of Education	Sacramento County ED Special Education	17	35.30%	66.70%	33.30%
Sacramento County Office of Education	Gerber Jr./Sr. High	54	24.10%	76.90%	23.10%
Sacramento County office of Education	Elinor Lincoln Hickey Jr./Sr. High	53	22.60%	75.00%	25.00%
Sacramento County office of Education	North Area Community	54	16.70%	77.80%	22.20%
Sacramento County office of Education	El Centro Jr./Sr. High	291	8.20%	70.80%	29.20%
Sacramento County office of Education	Fortune	464	6.00%	67.90%	32.10%
Sacramento County office of Education	Sacramento County SH Special Education	16	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
San Juan Unified	Arlington Heights Elementary	*	*	*	*
San Juan Unified	Atkinson Academy Charter	*	*	*	*
San Juan Unified	Cambridge Heights Elementary	*	*	*	*
San Juan Unified	Del Dayo Elementary	*	*	*	*
San Juan Unified	District Office	*	*	*	*
San Juan Unified	Earl Legette Elementary	*	*	*	*
San Juan Unified	Gateway International	*	*	*	*
San Juan Unified	General Davie, Jr. Primary Center	*	*	*	*
San Juan Unified	Golden Valley Orchard	*	*	*	*

APPENDIX F - CONTINUED

Suspension Rates by School District

District	School	Cumulative Enrollment	Suspension Rate	Percent Suspended (One Time)	Percent Suspended (Multiple Times)
San Juan Unified	Golden Valley River	*	*	*	*
San Juan Unified	Grand Oaks Elementary	*	*	*	*
San Juan Unified	Green Oaks Fundamental Elementary	*	*	*	*
San Juan Unified	Harry Dewey Fundamental Elementary	*	*	*	*
San Juan Unified	Laurel Ruff Transition	*	*	*	*
San Juan Unified	Mission Avenue Open Elementary	*	*	*	*
San Juan Unified	Oakview Community Elementary	*	*	*	*
San Juan Unified	Orangevale Open K-8	*	*	*	*
San Juan Unified	Ottomon Way Elementary	*	*	*	*
San Juan Unified	Pershing Elementary	*	*	*	*
San Juan Unified	Ralph Richardson Center	*	*	*	*
San Juan Unified	Trajan Elementary	*	*	*	*
San Juan Unified	Twin Lakes Elementary	*	*	*	*
San Juan Unified	Valley Oaks	*	*	*	*
San Juan Unified	Woodside K-8	*	*	*	*
San Juan Unified	La Vista Center	22	54.50%	66.70%	33.30%
San Juan Unified	Mesa Verde High	37	54.10%	55.00%	45.00%
San Juan Unified	Del Campo High	77	46.80%	52.80%	47.20%
San Juan Unified	El Camino Fundamental High	82	43.90%	33.30%	66.70%
San Juan Unified	Thomas Edison Language Institute K-8	77	40.30%	38.70%	61.30%
San Juan Unified	Mira Loma High	83	38.60%	37.50%	62.50%
San Juan Unified	Encina Preparatory High	166	38.00%	42.90%	57.10%
San Juan Unified	Dyer-Kelly Elementary	51	35.30%	66.70%	33.30%
San Juan Unified	Carriage Drive Elementary	10	30.00%	0.00%	100.00%
San Juan Unified	Gold River Discovery Center K-8	10	30.00%	100.00%	0.00%
San Juan Unified	La Entrada Continuation High	20	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

APPENDIX F - CONTINUED

Suspension Rates by School District

District	School	Cumulative Enrollment	Suspension Rate	Percent Suspended (One Time)	Percent Suspended (Multiple Times)
San Juan Unified	Starr King K-8	69	29.00%	50.00%	50.00%
San Juan Unified	San Juan High	43	27.90%	58.30%	41.70%
San Juan Unified	Carmichael Elementary	26	26.90%	28.60%	71.40%
San Juan Unified	Winston Churchill Middle	46	26.10%	33.30%	66.70%
San Juan Unified	Coyle Avenue Elementary	25	24.00%	66.70%	33.30%
San Juan Unified	Charles Peck Elementary	26	23.10%	33.30%	66.70%
San Juan Unified	Whitney Avenue Elementary	53	22.60%	50.00%	50.00%
San Juan Unified	Greer Elementary	76	21.10%	50.00%	50.00%
San Juan Unified	Thomas Kelly Elementary	24	20.80%	60.00%	40.00%
San Juan Unified	Louis Pasteur Fundamental Middle	10	20.00%	50.00%	50.00%
San Juan Unified	Mariposa Avenue Elementary	20	20.00%	50.00%	50.00%
San Juan Unified	Northridge Elementary	10	20.00%	100.00%	0.00%
San Juan Unified	John Barrett Middle	33	18.20%	33.30%	66.70%
San Juan Unified	Sylvan Middle	28	17.90%	80.00%	20.00%
San Juan Unified	Rio Americano High	46	15.20%	71.40%	28.60%
San Juan Unified	Aspire Alexander Twilight College Preparatory Academy	40	15.00%	33.30%	66.70%
San Juan Unified	Will Rogers Middle	35	14.30%	80.00%	20.00%
San Juan Unified	Andrew Carnegie Middle	15	13.30%	50.00%	50.00%
San Juan Unified	Bella Vista High	32	12.50%	75.00%	25.00%
San Juan Unified	Kingswood K-8	24	12.50%	66.70%	33.30%
San Juan Unified	Cottage Elementary	18	11.10%	50.00%	50.00%
San Juan Unified	Mariemont Elementary	18	11.10%	100.00%	0.00%
San Juan Unified	Pasadena Avenue Elementary	36	11.10%	50.00%	50.00%
San Juan Unified	Arcade Fundamental Middle	19	36.80%	43.00%	57.00%

APPENDIX F - CONTINUED

Suspension Rates by School District

District	School	Cumulative Enrollment	Suspension Rate	Percent Suspended (One Time)	Percent Suspended (Multiple Times)
San Juan Unified	California Montessori Project-San Juan Campus	10	10.00%	0.00%	100.00%
San Juan Unified	Aspire Alexander Twilight Secondary Academy	31	9.70%	33.30%	66.70%
San Juan Unified	Albert Schweitzer Elementary	11	9.10%	0.00%	100.00%
San Juan Unified	Cameron Ranch Elementary	24	8.30%	50.00%	50.00%
San Juan Unified	Howe Avenue Elementary	84	8.30%	100.00%	0.00%
San Juan Unified	Casa Roble Fundamental High	13	7.70%	100.00%	0.00%
San Juan Unified	Sierra Oaks K-8	44	6.80%	66.70%	33.30%
San Juan Unified	Arden Middle	31	6.50%	100.00%	0.00%
San Juan Unified	Mary Deterding Elementary	17	5.90%	100.00%	0.00%
San Juan Unified	Skycrest Elementary	23	4.30%	100.00%	0.00%
San Juan Unified	Del Paso Manor Elementary	50	4.00%	100.00%	0.00%
San Juan Unified	El Sereno Alternative Education	16	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
San Juan Unified	James R. Cowan Fundamental Elementary	13	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
San Juan Unified	Lichen K-8	12	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
San Juan Unified	Nonpublic, Nonsectarian Schools	15	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
San Juan Unified	Options for Youth-San Juan	178	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
San Juan Unified	San Juan Choices Charter	20	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
San Juan Unified	Visions In Education	259	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
SBE - Paramount Collegiate Academy	Paramount Collegiate Academy	*	*	*	*
Twin Rivers Unified	Community Outreach Academy	*	*	*	*
Twin Rivers Unified	Futures High	*	*	*	*
Twin Rivers Unified	Miles P. Richmond	*	*	*	*
Twin Rivers Unified	Orchard Elementary	*	*	*	*
Twin Rivers Unified	Pathways Community Day	*	*	*	*

APPENDIX F - CONTINUED

Suspension Rates by School District

District	School	Cumulative Enrollment	Suspension Rate	Percent Suspended (One Time)	Percent Suspended (Multiple Times)
Twin Rivers Unified	Westside Preparatory Charter	*	*	*	*
Twin Rivers Unified	Rio Tierra Junior High	41	48.80%	55.00%	45.00%
Twin Rivers Unified	Martin Luther King Jr. Technology Academy	67	44.80%	46.70%	53.30%
Twin Rivers Unified	Rio Linda Preparatory Academy	18	38.90%	42.90%	57.10%
Twin Rivers Unified	Village Elementary	50	38.00%	57.90%	42.10%
Twin Rivers Unified	Kohler Elementary	60	36.70%	68.20%	31.80%
Twin Rivers Unified	Foothill High	144	31.30%	64.40%	35.60%
Twin Rivers Unified	Nova Opportunity	16	31.30%	60.00%	40.00%
Twin Rivers Unified	Rio Linda High	82	30.50%	68.00%	32.00%
Twin Rivers Unified	Foothill Ranch Middle	74	29.70%	50.00%	50.00%
Twin Rivers Unified	Fairbanks Elementary	43	27.90%	41.70%	58.30%
Twin Rivers Unified	Hagginwood Elementary	69	27.50%	52.60%	47.40%
Twin Rivers Unified	Pioneer Elementary	56	26.80%	53.30%	46.70%
Twin Rivers Unified	Grant Union High	264	23.90%	68.30%	31.70%
Twin Rivers Unified	Madison Elementary	81	23.50%	57.90%	42.10%
Twin Rivers Unified	Woodlake Elementary	73	23.30%	52.90%	47.10%
Twin Rivers Unified	Higher Learning Academy	76	22.40%	70.60%	29.40%
Twin Rivers Unified	Oakdale Elementary	113	22.10%	40.00%	60.00%
Twin Rivers Unified	Northwood Elementary	60	21.70%	15.40%	84.60%
Twin Rivers Unified	Frederick Joyce Elementary	75	21.30%	62.50%	37.50%
Twin Rivers Unified	Del Paso Heights Elementary	69	20.30%	35.70%	64.30%
Twin Rivers Unified	Ridgepoint Elementary	48	18.80%	55.60%	44.40%
Twin Rivers Unified	Hazel Strauch Elementary	52	17.30%	55.60%	44.40%
Twin Rivers Unified	Creative Connections Arts Academy	40	15.00%	50.00%	50.00%
Twin Rivers Unified	Hillsdale Elementary	18	6.00%	0%	100%

APPENDIX F - CONTINUED

Suspension Rates by School District

District	School	Cumulative Enrollment	Suspension Rate	Percent Suspended (One Time)	Percent Suspended (Multiple Times)
Twin Rivers Unified	Smythe Academy of Arts and Sciences	60	15.00%	66.70%	33.30%
Twin Rivers Unified	Foothill Oaks Elementary	70	14.30%	60.00%	40.00%
Twin Rivers Unified	Sierra View Elementary	30	13.30%	75.00%	25.00%
Twin Rivers Unified	Warren A. Allison Elementary	46	13.00%	33.30%	66.70%
Twin Rivers Unified	Woodridge Elementary	100	13.00%	46.20%	53.80%
Twin Rivers Unified	Norwood Junior High	91	12.10%	63.60%	36.40%
Twin Rivers Unified	Vista Nueva Career and Technology High	35	11.40%	100.00%	0.00%
Twin Rivers Unified	D. W. Babcock Elementary	47	19.10%	77.80%	22.20%
Twin Rivers Unified	Pacific Career and Technology High	29	10.30%	33.30%	66.70%
Twin Rivers Unified	Westside Elementary	10	10.00%	100.00%	0.00%
Twin Rivers Unified	Garden Valley Elementary	44	9.10%	25.00%	75.00%
Twin Rivers Unified	Michael J. Castori Elementary	63	7.90%	40.00%	60.00%
Twin Rivers Unified	Harmon Johnson Elementary	27	7.40%	0.00%	100.00%
Twin Rivers Unified	Noralto Elementary	29	6.90%	100.00%	0.00%
Twin Rivers Unified	Highlands High	70	31.40%	36.40%	63.60%
Twin Rivers Unified	Regency Park Elementary	77	5.20%	75.00%	25.00%
Twin Rivers Unified	Community Collaborative Charter	45	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Twin Rivers Unified	Dry Creek Elementary	10	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Twin Rivers Unified	Elwood J. Keema High	36	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Twin Rivers Unified	Frontier Elementary	23	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Twin Rivers Unified	Heritage Peak Charter	61	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Twin Rivers Unified	Highlands Community Charter	70	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Twin Rivers Unified	Morey Avenue Early Childhood Development	16	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Twin Rivers Unified	Nonpublic, Nonsectarian Schools	44	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Twin Rivers Unified	SAVA: Sacramento Academic and Vocational Academy	161	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

Note: * numbers are too small to report.



SACRAMENTO CITY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
SYSTEMIC INSTRUCTIONAL REVIEW

2020-2021

ccee
California Collaborative
for Educational Excellence

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I. What is the Systemic Instructional Review?

A systemic instructional review (SIR) is a diagnostic of an organization's instructional programs, practices, and implementation of initiatives (academic, behavioral, and social-emotional) from pre-K to 12th grade. A SIR is designed to guide sustainable practice that is grounded in a continuous improvement model and the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) framework. The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) defines MTSS as "a comprehensive continuum of evidence-based systematic practices to support a rapid response to students' needs, with regular observation to facilitate data-based instructional decision-making" (Title IX). Previously known as Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTI²) and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), MTSS provides the umbrella under which both live. MTSS consists of six critical components: Leadership, Communication/Collaboration, Capacity/Infrastructure, Data-based Problem-solving, Three-Tiered Instruction/Intervention, and Data Evaluation. The foundational work of the SIR has MTSS at its core.

The purpose of a systemic instructional review is to help support a local educational agency (LEA) identify strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities (SWOT) in the implementation of instructional initiatives and practices. Data is collected through focus group interviews, individual interviews, observations of all aspects of the instructional program, artifact reviews, and data analysis. Stakeholders at multiple levels (students, families, teachers, school site staff and administration, governance members, and district office leadership) are involved throughout the data collection process.

The SIR culminates in recommended action steps that are designed to assist districts in creating coherence throughout the system by supporting a strong focus on instruction, developing collaborative cultures, enhancing deeper learning, and establishing accountability throughout the system. These recommended actions are intended to serve the district as a roadmap to systemic instructional improvement.

Once the SIR report is completed, the district's first step is to prioritize SIR action steps from the report and engage in cycles of continuous improvement with progress-monitoring data indicators and evidence to validate completion. CCEE can serve the district, if desired, in its role to advise and assist the district in this process and work with the district to identify supports needed to implement the SIR actions leading to student success. Activities driven by the SIR should ideally align with a district plan with priorities, actions, and progress-monitoring data indicators. In its role, as defined in EDC 52072, to determine the capacity of the school district to implement the recommendations (identified as action steps within the SIR) and therefore will monitor and communicate the progress of the district on the implementation of SIR actions and recommendations specifically the district, COE, State Superintendent of Public Instruction and State Board of Education twice a year (fall and spring).

II. The California Collaborative for Educational Excellence

The California Collaborative for Educational Excellence (CCEE) is a statewide agency that works to strengthen California's public-school system so LEAs can build their capacity to improve student outcomes. The CCEE partners with the California Department of

Education (CDE), county offices of education (COE), and other stakeholders comprising a statewide network of experts who support LEAs under the System of Support and specialize in instructional practices targeting students with disabilities (SWD), English learners (EL), low-income students, and foster youth.

III. Project Inception

In December 2019, the data set on CA Dashboard for the 2018-19 school year was released. This year marked the 3rd year for the CA Dashboard, which enacted Education Code subdivision (g) of Section 52064.5 (CA School Dashboard) for three or more pupil subgroups identified pursuant to Section 52052 or, if the school district has less than three pupil subgroups or if all of the school district's pupil subgroups fail to meet priority outcomes in three out of four consecutive school years, the district is eligible for support from CCEE. The following table demonstrates how Sacramento City Unified School District (SCUSD) met the criteria for Education Code subdivision (g) of Section 52064.5.

Student Groups*	2017 Priority	2018 Priority	2019 Priority
Foster Youth	- Pupil Achievement - Pupil Engagement - School Climate	- Pupil Achievement - Pupil Engagement - School Climate - Outcomes in a Broad Course of Study	- Pupil Achievement - Pupil Engagement - School Climate
Students Experiencing Homelessness	- Pupil Achievement - School Climate	- Pupil Engagement - School Climate	- Pupil Achievement - Pupil Engagement
Students with Disabilities	- Pupil Achievement - Pupil Engagement - School Climate	- Pupil Achievement - Pupil Engagement - Outcomes in a Broad Course of Study	- Pupil Achievement - Pupil Engagement

*In addition to the student groups listed, in 2017 African American students were identified for Differentiated Assistance (DA). In 2018 African American, Native American, and Pacific Islander students were identified for DA. These student groups made improvements and were not identified for DA in 2019.

As a result of meeting the criteria, the CCEE SIR team met with SCUSD and Sacramento County Office of Education (SCOE) to present information as to what a systemic instructional review involves, the needs of the district, and the overall timeline of the review.

In March 2020, the SCUSD SIR was placed on pause due to the COVID-19 pandemic that halted data-gathering activities and required the immediate attention of the school district and county office of education. During the pause of the SIR activities, the CCEE team remained engaged with the district through monthly check-in meetings to provide guidance and support for immediate needs.

The support that comes from this partnership will manifest in the following ways:

- The CCEE provides advice and assistance to the school district and COE.

- CCEE, along with the COE, will report on ongoing progress on the implementation of actions to the State Superintendent.
- The systemic instructional review (SIR) and Differentiated Assistance Support will come together in service of the school district.
- The SIR will help inform the district as it makes decisions on LCAP priorities, meeting with stakeholders, and determining investments.

IV. Data Collection

The SIR activities resumed in early summer 2020, knowing that flexibility would be needed as SCUSD began the year with distance learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. The activities that began and were completed through December 2020 include empathy and individual stakeholder interviews with district staff and labor partners, as well as 18 focus groups from various stakeholders, including teaching and instructional support staff, students, families, principals, and community committees and partners (e.g., Black Parallel School Board, City of Sacramento). CCEE staff reviewed all documents submitted by SCUSD to support instructional efforts (e.g., LCAP, LCP, professional learning, assessment, and curriculum plans). Additional documents were added and reviewed during the period of focus groups and report drafting. After data triangulation sessions, CCEE SIR members followed-up with members of the district for clarifications as needed.

In November 2020, SCUSD decided to forgo virtual school and classroom visits and observations, an activity of the SIR process that normally occurs in-person. This decision was made after district leadership took stock of the current capacity of staff, teachers, and school leadership. After discussing the strain on the system due to the COVID-19 pandemic, with teaching and leadership staff expressing high levels of stress to district leadership, the CCEE and SCUSD agreed to host classroom and school site visits after in-school instruction resumes. The data gathered, at that point, will be incorporated into the ongoing support and progress monitoring of the implementation of SIR actions.

V. Report Features and Layout

The report is organized around the 12 CCEE instructional components. Each section of the report includes:

- a summary of the CCEE instructional component reviewed
- the findings based on data collection and SWOT analysis
- the discussion paragraph(s) detailing evidence based on the instructional component being reviewed
- the SWOT analysis of the component (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats); and
- Action Steps

The report culminates in a table of actions for SCUSD, and in collaboration with the CCEE, and Sacramento COE the district will create and implement a plan that prioritizes activities to address the SIR. Upon reviewing this report, it is recommended to have the CCEE Systemic Instructional Review Components (Appendix A) in hand to see the full details of each component.

VI. Summary of Findings

SCUSD serves approximately 42,000 students across 75 school sites spanning 70 square miles inclusive of both rural and urban settings. The diversity of Sacramento, one of the nation's most ethnically and linguistically diverse cities (Sheeler, 2019; Stodghill & Bower, 2002), is reflected in the district's demographics. Latinx students make up 40 percent of the student population, Asian and Pacific Islander students 19 percent, African American students 15 percent, and white students 17 percent. More than 51 languages are spoken by students and families in the district, and 31 percent of students are English learners (CDE). SCUSD serves some of the lowest income neighborhoods in Sacramento County, and more than 71 percent of students are considered socioeconomically disadvantaged.

Superintendent Jorge Aguilar, hired in 2017, inherited a district known for central office management challenges and adversarial labor-management relations. This has created an unstable foundation upon which the district has faced increasing personnel costs and structural budget deficits. Declining enrollment coupled with rising special education, operational, health, and pension costs have contributed to the ongoing structural budget issues and deficit spending. On November 19, 2020, the district presented a draft Fiscal Recovery Plan to the board, identifying potential budget reductions and changes. The Board voted on December 10, 2020 to continue the discussion up to February 2021 in order to focus on a negotiable savings reduction of about \$35 million.

Research shows continual change in leadership diminishes the ability to create long-term goals to see new policies and initiatives through to full implementation and create positive student results. Furthermore, staff members and community constituents can easily become frustrated with the constant cycle of change in a district's direction and mission. Studies show a clear link between consistent district leadership and student achievement. There is an expectation of accountability that extends to those supervising school operations and academic achievement. Across the country, an increase in the number of superintendent positions has not resulted in an increased pool of candidates. Urban districts across the country have seen the same vacancies targeted for the same candidates resulting in a shortage of candidates. High expectations, short (3-5 year) contracts, and difficult litigation have increased the pressure of occupying these positions (Nussbaum, 2007).

Superintendent Aguilar is the seventh superintendent to serve SCUSD since 2003. Superintendent Aguilar has worked to improve problematic business decisions and other internal processes since he was hired in 2017. He hired a new communications chief, replaced the district's chief academic officer and chief business officer. In 2019, the district brought in additional fiscal support to help correct budget errors and tighten up processes.

The district management and Sacramento City Teachers Association (SCTA) have had an antagonistic relationship for decades (The Implications of Sacramento City Unified's Ongoing Budgetary Challenges for Local and State Policy PACE, November 2019) that continues today and creates impediments to moving the instructional and continuous improvement priorities forward. Interviewees from both the district and SCTA described the relationship as broken and distrustful. Oftentimes, districts with contentious labor and management relationships continue to face budget challenges and may lose sight of what

matters most: student success and well-being. A recent example of the district and SCTA's inability to reach an agreement is the distance learning plan during pandemic.

The long history of contentious relationships between SCTA and SCUSD which signals the need to nurture strong, collaborative, and productive relationships between management and labor. It is clear that this contentious relationship has contributed to lack of clarity of what is expected both at the central office and school level. Of particular urgency is the need to come to agreement on the implementation of assessment and professional development. According to researchers, there are districts and labor partners that have been successful in strengthening labor-management relationships to do this work differently, and often in ways that fundamentally break with tradition. "[Districts and labor partners] are rethinking shared policymaking processes such as collective bargaining and meet-and-confer settings, as vehicles to address more traditional issues, such as wages and benefits. They often begin with a shared commitment in principle that places improved student learning and closing achievement gaps as an explicit priority for their work together. More often than not, these commitments reaffirm fairness in the workplace and develop the professional foundation for teaching and teacher leadership, as well" (Eckert, J. (Ed.) 2011).

In addition to developing and strengthening the foundation for teaching and learning in the district, there is also a need to restructure the district leadership to increase collaboration and more clearly define roles, responsibilities, and performance expectations within and across departments. Internal conversations with cabinet, instructional assistant superintendents, and key directors could examine the current structure and make needed changes that will better align with district goals and integrate the theory of action and improvement science principles as a starting point. Key goals for restructuring the district team is to reduce fragmentation, increase coherence and strategic support to schools, and develop two-way communication strategies to better gauge impact, results, and effectiveness for improving student outcomes.

Continuous improvement has been defined as the district's ongoing commitment to every schools' quality improvement efforts that are evidence-based. For this to occur, continuous improvement must be integrated into the daily work of individuals, contextualized within the system, and be iterative (Park et al., 2013). This will require SCUSD to take necessary steps to decide and communicate how this will look and how they will know it is working through performance indicators.

In spite of the challenges that need to be addressed by SCUSD, there are positive highlights to build from, supported by data, which provide opportunities to scale for systemic change. The following is a summary of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to the district:

Strengths

- The current work of the district is grounded in equity, access, and social justice.
- Increased A-G completion rates and 12th grade graduation rates for African American and students with disabilities.
- There is an increase in FAFSA application participation and submission.
- The district is working to standardize courses of study at the high school level.

- The district has developed a mid-year review process for the SPSA (School Plan for Student Achievement) to improve how it is used to monitor progress toward meeting goals.
- MTSS multi-year plan is in place and has been embraced by stakeholders.
- The district has undertaken SEL work over several years and has been recognized for their work in this area.

Weaknesses

- The instability of staffing, unclear expectation for roles, responsibilities, and accountability of leadership, uncertainty of budget and labor relations have resulted in silos within and across departments, increased tension, frustration, and morale issues.
- There is a lack of clarity among district office, departmental staff, principals, and teachers of what the exact district priorities are and what strategies are in place to accomplish priorities and execute the vision and mission of the district.
- There is a lack of coherent, efficient, and equitable district office service and support to schools.
- There is a lack of uniformity in how data is used, decisions are made, and central office departments are accountable to support the vision and mission of the district.
- Coherent, ongoing communication within and across departments and to schools is confusing and inconsistent.
- There is a lack of collective accountability for teaching and learning goals as well as priorities that would result in improved student outcomes.
- The lack of consistent implementation of common assessments across the district impacts how student progress is monitored and measured.
- The absence of an English learner (EL) master plan contributes to the lack of understanding, accountability, and implementation of integrated and designated ELD.
- The lack of a proactive process for identifying homeless youth may contribute to low identification numbers in the district.
- Collective accountability, ownership, and commitment to improving instruction, service, and support for students with disabilities continues to be a significant inequity in the district.
- There are limited and uneven districtwide opportunities to provide new and sustained professional learning linked to district goals, actions, and strategies.

Threats

- Siloed central office departments have led to limited collaboration within and among district and site leaders, lack of clear communication, expectations, and messaging of goals and outcomes.
- Ongoing labor relations between the district and SCTA, in areas such as how best to implement professional development and local assessments, hinder the progress of district goals and limits the capacity to change and improve student outcomes.
- Lack of accessible user-friendly data is a threat to developing data literacy and data-based decision-making.

- Changes in leadership and past district priorities have resulted in a range of ongoing school programs and resources that may be misaligned with current priorities. This misalignment may be contributing to the lack of progress for students with disabilities, EL students, African American students, students experiencing homelessness, foster youth, and others.
- Communication structures and processes are siloed and severely limit innovation, collaboration, and collective efficacy in supporting schools, site administrators, and teachers.
- The current district organizational structures do not support the urgent need to provide equitable robust instruction and educational experiences for all students and may lead to continued inequities.
- A decentralized system without clear expectations, accountability, and communication has resulted in less effective support for school leaders and inequitable educational programs/opportunities for students.

Opportunities

- The vision of equity and continuous improvement provides the opportunity to create coherent understanding and implementation strategies across the district to better support the whole child/student needs.
- There is an opportunity to capitalize on the SPSA processes to develop school goals and the implementation of continuous improvement expectations linked to leading and lagging measures to monitor progress.
- The district's implementation of the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) provides the opportunity to create and articulate an instructional vision, framework, priorities, and goals.
- There is an opportunity to streamline district priorities and strategies that results in a more systematic way to manage district time and resources.
- There is an opportunity with new personnel hires at cabinet level—chief academic officer, chief business officer, and the assistant superintendent for special education—to clarify the work and build trusting relationships across the entire district.

For the SCUSD SIR Executive Summary, please [click here](#).

VII. SIR Instructional Components, Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats, Analysis, and Actions

1. Culture, Coherence, and the Planning Process

(CCEE Instructional Component 1) The local educational agency (LEA) places a strong value on culture and climate for all stakeholders through the implementation of districtwide professional learning opportunities that teach, promote, and practice inclusivity and diversity. LEA members implement culturally reflective practices and policies designed to create coherence around an inclusive instructional mission and vision achieved through continuous improvement practices and processes. The LEA has a robust culture of accountability in regard to the academic, social, and emotional developmental of each child. Achievement outcomes guide coherent and collaborative work while fostering knowledge of expectations around teaching, learning, and accountability.

Finding 1a. While there is a theory of action, strategic plan, and vision around equity, access, and social justice, there is not yet a roadmap or comprehensive strategy for schools to engage in this work beyond the redesign of the SPSA and the beginning MTSS implementation.

Finding 1b. The lack of uniform communication and understanding of the strategies to accomplish the vision and mission of the superintendent and board leads to incoherence, fragmentation, and continued silos across the central office.

Finding 1c. District, parent, and community stakeholders show interest and value in improving the culture, climate, and the delivery of data based on equitable instruction to all students.

Finding 1d. The lack of coherent structures (e.g., policies, procedures, roles) that lead to universal strategies for ensuring equity, access, and inclusivity of all students results in inconsistent service and support to schools and student groups.

Finding 1e. The district is developing a data-driven decision-making culture and practices at the district and school level via MTSS, which will assist in providing an equity lens within a framework that provides a common language, common understanding across the district and schools to better differentiate instruction and support across academics, behavior, and social-emotional well-being.

Finding 1f. Although the district community and stakeholders interviewed demonstrate a clear interest in and focus on improving instruction for students, there is a culture and belief that the district and SCTA's strained relationship is a central barrier to collectively improve instruction and other educational practices necessary for school reform.

Discussion

The current work of the district is guided by the principles of equity, access, and social justice: all students are given an equal opportunity to graduate with the greatest number of postsecondary choices from the widest array of options. The district's vision statement "recognizes that our system is inequitable by design and we vigilantly work to confront and interrupt inequities that exist to level the playing field and provide opportunities for everyone to learn, grow, and reach their greatness."

The district's strategy to strengthen the development and implementation of the School Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA) at all schools and the emerging implementation of

the Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) strategies provides the time and space to have courageous conversations about equity, instruction, and data-driven practices. The development of the SPSA is designed to address areas of growth for continuous improvement at every school. SPSAs are intended to include concise, measurable, and achievable goals and objectives prioritizing actions and services to improve student outcomes. MTSS is an integrated, comprehensive framework that focuses on content standards, core instruction, differentiated learning and supports, student-centered learning, and the alignment of systems necessary for all students' academic, behavioral, and social-emotional success. Rather than view these efforts as distinct initiatives, district leadership should consider articulating how the work with the SPSA, the "*what* of continuous improvement" and MTSS, the "*how* of continuous improvement" are intended to deepen learning to accelerate improvement, foster innovation, and secure accountability from the inside out (Fullan & Quinn 2015).

More organizational coherence and clarity and less fragmentation of departments can result in more effective, differentiated support to teachers and leaders that results in improved outcomes for students. Theory and research in the fields of learning, motivation, organizational productivity, and school effectiveness suggest that instructional program coherence should assist student achievement in two ways: by helping teachers to work more effectively on problems of school improvement and by directly increasing student engagement and learning (Greeno, Collins, & Resnick, 1996; Mayer & Wittrock, 1996; Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 1999).

In order to successfully engage district leadership and school communities to move forward, a culture of trust must be developed, courageous conversations initiated, and beliefs about teaching and learning addressed. While there is understanding that the superintendent's overall vision and mission is to address existing inequities in SCUSD utilizing continuous improvement, there remains a need for the district to articulate the instructional vision, strategies, priorities, and outcomes that will be taken to accomplish this. The superintendent and board of education have attempted to engage district and school leaders in a continuous improvement process to address the systemic need for instructional coherence and use of data to drive improved outcomes for students across academic, behavioral, and social-emotional well-being. Principals, to date, have had at least two years of professional learning around the continuous improvement process. Continuous Improvement is an essential component of effective instructional strategy and practice (Flumerfelt & Green, 2013; Park et al., 2013; Wilka & Cohen, 2013).

Established in the 1990s, there are currently 28 Student Support Centers (SSCs) located on SCUSD school campuses that support students who are struggling socially, emotionally, behaviorally, and/or academically. While these schools are fortunate to have school-based youth and family resource centers, supported through priority school funds, the remaining schools (approximately 48) must rely on their own limited resources to address the many and varied needs of their students and families. To support the remaining schools without SSCs the district has one Connect Center to help with the high level of need for social, emotional, and health support for SCUSD students and families. Families are either referred to the Connect Center by school personnel or self refer for assistance.

The district's model for providing equitable inclusive practices that support students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment is not evident. Established in 2010, the district's Inclusive Schools' model was intended to ensure students with disabilities have a strong presence, access, and voice in the general education classroom. If parents are able to transport their child, they may apply for school choice and if accepted attend the inclusive school program. These inclusive schools are located in a variety of well-resourced schools.

There are a number of SCUSD schools that require students to take an entrance exam and/or screening criteria in order to attend the school. This selective practice is in direct conflict with the mission of equity, access, and social justice for all. There does not appear to be a uniform or accountable oversight of these practices. Parents commented in interviews that there is a lack of clear information on entrance requirements and questions about how select schools remain exclusive when the district is focused on equity, access, and social justice. As a result of this practice, the district has recently received an Office of Civil Rights (OCR) complaint pertaining to the kindergarten screening exam at one of the district's schools.

Still remaining from a previous superintendent is the implementation of the Priority Schools (seven schools) funding model. This model is incongruent with the vision and mission of the district regarding access, equity, and social justice. The Priority Schools funding creates inequities across schools (e.g., additional staffing, Student Support Centers, etc.) that has not necessarily resulted in accelerated improvement of student outcomes.

There is a district-developed index and dashboard indicating level of need and support for each site. These data show the differentiated support district schools need according to student population. Given the current budget deficits, it remains unclear how this index informs the current model for providing support to ensure equity and access for schools that need it most.

There is a culture of siloed departmental work at the central office resulting in "centers of expertise" and little time to build capacity. Interviews revealed that there is little time for collaboration and there are too many technical issues that require adaptive solutions and leadership agility. Communication and messaging to school sites is not necessarily uniform nor coherent.

SWOT on Culture, Coherence, and the Planning Process

A. Strengths:

- There is a developing culture of the importance of using data across multiple measures (e.g., academics, behavior, social-emotional well-being) to guide the work of the district.
- The superintendent has established an in-kind partnership with UC Merced that can provide the SCUSD community with accessible data to measure the level of quality implementation of continuous improvement principles and target additional growth areas.
- Site administrators have undergone two years of professional learning around continuous improvement.

- The superintendent and district leadership understand that the current work of the district is centered around equity, access, and social justice.
- Using disciplined inquiry to develop and implement the SPSA is intended to change the approach from a compliance document to a change management tool.
- There is a multi-year implementation plan for the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) using a cohort model (e.g., 25 schools per cohort).
- The development of the MTSS implementation plan has been collaboratively vetted through the established MTSS district leadership team that includes principals and district office staff.
- Creating equitable access for all students, parents/caregivers, and families through the use of continuous improvement strategies and processes is a stated goal.

B. Weaknesses:

- Given the district's emphasis on the SPSA, there continues to be a general lack of understanding of the instructional strategy, practices, and outcomes needed to attain the district goals and coherent strategies for achieving equity and access for all students.
- Currently, the revisions to the SPSA are seen in some schools as a compliance document rather than the continuous improvement commitment that the district envisions.
- Lack of consistent and aligned, on-going districtwide professional learning for teachers limits how school teams build a culture of continuous improvement.
- In general, there is a lack of professional learning for teachers and administrators that reflect culturally reflective practices and inclusivity.
- The current district organizational structure and climate do not support the urgent need to provide equitable support to schools and robust instruction and educational experiences for all students. Some interviewees shared a perception that requests for assistance get addressed by the central office staff based on relational power and portrayed the district as top down with little room for collaboration, input, or feedback on initiatives underway or in development.
- There is uneven accountability for the implementation of district initiatives, timelines, and other goals (e.g., intentional and coordinated communication on guidance, expectations, and consistent progress monitoring of district benchmarks).
- Given the siloed structures and limited collaborative culture focused on accomplishing common goals, many staff feel disconnected from the organization, which leads to low morale and continued fragmentation.
- Support centers are housed at campuses that have the funds to purchase services and/or where school administration has prioritized its need, yet are not universally accessible.
- The district's Inclusive Schools model, established in 2010, is only available at six schools.

- There are a number of existing structures (e.g., SSC, inclusive school model, entrance requirements, priority schools) that do not lend themselves to the district goals of equity, access, and social justice.

C. Threats:

- The missing cohesive roadmap for district departments to lead the work of equity and access creates a threat to achieving the district mission, vision, and goals.
- Inconsistent district leadership and oversight has resulted in the lack of a culture of collective accountability across central office departments focused on improving teaching and learning, and better outcomes for students.
- The lack of clear, consistent communication among district departments reinforces the silos in place and threatens the effort to establish an inclusive and equitable educational system.
- The lack of transparent communication within and across departments and from the central office to schools threaten the cohesive pathways for achieving a district culture of inclusivity and culturally reflective practices firmly grounded in equitable access for all.

D. Opportunities:

- The vision of equity, access, and continuous improvement provides the opportunity to create coherent understanding and implementation strategies across the district to better support the whole child/student needs.
- The dashboards provide the opportunity to revisit the commitment to developing and refining a culture of teaching and learning that is based on clear learning targets consistently assessed across multiple measures.
- The implementation of MTSS affords the district an opportunity to implement a coherent framework within which all teaching and learning efforts across academic, behavioral, and social-emotional well-being can be coordinated and monitored and linked to SPSA implementation.
- There is “hope” and “excitement” around the implementation of MTSS across all stakeholder groups and individuals interviewed.
- To ensure that expenditures result in high-yield strategies that improve student outcomes, there is an opportunity given the current financial landscape and focus on equity to evaluate current structures (e.g., priority schools model) to determine their functionality and return on investment.
- There is a desire to develop a stronger sense of connectedness among leaders, teachers, and staff.

Actions: Culture, Coherence, and the Planning Process

- 1A. Develop a roadmap that includes well-articulated priorities and strategies to implement the district's vision, mission, and goals.
- 1B. Considering the budget reductions conduct an analysis of the current central office organizational structure, including all positions, to determine how to reallocate and repurpose existing resources and positions to better provide comprehensive, coordinated, and differentiated services and support to schools.

- 1C. Examine the central office departments and restructure to establish a culture grounded in meeting performance outcomes, integration of work streams, and regular routines that result in increased collaboration, and focus on common priorities that ensure consistent communication.
- 1D. Create intentional communication structures across all departments to ensure clarity of message, priorities, and expectations.
- 1E. Form a cross functional team of central office and site leadership to examine and problem solve the fragmented and uneven support (e.g., SSC), models (e.g., Inclusive Schools), and school entrance requirements that create barriers to access, equity, and social justice goals.
- 1F. Form a representative group of principals, instructional assistant superintendents (IASs), and other key central office leaders to identify ways that principals' voices can become an integral and consistent part of planning (e.g., professional learning, priorities, etc.) problem-solving, and communicating with central office leadership and each other.
- 1G. Review hiring practices for general and special educators, paraprofessionals, and other support staff employed by the district. Analyze the current practices, especially related to teachers, within the context of the current partnership with Sacramento State University that places approximately 135 student teachers per year in the district.
- 1H. Given the district goal of equity, access, and social justice, clarify roles and responsibilities of the central office and schools in planning and engaging in activities that deepen the commitment to ensure all students attain educational success.
- 1I. Develop and implement strategies to intentionally focus on celebrating student diversity and success using a variety of school/district awareness campaigns as a mechanism for raising awareness of accomplishments, such as increased graduation rate.
- 1J. Continue the work of SPSA development and monitoring and MTSS implementation that will provide an instructional framework within which instruction and support for academic, behavioral, and social-emotional well-being is differentiated and data-driven.
- 1K. Ensure that explicit expectations and communication about roles and responsibilities of the central office (e.g., IAS, Assistant Supt. of Curriculum/Instruction, CAO, etc.) are clear, understood and supported through coaching.
- 1L. Use the position of the chief of communications to engage central office staff in strategic communications planning processes to help drive internal alignment and support for teaching and learning goals and benchmarks across the district. Focus on identifying indicators and results-based accountability measures to organize the district teams' work to have the greatest impact on students and schools.

2. Curriculum, Learning, and Support

(CCEE Instructional Component 2) The LEA has an MTSS framework that documents and assesses the implementation of all standards-aligned materials, curricula, learning, and social-emotional and behavioral supports (e.g., differentiation options, tiered support options, integrated aligned ELD supports). The LEA uses a coherent, standards-aligned curriculum, instruction, and assessment system that is culturally and linguistically responsive and meets the needs of all learners (e.g., gifted, English learners, students with disabilities, and homeless and foster youth). Evidence-based programs and instructional materials reflect the diverse needs of the student population and provide equitable access for all learners.

Finding 2a. The district has developed and begun to implement a multi-year MTSS plan that provides the opportunity for coherent professional learning for Instructional Leadership Teams (ILTs), the evaluation and alignment of materials and supports to better meet the needs of the diverse student population in the district.

Finding 2b. The district's MTSS framework provides the opportunity to comprehensively align, differentiate, and coordinate its service and support to schools across academic, behavioral, and social-emotional well-being for gifted students, English learners, foster and homeless youth, students with disabilities, and those at-risk for failure.

Finding 2c. The district's strategy of using MTSS as the comprehensive framework for curriculum, learning, and support provides the opportunity for the integration of the SPSA development process and alignment of change management strategies.

Finding 2d. As a result of the development of the distance learning plan the district developed a TK-12 scope and sequence for literacy and mathematics.

Finding 2e. The district launched an interim formative assessment system in fall 2019. However, assessments aligned to the curriculum and state standards are not consistently implemented or agreed upon at the school level. Although an MOU titled, "Monitoring of Student Progress" was created in 2016, the district and SCTA are not in agreement on implementation, which contributed to the district mandating districtwide implementation and use of formative assessments. SCTA filed a grievance, and the MOU titled, "Monitoring of Student Progress" is currently in arbitration.

Discussion

Research shows a rigorous and relevant curriculum provides teachers with an organized framework that enables them to continually monitor student progress toward mastery of the standards. By consistently focusing on intended learning outcomes and assessment evidence of student learning, teachers learn to adjust their instruction based on student learning needs informed by grade-level or course-specific standards (Bambrick-Santoyo, 2012).

The SCUSD team recognizes the value of and need for a vertically and horizontally aligned standards-based curriculum as the foundation for student success. The district's multi-year MTSS implementation plan is in its first stage of implementation. The implementation uses a cohort model (e.g., approximately 25 schools each year) and has been shared with all site leaders. Each cohort has been strategically selected using criteria (e.g., schools already implementing PBIS, CSI and ATI schools, Be Here Grant schools for chronic absenteeism, 5% variance of suspension for African American students). Schools have been distributed across IASs and school board members. Principals and district curriculum and instruction

coordinators have had several professional learning opportunities to build familiarity, capacity, and understanding of the content, scope, and sequence of year one learning. Cohort one's newly established Instructional Leadership Teams (ILTs) are currently engaged in the first phase of professional learning being delivered during the school day, with substitutes provided where needed.

The use of data-based decision-making via MTSS moves the district toward creating alignment and consistency of the implementation of standards-aligned curricula, learning, and social-emotional and behavioral supports across schools. MTSS provides a framework for all students and focuses on maximizing achievement and success in school by integrating evidence-based instruction with ongoing assessment. Considering the diverse learning needs of SCUSD students, the work of MTSS supports the vision and mission of the district to provide equity, access, and opportunities tailored to students' needs in order to reduce disparities in learning outcomes and support. MTSS utilizes Universal Design for Learning (UDL) (see SIR Component 3), which encompasses flexible learning environments so that students are able to access material, engage with it, and show what they know in ways that accommodate their individual learning needs.

However, all the work of MTSS and UDL heavily relies on the data office's ability to provide user-friendly, easily accessible, real-time data reports that can be used to make instructional decisions to continue to—or better—meet the needs of students. Interviewees and stakeholder groups shared that data are not easily accessible. While the district has access to a variety of data platforms (Escape, SIS, Illuminate, attendance, EIS, PTAI, SWIS, Infinite Campus (SIS), Tableau) utilization is still an issue.

Research shows the degree to which teachers feel connected to and engaged with their school community determines a great deal about how they approach new learning and working collaboratively to solve problems (*Effective Teacher Professional Development*, Linda Darling-Hammond, Maria E. Hyler, and Madelyn Gardner (2017)). There is a perception that ongoing professional learning for teachers and school sites is optional (e.g., shared in interviews as "opt-in"). There are days designated every month by district and school-level decision-makers for professional learning and agreed upon by both teacher and administrator contracts. However, the degree to which school teams structure time to reflect on and discuss instructional priorities and pedagogical practices is fragmented.

It is essential for school leaders and teachers to come together based on the instructional vision, strategy, priorities, and outcomes set forth by the district and determine how to face challenges together and grapple productively with how to fix them, with the support of the district. There are examples of proactive effective leadership decisions that have resulted in some school sites and district-level agreement on professional development. For example, a signed MOU with SCTA for additional professional development for all its members allowed professional learning to occur in August 2020 before the start of school. General and special education teachers and other providers were trained (e.g., technology, essential standards, UDL, scope and sequence). In addition, principals were also trained in the same content in order to prepare to support teachers in the implementation of distance learning.

TK-12 standard aligned ELA scope and sequences are in place for 2020-21. The ELA curriculum maps for 2020-21 were updated in June 2020. Science courses of study were recently updated and approved by the board (August 2020). The district recently adopted science instructional materials for grades 6-12. An adoption timeline for K-5 science instructional materials adoption was in place for January 2020-spring 2021 but is delayed because of COVID and is now on hold given the district's financial constraints. A proposed new curriculum adoption's timeline, in all subjects, has also been put on hold due to the district's current fiscal situation.

The district's common assessments are aligned to the ELA and math scope and sequence. Many of the interim assessments are curriculum embedded with the exception of those used for assessing foundational skills in ELA (e.g., core and pass). However, the implementation of formative assessments is not uniform across the schools. While data to illustrate fidelity of assessment implementation is available through a board communication, (e.g., 43% of students completed at least one ELA assessment and 53% of students completed at least one math assessment) the assessment results are not.

Increasing graduation rates, A-G course taking, Career Technical Education (CTE) completion, and decreasing dropout rates are district priorities reflecting expectations for standards-aligned materials, curricula, and student learning goals. The district team has disaggregated data by school to develop plans to support all students and especially those special populations where there has been a decline in graduation and/or A-G course completions. An internal audit of Career Technical Education pathways was the basis for updates to the 2020-2021 master schedule to ensure students are taking courses in the appropriate sequence to reach completer status. More importantly, students participate in a sequence of courses aimed at solidifying their desire to pursue a career of their choice. Monthly meetings with high school teams are in place to review this data and to ensure students are receiving the support they need to be successful.

The internal work of the chief of continuous improvement and accountability and the chief academic officer has resulted in identification of standardized courses at the secondary level, helping to ensure that course offerings are equitable across high schools. A key strategy in place is to control master schedule courses from the district office so that all high schools are providing rigorous standards-aligned courses within the master schedule. This strategy is contributing to the increase in A-G course completion and graduation rates. In an effort to proactively support students in the area of graduation and A-G courses, the district Office of Guidance and Counseling is supporting school counselors who are beginning to leverage data to identify students who have course deficiencies and enroll them into credit recovery courses. For high school students who are significantly off-track, a process was developed in collaboration with the Alternative Education principals to make the referral process more student-family friendly. These are examples of systems changes to address student outcomes and have demonstrated results.

In terms of CTE, a total of 1,155 concentrator courses were completed, an increase of 281 courses over the 2019-2020 academic year, and a total of 333 completers, an increase of 110 courses over the 2019-2020 academic school year. There is a need to continue expanding the CTE opportunities to ensure equitable access at every high school. Community partners also mentioned the importance of increasing student CTE pathways

and participation as a key investment strategy for increasing students' success in the Sacramento workforce. The College and Career Indicator on the CA Dashboard also provides the district with increased motivation to increase CTE preparation options.

There is agreement within the district that progress on graduation rate and course-taking is an important indicator of student success. Stakeholders shared that they do not necessarily have input on initiatives, such as A-G or college and career initiatives, developed by the district that they are required to implement. While these are well intentioned policies/practices, the most informed people are not involved or provided the opportunity to provide input. Such decisions also perpetuate that lack of commitment or "skin in the game" to support the work going forward.

SWOT on Curriculum, Learning, and Support

A. Strengths:

- The district's comprehensive distance learning plan explicitly includes literacy and mathematics scope and sequences for K-12, essential standards, embedded strategies for ELs, embedded SEL mini lessons, and district assessments that are aligned (e.g., essential standards and scope, sequence).
- Two days of professional learning to support distance learning was delivered prior to the start of school to support teachers and school leaders.
- With the support of the Supporting Inclusive Practices grant team, three overarching modules (digital tools and building relationships; principles and lesson planning using UDL; supporting and coaching teachers) were designed and delivered to all site administration and key central staff prior to bringing the modules to all general and special education teachers and other service providers.
- MTSS is a key interest across individuals and stakeholders interviewed.
- The work of MTSS provides the framework within which the district can hone, organize, and develop instructional practices, strategies, and support using data-driven decision-making and established data systems.
- There is on-going work to ensure that rigorous standards aligned courses are equitably provided at all high schools.
- A concerted effort has been made to clean up and align course descriptions and offerings to ensure rigorous standardized content instruction across the district.
- There has been a steady increase in the number of CTE completer courses over the past two years.
- District common assessments to help inform curriculum, learning, and supports were launched in fall 2019 and have the potential to provide the district data needed to evaluate and support teaching and learning that results in significantly improved students outcomes.
- Site based management and teacher collaboration designed to improve student achievement is built into school schedules and occurs on the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Thursday of the month for 1 hour each and has the potential to provide opportunities to assess student learning to help drive instruction at the site level.

B. Weaknesses:

- There is a lack of equitable, accessible, and differentiated instructional materials and interventions for students across the district (e.g., students with disabilities, English learners, home and foster youth, gifted).
- There is a lack of processes at the central office for providing data-based support to schools, based on student need, and the use of data to identify and progress monitor students in need of intensified instruction.
- The digital divide between groups of students (e.g., foster, homeless, EL, students with disabilities, socio-economically disadvantaged) has been exacerbated by COVID.
- There is not yet a clearly defined instructional vision with strategy, priorities, and outcomes to provide site leaders with the training necessary to mobilize school teams, model inquiry, and reflection to access new knowledge and skills.

C. Threats:

- Lack of agreement between the district and SCTA in areas of assessment and professional learning have created inconsistencies across schools and staff, which is a threat to the implementation of curriculum, instruction, and support that would create equity and access for all students.
- There is a lack of available assessment data critical to evaluating the efficacy and impact of curriculum, learning, and support. Results of the 2019-20 district common assessments have not been publicly provided.
- Lack of a coherent, standards-aligned curriculum, instruction, and assessment system significantly impacts student outcomes.
- If the SPSAs are a key lever for school improvement, the lack of an integrated approach connecting key instructional strategies and implementation science to monitor progress threatens the district's efforts to impact curriculum, instruction, and differentiated support districtwide.

D. Opportunities:

- The district is interested and supports the need to infuse and integrate culturally relevant topics into curricula.
- The current systemic work of developing master schedules (e.g., pre-registration process) provides an opportunity to shift the culture/mindset to one that is based on the needs of students.
- Graduation and A-G rate trends are increasing for some schools and student groups. For example, the graduation rate for African American students increased by 4.81% and students with disabilities 3.33%, while the rate dropped for English learners and American Indian or Alaskan Native students. There is an opportunity to assess what supports and instructional changes led to these increases and implement similar strategies across all student groups.
- The emerging work of MTSS provides the district an opportunity to identify, provide, and implement evidence-based programs, including supplemental and enrichment curricular and instructional materials that are culturally and linguistically responsive and meet the diverse needs of the student population (e.g., gifted, English learners, students with disabilities, and homeless and foster youth).

- MTSS, a district pathway to coherent standards-aligned curriculum, instruction, and assessment systems provides the opportunity for integration with the SPSA.
- MTSS provides the opportunity of staff at the site level to be active decision-makers and to help teachers modify their teaching and learning practices and beliefs, where appropriate, to improve student learning.
- With clarity on, and resources aligned to, the district instructional vision, strategy, priorities, and outcomes, site-based management can collectively work together to demonstrate improved outcomes for students.
- CBA Article 24.11 provides the opportunity for the district and SCTA to participate together on a districtwide steering committee to help coordinate, implement, and support the process of site-based decision-making as agreed upon in Article 24.

Actions: Curriculum, Learning, and Support

- 2A. Create a central office organizational structure that aligns with the district's theory of action and results in explicit expectations and accountability for the delivery of curriculum, instruction, and support to schools.
- 2B. Conduct a curriculum audit to identify and ensure all schools and students (e.g., students with disabilities, EL, homeless and foster youth) have standard-aligned curriculum materials and supports that are stimulating, rigorous, and accelerate grade-level content and language development.
- 2C. Research and train school sites where student equity data reflects the highest priority and provide school leaders the opportunity to strengthen their ability to mobilize others, model inquiry and reflection, and data-based decision-making.

3. Instructional Practice and Strategies

(CCEE Instructional Component 3) The LEA has established and defined instructional practices and strategies that are culturally inclusive, differentiated, rigorous, coherent, and standards aligned. Instructional technology, project-based learning, and other experiences beyond the textbook are regularly utilized. Instructional practices and strategies positively support students in developing self-agency and building metacognitive skills. The LEA maintains a districtwide intentional focus on providing a rigorous teaching and learning experience that uses Universal Design for Learning principles for improving and extending differentiated instructional practices that increase student engagement.

Finding 3a. Universal Design for Learning (UDL) has become a primary driver for delivering curriculum and supports the development of lessons and courses that address the needs of diverse learners from the start so that all students have equitable access.

Finding 3b. There is a districtwide multi-tiered approach and strategies to reduce chronic absenteeism.

Finding 3c. There continues to be a lack of inclusive educational environments and quality instruction and support for students with disabilities.

Finding 3d. Clear tools and processes for communicating, supporting, and guiding the district's instructional vision, strategy, practices, and expectations for every school, classroom, and student are not yet evident.

Finding 3e. The district lacks evidence of an English learner master plan that aligns with the CDE roadmap and identifies districtwide integrated and designated instructional priorities so that district programs ensure English learners attain high levels of English proficiency, mastery of grade-level standards, and opportunities to develop proficiency in multiple languages.

Discussion

Beginning in spring 2020, the district began its journey of Universal Design for Learning (UDL). UDL allows students to express their learning in ways that reduce or eliminate barriers to showing what they know and can do. The UDL principles focus on ensuring equity in access by providing multiple ways of representing content (e.g., text-to-speech, audible passages), providing multiple ways for students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills (e.g., verbal, speech-to-text), and providing multiple strategies for student engagement (e.g., instructional choice). The use of UDL principles is necessary to provide access to curricula, instruction, and learning as they directly address the *why* (engagement), the *what* (representation, multiple approaches to instruction), and the *how* (expression, multiple ways for students to demonstrate) of learning. The concentrated focus on UDL offers the district an opportunity to differentiate instruction for all students, including diverse learners, and develop instructional practices that lead to improved student outcomes for all. UDL provides students with language and/or cultural differences, sensory disabilities (e.g., blindness or deafness), and learning disabilities a different way of approaching content. UDL professional learning opportunities have been provided for school administrators and teachers. UDL learning modules and resources have been developed and shared and support the development of instructional lessons via learning intentions and success criteria.

The district has also embarked on trauma-informed instruction: understanding the impact of trauma on the brain and ability to learn. A recent presentation to administrators by Pamela Cantor, MD founder and senior advisor for Turnaround for Children, began the journey of leaders understanding trauma-informed instruction and shared that "adversity doesn't just happen to children, it happens inside their brains and bodies." Trauma-informed instruction is premised by "the path to learning is a calm brain." The combined work of trauma-informed instruction and UDL integrated within an MTSS framework provides a formidable opportunity to address the significant academic, behavior, and social-emotional well-being of SCUSD students.

The district is a recipient of the Be Here grant funded by CDE (2017), which focuses on chronic absenteeism and attendance. Research is inextricably clear regarding the detrimental impact of chronic absenteeism on student achievement and performance. As a result, the Attend, Achieve, Succeed program was developed and districtwide work on chronic absenteeism and attendance was launched in a targeted way that differentiates support to different tiers of schools. The professional learning around the Attend, Achieve, Succeed program has refocused the district in a proactive and positive approach to support students and families and help improve attendance. The grant has also provided

the district an opportunity to triangulate academic and behavioral data and create interventions that promote student engagement with goals of reducing chronic absenteeism and increasing student success.

A recent remarkable effort included outreach to 1,646 students (predominantly homeless, foster, EL, African American, Pacific Islander, Asian) who were absent from spring distance learning. Through a variety of efforts, including but not limited to phone banking, verifying contact information, conducting more than 800 home visits and delivering home devices, a total of 1,557 students were located and connected with. A tiered model of student attendance and engagement via an MTSS model is established and being implemented as the district continues to support schools, students, and families in distance learning.

Within the district's distance learning, teachers are responsible for monitoring engagement (e.g., attendance) using multiple measures. Teachers are required to monitor student submission of assignments, presence within the learning management system (Google Classroom), attendance at live, synchronous instruction, and other forms of contact determined by the school site. Teachers are responsible for maintaining and certifying a weekly record documenting a student's synchronous and/or asynchronous engagement each day. The district developed a Weekly Engagement Log to track engagement/instructional time. Teachers are either using the district-provided log or "engaging in concerted activities (e.g., The National Labor Relations Board defines concerted activity as when two or more employees take action for their mutual aid or protection regarding terms and conditions of employment). In the latter case, it was reported that no engagement data are being provided and a log is not being submitted. Data about student engagement are collected and reviewed weekly by the IASs.

The district has the Parent Teacher Home Visit program (PTHV). At its core, PTHV's goal is to create, build, and sustain parent-teacher relationships. It is not an academic or social-emotional intervention program. After mandatory training, classroom teachers and classified staff receive a stipend for each one-hour visit with a student's family at the child's home. Currently, SCUSD has 459 educators trained to conduct Bridge Visits.

The district was recently awarded (August 2020) a Supporting Inclusive Practices (SIP) grant that targets how students with disabilities are being educated in general education. While this is certainly an excellent opportunity for SCUSD, the grant (approximately \$18,000 per year for 3 years) is not nearly enough to address the long-standing needs of the district's inequitable programs and services for students with disabilities (see the Council of the Great City Schools, 2017).

There is serious inequity of inclusive practices for students with disabilities across the district. There are six sites that are considered part of the inclusive schools model. Inclusive education is viewed as a "program" rather than a vision and practice that enables students with disabilities to receive meaningful differentiated instruction within general education classes and interventions either inside or outside the general education class. The co-teaching model is viewed as the tool for inclusive practices, which discounts other effective models, such as consultation/collaboration, and the grouping of students with shared needs (with and without IEPs) across classes for tiered interventions. The inclusive-practices schools' model requires students needing a special day class (SDC) to

transfer out of the school to be educated. There does not appear to be a systemwide culture of inclusivity that promotes services based on student needs. There is a lack of culture, training, and support that emphasizes the value of inclusive instruction and how to achieve it successfully.

The special education department's organization is not staffed or structured for maximum effectiveness. This continues to be a significant area of need (see CGCS Report, 2017; Administration and Operation of Special Education (pg1), Incidence Rate and Staffing Survey Results.) The program specialists' primary focus on compliance and gatekeeping leaves little time for them to support teaching and learning.

Similar observations can be made of the multilingual office. Currently the multilingual office lacks a director. There is one coordinator position that was vacant most of last school year. There is one secondary instructional specialist. Given how limited the candidate pools have been for hiring, current and new positions for the multilingual and special education departments the district should consider a job classification study to incentivise and attract internal and external applicants (e.g., salary, responsibilities). This may require repurposing or reallocating current positions to better align with the departments.

There is little evidence of any professional learning to support the implementation of designated and integrated ELD. Similar to the office of special education, the work that is managed is around compliance with little attention to the delivery of robust standards aligned instruction. There is no evidence of a district plan for English learners. Although CDE has a Roadmap, SCUSD lacks a strategic or master plan to address the need of providing differentiated services and instruction for ELs. The distance learning plan requires schools to implement designated ELD. Other than the current UDL effort, there is no planned professional learning to support the implementation and support of ELD.

The lack of districtwide systematic use of data to plan, design, and deliver culturally responsive and differentiated instruction has resulted in a lack of clear expectations for how IASs provide supportive accountability to principals to monitor and support rigor, implementation of instructional practices, and student learning progress in all classrooms.

SWOT on Instructional Practice and Strategies

A. Strengths:

- The work of UDL is a driver for creating equitable and accessible instructional practices for all students.
- The district's distance learning (DL) plan is grounded in the principles of UDL, which focuses on designing learning environments that are differentiated according to student needs.
- Materials, resources, and professional learning is on-going with site administrators in order to support the use of UDL in distance learning and beyond (e.g., barrier-free learning intentions and lesson planning).
- The district has developed an extensive Attendance Toolkit to support the work of decreasing chronic absenteeism.
- There is a multi-year district plan for reducing chronic absenteeism that has engaged the district in a movement away from a punitive model to one that is tiered and proactive.

- PTHV has worked in collaboration with external partners to adapt its approach of building school and parent/family connection during COVID-19 through development of the parent-teacher bridge model.

B. Weaknesses:

- Across the district, there is serious inequity of inclusive practices for students with disabilities, which contributes to disproportionate academic failure, chronic absenteeism, and suspension among this student population.
- The staffing vacancies and organizational structures in several departments are barriers to supporting implementation of instructional practices and supporting programs in schools (e.g., multilingual, special education).
- There is no evidence of a district EL plan to support the implementation of ELD, designated or integrated, monitor progress, and to provide supportive accountability from the district office to school sites to ensure equity and access to robust instruction for ELs.
- There is a lack of accountability to a standardized process across schools to support students at risk of failure. An example cited was that in some cases a student goes into special education after three SST meetings.
- While the district has a plan for reducing chronic absenteeism, building capacity to implement best practices with fidelity is challenging due to internal lack of procedures and monitoring structures.

C. Threats:

- Concerted activity versus the completion of a weekly engagement log jeopardizes the district's compliance with SB 98.
- The lack of staffing in the office of special education continues to be a threat to supporting teaching and learning and ensuring compliant IEPs are written and mandated services are delivered.
- The lack of collective accountability for teaching and learning goals/priorities by the district leaders, IASs, and among varied central office departments continues to result in poor student outcomes.
- Changes in leadership and respective district priorities over time have resulted in a range of on-going school instructional practices, programs, and resources that may be misaligned with current priorities.

D. Opportunities:

- The implementation of UDL, trauma-informed instruction, and MTSS provides the opportunity to clarify what the districts core instructional practices are and systematically plan, design, and deliver accessible differentiated instruction that in turn increases the rate of student growth across multiple measures (e.g., academic, behavior, and social-emotional well-being).
- The lens of equity and social justice provides the opportunity to create a compelling "why" for the district to establish and communicate a clear instructional vision, strategy, and practices and will require courageous conversations about bias and anti-racist practices.
- The emerging work of UDL, MTSS and trauma-informed instruction provides an opportunity to develop the capacity of leaders and teachers to provide for

exploration, discovery, and support of equity and access and implicit bias in instructional practices.

Actions: Instructional Practice and Strategies

- 3A. Clarify the instructional vision so that strategies, tools, practices, and clear communication of expectations and implementation timelines are aligned.
- 3B. Analyze current and past priorities to ensure alignment with the current theory of action.
- 3C. Expect that all principals are responsible for overseeing special education in their buildings and that IASs support and hold principals accountable for this responsibility. Ensure that supportive accountability is provided for all staff.
- 3D. Develop and implement a walk-through tool to systematically monitor and support instruction and interventions in general education classes, RSP classes, and Special Day Classes (SDC). Use these data to ensure there is equitable access to good first teaching and differentiated intervention is provided for both general and special education students.
- 3E. Establish and implement a clear and defined vision for the value of inclusivity from the boardroom to the classroom. Ensure students with disabilities have equitable access to the same instruction and support as general education students (e.g., UDL, MTSS) to ensure success in the least restrictive environment.
- 3F. Delineate expectations for the provision of linguistically appropriate and culturally competent instruction aligned with core standards that are differentiated for students with reading and math performance levels significantly below those of their classroom peers.
- 3G. Develop and implement a plan that ensures ELs across all levels of language proficiency levels can access, fully engage with, and achieve rigorous grade-level academic content standards and English language proficiency goals.

4. Social-Emotional and Behavioral Health and Development

(CCEE Instructional Component 4) The social-emotional and behavioral well-being of the whole child is a critical component in the LEA's mission and vision. Identified social-emotional learning (SEL) skills are integrated into the curriculum and instruction practices and resources identified for student support and school capacity building. SEL is embedded in the policy and practice and is modeled by adults LEA-wide.

Finding 4a. While there are numerous quality and useful SEL materials to support academic success, the number of schools accessing and using the resources consistently limits full districtwide implementation.

Finding 4b. The lack of on-going districtwide professional learning opportunities limits how teachers and leaders learn about the implementation and integration of SEL, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS), and other mental health supports within the instructional environments.

Finding 4c. Siloed roles and responsibilities of the central office departments and the lack of clear expectations and district instructional vision contributes to the lack of integration and inconsistent implementation of current district resources to support social-emotional and behavioral well-being.

Finding 4d. There is a need for implicit bias training across the district to assess and address systemic racism and ensure equitable access to educational opportunities and social-emotional support (e.g., policies and practices), including how they contribute to the disproportionate suspension of African American students and students with disabilities.

Discussion

SCUSD acknowledges the importance of emphasizing social-emotional learning (SEL) to deepen learning and self-efficacy for both students and adults. The district has been recognized by the CDE for the social-emotional practices that have been developed. For example, an Academic Integration Framework and resources were developed as a starting place for schools to learn how to implement SEL strategies with facilitation by a training specialist or coach. Mental health tools are a part of the resources to support a comprehensive approach to behavioral health prevention, early identification, and intervention. The use of SEL strategies is intended to better meet students' needs and to be a lever toward upholding the district's guiding principle of equity, which states that all students are given an equal opportunity to graduate with the greatest number of postsecondary choices. Since schools opt in if they choose to implement the framework, use of the strategies is in place in only some of the schools.

According to the Council of the Great City Schools, building an integrated mental health program is difficult, yet when accomplished has the ability to serve students and school communities in addressing social-emotional and mental health needs (CGCS, 2020). To address this, the SCUSD needs to continue to build a culture of shared ownership over both academic and social-emotional well-being through an MTSS framework. Students will not benefit from high-quality instruction if their immediate physical and psychological needs are not met.

A way to operationalize a culture of shared ownership is through the breakdown of organizational silos. SCUSD needs a comprehensive instructional vision, strategy, priorities, and outcomes aligned to social-emotional well-being and mental health to attain pupil achievement and work with departments across the district to establish a common agenda and responsibility to provide social-emotional well-being and mental health support.

Currently, ownership of this domain and provision of services are not coordinated across the academic office, student support and health services, PBIS, special education, and other mental health divisions. For example, SCUSD social workers, school psychologists, behaviorists, and SEL instructional specialists work in different departments such as curriculum and instruction, student support and health services, academic office or special education, so it is unclear how SEL and continuum of mental and well-being and is integrated within the larger academic functions of the school system. To promote efficiency and effectiveness in supporting the whole child, academic support, social-emotional learning, and mental health interventions need to be part of an integrated, comprehensive approach to support.

The use of MTSS can lead to the effective integration of prevention efforts for academics, and behavior (PBIS), and SEL. Currently, the district has engaged an MTSS district leadership team composed of personnel from each department as a necessary and efficient way to create a common language and common understanding of the integrated work across academics, behavior, social-emotional, and mental health. The ability to triangulate data on attendance, grades, and behavior provides a more complete picture than when looking at each separately. The open communication and sharing of data from across each of these areas is therefore critical to ensure students' needs are accurately identified and supported.

To effectively create an integrated approach to social-emotional learning, behavioral support, and mental health, SCUSD can start by clearly communicating a unified vision—and underlying methodologies—for supporting the whole child. One way is by using well-developed, structured, cross-functional teaming and meetings. For example, teams of academic, SEL, and mental health staff visiting school sites together, debriefing on both the unique and shared needs across schools, and developing an integrated response would help to build a more cohesive leadership and decision-making structure similar to the efforts of aligning behavior and academics through MTSS. This will also ensure that departments across the district are able to leverage each other to best support schools, communities, and students in addressing social-emotional and well-being needs.

The use of local measures to assess students' social-emotional well-being in the state accountability system has elevated the SEL profile in the district and provides an additional rationale for embedding the SEL curriculum at all schools. Survey (e.g., School Climate Survey, Safety and Connectedness/Belonging) data is analyzed for trends and patterns of responses in order to work with school teams on areas of need as reflected in the data. The contractual limits on districtwide professional learning time available for teachers impacts capacity building for understanding social-emotional learning in the context of the whole child, its link to academic success and the implementation of a continuum of social-emotional and behavioral supports.

The Community College Equity Assessment Lab at San Diego State University released a report in February 2018 identifying SCUSD as the district in Sacramento County with the highest suspension rates for African American males. In the report, SCUSD had both the highest total suspensions and highest suspension rate of 20.7 percent in the county. For 2018-19, SCUSD suspension rate was 5.7 percent districtwide, 14.6 percent for African American students, the highest student group rate in the district.

Suspension rate continues to be of concern for SCUSD, even though the performance indicator improved from red in 2017-18 to orange in 2018-19. Overall on the CA school dashboard (2019), there was no change in the district's current suspension rate, nor the color rating of orange. Eight of 13 student groups received a red or orange and five student groups reflected an increased suspension rate. Similarly, data exist for students with disabilities. A recently filed class action complaint (September 2019) shows that during the 2018-19 school year African American students were disproportionately suspended receiving approximately 40% of total suspensions while comprising 14% of the student

population. During that same year, African American students were more than ten times more likely than other students with disabilities to be suspended.

At the January 16, 2019 SCUSD Board of Education meeting, district staff made a presentation outlining the important first steps to reset discipline expectations. Training began with IASs and school leadership and explicitly outlined expectations for the following: elimination of soft suspensions, suspension for “willful defiance” K-8, manifestation determination for IEP requirements, and behavioral support for students with IEPs. The theory of action in this work is: when there is districtwide expectation, accountability, and focus on equity, access, and the implementation of social-emotional support along with mental health and PBIS strategies at every school, then the suspension rates for African American students and African American students with disabilities will be reduced and become proportionate with student populations.

Restorative justice, practices, and processes are reportedly in the beginning implementation stage, providing schools with strategies and processes based on the idea of bringing students together in peer-mediated small groups to talk, ask questions, and air their grievances through mediation and agreement rather than punishment. The purpose of a restorative process is to hear each person’s perspective on what happened, how people have been affected, and to involve all voices in how to repair harm and make plans to move forward. Currently, the district and SCTA continue to negotiate how a school will determine whether they will become a “Restorative Justice School.”

In order to serve the district's most vulnerable children and families, a culture and mindset of the district's vision of equity, social justice, and access must continue. Clarity is needed on how the district will ensure that their inclusive and diverse district community can meet student academic and social-emotional needs. To achieve this, SCUSD will need to utilize an MTSS approach by identifying common social emotional needs and challenges among all students and families, examine the resources that currently address these universal needs, and determine what must be heightened as a priority to address the most at-risk students. There is great promise in the departments that have been supporting and leading the work of SEL, PBIS, student health and support services, behaviorists, etc. For the district's MTSS work to be sustainable, scalable, and systemic, these supports must be integrated into the SPSA.

SWOT on Social-Emotional and Behavioral Health and Development

A. Strengths:

- Social-emotional and behavioral (SEB) well-being of the whole child is identified as a critical component in the work of equity, access, and social justice.
- SEL materials and resources have been developed for teachers and leaders.
- The student support and health services department provides an explicit data-based annual report and has extensive resources and support available for students and families.
- The district has been engaged in the work of SEL and PBIS for several years and has been recognized for this work.

- Beginning implementation of restorative justice practices is in place and aligned with the district theory of action for increasing student success.

B. Weaknesses:

- While SEL may be valued, clarity on the expectations for implementation at the district level and in schools is lacking. It seems the work of SEL is limited to those school sites and teachers willing to work in this area.
- The uneven implementation of SEL across the district contributes to the equity and opportunity gap in how behavioral supports are provided.
- The current provision of SEL, behavior, and mental health support has resulted in a decrease in suspensions (2018-19) for some student groups but African American students are still suspended at the highest rate in the district.
- The siloed nature and lack of an integrated approach of the offices providing social-emotional, behavior, and mental health support to students limits how students are provided coherent services and strategies to acquire techniques for processing and managing emotions as well as essential social skills.

C. Threats:

- Individual schools decide how they will integrate academic and social-emotional learning, limiting system-wide support and districtwide implementation.
- Coherence related to the limited professional learning opportunities prevent the ability to build capacity and integrate SEL strategies into instruction, and results in uneven implementation and accountability.
- There is a lack of an integrated approach grounded in MTSS to support schools, families, and students, which limits the effectiveness and use of scarce resources to address social-emotional and well-being needs.

D. Opportunities:

- The development of the Academic Integration Framework and other resources provides the opportunity to implement SEL strategies districtwide within the MTSS framework.
- There is an opportunity to expand student support and health services to include the SEL department so that more integrated and coordinated support is available for schools.
- Since the social-emotional well-being of students is a local performance indicator included on the CA Dashboard, the district has the opportunity to leverage the use of resources in every school.
- Early recognition and intervention of mental health challenges at some schools provides an opportunity to positively impact student attendance, behavior, and academics and could be expanded to other schools in the district.
- The reorganization and integration of current departments/units (e.g., academic, SEL, PBIS, mental health, special education) provides the district the opportunity to better align, coordinate resources, and deliver needed services and support to schools, students, and families.

Actions: Social-Emotional and Behavioral Health and Development

- 4A. Use the CA Dashboard expectations for SEL local performance measures to increase SEL implementation aligned with the Academic Integration Framework.
- 4B. Provide the central office team with ongoing professional learning to better understand the Academic Integration Framework, develop strategies for use by school teams, and establish implementation benchmarks and accountability timelines for implementation.
- 4C. Integrate current departments/units (e.g. SEL SHHS, Curriculum and Instruction) into ones that better align services and support to schools to better integrate strategies and sustain social-emotional well-being and mental health of students and staff.
- 4D. Ensure that there is a continuum of social-emotional, behavioral and mental health supports/resources in SCUSD and the process for accessing it is clear so that all schools and families, including homeless and foster youth, know how to access them.

5. Assessment and Accountability

(CCEE. Instructional Component 5) The LEA has a systemic process to measure and analyze student data—academic, behavior, and social-emotional learning—that drives the accountability system for all stakeholders (classroom to boardroom and home) and informs a continuous improvement process. The LEA's system of assessment ensures that all students are provided with, know, and understand clear learning targets in all courses and at all grade levels with the goal that each student comprehends precisely what and how to attain mastery of key skills and concepts. The system includes targeted and on-going assessment of ELs to ensure they are moving toward advanced levels of English, reclassification, and closing the academic language gap.

Finding 5a. District LCAP development timeline limits input from the Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) and minimizes their role to provide feedback in timely and meaningful ways.

Finding 5b. The role of the LCAP PAC has the potential to synthesize and prioritize parent advisory committees and community feedback in a more coherent and consequential manner.

Finding 5c. The district has invested in developing the SPSA as a roadmap for continuous improvement and progress monitoring aligned with the LCAP. Yet, there is inconsistency across the district on the instructional vision, strategy, priorities, and outcome data to be used to assess progress, which is critical to strategically informing district decisions on resources and providing guidance and support to schools.

Finding 5d. Strained relationships and disagreement between the district leadership and SCTA on how best to create and implement formative assessments, as evidenced by the grievance and arbitration of the MOU titled, "Monitoring of Student Progress," influence the ability to collectively improve instruction, respond to student needs, and other educational practices of interest.

Finding 5e. Given the size of the district, the number of students identified as experiencing

homelessness appears under reported (less than 1% of the student population).

Discussion

The district strategic plan (2016-2021) outlines goals aligned to the Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) and proposed actions and services. The development and implementation of the Learning Continuity and Attendance Plan (LCA Plan) was developed with an understanding that significant improvement in instructional coherence and consistency was needed prior to COVID-19, and distance learning intensified additional challenges. The implementation of the LCA Plan is the current accountability mechanism for improving teaching and learning and outlines ten consistent districtwide components for parents, families, students, and community members to expect. While these components are clearly elaborated in the plan, districtwide implementation varies across schools, leading to continued inconsistency and fragmented instruction and accountability for students (see the LCA plan for complete detail).

The LCAP PAC provides input on the development of the LCAP and helps the district team set goals, plan actions, and leverage resources to meet those goals to improve student outcomes. Feedback from the LCAP PAC provided a range of suggestions about what is working for them and what challenges prevent them from representing the community points of view. Much of the meeting time is spent receiving information from the district team with limited feedback, primarily driven by the established timeline for giving input. It is unclear how feedback given by the PAC to the district is evaluated and folded into the development of the LCAP or rejected for reasons that are shared. It was reported that repeated questions from the PAC to review qualitative and quantitative data to determine the impact of LCAP actions and services have not necessarily been addressed. The LCAP PAC understands the district's need to share relevant information with them, but ongoing measures to monitor implementation benchmarks and impact on student outcomes have not been readily available. As a result of the recent concerns raised by the LCAP PAC the district has proposed the creation of a permanent data-sharing repository. PAC members are currently working with the district to identify data points that are most compelling to unpack for the LCAP.

Research (Black & Wiliam, 1998) and guidance from the California Department of Education support the value of formative assessment practices to increase student learning and district assessment goals reflect this understanding. The timeliness of results enables teachers to adjust instruction quickly while learning is in progress, clearly benefiting students. Consequently, students can use the feedback and results to adjust and improve their own learning. Teachers and students making use of assessment results to improve real-time teaching and learning increases students' role in their own learning. Teaching students to monitor and regulate their learning increases their rate of learning.

Some SCUSD school sites do identify and use local formative and summative assessments to measure student outcomes and progress toward achieving their stated goals, but this is not consistent across the district to support student success. Additionally, an MOU titled, "Monitoring of Student Progress" was developed in 2016, prior to the current leadership, but attempts to agree on procedures and implementation of the MOU contract agreement have proved unsuccessful, and the district and SCTA are currently in arbitration over the implementation of formative assessments within the district. Consequently, ongoing,

aligned, districtwide assessment processes are not consistently in place across all schools that measure how, what, and how well a student is learning. Efforts to improve student achievement will continue to require an interest in “all” parties, including district leaders, unions/associations, and school boards, working together. Decades of research support this claim, and the results show gains in student achievement, improved school climate, increases in teacher retention, and both principals and association representatives being seen as stronger resources by educators in their school.

As part of SCUSD's *Return Together* distance learning plan, an extensive matrix of assessments and respective calendars has been developed. Video tutorials and resources for foundational skill interim common assessments have been developed to support implementation. The district common assessment system meets the requirement of SB 98 that calls for “assessments during learning and throughout the school year that evaluate how students are progressing both in the moment and over time to address learning loss before and after the school closure.” A recent artifact (e.g., heat map, December 1 Board Communication) shows that more than 50% of students are taking the ‘unfinished learning’ interim assessments. Although Illuminate data on these assessments is available, the limited response rate makes it difficult to make any significant determination. The distance learning plan was also an area that the district and SCTA did not attain an agreement on, which included assessment expectations.

Pre-COVID there was a lack of targeted and on-going assessment of English learners to analyze and monitor progress toward advanced levels of English, reclassification, and closing academic language gaps. The lack of real-time, consistently collected, and readily accessible data has been an impediment to progress monitoring of the redesignation rate of ELs and the declassification rate and movement of service delivery (e.g., LRE) for students with disabilities. During the COVID pandemic, the district's ability to administer instructional assessments for ELs and students with disabilities including eligibility for special education has yet to be resolved with SCTA, which raises concerns about federal and state requirements being met.

A November 2018 Federal Program Monitor identified three findings for the district: (1) work to better analyze and understand student achievement data and identify student academic needs by all student groups; (2) provide support to all staff in order to identify and implement effective instructional strategies to improve academic programs and the close achievement gap for all students; and, (3) develop learning communities that encourage the linkage of site action planning to budget decision-making. As a result of these findings, the district moved toward a districtwide improvement strategy using the SPSA as a key accountability tool. SPSA goals are aligned with the LCAP.

The district team, in partnership with Sacramento County Office of Education staff providing differentiated assistance, developed a SPSA monitoring plan, and conducted professional learning around the cycle of continuous improvement and the SPSA development process.

The district created a midyear SPSA review process that provides a framework for schools to implement and monitor high-leverage activities and strategies. It is designed to include a series of prompts to assist principals in describing their progress toward meeting their goal and performance to date, implementation strategies, progress of specific student

groups, and needed revisions to goals, strategies, or outcomes. The first midyear review occurred in February 2020 so the impact of the strategy was disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic and the implementation of distance learning. The second mid-year SPSA review is in process. The UC Merced dashboard provides data reflecting the Performance and Targeted Action index, Early Identification and Intervention Warning System (e.g., attendance, behavior, course performance), and college-going tools for use by school teams.

The use of the SPSA as an accountability tool does have the potential to identify key problems of practice at school sites, identify root causes, and move to cycles of inquiry for testing actions and strategies. More evidence is needed on what local data is analyzed and how frequently in order to monitor how the changes and strategies identified within the SPSA, and aligned to the district's instructional vision and priorities, are moving the needle toward improved outcomes for students. In its current design, the SPSA is perceived as a compliance document with specific timelines and technical activities. The intentional pivot to improvement science presents itself as an adaptive approach to implementing change management. It is not yet clear how these two streams of work are integrated in a way that builds the will, skill, and capacity of school leaders to enact change management using the goals and identified benchmarks of the SPSAs. It is unclear how Title I and Supplemental and Concentration funds are aligned to these high leverage activities.

SCUSD is partnering with the CSU Sacramento Teacher Education team to assess the work in progress on SPSA development as a districtwide continuous improvement strategy. A report from the CSUS team will be submitted to the district in December 2020. Emerging themes that were shared with the CCEE SIR team align with findings identified in the SIR. In general, there is more uniformity in the SPSAs—increased attention to data and precision in goal statements. The following are additional themes based on our understanding:

- There is limited evidence that the goal statements build from the districtwide theory of action.
- The superintendent and district team are trying to support major organizational cultural shifts with a central office staff who are experienced educators with many years of "compliance mandates."
- Rote learning is occurring with school leaders, but deep learning is not yet evident.
- Many district processes must be greatly strengthened to fully support principals in making a transition from completing the SPSAs to comply with mandates to developing the SPSAs according to the district's new schema.
- Differentiated assistance from the Sacramento County Office of Education is in place for SPSA and a partnership with CORE on continuous improvement support.

As a result of the lack of accountability and progress by students with disabilities, homeless and foster youth, the district is in differentiated status. Interviews and stakeholder input revealed a lack of a comprehensive system of expectation, support, and accountability in which all staff members see supporting all students, namely students with disabilities, foster and homeless youth, as their primary role. According to the 2018-19 CA Dashboard, 14% of students with disabilities met or exceeded ELA standards and 10.9% met

or exceeded math standards. In the same year, students with disabilities performed in the orange band for attendance and the red band for graduation rate.

At the time of this report, the SCUSD (approximately 47,000 students, 75% Free and Reduced Price Lunch (FRPL) has approximately 340 homeless students (0.7% of district population) and 221 foster youth (0.5% of district population). For comparison and pre-COVID-19, in 2018-19 the district had 217 homeless and 249 foster youth. A district comparison shows that the Twin Rivers Unified School District (approximately 31,000 students, 85% FRPL) currently has approximately 2,196 homeless youth (7% of district population) and 161 (0.5%) foster youth. In 2018-19, the district had 2,320 homeless and 161 foster youth. A second comparison shows that San Juan Unified School District (approximately 50,000 students, 50% FRPL) has 2,085 (4%) homeless students and 243 (0.5%) foster youth. In 2018-19, these numbers were 2,249 and 243 for homeless and foster youth, respectively. All three districts show an increase in both homeless and foster youth since the pandemic began.

Given the size and needs of the SCUSD school community and comparisons to other districts, it would appear that homeless students are underidentified. Government funds are available to school districts to support homeless students. It is unclear the steps the district has taken to ensure appropriate identification of students experiencing homelessness and to take advantage of these funds to develop a system to identify and systematically support homeless youth across the district.

Various assessments are used to monitor social-emotional skills and behavioral health of foster youth and homeless students. However, assessments for academics have been limited to CAASPP data or any other site-based assessments provided for these students. It is unclear how local data at the school sites are utilized to progress monitor students outside of CAASPP. Students residing in foster care have access to tutoring through vendors, where additional assessments are provided; however, this is student specific. Districtwide measures that monitor, support, and promote resilience in foster and homeless youth and assess students' soft skills such as motivation, social adaptability, and interpretive abilities are not yet evident. Assessment data used to monitor the rate of growth for foster and homeless youth to ensure students are receiving differentiated and well-rounded support for academics, social-emotional, and behavioral health is also lacking.

Currently, the district homeless department has one coordinator who ensures the district is in compliance with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act: Education for Homeless Children and Youth, one social worker to provide follow up on students identified as homeless and triage support by need, and two per diem administrative support staff. Foster youth services are supported by one coordinator, five FTE (e.g., program associates, instructional aides), and one administrative position.

The homeless coordinator notifies schools of homeless students in attendance. The schools are then to use the Student Support Data Handbook to ensure homeless students' success. However, in this model, it was reported that most often the needs of homeless students' support is identified when they surface as chronically absent, referred to the Student Attendance Review Board (SARB), in crisis, or referred to the Student Support

Team (SST), 504 or for eligibility for special education due to concerns about academic, behavior, and/or social emotional well-being, or self identity. (Note: Some families may choose not to self identify as homeless.) A proactive process to identify students as homeless and/or assess eligibility for services available through McKinney-Vento is not yet clearly established despite the need.

Funding for foster youth services flows from the county and is focused on independent living skill training for high school aged foster youth even though it is reported that most identified foster youth are at the elementary level. A partnership with the department of child welfare provides the district with data about foster youth enrolled in SCUSD. Recent collaboration efforts with the director of guidance and counseling has provided school counselors with targeted information/resources on graduation requirements for students residing in the foster care system, experiencing homelessness, or involved in the juvenile justice system. As a result, at the secondary level, the district has been able to identify and prioritize students for credit recovery to ensure they have every opportunity to graduate. The increase in graduation rates for foster youth is attributed to this targeted and intentional collaboration. (At the time of this report, foster and homeless graduation data are embargoed.)

The Student Attendance and Engagement Office has a partnership with the Sacramento County Department of Human Assistance Family Stabilization unit, so when families are discovered as being homeless, usually at the SARB, eligibility is assessed and they are connected with six months of intensive case management, through the county, to support with housing and "at risk youth services."

SWOT on Assessment and Accountability

A. Strengths:

- The district has invested a significant amount of time into developing the SPSA as a roadmap for continuous improvement and progress monitoring aligned with the LCAP.
- This year (February 2020) the district has begun utilizing a mid-year review tool for the SPSA.
- Teacher Resource Guides have been developed for each grade level assessed.
- Several dashboards have been developed (e.g., EIS, PTAI) to provide performance metrics.
- The EIS is heavily used by student support and health services and the activities under the Be Here grant.
- The increasing graduation rate is a milestone for accountability.
- Established data-sharing partnerships exist between the district's guidance and counseling office and local post-secondary institutions that allow monitoring of eligible students to enroll.

B. Weaknesses:

- Real-time data are not readily available for teachers, leaders, and central office personnel and administrators.

- In stakeholder interviews, the LCAP PAC voiced they had repeated unfulfilled requests for impact data and the expenditures allocated in the LCAP. Work has begun and is underway to address these issues.
- LCAP PAC consistently shared frustration over the lack of data to inform plan development, impact of funds expended year-to-year and the return on investment of funds spent.
- When compared to districts with similar size (e.g., Twin Rivers USD and San Juan USD) and FRPL, SCUSD's homeless populations appear to be underidentified.

C. Threats:

- In order to monitor district goals for teaching and learning, make decisions on instruction supports and resources and measure impact of changes, there needs to be more readily available, user-friendly, and consistent collection and use of assessment data.
- There are a number of initiatives and work streams in the district and limited data to evidence impact on improving teaching and learning.
- The lack of readily available data for stakeholder groups (DELAC, LCAP, CAC etc.), such as progress on LCAP goals, use of supplemental and concentration funds, progress monitoring of reclassification of English learners, has created tension, frustration, and lack of trust in the district's commitment to improving outcomes for all students.
- There is a need to identify key strategies and expectations for teaching and learning so these practices can be coherently built into SPSAs.
- The use and purpose of implementation science without deeper understanding and direct connection to instructional practice limits the capacity of both central office and school leaders to address problems of practice and results of root cause analysis.

D. Opportunities:

- Develop a commitment, expectation, and practice of using data to drive teaching, learning, and support at the central office and school sites.
- Considering site-based decision-making, strengthen the capacity of site administrators to work with teachers to implement local formative assessments that reflect the work at the school level.
- The district's work with CORE and SCOE's differentiated assistance process around the continuous improvement cycle provides the opportunity to make better connections and utility of the SPSA as a lever for change.
- There is an opportunity to provide stakeholder groups with requested data to develop LCAP in more timely ways, including impact data.
- Implementing systems to better monitor district progress on increased coherence of curricula, instruction, and professional learning provides opportunities to focus attention when district benchmarks and goals are not met.
- There is an opportunity for the district to create a coordinated and systemic system of support whereby schools have a consistent approach for identifying and implementing proactive strategies for foster, homeless, and chronically absent students.

- The MOU agreement between the district and SCTA communicates the importance of the use of formative assessments, and although the two parties have not been able to agree on the implementation of the MOU and are currently in arbitration over the districts decision to launch a districtwide formative assessment plan last fall (2019), there is opportunity once a decision is delivered to move forward in further attempts to implement formative assessments across the district to improve student learning.
- The Early Identification and Intervention system (EIS) has potential value in informing school leaders on early warning indices, such academic, behavior, and attendance, for increased accountability.

Actions: Assessment and Accountability

- 5A. Establish a suite of custom accountability reports available to all school and district staff that align with district goals and benchmarks for teaching and learning.
- 5B. Clarify the progress monitoring and accountability expectations for school teams and the purpose, role, and function of the multiple dashboards and platforms are in producing aligned data.
- 5C. Research the LCAP development timelines of other districts and consider how SCUSD timelines should be revised for increased input and feedback from LCAP PAC.
- 5D. Organize a series of meetings with CCEE, CORE, and SCOE to ensure coherence, collaboration, and integration of support and technical assistance.
- 5E. Engage principals in cycles of inquiry and implementation science separate from SPSA completion to develop skill, understanding, confidence, and trust.
- 5F. Examine the current documented procedures and support structures across homeless and foster youth divisions to ensure there is a consistent and multi-tiered system of support designed, implemented, communicated and monitored at the district level and across sites that provides intensified instruction, services, and support for these students.
- 5G. Create a systemic approach for identifying and supporting homeless youth. Ensure that a systemic and proactive system that provides academic, behavioral, and social-emotional health is established at all schools sites and monitored at the central office.
- 5H. Based on the findings and eventual ruling of the arbitration over the implementation of the MOU titled, "Monitoring of Student Progress", the district and SCTA will need to continue efforts to develop agreements on the use of formative assessments to improve student achievement.

6. Student and Family Engagement

(CCEE Instructional Component 6) The LEA practices two-way communication that reflects the cultural and linguistic needs of families in the community and provides resources and activities that give students agency, promotes student leadership, and provides a space for active family and community engagement. The

district has both systems and supports in place to successfully engage families and students in an adaptive learning environment (e.g., distance learning, blended learning, flipped classroom), internet connectivity, devices, orientation, and guidance on hybrid learning environments. Clear two-way communication is used with families and cultivates a clear understanding of steps and progress required for students to show mastery of skills, concepts, and grade-level and graduation requirements.

Finding 6a. While there are many parent and community stakeholder groups, there are few structures for integrating feedback from them to coordinate with district priorities, support, and communication.

Finding 6b. While there is required group feedback from stakeholder groups (LCAP PAC, LAC plan, Local plan, DELAC), there is a lack of coordinated collaboration across central office personnel to address and incorporate community feedback into strategies and action.

Finding 6c. Language barriers, translation and interpretation services and materials, and timely communication are challenges at both the school and district levels even though new processes to ensure translations for district community meetings are now in place.

Discussion

The diversity of the district's families and students provides a richness to the community. It also contributes to the challenge of engaging all students and families, in particular those whose language may be other than English. Parents, including those in committees, cited challenges with the language barriers and asked for more opportunities to be involved, more timely communication about events, varying or multiple meeting times during the evening, and engagement opportunities from principals. Specifically, parents expressed interest in wanting information on how to become involved at the high schools.

Engaging both student and family voice is an important aspect to delivering robust customer service that facilitates engagement and student success.

Families indicated there is a need for a clearer understanding of the process and steps for special education, including more specific information about what parents need to know to seek out special education services for their child. A few families spoke of the "top down" approach they perceive is present at the district level. They believe the superintendent is making decisions and not taking into account parent feedback. Families also feel that they receive mixed messages and communication. Families spoke about the perceived conflict in districtwide decision-making between an expressed focus on equity and the sense that there is the same approach for all schools, instead of differentiation to meet the needs.

Families expressed clear opinions that the current coronavirus situation is an opportunity to do things differently and disrupt the status quo and better serve all students. It was shared that one size does not fit all; training, instruction, and communication all need to meet the individual and group needs of students, families, and staff. Distance learning during spring 2020 was not effective. However, lessons learned informed the *Return Together* distance learning plan. Critical aspects of distance learning now include live instruction, access to recorded lessons, access to teachers and staff, and communication of clearer expectations on a regular basis. The district proposes more live instruction in blocks throughout the school day so that students can interact and learn from their teachers, and receive support and help with assignments. SCTA proposes students will spend more time learning on their

own, without their teachers and with less direct support, so teacher implementation of distance learning is inconsistent across the district.

There is targeted support for students and families to help with technology access and connectivity issues that impact their ability to engage in distance learning. However, parents, guardians, and caregivers need much more support to effectively partner in the education of students at home. This includes more opportunities to understand guidance on what they should expect from distance learning, opportunities to engage in two-way dialogue regarding district planning, and their own student's learning, training, resources, and support in using technology to learn at home. The learning loss for students in sequential courses, like world languages and math, is a concern of some parents interviewed even though the district has developed a comprehensive communications plan and parent resources to assist parents.

Students shared the challenges some teachers are having with teaching in the virtual space. They mentioned that some educators are leveraging technology well, while others are noticeably not utilizing it effectively and that this variance impacts their learning experiences. Students reported that some teachers are able to navigate the digital learning tools and use them to encourage interaction with students. It was shared that it is helpful when teachers use the Zoom chat box and allow students to respond there. Students mentioned that they feel most comfortable participating in their classes when teachers make them feel comfortable, give them choices, are strict but fun and provide extra support when a student is struggling.

Students and parents identified the need for more specific training so teachers are able to use the platforms (e.g., Google Classroom) and create more engaging virtual learning opportunities. Based on student interviews, it seems that practices in the virtual classroom have been inconsistent and are perceived by students to generally be in need of some improvement in order to more effectively engage students.

There is a perceived lack of support from the district staff regarding English learners (e.g., currently no full-time director for the Multilingual department). Parents felt that the district needs to do a better job of reclassifying students and providing more programs for EL students. Parents have questions and doubts about the district's spending on supports for EL students. They would like to see more budget transparency and accountability.

Student voice around engagement is based on input received from two listening sessions held in July with the Student Advisory Council (SAC) facilitated by the district for the purpose of informing the development of the Learning Continuity Plan. Other feedback was independently gathered by the student board members and SAC members. It was shared that more counseling services are needed in all schools in the areas of mental health, academics, and college planning. Students emphasized the fact that this need predates the pandemic and is even more urgent now.

Students expressed the need for more opportunities to share their voice including authentic questioning, constructive feedback, and open dialogue. Students shared that they need specific ways to regularly and safely provide feedback to staff. Consistency in instruction was noted as critically important. This includes online platforms, access to support, and clear expectations. Students want and need flexibility during distance

learning. Receiving assignments and due dates in advance for self-pacing and having access to recorded lessons provide key supports to students who need more flexibility.

SWOT on Student and Family Engagement

A. Strengths:

Students:

- There is a student representative who sits on the SCUSD school board.
- There is an established Student Advisory Council, and they periodically publish a newsletter that highlights activities of interest, celebrates teacher(s) of the month, and identifies resources for students.
- Despite COVID, clubs and afterschool classes/opportunities are continuing, providing students extracurricular and social opportunities. Examples cited include a program called "ASSETS," and college and career help.
- Under the current district leadership/superintendent there is reportedly more active parent engagement (e.g., volunteering to sit on committees).

Families:

- The work of the Family and Community Engagement department that started under the previous administration has continued with an intentional focus under the current superintendent.
- There is a Monthly Parent Exchange (pre-COVID) that includes a lunch and presentation from partners or district personnel, which in turn keeps this parent group in communication with district work.
- As a result of distance learning, parents reported being more privy to and involved in the day-to-day education of their child before parent-teacher conferences. Parents are able to "pop in" on class and see what is working for their child and what is not, and they can provide the necessary support, if they are able to.

B. Weaknesses:

Students:

- During student focus groups, students shared their experience with school counselors. Some students felt that their school counselors never seemed to be available. Others shared their perspective saying that their counselor has never asked them about their needs, and they felt they only helped them because they have to. Another student shared that their counselor has been unable to help them with their questions about going to college.
- Students share that teachers' practices in the virtual classroom have been inconsistent and are perceived by students to generally be in need of some improvement in order to more effectively engage students.

Families:

- Parents reported wide ranges of experiences across different campuses within the district, highlighting positive experiences at one campus and negative experiences at others and not feeling welcomed.

- There is a lack of adequate user-friendly interpretation available for parent meetings and translation of communication materials for the home language. Not all activities are provided in a parent-friendly language and during a time of day where they can engage.
- The current enrollment center is not as user-friendly as it might be and is an impediment to families and others from getting needed information, both before and during the COVID pandemic.
- Many families are challenged under the current distant learning environment (e.g., Chromebook cameras and/or microphones do not work), finding it difficult to help students with their school work.

C. Threats:

Students:

- Student voice reflected an inconsistently caring school environment in which students do not always feel safe or cared for and self agency is only sometimes valued. Some high-achieving students indicate their relationships with staff have to do with their high levels of achievement and therefore their lower achieving peers do not have the same access and relationships.
- There is a perception that ongoing disputes between the teacher's union and school district creates tension and distractions that undermines initiatives (e.g., it is unclear who has the final say on some matters).

Families:

- Several parents expressed that the bylaws for ELAC should be re-evaluated, since they see them as hindering them more than helping them.
- Several parents mentioned, currently and pre-pandemic, that district and school engagement efforts are what they considered to be low.
- Parents expressed that the district was not ensuring that every school site comply with the state requirements (if they have 21 or more English learners, they must form an ELAC).

D. Opportunities:

Students:

- There is opportunity to regularly convene and gather input from a districtwide student forum that authentically engages students to identify areas for improvement and to help implement best practices in engaging and supporting students and families.
- Students perceive orientation meetings as being helpful for their parents/guardians and wish there were more opportunities for their parents to be engaged in that way.
- Some students are enjoying Google Classroom and other apps and that they would like to see them continue to be used when in-person instruction resumes.
- Several students suggested hiring teachers that are bilingual when possible and specifically teachers that speak languages other than English and Spanish.

- Students reported that some teachers are able to navigate the digital learning tools and use them to encourage interaction with students.

Families:

- The number of parent and stakeholder groups (e.g., CAC, AAAB, DELAC) that currently exist in the district provides the opportunity to develop a coordinated written multi-year plan for engaging parents and other stakeholders in learning that is aligned to the district's strategies for improving academic, behavioral, and social-emotional learning.
- Parents suggested the creation of a parent/community lead program that assists students with literacy and provides assistance to families that do not speak English to help them support their child's literacy development.
- The ability to attend meetings virtually helps some parents, providing the opportunity to network, assist each other, and share ideas.
- Community forums would help families be open about their needs. Parents also suggest an English learner focused town hall meeting to talk about reclassification.

Actions: Student and Family Engagement

- 6A. Reexamine the hiring practices to ensure there is a representative group of teachers who are multilingual. The current contract timeline for in-district transfer is a barrier to timely hiring of high-demand personnel.
- 6B. Continue searching for and hiring a highly qualified Director of Multilingual; consider conducting a national search for this position.
- 6C. Continue to develop a clear communication and meeting plan for parents that includes processes and procedures to ensure that translation and interpreter services are provided in parent languages and in a user-friendly, timely manner.
- 6D. Continue to implement student engagement strategies to increase student voice, choice, and agency at schools and across the district.
- 6E. Re-evaluate and enhance practices for communicating and sharing EL reclassification information (the process and the data for reclassification rates).

7. School-based Instructional Leadership Teams (ILTs)

(CCEE Instructional Component 7) Instructional Leadership Teams (ILTs) exist in every school in the LEA and are representative across grades and disciplines with members that make culturally responsive data-driven decisions to design instruction for all students and their needs. ILTs facilitate site-based professional learning and support the implementation of district and site programs and efforts. The LEA has written expectations for ILTs roles, responsibilities, and team membership and provides professional development on the purpose, process, facilitation, and outcomes for leadership teams.

Finding 7a. While current school structures (e.g., Liaison Committee, Site-based decision-making team (SBDMT), school site council SSCs) provide some opportunities for site-based leadership, the establishment of Instructional Leadership Teams would benefit schools by providing a more structured model for data-based problem-solving and targeted action planning to improve and support teaching and learning.

Finding 7b. It is unclear how the current team structures at schools (e.g., Liaison Committee and SBDMT, SSCI) align with and progress monitor the implementation of a district instructional vision, LCAP, and SPSA identified goals and activities.

Finding 7c. The roles of site Liaison committees, SBDMTs and SSCs in determining how teaching and learning goals are being met by examining school-wide, grade level, and content area data to monitor students progress has not yet demonstrated improvement in student outcomes.

Discussion

Research shows school-based instructional leadership teams (ILTs) are a critical vehicle to monitoring the health and wellness of a school across academics, behavior, and social-emotional well-being (Day, LeMoyné, & Moody, 2020). The purpose of ILTs is to monitor and problem solve actions that lead to improved outcomes across academics, behavior, and social-emotional well-being. Each ILT is composed of school site stakeholders (e.g., counselors, grade level/content teachers, school psychologists, special education teachers, program specialists, social workers, nurses, EL personnel as well as classified staff, principal, assistant principal, etc.) The establishment of ILTs provides a dedicated structure for making data-driven decisions and problem-solving.

While ILTs may exist at some schools in the SCUSD, it is not clear how widespread this practice is across the district. The SCTA contract Articles 16 and Article 24 outline site-based committees in SCUSD. The Article 16 liaison committee is established as a vehicle to increase two-way communication between teachers and school administrators and focuses on operational and logistical needs at the school site.

Site-based decision-making teams (SBDMT) are established at some school sites. According to Article 24 - "...the measure of success for site-based decision-making will be whether there is continuous improvement in student learning and in the working environment." According to Article 24 the purpose of SBDMT is to participate in a collaborative decision-making, problem-solving process that seeks to improve the education of students and the quality of the workplace.

Although there is an opportunity to leverage this team, the impact of the SBDMT has not yet demonstrated to be an effective structure to improve student outcomes across the district. Interviews indicate that the SBDMTs do not necessarily focus on continuous improvement of student learning or on how data-driven adjustments are made to improve student outcomes.

California Education Code 52852 requires that a school site council (SSC) shall be established at each school that participates in Title I or LCFF supplemental/concentration grant funding. SSCs meet regularly to advise on the annual revision of the SPSA, approve revisions to the site categorical budget and SPSA, monitor the implementation of the site categorical budget and activities in the SPSA, and annually evaluate the activities in the approved SPSA.

While the district has established committees (SBDMT, SSCs) whose purpose is to monitor and support student success, their impact on improving student outcomes is not yet evident. This may be due to the broader roles of these existing committees, which inhibit

their opportunity to provide the needed focus on teaching and learning necessary to attain improved student outcomes.

The establishment of targeted and intentional school-based ILTs with a primary focus on teaching and learning and data-driven decisions to inform instruction for all students will complement and support the work of the other committees and significantly increase opportunities to improve student outcomes. ILTs meet regularly to converse and review data on student progress and the health and wellness of the school. ILTs monitor and adjust actions that lead to improved student outcomes across multiple measures (e.g., academics, behavior, social-emotional well being).

SWOT on School-based Instructional Leadership Teams (ILTs)

A. Strengths:

- School-based stakeholder groups revealed strong camaraderie and support among school staff.
- The emerging work around MTSS will provide a consistent framework within which the work of school-based instructional leadership teams can support improved student outcomes .

B. Weaknesses:

- It is unclear how schools ensure that the SPSA is understood by school staff, implemented, and monitored for the betterment of teaching and learning.
- The work of the currently established school committees (e.g., Liaison Committee, SBDMT, SSC) has not resulted in improved student outcomes.

C. Threats:

- The lack of coherence between site committees (e.g., SBDMT, SSCs) contributes to the possibility that the focus (dedicated time/exclusive focus) on teaching and learning necessary to improve student outcomes is not occurring.

D. Opportunities:

- The development of ILTs at school sites will provide an opportunity for teachers and administrators to collaborate and focus exclusively on teaching and learning practices and professional learning opportunities to improve student outcomes that are based on the unique needs of the site.
- The work of the ILTs will further support the work of the current Article 24 committees and SSCs and provides an opportunity to align interests and to work together to identify school-based actions needed to accelerate the improvement of students outcomes.
- The establishment of ILTs to intentionally target tiered supports for instruction and social-emotional well-being based on local/school-based data provides the opportunity to support the goal of school SPSAs.

Actions: School-Based Instructional Leadership Teams

7A. Establish ILTs at every school site and develop written expectations for ILTs' roles, responsibilities, and team membership. Work toward coherence and clarity around

the coordination, communication, and cross function of school site committees and ILTs.

7B. Once ILTs are established, provide on-going site-based professional development and coaching on instruction, assessment, and data-driven decision-making.

7C. Ensure that school leader professional learning aligns with the work of ILTs and builds school capacity for sustaining data-based decision-making.

7D. Clarify the instructional vision, strategy, priorities, and desired outcomes. Engage the school-based committees to build a common language, common understanding of the instructional vision and their critical role in supporting the attainment of the vision.

8. Administrative Coaching and Leadership

(CCEE Instructional Component 8) Infrastructures across the LEA support, promote, and enhance a collaborative culture for district and site administrator effectiveness in management and instructional leadership. Data (academic, social-emotional, and behavioral) are consistently used to monitor instruction and inform stakeholders' engagement. Consistent leadership coaching and mentoring provides principals the opportunity to reflect on, monitor, adjust, and increase effectiveness of their roles in strengthening instructional practices to meet the needs of diverse learners.

Finding 8a. The assignment of IASs to schools is a sound organizational support structure for schools. Additional clarity is needed in IASs' roles and responsibilities for supporting principals to become instructional leaders.

Finding 8b. Administrative coaching is an essential strategy to improve teaching and learning. There is a need to assess and improve the district strategy for developing instructional leadership at the district and school levels.

Finding 8c. Given the changed role of IASs, from area superintendents to instructional superintendents, and their participation with CORE, there is still a need to provide professional learning that builds their capacity and expertise to provide coaching, guidance, and mentoring for school administrators to strengthen teaching and learning.

Finding 8d. Inconsistent use of school-based data by district and site leaders to assess the rate of growth for academic, behavioral, and social-emotional learning in the district leads to uneven differentiated levels of support to schools.

Finding 8e. The lack of focus on students with disabilities and foster and homeless youth by IASs has resulted in abysmal student outcomes, disproportionate suspension, chronic absenteeism, and high failure rates.

Finding 8f. It is unclear how the district theory of action guides and informs the development and use of key instructional strategies across the district and coaching strategies to support principals. It is unclear how school teams implement the strategies and monitor results using cycles of data analysis to guide instructional decisions.

Discussion

The current structure for administrative coaching and leadership within SCUSD relies on the roles of the Instructional Assistant Superintendents (IAS) assigned to work with specific

schools and principals. Issues related to coherence and collaboration within this organizational structure were repeatedly identified during interviews as areas for improvement. While the current structure has potential, there is a lack of clarity about the way the IASs have agency to collaboratively problem solve or to meet with other district staff whose responsibilities may be helping or hindering school progress, even with the experience of the CORE professional development. While lines of authority are quite intentional, varied messages from central office departments create confusion, which then transfers to the school level.

Additionally, there is acknowledgement from district leadership that there are “pockets of excellence, deserts of despair” across schools in the district, which leads to a range of issues related to collaboration, implementation priorities, and accountability expectations. District staff did not articulate consistently how expectations for school site administrators are formally determined and communicated. How district staff support and help develop effective instruction and managerial leadership based on student needs and school priorities was not clear.

Principals identified the lack of cohesiveness across district departments and teams as leading to mixed messages and inconsistency of needed actions. IASs both evaluate and coach principals which causes some tension in expectations and requests for assistance by principals. Peer-to-peer coaching and advice from other principals was noted as the most effective strategy principals use to get support and information to do their jobs. Principals spend an extensive amount of time problem-solving and following up with individual departments at the district, for example, human resources and budget, instead of spending time in classrooms observing instruction and providing feedback to teachers.

SWOT on Administrative Coaching and Leadership

District Leadership

A. Strengths:

- Central office personnel are aware that “the way of doing business” needs to change as it is not resulting in improved outcomes for students and the morale of the adults in the system.

B. Weaknesses:

- There is general consensus that the district lacks coherence around the implementation of the district’s vision and priorities.
- Communication is a significant challenge within and between central office departments as well as between central offices and schools.
- The current district organizational structure does not lend itself to accountable service and support to schools.
- Interviewees shared that the roadmap for district and site administrative coaching that supports the district’s theory of action, efforts around SPSA, and use of data sources is not yet evident.
- There is a lack of leadership and accountability to ensure students with disabilities and foster and homeless youth are provided services and support so they are not disproportionately suspended, chronically absent, and/or at risk for failure.

- The inconsistent and lack of data use by IASs contributes to inequitable educational opportunities for students with disabilities.

C. Threats:

- Central office silos sometimes unknowingly work against each other.
- The lack of central office coherence for implementing common goals results in disorganized communication and inconsistent messages and support to schools.
- The development and capacity building of the IASs to facilitate the development of instructional leadership and accountability for improving student outcomes is not yet evident.
- The current IAS structure does not facilitate the development of instructional leadership and accountability for improving student outcomes.
- The lack of accountability for students with disabilities and foster and homeless youth from the IASs will continue to contribute to inequitable programs and services and exposure to district litigation.

D. Opportunities:

- The shift of IAS responsibilities to instructional coaching has the potential to strengthen teaching and learning and provide better support to principals and school teams.
- The current special education lawsuit/complaint provides an opportunity to create accountable systems and structures that reflect a commitment to students with disabilities.
- There is an opportunity to develop a coaching model for IASs that builds their knowledge and skills around teaching and learning and in turn their support when working with principals.
- There is an opportunity to develop the capacity of central office leaders by developing a coaching and leadership roadmap that includes explicit expectations, outcomes, and evidence to show the impact on improving student outcomes.

Site Leadership

A. Strengths:

- There is a strong perception from interviewees that there are many effective school leaders and principals with expertise that could serve as a resource to the district.
- There is a general sense of collegiality and support among and between teachers.
- There is a general sense that principals try to understand and support special education and other high-need student groups.
- Site administrators are open to instructional coaching and strengthening collaborative decision-making and problem-solving.

B. Weaknesses:

- School-based personnel interviews consistently described a system in which there are too many initiatives that lead to a lack of focus. While initiatives may

- be useful, they are not necessarily reflective of the direct needs of students, teachers, and leaders.
- Schools perceive a top-down expectation for accountability with a lack of expectations for central office staff.
 - There is a disconnect with the current organizational structure whereby IASs do not support a coherent vision of teaching and learning.
 - There is a widely held perception that positions of power and relationships take higher precedence than standardized services and equitable support across the district.
 - It was reported there is a lack of known standard operating procedures for hiring, budgeting, procurement, permissions for attending conferences, and other areas of district operations.
 - The lack of basic standard operating procedures results in inordinate delays in decisions and communication that impact school leaders.
 - Since there are weak district processes for developing and implementing long- and short-range plans, involvement from key stakeholders and implementers does not happen as a norm for conducting district business.
 - There is a lack of initial and ongoing support for new principals and teachers (e.g., access to data systems, email etc.), which means they are not prepared to immediately step into their roles.
 - The lack of differentiated support for principals results in administrators seeking out their own mentoring and support from colleagues.

C. Threats:

- Site administrators are distracted by the constant need to follow up on central office requests (e.g., hiring, procurement, conference approvals) without understanding the link to district priorities and outcomes.
- The lack of coherence across IASs results in inconsistent and confusing communication and directives for principals.
- The lack of coordinated new administrator induction results in new personnel having to repeatedly ask for access to systems (e.g., data tracker, Frontline, email) and limits their effectiveness.
- The inconsistent presence and participation of administrators and other required school-based members at student IEPs places the district at risk for continued district litigation.

D. Opportunities:

- There is an opportunity for the district to intentionally target and communicate key high priority areas and operationalize them within a written plan and implementation timeline to improve teaching and learning.
- There is an opportunity to prioritize standard operating procedures that would facilitate transparent communication about expectations and procedures/processes across the central office and between the central office and sites.
- There is an opportunity to engage and collaborate with school leaders to provide consistent input into the design of professional learning and meeting structures that are aligned with school needs.

- The voice of site administrators can be utilized to identify systemic barriers between and within central office departments that, in turn, result in the delivery of coherent and consistent service and support to schools.
- Given the turnover and addition of new principals, there is an opportunity to implement a sustainable new principal support and induction system.
- There is a desire for more investment in developing site administrators' instructional leadership capacity.
- There is an opportunity to differentiate professional learning sessions to integrate site needs better and develop the instructional leadership capacity of principals to support teachers in delivering effective instruction.

Actions: Administrative Coaching and Leadership

District Leadership:

- 8A. Develop aligned, systemic processes, both qualitative and quantitative, that measure how, what, and how well district and school leaders are functioning in their current roles.
- 8B. Expect all IASs to demonstrate consistent use of qualitative and quantitative school-based data to assess the rate of growth for academic, behavioral, and social-emotional learning across student groups and differentiate levels of support.
- 8C. Continue to build the skill and capacity of IAS to systematically support the implementation of UDL practices and MTSS framework designed to accelerate improved student outcomes.
- 8D. Develop a consistent principal coaching model for use by IASs and implement a support calendar that expects and provides for observing instruction in both general and special education settings and providing strengths-based and actionable feedback to site leaders.
- 8E. Develop and implement user-friendly tools, expectations, timelines, and strategies to support site administrators' consistent use of quantitative and qualitative data to assess rates of growth for academic, behavioral, and social-emotional learning for all students.
- 8F. Continue to work toward cultivating a growth mindset across district leadership that manifests a trusting and safe environment in which personnel feels comfortable taking risks, sharing innovative practices, and actively contributing to results-based decision-making (e.g., within SPSA process).

Site Leadership

- 8A2. Provide site administrators with professional learning and coaching opportunities to enhance their knowledge and skills to fulfill their roles and responsibilities as instructional leaders.
- 8B2. Deliver consistent leadership coaching and mentoring for principals that provides them the opportunity to reflect, monitor, adjust, and increase the effectiveness of

their roles in strengthening instructional practices to meet the needs of diverse learners (e.g., gifted, homeless and foster youth, students with disabilities, and those at risk for failure).

8C2. Create the expectation and support that allows administrators to clearly demonstrate a balance of their time between building management and instructional leadership priorities.

9. Professional Learning and Coaching

(CCEE Instructional Component 9) There is a professional learning plan that cultivates the development of a teaching and learning culture through the eyes of a student and reflects the needs of all teaching staff. The LEA-wide data-driven professional learning plan designed for all stakeholders focuses on effective instructional practices that improve student academic, social-emotional, and behavioral learning. The data-based professional learning opportunities the LEA provides are grounded in student performance and foster collective responsibility for improving student outcomes. Instructional coaches support the implementation and improvement of the tiered instructional practices.

Finding 9a. The district's targeted work in universal design for learning (UDL) can result in providing flexible goals, methods, materials, and assessments in order to provide equitable access to good instruction and differentiated support to a diversity of learners (e.g., gifted, foster and homeless youth, students with disabilities).

Finding 9b. Through the implementation of MTSS, the district is working to provide highly effective, data-based professional learning opportunities that are grounded in student performance while fostering collective responsibility for improving student outcomes.

Finding 9c. The district has created a new rhythm for delivering professional learning whereby school administrators are trained first, giving them an opportunity to process the new learning before they turnkey that learning to teachers at their sites.

Finding 9d. Site Based Management and Teacher Collaboration, designed to improve student achievement, is built into school schedules and occurs on the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Thursday of the month for 1 hour each and has the potential to provide opportunities to assess student learning to help drive instruction at the site level.

Discussion

Professional Learning opportunities are specific to each site, as evidenced by bargaining agreements, and/or require teachers the ability to opt-in or out and does not provide consistency at the school site or across the district to provide ongoing capacity building to improve teaching and learning. This opt-in culture also contributes to uneven implementation of best practices across the district.

In addition, effective site-based management requires a specific skill set of site-level leaders (for both administration and teachers), and it is not apparent how these leaders are able to obtain the level of skill to address the chronic failure of students as evidenced by the CA dashboard results. For example, there is a lack of systemic focus on developing the capacity of all teaching staff to deliver effective lessons that actively engage ELs and students with disabilities and advance their learning and language proficiency across the curriculum. A professional learning plan that cultivates the development of a teaching and learning culture through the eyes of students and reflects the needs of all teaching staff

would serve the district well. Interviewees offered differing perspectives of the work in the district as moving toward solutions too quickly and then not spending enough time on implementation to monitor impact or progress. Others expressed that there are too many initiatives with not enough focus on any one.

Creating professional learning networks, applying research-based strategies to instructional practices, and creating high-functioning school teams (e.g., ILTs) focused on equity and results are not expectations that are communicated and intentionally acted upon across the district even though there is an expressed interest and cabinet support to move in this direction. District staff, teachers, and leaders value professional development that is differentiated and linked to school priorities. Opportunities to develop a district culture where everyone is responsible for participating in professional development is not yet in place.

Specific professional learning activities in SCUSD's distance learning plan that are mandated for all teachers and leaders included three self-paced modules for UDL and corresponding processing guides and self-paced online professional learning related to the use of Google Classroom. Ongoing professional learning for school leaders will need to continue throughout the year to support the achievement of school goals within the SPSA and the use of improvement science to improve outcomes for all students.

Professional learning with site administrators on the development, implementation, and monitoring of the SPSAs is on-going. The district continues to work with CORE to support and develop the capacity of IASs to provide robust principal professional learning around continuous improvement.

Interviews with multiple groups revealed hopes that lasting change needs to occur in schools. Principals need and want to empower leaders at all levels of the school to be drivers of change and to create the systems and structures necessary to carry out change initiatives. Building a consistent culture throughout the district that reinforces the message that all students—and all teachers—are capable of excellence is an expressed interest by many, but developing and implementing the strategies to create a culture of excellence is not yet consistently evident. School leaders expressed frustration that there is a lot going on to try to make improvements and consistent collaboration and time to implement changes are not yet district norms.

A new approach for imparting targeted professional learning to support district curriculum, instruction, and learning goals has begun. The district is first providing training for administrators whereby they learn the material in a safe space and then take it back to their sites to share with their staff across available times.

The district has 25.8 instructional specialists whose role it is to provide professional learning and support to teachers and leaders. However, given the opt-in culture of the district, the instructional specialists must be invited into classrooms and are limited to working with sites that value and desire their support leading to uneven support and implementation of district departmental goals, roles, and functions.

SWOT on Professional Learning and Coaching

A. Strengths:

- There is a strong and urgent desire to provide professional learning opportunities throughout the district.
- There is intentional focus and delivery of professional learning regarding the systemic implementation of UDL.
- The district has 25.8 instructional specialists (7 ELA/ELD, 9 math, 0.8 GATE, 2 science, 5 SEL, and 2 inclusive practices) who have the potential to strengthen support for teaching and learning priorities.
- On-going professional learning is provided to the IASs and principals about the SPSAs and continuous improvement.
- The emerging MTSS work has a multi-year professional learning plan for district and site leaders and teachers.

B. Weaknesses:

- Instructional specialists provide content expertise. However, the "opt-in" culture does not create an equitable approach to accessing this support for instructional improvement by all schools.
- There are no instructional specialists allocated for English learner integrated support.
- While there are regular monthly professional learning opportunities (PL) for site administrators, districtwide opportunities for teachers, paraeducators and other support staff have not yet occurred on a consistent basis.
- The training offered at principal meetings does not necessarily address the immediate needs of the schools. The absence of the audience/participant voice in planning PL does not yet appear to be a consistently established culture.

C. Threats:

- The general lack of cohesive use of the data dashboards threatens the implementation of data-driven professional learning and feedback that is regularly collected and shared to support continuous improvement and monitor progress.
- The pervasive lack of access and use of systemic data hinders the district's ability to provide data-driven professional learning from the boardroom to the classroom.
- As a result of the current labor contract, on-going professional learning does not exist to support teachers' reflections and efforts to improve classroom practices for academics, social-emotional, and behavioral learning (e.g., instructional coaches and/or support personnel).

D. Opportunities:

- The development of various data dashboards provides the district with the opportunity to develop a data-driven professional learning plan designed for all stakeholders focused on effective instructional practices that improve student academic, social-emotional, and behavioral learning.

- The districtwide implementation of MTSS provides the professional learning opportunity to further develop assessment literacy and provide for continual analysis of student data that results in effectively raising achievement academically, socially-emotionally, and behaviorally.
- Given the current landscape of schooling, there is an urgent need to focus on digital literacy within an adaptive environment that provides opportunities to practice and build skills in this area (e.g., blended and online learning, flipped classrooms, maximizing the use of digital platforms and resources, synchronous and asynchronous).
- Given the new rhythm of delivering PL to site administrators, there is an opportunity to provide more high-quality professional development aligned to the district's instructional vision and priorities (e.g., MTSS) and SPSA goals.
- There is an opportunity to consistently include the principal voice in the development of professional learning.
- The recently acquired Supporting Inclusive Practices (SIP) grant provides the opportunity to develop professional learning and coaching to district and school personnel that will support, improve, and expand programs and services for students with disabilities.
- There is an opportunity to examine the current role and function of the instructional specialists and other departmental work to better marshal the support for teachers, leaders, and schools.
- Site-based management, teacher collaboration time, and formative assessment agreements, designed to improve student achievement, provide a base to build from. When the district and SCTA agree on how to implement these agreements, opportunities to effectively assess student learning to help drive instruction at the site level will be possible.

Actions: Professional Learning and Coaching

- 9A. Develop a written, comprehensive multi-year professional learning and coaching plan based on best practices for improving effective instruction for veteran and new principals, teachers, and staff (classified and certificated) and have clear expectations for implementation and monitoring.
- 9B. Develop a written multi-year plan for engaging parents and other stakeholders in learning that are aligned to the district's strategies (e.g., LCPA, SPSA) for improving academic, behavioral, and social-emotional learning.
- 9C. Develop and/or enhance the system to gather input and act upon the feedback on the delivery of professional learning and coaching to ensure the needs of consumers are met.
- 9D. Analyze the current instructional specialist positions and reallocate and/or repurpose their roles and responsibilities to better provide comprehensive, coordinated, and differentiated services and support to schools.

10. Data Management and Use and Student Information Systems

(CCEE Instructional Component 10) The LEA has a student information system (SIS) that actively stores and tracks all individual student data (e.g., grades, attendance, discipline). The SIS provides LEA-wide appropriate

access for teachers, administrators, and parents/caregivers, which allows for aggregate data use for school-based planning and also meets federal/state/local reporting requirements. The LEA has an early warning system for students' academics, behavior, and attendance at the district, school, and classroom levels. A suite of reports through the SIS that is readily available and customized for the end-user (e.g., principal, teacher, board member, assistant superintendent, parent/caregiver, etc) and reflect the areas identified as needing improvement for each student.

Finding 10a. Districtwide conditions of quality common assessments, effective curricular lesson plans, structures for schoolwide data meetings and aligned professional development on data-driven instruction are not present in every school.

Finding 10b. Data systems are in place, but the protocols and timelines for data analysis and decision-making are not consistently implemented in every school.

Finding 10c. There are multiple data systems that do not readily provide data in a user-friendly way.

Finding 10d. The implementation of MTSS provides a common language and framework to support data-driven instruction and tiered intervention that align with student needs.

Discussion

District leadership understands that the current data management systems are not all aligned and require time-consuming tasks across platforms (e.g., Escape, SIS, Illuminate, attendance, EIS, PTAI, SWIS, Infinite Campus (SIS), Tableau, and others). Leadership understands having a centralized platform to house district and school-related data would optimize operational processes. There is limited information from interviews and artifact reviews that suggests a culture of data use exists across the entire district. Some district and school leaders are using the district-developed dashboards to monitor progress, and the CA Dashboard performance indicators are used to generate conversations about how to increase performance and close achievement gaps. There is limited evidence that there is a transparent cultural belief across the district that data belongs to everyone in the community.

Differentiation and remediation are structured by determining which students need additional support or practice, and which students are ready for enrichment. Teachers and principals identified student-skill deficits as a key reason for achievement gaps and opportunities, but real-time, coordinated data for use by schools and district offices are not readily available when needed. The current lack of data culture in the district precludes providing user-friendly and easily accessible data needed to progress monitor rate of growth across multiple indicators (academic, behavior, social-emotional well-being) across diverse student groups (gifted, foster and homeless youth, students with disabilities, etc).

Everyone needs to be accountable for knowing their data, both at the district and school level, and knowing how to monitor that data, while having systems in place to support teachers and support students' improvement and achievement. The current data management system, with its multiple systems/platforms, lack of accessibility, and clarity of use, places the district in the difficult position of expecting data-based decision-making when data are not readily available.

With the use of data, support, and professional learning, resources can be targeted to address areas of real need. There is a need to know how to navigate various data systems and dashboards and understand how to use the data to increase instructional effectiveness. Given this impediment, the district must develop data governance that articulates the purpose, role, and use of existing data systems and delivers trusted data in the right format and at the right time to consumers.

SWOT on Data Management and Use and Student Information Systems

A. Strengths:

- Some central office personnel are using the established metrics/dashboards.
- Data-sharing agreements are in place with Los Rios Community College, Cal State Sacramento, UC Davis, and Merced.
- School leaders uniformly agree on the need for a user-friendly and reliable data system that is timely and easy to access and gives them the information they seek.
- Some training is occurring (e.g., school administrators) in the use of local dashboard data and Illuminate, the business intelligence tool used by the district.

B. Weaknesses:

- There are several platforms and/or data sources in the district, which has led to user confusion.
- While data is critical for student improvement, they are not regularly used to monitor progress and ensure curriculum, instruction, and tiered support result in positive student outcomes (academics, social-emotional, and behavioral health).
- The lack of a uniform, user-friendly data system inhibits consumer use of data to drive instructional improvements at the district and school levels.
- The current data platforms in use are cumbersome and fragmented, creating confusion and uncertainty about the accuracy of data and how to access it when needed.

C. Threats:

- The lack of explicit expectations and guidance on data use across the multiple platforms has resulted in confusion and lack of trust in data sources.
- The amount of effort needed to sort through data systems contributes to the lack of regular use of data for instruction and decision-making at both the school and central office.
- Data governance (e.g., the process of managing the availability, usability, integrity of the data, and internal data standards and policies) continues to be a work in progress and does not meet the current and urgent needs of the district.
- The lack of timely responsiveness to data requests continues to contribute to the current ineffective practices and systems.
- Data is a leading indicator that provides an opportunity to create equitable, supportive accountability at both the central office and the schools. The current data systems and the management of them do not lend themselves

- to this critical district need and contributes to the current lack of progress across multiple measures.
- Without regular data use, including formative and summative assessment results, data analysis, progress and growth monitoring, and adjustments to instructional practices, students' progress, achievement expectations and results will continue to widen the opportunity gap across diverse student groups.
 - The various data management systems and lack of data-driven organizational culture are a threat to the implementation of data-based decision-making and monitoring of district goals and student outcomes across multiple measures.

D. Opportunities:

- There is an opportunity for the district to commit to using data for continuous improvement at the school and classroom levels to empower teachers and principals to make decisions for which they will be held accountable with support from district teams.
- While there is an EIS accountability planning tool, consistent use across the district is not yet evident, nor was it raised in interviews as a resource to improve student outcomes.
- The work of data governance should necessarily include aligning data systems used by HR to ensure their functionality and efficiency.
- The urgent need for aligning data governance and school culture provides the district an opportunity to create guardrails for reporting data (e.g., in-school and out-of-school suspension).

Actions: Data Management and Use and Student Information Systems

- 10A. Given the current data platform, provide uniform processes whereby consumers have user-friendly and real-time data at their disposal. Increase the skill, capacity, and expertise of the current personnel needed to reach data governance priorities.
- 10B. Review and prioritize the activities of the data department within the office of Continuous Improvement and Accountability so they are more aligned with district and schools' data needs to provide real-time data across multiple measures delivered in a universal and user-friendly way.
- 10C. Develop a well-articulated/operationalized set of expectations and routines for data use and accountability for those who support school leaders.
- 10D. Develop or refine protocols for data reporting and establishing quality-assurance mechanisms focused on reliable data in order to establish a culture of intentional and regular use that supports data-driven decision-making and efficacy to improve teaching and learning.
- 10E. Disaggregate data in meaningful ways to identify disparities in opportunity and outcomes as central to the district mission of equity, access, and racial justice.

- 10F. Provide time for central office staff and principals to increase their knowledge and skills on creating a culture of data to monitor continuous improvement at the school and classroom levels to increase accountability for teaching and learning goals.
- 10G. Ensure that, once collected, data are be used, analyzed, and acted upon leading to a continuous cycle of collection, organization, and synthesis to support informed decision-making across the district.
- 10H. Establish a data culture of customer service that results in responsiveness to data requests in a timely manner.
- 10I. Enable data systems to report on students' progress after graduation, including postsecondary access and completion, formal apprenticeships, military participation, and remediation rates in order to create feedback loops for the district.

11. District and Leadership Capacity

(CCEE Instructional Component 11) The LEA contains strong multi-level (school and district leadership) organizational capacity and processes to make coherent, coordinated decisions that ensure goals and metrics are mission and vision aligned across sites and departments. District and school leadership develop and facilitate collaborative and transparent processes to implement shared goals regarding teaching and learning, effective leadership, and accountability and commitment to equity. Established processes ensure each member, regardless of position, is supported and can fulfill their role and responsibilities. Each department's strategic workflow, metrics, and benchmarks are verified with data, aligned with district goals and vision, and reviewed regularly.

Finding 11a. There is limited evidence of how district and school leadership develop and facilitate collaborative and transparent processes to implement and discuss progress on shared goals regarding teaching and learning beyond the development of the LCAP and SPSAs (e.g., cycles of inquiry, performance dialogues).

Finding 11b. Organizational systems, processes, and communication strategies seem hierarchical therefore creating fragmented communication and decisions among central office leadership, which creates a perception of leadership having limited capacity to make coherent, coordinated, transparent decisions informed by data and collaborative input.

Finding 11c. There is limited evidence that aligned, systemic processes are in place and used across the district to measure how, what, and how well district and school leaders are functioning in their roles and impacting student equity, learning, and success.

Finding 11d. There is limited evidence that strong organizational capacity, dynamics, and processes exist to make coherent, coordinated decisions that improve the overall health and wellness of how the district functions as a learning organization.

Discussion

SCUSD district leadership hierarchy consists of the superintendent, deputy superintendent, and six chief officers with specific responsibilities and assigned staff. SCUSD core values embrace equity, achievement, integrity, and accountability as essential components. District Board goals include (1) college, career, and life-ready graduates, (2) safe, emotionally healthy, and engaged students, (3) family and community empowerment and (4) operational excellence. Stakeholder and individual interviews, including those with district staff, reflect the understanding of the importance of increasing student outcomes

and narrowing opportunity gaps for district students, ensuring they graduate with the greatest number of post-secondary choices from the widest array of options, having experienced a relevant, rigorous curriculum with equitable access to the opportunities, supports, and tools needed to be successful. District leadership is intentional in its vision "to rise above and disrupt the current status quo of systemic inequity to meet the academic, social, and emotional needs of all our students, especially our most vulnerable students at each school." The pathway to accomplishing this is yet unclear.

A SCUSD Theory of Action graphic identifies the system components of curriculum and instruction, professional learning, logistics and operations, and supervision and evaluation to guide implementation of district goals and plans through a continuous improvement model. Knowing that constant feedback is an important aspect of the continuous improvement model, along with open communication during every phase of executing improvements, there is no evidence that the Theory of Action influences district decisions and actions. The Theory of Action has not served to be a foundational model that is neither deeply understood and used by district and school leaders nor acted upon by district departments.

The status of labor-management relationships in the district hinders the pace of change by confounding the structure and speed of decision-making. As a result, the ability to build district and school capacity to develop collective knowledge and understandings required for ongoing instructional improvement that meets the needs of each student is significantly limited. Implementation fidelity to district goals is limited, and it is unclear how school, labor, and district leaders are working together to support student success.

Some coaching occurs at the district level. Empathy and individual interviews reflect the need to increase opportunities for team cohesiveness to meet district goals and more distributed leadership to increase collaborative decision-making, engage in an ongoing dialogue on improving student outcomes, and reciprocal accountability to these outcomes. There is a need to create more cross-role leadership structures and facilitate strategic communications across the district on goals and priorities to meet these goals. While district individual and stakeholder interviews identify equity and improved achievement as clear district goals, professional norms of peer support, shared responsibility, and continuous learning for the adults are not currently evident. This has resulted in the lack of the central office team monitoring the coherence of actions and programs that align with the focus and vision of the district. While increased student learning is a district goal, systems are not yet explicitly in place to reinforce common strategies and efforts to attain goals at all levels (e.g., central, school, and classroom).

While the IASs have restructured roles and responsibilities to support teaching, learning, and increase equity, the balance of district authority and school autonomy is still a work in progress. Beginning work on strengthening SPSAs is an opportunity, especially if it is aligned with a comprehensive instructional vision, strategy, priorities, and outcomes. However, more structures to support the development and cycles of inquiry to monitor progress and to ensure effectiveness in meeting student outcomes will be needed. Building the instructional leadership capacity of IASs is needed so that their work with

principals is more focused on monitoring progress, reviewing student performance data, and supporting teaching and learning.

The recent focus on UDL and MTSS provides the opportunity to develop the skill, capacity, and knowledge of district leadership that supports professional learning and coaching focused on improving classroom practices and implementing and monitoring SPSA instructional goals. The need to implement MTSS as the instructional framework from which the district operates is aligned to previous report findings (e.g., Council of Great City Schools, 2017) and best practices to ensure a quality and rigorous learning experience for all students, especially those most vulnerable. There have been multiple starts and stops in relation to MTSS implementation. This has limited the district's ability to build the systems and structures necessary to build districtwide capacity and support understanding of the MTSS framework at school sites. The current steps taken by the district to implement MTSS consistently across the district and school is essential for school site teams to make informed decisions on actions for implementation and be supported by the central office. The MTSS framework is an opportunity to clarify an instructional vision, strategy, priorities, outcomes, and integrate with school-level continuous improvement activities, such as SPSA.

SWOT on District and Leadership Capacity

A. Strengths:

- Clear district vision focused on equity, achievement, integrity, and accountability as the foundation for continuous improvement goals is evident by the theory of action.
- There is a desire for clarity on specific strategies and pathways to reach goals so that the central office team is working collaboratively to support the vision and mission of the district.
- Although there is consensus that central office departments are siloed, there is a desire to create more collaborative workflows, communication, and more consistent support to schools

B. Weaknesses:

- Top-down management structure and expectations limit collaborative decision-making and shared responsibility for attaining success on district goals.
- As noted in the Harvard Public Education Leadership Project (PELP) problem of practice, it is unclear how district leadership makes decisions on budget and instructional decisions for schools in a consistent manner that uses continuous improvement.
- There is a perception that IASs and central office staff provide inconsistent support for principals to improve the instructional core and ground budget decisions that reflect school and district use of continuous improvement.
- The communication systems and tools for district goals, priorities, and outcomes seem to be lacking, resulting in mixed messages and confusion across central offices and schools.

- The delays in hiring within the Human Resources department and support to schools evidence a lack of standardized practices and customer service practices.

C. Threats:

- The lack of central office special education personnel, given the size of the district, and the inconsistent delivery of robust core standards-aligned instruction, differentiated instruction and support contributes to opportunity gaps for students with disabilities.
- The lack of expectation and regular review of established performance metrics aligned with the district vision and goals continues to threaten the growth and sustainability of using a continuous improvement model.
- A decentralized system can be innovative; however, the lack of clear expectations, accountability, and communication has resulted in a lack of support for school leaders and inequitable educational opportunities and programs for students.
- The current contractual timelines for posting for external hires is July 1, which significantly impacts the district's ability to hire early and ensure there is a teacher in every classroom at the start of the school year.

D. Opportunities:

- There is a desire by central offices and schools to increase student outcomes and narrow opportunity gaps for district students. Financial challenges necessitate more collaboration and transparent decision-making to meet student needs, provide a robust instructional program and ensure specific departments (e.g., multilingual, special education) are staffed to support diverse learners and schools.
- There is an opportunity for district and school leadership to develop and facilitate collaborative and transparent processes to implement shared goals regarding teaching and learning, effective leadership, accountability, and commitment to equity and excellence across the district.

Actions: District and Leadership Capacity

- 11A. Establish a customer service oriented central office organization with clear roles and responsibilities for personnel, departments, and service and support to schools including how decisions are made and communicated.
- 11B. Identify and establish the key strategies and practices for providing effective and continuously improving teaching and learning (e.g., UDL, MTSS), the process and structures for coaching and supporting principals and school teams and monitoring implementation of district goals.
- 11C. Develop explicit accountability systems to monitor the implementation of LCAP and SPSA goals and service and support to schools with transparent communication of the return on investment of efforts.
- 11D. Revisit the Council of the Great City Schools 2017 report (Administration and Operation of Special Education) and the current office of special education

organizational structure for the purpose of staffing the central office at the level commensurate to support a district the size of SCUSD.

- 11E. Continue to negotiate the expectations for the principal evaluation tool and coach and support principals to improve the instructional core.
- 11F. Develop, for each central office department, a strategic workflow including metrics and benchmarks to be verified with data and aligned with district goals and accountability expectations.
- 11G. Develop a calendar to engage in continuous improvement and cycles of inquiry to assess district and school leadership culture, coherence, and professional learning that informs two-way communication with the superintendent to ensure district benchmarks and goals are met.
- 11H. Establish a process for the cabinet to model and engage in ongoing dialogue and review of data around key performance indicators and benchmarks aligned with district goals in order to increase the skills, knowledge, and leadership capacity of the cabinet.

12. Governance Support with Instruction

(CCEE Instructional Component 12) The LEA's governing board has clearly established written policies, processes, and protocols to assist in the implementation of strong instructional practices and educational supports for each and every student. The board's policies support the goal that all students are provided with, know, and understand clear learning targets in all courses and at all grade levels. The district's governing board has a delineated function and members have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in improving district, school, and student outcomes. The district's governing board members demonstrate conflict resolution, effective communication, and interpersonal respect for each other, the district leadership, staff, and the community they serve.

Findings 12a. The governing board works to set priorities and implement policies to better align the budget to support the goals and operational components of the district.

Findings 12b. The district's mission and goals are published in a variety of documents; however, defined and calendared annual review processes for reporting progress to the governing board, schools, and the community do not make it clear to all stakeholders what their responsibilities are to achieve the goals.

Findings 12c. It is not yet clear how the governance team and district leadership work to develop an organizational culture that supports continuous improvement and innovative instructional practices.

Finding 12d. Although there is a theory of action that has been established by the governing board and the superintendent, how the board uses the adoption of policies and administrative regulations to support implementation at all levels of leadership and across all schools is unclear.

Finding 12e. Positional bargaining between labor and management has led to a history of adversarial and vitriolic negotiations that lead to perceived concepts of wins and losses

and dysfunctional ongoing conflict instead of mutual benefits and shared solutions for improving teaching and learning.

Discussion

The governance board works to support the vision, mission, and goals of the district. Board goals have been set to increase the graduation rate and improve academic progress for all students with equity, access, and social justice as the foundation for the goals and aligned actions and services. Sustained focus on identified goals and continuous improvement cycles are often interrupted by distractions or initiatives (e.g., grant seeking without transition plans, individual board member requests, community requests, and advocacy). This can cause resources to be consumed differently than planned and have an impact on district staff time or have little systemwide impact on increasing student success. There are limited strategic-driven policies and practices in place that create systemic alignment to support the entire district's work toward common goals in mutually supportive ways.

As shared in the culture, coherence, and the planning process section (p.8), there are internal systems and structures that are needed within the district. With these in place, the governing board will be able to monitor the district's progress. Nevertheless, external conditions exist within the district including the management of multiple parent and community groups often with cross purposes, vitriolic relationships with bargaining groups, fiscal reductions, and budget decisions on spending that create interference and disruption to staying the course on priorities and goals, often pushing teaching and learning goals to the background.

The SCUSD Board election results of November 2020 have the ability to impact either positively or negatively how the governance team continues to develop the working relationship with the superintendent, administrators, teachers, and staff based on mutual respect, collegiality, and a joint commitment to student success. With new members on the board, there is a need to revisit board norms and goals to strengthen how the board acts collectively and openly, guided by community perspectives and informed by recommendations from the superintendent and professional staff. This includes improving the board's capacity to govern by creating protected time and structure for their development as a board.

SWOT on Governance Support with Instruction

A. Strengths:

- The Board and district team has spent time prioritizing problems of practice, root cause analysis, identifying a theory of action and set of strategies based on the following premise: "Boldly improving unacceptably low student achievement levels, particularly among each school's most vulnerable students, depends on grounding every budget and instructional decision in school site and district plans using principles of continuous improvement with the belief that all children can learn."

B. Weaknesses:

- It is unclear what the processes are for governing board members to make requests to staff on specific topics. Board members' requests for additional information, when they come with little notice, impact staff time to ensure

teachers, leaders, and staff are engaged in strengthening teaching and learning priorities.

- Given the participation of board members in PELP, how the PELP-identified problem of practice strategies are progressing was not clear in interviews or analysis of artifacts.

C. Threats:

- With so many needs across the district, it can be challenging for the board to keep the north star focus on student achievement and to avoid the pitfalls of a culture that maintains a status quo of unacceptably low student achievement and/or fear of being targeted as a change agent because politics undermines a focus on student success and equity.
- Without intentional efforts, that should include board training and time focused on creating agreement between new and more experienced board members and the administration to agree on and support the goals of the district, there is potential for misalignment and lack of clear direction for the leadership of the district and the community.
- Without renewed and additional efforts to address the strained relationship between the district and the SCTA, efforts to improve teaching and student learning will be compromised.

D. Opportunities:

- There is an opportunity for board leadership to model expectations and accountability aligned with, and designed to, support the goals of the district and provide clear direction for the leadership of the district and require staff to provide clear, easy-to-understand data to monitor progress and assess the impact on budget decisions.
- There is an opportunity to clarify the process for board requests for information on agenda items and other topics.
- There is an opportunity for the governing team to coordinate, integrate, and communicate across parent groups to create a cohesive and integrated alignment of efforts.
- The LCAP provides an opportunity for the Board to examine how funds are spent, the impact and efficacy of their use, and provide transparent communication with the community and parent groups.
- There is an opportunity for the governance team to review and revise how two-way communication strategies with community and parent groups increase feedback and impact of budget decisions on teaching, learning, and student success.
- The FCMAT finding of the misalignment of the budget with the LCAP provides the opportunity for the Board to realign the budget and increase data-driven decision-making in regard to efficiency of spending and impact on student learning, which is in process now.
- There is an opportunity for the Board to ensure funding follows students and that schools are equitably resourced according to need. For example, the inclusive schools model is currently housed at six well-resourced schools.

Actions: Governance Support with Instruction

- 12A. Improve the process for how the district departments provide clear and timely data analysis of trends, patterns, root cause analyses, and solutions for improving teaching and learning to the board of education.
- 12B. Provide clarity around district strategies and benchmarks for improving teaching and learning, so they are clearly understood, implemented, supported, and monitored by central office staff and school teams, and shared with the board.
- 12C. Develop proactive two-way district communication and engagement strategies to anticipate issues, provide consistent messaging, and answer important questions for multiple audiences through the Chief Information Office.
- 12D. When new governing board members join the SCUSD board, work sessions should be held to ensure roles, expectations, and priorities are articulated specifically as it relates to instructional vision, strategy, practices, and monitoring of student achievement. These should then occur regularly (e.g., 3 times per year) and provide a deeper study into various topics of district need and interest and involve appropriate staff.
- 12E. Establish a review process (e.g., two times per year) on the progress on SIR actions and ensure the discussion and opportunities for Board input and that actions are added to the Board calendar of topics.
- 12F. Work collectively with the district leadership to continue efforts to strengthen trust and develop a shared commitment, in principle, with labor partners that places improved student learning and closing achievement gaps as an explicit priority and develops the professional foundation for teaching and teacher leadership.

VIII. Conclusion

This SIR report was commissioned pursuant to subdivision (g) of Section 52064.5 (CA School Dashboard) for three or more pupil subgroups identified pursuant to Section 52052. Although all student group performance is examined during the SIR process to ensure all students are meeting priorities for learning, SCUSD foster youth, students experiencing homelessness, and students with disabilities failed to meet progress for three consecutive years according to statewide data. In addition to statewide priorities data, the SIR report is a result of an analysis of artifacts submitted by the district as evidence along with extensive empathy interviews, individual interviews, and stakeholder interviews. The discussions and respective SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) for each of the 12 SIR components provides the foundation for actions provided.

This report identified that SCUSD has multiple areas where the district took steps to achieve its core values and mission. There are opportunities that have been highlighted as a way to leverage what is in place and align to effective instructional strategies and structures that produce improved outcomes for students, especially those from the most vulnerable student populations. However, there are critical steps the district must urgently take to establish and cultivate the instructional systems and structures necessary for attaining student outcomes and closing achievement gaps.

The weaknesses and threats identified in this report are aligned to problems of practice, identified through the SIR data collection and analysis process, which ultimately lead to actions that surface the need for additional root cause analysis or offer specific actions that the SIR team was able to identify. Next steps after the completion of the report include CCEE working with the district and county office of education on progress monitoring and the identification of ongoing support the district needs to implement the SIR actions. CCEE will provide the district, County Superintendent, and State Superintendent of Public Instruction progress updates, at a minimum, on the implementation of the SIR actions/recommendations in the spring semester of 2020-2021, and during the 2021-2022 school year.

Although CCEE has developed this report to advise and assist the district as it continues to work to improve outcomes for students, there will be ongoing factors that are important to highlight. First, the ongoing structural budget deficit presents challenges to achieving the priorities for student educational success and well-being. The district draft Fiscal Recovery Plan for funding reductions is an important upcoming consideration for the SCUSD Board of Trustees. The district continues to face the possibility of a State Loan, but this has not yet been determined. Second, ongoing disagreements between the district and SCTA affect areas central to instruction and assessment. The ability to move forward to best serve the academic needs and overall well-being of students will remain a challenge without a commitment by all parties to refocus their efforts, break from traditional negotiations that have proved unsuccessful, and create new structures and processes for getting work done as partners.

Despite these challenges, there are many strengths identified in the review and much to build on given the many different voices from across the district, schools, and community that this report represents. The strengths affirm the consistent and collective commitment

from all stakeholders to serving students and supporting their success. Building district capacity and collective leadership and ownership for student success is possible moving forward.

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The Implications of Sacramento City Unified's Ongoing Budgetary Challenges for Local and State Policy Carrie Hahnel, Independent Consultant Hannah Melnicoe, Pivot Learning, PACE November 2019

Appendix A

SIR INSTRUCTIONAL COMPONENTS

Instructional Components	Characteristics
<p>1. Culture, Coherence, and the Planning Process</p> <p><i>LCFF/LCAP:</i></p> <p><i>Priority 6: School Climate (Engagement)</i></p>	<p>The local educational agency (LEA) demonstrates a strong value on culture and climate for all stakeholders through the implementation of district-wide professional learning opportunities that teach, promote, and practice inclusivity and diversity. LEA members implement culturally reflective practices and policies that are designed to create coherence around an inclusive instructional mission and vision achieved through continuous improvement practices and processes. This is evidenced by the following characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A supportive and engaging culture and climate that is visible for stakeholders (e.g., teachers, leaders, staff, parents, students) and cultivated and evident across all district efforts. ● A culture of accountability that considers the whole child (e.g., academic, social, and emotional developmental) and provides students multiple opportunities and alternatives for developing learning strategies that result in improved achievement and school performance. ● A commitment to developing and refining a culture of teaching and learning that is based upon clear learning targets consistently assessed across multiple measures. ● A clear understanding of the importance of using achievement outcomes to guide coherent and collaborative work while fostering knowledge of expectations around teaching, learning, and accountability. ● Practices and planning processes that reflect an inclusive instructional vision and mission using a multi-tiered system of support that is sensitive to the diverse student community (e.g., gifted, students with disabilities, English learners, homeless and foster youth). ● Professional learning opportunities are provided, from the boardroom to the classroom and home, that create and sustain a district-wide culture of inclusivity and celebration of diversity and language, as well as include culturally reflective practices and policies. ● Student diversity is celebrated and recognized in a variety of units or school/district-wide awareness campaigns (e.g., May is National Foster Care Month, October is Disability Awareness Month, November is National Homeless Youth Awareness month, and one week is designated as National Hunger and Homeless Awareness Week). ● Continuous improvement practices and processes are utilized and shared to determine whether the instructional mission and vision are being attained. ● Support and development of the use of technology that promotes effective pedagogy and student engagement in an adaptive world (e.g., blended learning, hybrid, flipped classroom). ● A culture of clarity around the roles and responsibilities of central office and schools in planning and engaging in activities that deepen the commitment to ensuring all students attain educational success. ● A District Leadership Team provides direction, guidance, differentiated support, and oversight for ensuring the health and wellness of the district.

SIR INSTRUCTIONAL COMPONENTS

Instructional Components	Characteristics
<p>2. Curriculum, Learning, and Support</p> <p><i><u>LCFF/LCAP:</u></i></p> <p><i>Priority 2: State Standards</i></p> <p><i>Priority 5: Pupil Engagement</i></p> <p><i>Priority 8: Other Pupil Outcomes</i></p>	<p>The LEA has an MTSS framework that documents and assesses the implementation of all standards-aligned materials, curricula, learning, and social-emotional and behavioral supports (e.g., differentiation options, tiered support options, integrated aligned ELD supports). This is evidenced by the following characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A coherent, standards-aligned curriculum, instruction, and assessment system is in place that is culturally and linguistically responsive and meets the needs of all learners (e.g., gifted, English learners, students with disabilities, and homeless and foster youth). ● Evidence-based programs, including supplemental and enrichment curricular and instructional materials, are provided and reflect the diverse needs of the student population and provide equitable access for all learners. ● A multi-tiered approach is used to align and allocate district resources and support based on students' and schools' needs across multiple measures (e.g., academics, suspension, attendance, grades). ● A targeted focus on ensuring teachers hold high expectations for their students and have positive student-teacher relationships. ● Clearly articulated learning goals, across all grade levels and content areas provide students a path to mastery of the strategies, skills, and concepts embedded in the curriculum. ● Ensuring teachers are able to clearly articulate their concept of student progress and appropriately challenge surface, deep, and conceptual knowledge and understanding. ● Assessment components of the curricula and instructional practices clearly support the evaluation of the learning of all students across multiple measures. ● A written continuous improvement process exists and includes reviewing academic and social-emotional and behavioral performance data to identify and make decisions on curriculum and supplemental supports. ● High-quality, stimulating, and rigorous instructional materials that engage English learners (ELs), students with disabilities (SWDs), foster and homeless youth, and accelerate grade-level content and language development. ● A clearly articulated and executed plan that ensures ELs across all levels of language proficiency can access, fully engage with, and achieve rigorous grade-level academic content standards. ● An identified curriculum for designated ELD and non-graduation-bound SWDs is implemented with fidelity. ● Continuous improvement processes are used to routinely evaluate the fidelity of implementation of curricula and their respective quality. ● Amply available curricular materials and support are available for all students (e.g., electronic devices, tiered, and differentiated instructional materials).

SIR INSTRUCTIONAL COMPONENTS

Instructional Components	Characteristics
<p>3. Instructional Practice and Strategies</p> <p><u>LCFF/LCAP</u></p> <p><i>Priority: 1 Basic Conditions</i></p> <p><i>Priority 2: State Standards</i></p> <p><i>Priority 7: Course Access</i></p>	<p>The LEA has established and defined instructional practices and strategies that are culturally inclusive, differentiated, rigorous, coherent, and standards aligned. Instructional technology, project-based learning, and other experiences beyond the textbook are regularly utilized. Instructional practices and strategies positively support students in developing self-agency and building metacognitive skills. This is evidenced by the following characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A district-wide intentional focus on providing a rigorous teaching and learning experience that uses Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles for improving and extending differentiated instructional practices that increase student engagement. ● Evidence-based instructional practices focus on providing students access to and experience with rigorous, relevant, and coherent standards-aligned instruction and are responsive to the needs of all learners, including gifted students, culturally and linguistically diverse students, students with disabilities, homeless and foster youth. ● Teaching practices emphasize the engagement of students in the learning process, clear articulation of the strategies of instruction, learning intentions, and the criteria for success. ● District-wide instructional practices and strategies are actively cultivated, communicated, clearly documented, and evaluated. ● Continuous improvement data are regularly used to celebrate growth and problem solve areas in need of targeted assistance. ● Instructional practice and strategies ensure that the teachers of all student groups (gifted, culturally and linguistically diverse students, students with disabilities, homeless and foster youth) are included and participate in collaborative integrated planning for instruction. ● Teachers regularly meet to share and review student work. ● Instructional support staff provide in-class support for students needing additional support/remediation and extension. ● Intensive support teachers deliver the most targeted instruction for students in small groups. ● Instructional practices support the development of student agency for learning (i.e. academic self-efficiency and self-regulation). ● Students with disabilities are educated in the least restrictive environment. ● Digital learning and experiences beyond the textbook (e.g., project-based learning) and the classroom are used to actively engage students in learning, emphasize critical thinking skills, and adapt to a flexible world (e.g. synchronous and asynchronous). ● Systematic frequent and ongoing measurement of student learning allows multiple means and modalities to demonstrate mastery. ● Systematic use of school data to plan, design, and deliver culturally responsive instruction results in an increased rate of student growth across multiple measures (e.g. academic and social emotional and behavioral) ● Teachers are provided with opportunities to serve as a peer resource for teaching and learning. ● Regular communication and engagement provide opportunities for parents/caregivers to support their students' learning.

SIR INSTRUCTIONAL COMPONENTS

Instructional Components	Characteristics
<p>4. Social-Emotional and Behavioral Health and Development</p> <p><i>LCFF/LCAP:</i></p> <p><i>Priority 6: School Climate</i></p>	<p>Social-emotional and behavioral (SEB) well-being of the whole child is a critical component in the LEA's mission and vision. Identified social-emotional and behavioral skills are integrated into the curriculum, instructional practices, and resources identified for student support and school capacity building. Social-emotional and behavioral health is embedded in LEA policies and practices and is modeled by adults. This is evidenced by the following characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Social-emotional and behavioral health of the whole child is supported/substantiated within the written instructional vision, policies, and practices. ● Systemic and strategically embedded instruction that includes explicit teaching of expected student behaviors appropriate to the development level. ● Specific and differentiated social-emotional and behavioral strategies address students in Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III. ● Specific metrics measure and refine the impact of the SEB instruction. ● Rapid formative assessments are available for highly mobile students and are used to assess new students' abilities, recognize emotional needs, employ a variety of teaching strategies, arrange for students to complete homework at school, and provide individual or group tutoring. ● Professional learning is provided to enable teachers to understand the nature of homelessness and foster care, to create positive experiences for homeless children, and to provide strategies for discussing this topic in the classroom. ● A continuum of resources available at every site provides support to students whose behavior and well-being is of concern. ● Meaningful outreach engages families and caregivers with the continuum of available resources. ● Planned and intentional professional learning builds staff capacity in the use of Student Success Teams (SST) and Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS). ● Social-emotional, behavioral, and health development is practiced and modeled by adults throughout the district. ● A continuum of school-based social-emotional, and behavioral supports are identified and external partnerships are cultivated. ● The school site culture among teachers and school leaders engages, challenges, and supports social-emotional, behavioral, and academic development. ● Social-emotional and behavioral health and respective curricular programs are routinely evaluated and use data to ensure fidelity of implementation, quality of the selected curriculum, and to inform continuous improvement instructional decisions. ● On-going professional learning opportunities provide a safe space for teachers and leaders to learn about the importance of SEB.

SIR INSTRUCTIONAL COMPONENTS

Instructional Components	Characteristics
<p>5. Assessment and Accountability</p> <p><i>LCFF/LCAP:</i></p> <p><i>Priority 2: State Standards</i></p> <p><i>Priority 4: Pupil Achievement</i></p>	<p>The LEA has a systemic process to measure and analyze student data—academic, behavior, and SEL—that drives the accountability system for all stakeholders (classroom to boardroom and home) and informs a continuous improvement process. This is evidenced by the following characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A system of assessment that ensures all students are provided with, know, and understand clear learning targets in all courses and at all grade levels with the goal that each student comprehends precisely what and how to attain mastery of key skills and concepts. ● Ongoing, aligned, systemic processes are in place for measuring how, what, and how well a student is learning (e.g., early warning system, universal screening, diagnostic, formative, summative). ● Targeted and on-going assessment of ELs ensure they are moving toward advanced levels of English, reclassification, and closing the academic language gap. ● The redesignation rate of ELs and the declassification rate and movement of service delivery (e.g., LRE) for students with disabilities are monitored, assessed, shared, and used to make instructional decisions for improved student outcomes. ● Measures are used that promote resilience in foster and homeless youth and assess students’ soft skills such as motivation, social adaptability, and interpretive abilities. ● Assessment data are used to monitor the rate of growth for foster and homeless youth to ensure students are receiving differentiated and well-rounded support for academics, social-emotional, and behavioral health. ● District-wide practices include intentional time for teachers and leaders to learn, digest, analyze, problem-solve, and plan for instruction that results in improved student outcomes for academics, behavior, and SEL (e.g., establish Professional Learning Communities, Communities of Practice, etc.). ● Progress monitoring of district culture, coherence, curriculum, and instructional and professional learning provides two-way communication with stakeholders and ensures district benchmarks and goals are met. ● There is an established district-wide process (e.g., problem solving/continuous improvement protocols) for using assessment data to make instructional decisions at the student, classroom, school and district levels. ● The district’s multi-tiered system of support has established decision rules that articulate entrance and exit criteria for students needing intensified instruction and intervention. ● A functional student information system (SIS) is in place that readily provides data to inform continuous improvement and instructional decisions from the boardroom to the classroom. ● Assessment and accountability data are regularly collected and shared throughout the school year and align with district formative and/or benchmark assessments (e.g., beginning, middle, and end of year).

SIR INSTRUCTIONAL COMPONENTS

Instructional Components	Characteristics
<p>6. Student and Family Engagement</p> <p><i>LCFF/LCAP:</i></p> <p><i>Priority 3: Parental Involvement (engagement)</i></p> <p><i>Priority 5: Pupil Engagement</i></p>	<p>The LEA practices two-way communication that reflects the cultural and linguistic needs of families in the community and provides resources and activities that give students agency, promotes student leadership, and provides a space for active family and community engagement. This is evidenced by the following characteristics:</p> <p><u>Student Engagement:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Student agency and voice are fostered to promote critical thinking and leadership that contribute to decisions being made. ● Students are able to articulate what they are learning and why. ● Students are able to identify and use self-regulatory strategies for learning. ● Students are able to self identify instructional strategies for their learning. ● Students are provided with opportunities to self-assess. ● Students are provided equitable access to digital learning platforms and devices. <p><u>Family Engagement:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The LEA actively seeks and acts upon two-way communication with students, families/caregivers, and underrepresented groups. ● There are written protocols that delineate strategies and practices that promote and engage students and families. ● The district has both systems and supports in place to successfully engage families and students in an adaptive learning environment (e.g., distance learning, blended learning, flipped classroom), internet connectivity, devices, orientation, and guidance on hybrid learning environments. ● Clear two-way communication is used with families and cultivates a clear understanding of steps and progress required for students to show mastery of skills, concepts, and grade-level and graduation requirements. ● The cultural and linguistic needs of the community are reflected in the resources, engagement activities, and curriculum. ● Families/caregivers are active participants in PTA/PTO, school site council meetings, and other forums. ● The LEA provides support to schools to ensure family/caregivers and students are actively informed members and decision makers within the district system of support and school community. ● Parent groups engage and collaborate with school and district leaders in prioritizing goals and providing LCAP input and feedback. ● Universal use and provision of language translation and interpretation (e.g., written, oral language) is provided.

SIR INSTRUCTIONAL COMPONENTS

Instructional Components	Characteristics
<p>7. School-based Instructional Leadership Teams (ILTs) <u>LCFF/LCAP:</u> <i>Priority 6: School Climate</i></p>	<p>Instructional Leadership Teams (ILTs) exist in every school and are representative across grades and disciplines with members that make culturally responsive data-driven decisions to design instruction for all students and their needs. ILTs facilitate site-based professional learning and support the implementation of district and site programs and efforts. This is evidenced by the following characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Written expectations exist for ILTs roles, responsibilities, and team membership. ● ILTs exist in every school and meet regularly with organized agendas and minutes. ● ILTs are provided professional development on the purpose, process, facilitation, and outcomes for leadership teams. ● ILTs reflect cross grade and disciplinary representation of student groups including EL, gifted, homeless, foster, and students with disabilities. ● ILTs have a clear vision that aligns with the LCAP goals, student needs, and data. ● ILT members are capable and empowered to use data to design instruction based on the needs of each and every student. ● ILTs include a focus on supporting all educators in developing assessment literacy. ● ILTs are actively involved in facilitating culturally responsive data-driven decision making and creating the instructional supports necessary to deliver best first instruction that results in improved school-wide student outcomes. ● ILTs facilitate site-based professional development and coaching on instruction, assessment, and data-driven decision making.

SIR INSTRUCTIONAL COMPONENTS

Instructional Components	Characteristics
<p>8. Administrative Coaching and Leadership</p>	<p>Infrastructures across the LEA support, promote, and enhance a collaborative culture for district and site administrator effectiveness in management and instructional leadership. Data (academic, social-emotional, and behavioral) are consistently used to monitor instruction and inform stakeholders' engagement. This is evidenced by the following characteristics:</p> <p><u>District Leadership:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Central office administration ensures expectations of the school site administrators are clear and district infrastructures exist to support, enhance, and develop effective instruction and managerial leadership. ● Principal supervisors spend an extensive amount of time in schools observing instruction in both general and special education settings and providing strengths-based and actionable feedback to site leaders. ● District administrators demonstrate consistent use of qualitative and quantitative school-based data to assess the rate of growth for academic, behavioral, and social-emotional learning and differentiate levels of support. ● District leadership actively cultivates a growth mindset in a trusting and safe environment, in which personnel feel comfortable taking risks and actively contribute to decision making. ● District infrastructures provide professional learning to support site administrators in developing their assessment literacy. ● District leadership provides targeted coaching to site administrators that facilitates growth and development of assessment literacy for their respective instructional personnel. <p><u>Site Leadership:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● District infrastructures exist that support and enhance site administrators' effectiveness in instructional leadership. ● Consistent leadership coaching and mentoring provides principals the opportunity to reflect on, monitor, adjust, and increase effectiveness of their roles in strengthening instructional practices to meet the needs of diverse learners. ● Administrators clearly demonstrate a balance of their time between building management and instructional leadership. ● Administrative practices include targeted instructional coaching for staff to support and facilitate effective teaching strategies and practices that span all students—general education, special education, gifted and English learners, homeless and foster youth. ● Administrators spend an extensive amount of time in classrooms, including special education, observing instruction and providing strengths-based and actionable feedback to teachers. ● Administrators demonstrate a consistent use of qualitative and quantitative data to assess the rate of growth for academic, behavioral, and social-emotional learning for all students. ● Administration actively cultivates a growth mindset and a safe environment for personnel to take risks, speak their truth, and contribute to decision making. ● Administrators actively facilitate and engage parents/caregivers as welcomed partners in the school community/family.

SIR INSTRUCTIONAL COMPONENTS

Instructional Components	Characteristics
<p>9. Professional Learning and Coaching</p> <p><i>LCFF/LCAP:</i></p> <p><i>Priority 1: Basic</i></p> <p><i>Priority 2: State Standards</i></p>	<p>There is a professional learning plan that cultivates the development of a teaching and learning culture through the eyes of a student and reflects the needs of all teaching staff. The LEA-wide data-driven professional learning plan designed for all stakeholders focuses on effective instructional practices that improve student academic, social-emotional, and behavioral learning. Instructional coaches support the implementation and improvement of the tiered practices. This is evidenced by the following characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There is a written comprehensive multi-year professional learning (PL) and coaching plan based on best practices for improving effective instruction for veteran and new principals, teachers, and staff (classified and certificated) and has clear expectations for implementation and monitoring. ● District-led, highly effective, data-based professional learning opportunities are grounded in student performance and foster collective responsibility for improving student outcomes. ● There is a relentless focus on developing the capacity of all teaching staff to deliver effective lessons that actively engage ELs and SWDs and advance their learning and language proficiency across the curriculum. ● There is intentional focus on developing systemic implementation of Universal Design for Learning (UDL). ● The development of assessment literacy provides for continual analysis of student data that results in effectively raising achievement academically, socially-emotionally, and behaviorally. ● There is a clear focus on digital literacy within an adaptive environment that provides opportunities to practice and build skills in this area (e.g. blending and online learning, flipped classrooms, maximizing the use of digital platforms and resources, synchronous and asynchronous). ● A structure exists for school site professional learning that is focused on collaborative cultures, e.g. PLC, CoPs, ILTs. etc. ● A data-driven professional development plan exists at each school site that is intentional and differentiated for the learning needs of teaching staff. ● Professional learning feedback is regularly collected and shared to support continuous improvement. ● A structure exists to support teachers' reflections and efforts to improve classroom practices for academics, social-emotional, and behavioral learning (e.g., instructional coaches and/or support personnel). ● There is a written multi-year plan for engaging parents and other stakeholders in learning that is aligned to the district's strategies for improving academic, behavioral, and social-emotional learning. ● Regular professional learning and data-driven feedback is provided to the governing board.

SIR INSTRUCTIONAL COMPONENTS

Instructional Components	Characteristics
<p>10. Data Management and Use and Student Information Systems</p>	<p>There is a student information system (SIS) that actively stores and tracks all individual student data (e.g., grades, attendance, discipline). The SIS provides LEA-wide appropriate access for teachers, administrators, and parents/caregivers, which allows for aggregate data use for school-based planning and also meets federal/state/local reporting requirements. This is evidenced by the following characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● SIS data that support and align with the district’s assessment and accountability system(s). ● An early warning system (EWS) for academics (e.g., grades), behavior (e.g., major/minor events), and attendance is developed, available at the district, school, and classroom levels, and has established criteria for each level. ● A suite of reports that is readily available and customized for the end-user (e.g., principal, teacher, board member, assistant superintendent, parent/caregiver, etc.) and reflect the areas identified as needing improvement (e.g., EWS that can be disaggregated by student group, grade, gender, graduation rates, family/caregiver engagement, targeted indicators for ELs and students with disabilities). ● The SIS communicates with other data systems that are required and maintained by other departments (e.g. special education, English learners, foster and homeless youth). ● Regularly provide training on how to use and access SIS data. ● Regular district monitoring and reviewing of data in an effort to support educator access and usage of the SIS. ● Professional learning opportunities that unpack the need for and use of SIS data to drive student, school, and district improvement, inclusive of a continuous improvement problem-solving approach to help consumers analyze and act upon areas of need. ● Data are regularly used, from the governing board to the classroom and parent/caregiver levels, to monitor progress and ensure curriculum, instruction, and tiered support result in positive student outcomes in academics, social-emotional, and behavioral health. ● District leadership utilizes SIS data regularly (e.g., quarterly) to monitor a variety of data points (D/Fs, EWS trends, referral rates for special education, etc.). ● School leadership utilizes SIS data on a regular basis to monitor school based EWS indicators (academic, behavior, attendance) and other data to include, but not limited to, SST referrals, the success of Tier 2 and 3 interventions, success of the implementation of curriculum, etc. ● Longitudinal data are regularly provided and reviewed at the school and district level to track and report student progress. ● Readily available data that support cross-departmental, classroom to school analysis to inform continuous improvement instructional decisions. ● Decision rules are developed and socialized with teaching and learning personnel that provide entrance and exit criteria for robust and coherent tiered support for all students, including gifted, at-risk, English learners, and students with disabilities. ● Activities (e.g., PLCs, pairing of schools) that are organized using aggregated data and create opportunities for schools to collaborate and learn from and give each other feedback.

SIR INSTRUCTIONAL COMPONENTS

Instructional Components	Characteristics
<p>11. District and Leadership Capacity</p>	<p>The LEA contains strong multi-level (school and district leadership) organizational capacity and processes to make coherent, coordinated decisions that ensure goals and metrics are mission and vision aligned across sites and departments. Established processes ensure each member, regardless of position, is supported and can fulfill their role and responsibilities. This is evidenced by the following characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Strong organizational capacity, dynamics, and processes exist to make coherent, coordinated decisions that improve the overall health and wellness of the district. ● District and school leadership develop and facilitate collaborative and transparent processes to implement shared goals regarding teaching and learning, effective leadership, and accountability and commitment to equity and excellence across the district. ● On-going assessment of district and school leadership culture, coherence, and professional learning provides two-way communication with the superintendent to ensure district benchmarks and goals are met. ● Performance metrics aligned with district goals and vision are established across all central office departments and regularly reviewed for growth and sustainability using a continuous improvement model. ● Each department’s strategic workflow, metrics and benchmarks are verified with data, aligned with district goals and vision, and reviewed regularly. ● Aligned, systemic processes, both qualitative and quantitative, are in place to measure how, what, and how well district and school leaders are functioning in their current roles. ● On-going coaching is provided across the cabinet and superintendent that supports team cohesiveness and provides for individual growth and development. ● School leaders are provided with professional learning and coaching opportunities to enhance their knowledge and skills to fulfill their roles and responsibilities. ● A district instructional leadership team exists that continually assesses the needs of schools and provides differentiated support to sites. ● There are clear expectations and support for current and future leaders in the development of their assessment and technological literacy. ● A written leadership succession plan exists and is executed that works to build the capacity and bench of potential leaders for both the school and district levels. ● Career ladder opportunities are provided that support the development of a leadership pipeline for future leaders.

SIR INSTRUCTIONAL COMPONENTS

Instructional Components	Characteristics
<p>12. Governance Support with Instruction</p>	<p>The governing board has clearly established written policies, processes, and protocols to assist in the implementation of strong instructional practices and educational supports for each and every student. This is evidenced by the following characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The district’s governing board has policies and practices that support the focus that all students are provided with, know, and understand clear learning targets in all courses and at all grade levels. ● The district’s governing board has a delineated function and members have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in improving district, school, and student outcomes. ● The district’s governing board members demonstrate conflict resolution, effective communication, and interpersonal respect for each other, the district leadership, staff, and the community they serve. ● The district’s governing board participates in ongoing professional learning on policy development, leadership, and practices for effective teams. ● The district’s governing board meetings provide regular opportunities to engage with staff and departments via presentations and reports. ● Governing board work sessions are held regularly (e.g., 3 times per year) and provide deeper study into various topics of district need and interest and involve appropriate staff.

Appendix B: Action Steps by Themes

The table of the SIR actions found below are organized by the dominant themes that emerged and are designated by an instructional component number/letter. The six themes include the following:

- 1) Central Office Leadership, Organization, and Systems
- 2) Assessment and Accountability
- 3) Communication and Engagement
- 4) Instructional Practice and Strategies
- 5) Professional Learning, Development, and Support
- 6) Continuous Improvement and Data Use

One of the first steps for the district will be to review the SIR actions found below to identify and align priority actions. Although provided as discrete actions, many of the actions are complementary, cascade to other actions, and can be prioritized to leverage a group of actions. In addition to the progress monitoring of the SIR actions role of CCEE, based on the interest of the district, CCEE can continue to advise and assist the district, as well as in partnership with the county office of education, in prioritizing actions, progress monitoring of the SIR actions, and as appropriate assist with identifying supports for the district.

Theme 1: Central Office Leadership, Organization, and Systems	
1A	Develop a roadmap that includes well-articulated priorities and strategies to implement the district's vision, mission, and goals.
1B	Considering the budget reductions conduct an analysis of the current central office organizational structure, including all positions, to determine how to reallocate and repurpose existing resources and positions to better provide comprehensive, coordinated, and differentiated services and support to schools.
1C	Examine the central office departments and restructure to establish a culture grounded in meeting performance outcomes, integration of work streams, and regular routines that result in increased collaboration, and focus on common priorities that ensure consistent communication.
1E	Form a cross functional team of central office and site leadership to examine and problem solve the fragmented and uneven support (e.g., SSC), models (e.g., Inclusive Schools), and school entrance requirements that create barriers to access, equity, and social justice goals.
1F	Form a representative group of principals, instructional assistant superintendents (IASs), and other key central office leaders to identify ways that principals' voices can become an integral and consistent part of planning (e.g., professional learning, priorities, etc.) problem-solving, and communicating with central office leadership and each other.
1G	Review hiring practices for general and special educators, paraprofessionals, and other support staff employed by the district. Analyze the current practices, especially related to teachers, within the context of the current partnership with Sacramento State University that places approximately 135 student teachers per year in the district.
1H	Given the district goal of equity, access, and social justice, clarify roles and responsibilities of the central office and schools in planning and engaging in activities that deepen the commitment to ensure all students attain educational success.
1K	Ensure that explicit expectations and communication about roles and responsibilities of the central

	office (e.g., IAS, Assistant Supt. of Curriculum/Instruction, CAO, etc.) are clear, understood and supported through coaching.
2A	Create a central office organizational structure that aligns with the district's theory of action and results in explicit expectations and accountability for the delivery of curriculum, instruction, and support to schools.
3A	Clarify the instructional vision so that strategies, tools, practices, and clear communication of expectations and implementation timelines are aligned.
3B	Analyze current and past priorities to ensure alignment with the current theory of action.
4C	Integrate current departments/units (e.g., SEL SHHS, Curriculum and Instruction) into ones that better align services and support to schools to better integrate strategies and sustain social-emotional well-being and mental health of students and staff.
5D	Organize a series of meetings with CCEE, CORE, and SCOE to ensure coherence, collaboration, and integration of support and technical assistance.
5E	Engage principals in cycles of inquiry and implementation science separate from SPSA completion to develop skill, understanding, confidence, and trust.
5F	Examine the current documented procedures and support structures across homeless and foster youth divisions to ensure there is a consistent and multi-tiered system of support designed, implemented, communicated, and monitored at the district level and across sites that provides intensified instruction, services, and support for these students.
5G	Create a systemic approach for identifying and supporting students experiencing homelessness. Ensure that a systemic and proactive system that provides academic, behavioral, and social-emotional health is established at all schools sites and monitored at the central office.
5H	Based on the findings and eventual ruling of the arbitration over the implementation of the MOU titled, "Monitoring of Student Progress", the district and SCTA will need to continue efforts to develop agreements on the use of formative assessments to improve student achievement.
6A	Reexamine the hiring practices to ensure there is a representative group of teachers who are multilingual. The current contract timeline for in-district transfer is a barrier to timely hiring of high-demand personnel.
6B	Continue searching for and hiring a highly qualified Director of Multilingual; consider conducting a national search for this position.
8B	Expect all IASs to demonstrate consistent use of qualitative and quantitative school-based data to assess the rate of growth for academic, behavioral, and social-emotional learning across student groups and differentiate levels of support.
8F	Continue to work toward cultivating a growth mindset across district leadership that manifests a trusting and safe environment in which personnel feels comfortable taking risks, sharing innovative practices, and actively contributing to results-based decision-making (e.g., within SPSA process).
9C	Develop and/or enhance the system to gather input and act upon the feedback on the delivery of professional learning and coaching to ensure the needs of consumers are met.
9D	Analyze the current instructional specialist positions and reallocate and/or repurpose their roles and responsibilities to better provide comprehensive, coordinated, and differentiated services and support to schools.
10B	Review and prioritize the activities of the data department within the office of Continuous Improvement and Accountability so they are more aligned with district and schools' data needs to provide real-time

	data across multiple measures delivered in a universal and user-friendly way.
11A	Establish a customer service oriented central office organization with clear roles and responsibilities for personnel, departments, and service and support to schools including how decisions are made and communicated.
11D	Revisit the Council of the Great City Schools 2017 report (Administration and Operation of Special Education) and the current office of special education organizational structure for the purpose of staffing the central office at the level commensurate to support a district the size of SCUSD.
11F	Develop, for each central office department, a strategic workflow including metrics and benchmarks to be verified with data and aligned with district goals and accountability expectations.
12A	Improve the process for how the district departments provide clear and timely data analysis of trends, patterns, root cause analyses, and solutions for improving teaching and learning to the board of education.
12D	When new governing board members join the SCUSD board, work sessions should be held to ensure roles, expectations, and priorities are articulated specifically as it relates to instructional vision, strategy, practices, and monitoring of student achievement. These should then occur regularly (e.g., 3 times per year) and provide a deeper study into various topics of district need and interest and involve appropriate staff.
12E	Establish a review process (e.g., two times per year) on the progress on SIR actions and ensure the discussion and opportunities for Board input and that actions are added to the Board calendar of topics.
12F	Work collectively with the district leadership to continue efforts to strengthen trust and develop a shared commitment, in principle, with labor partners that places improved student learning and closing achievement gaps as an explicit priority and develops the professional foundation for teaching and teacher leadership.
Theme 2: Assessment and Accountability	
3C	Expect that all principals are responsible for overseeing special education in their buildings and that IASs support and hold principals accountable for this responsibility. Ensure that supportive accountability is provided for all staff.
5A	Establish a suite of custom accountability reports available to all school and district staff that align with district goals and benchmarks for teaching and learning.
5B	Clarify the progress monitoring and accountability expectations for school teams and the purpose, role, and function of the multiple dashboards and platforms are in producing aligned data.
5C	Research the LCAP development timelines of other districts and consider how SCUSD timelines should be revised for increased input and feedback from LCAP PAC.
8C2	Create the expectation and support that allows administrators to clearly demonstrate a balance of their time between building management and instructional leadership priorities.
11C	Develop explicit accountability systems to monitor the implementation of LCAP and SPSA goals and service and support to schools with transparent communication of the return on investment of efforts.
Theme 3: Communication and Engagement	
1D	Create intentional communication structures across all departments to ensure clarity of message, priorities, and expectations.
1I	Develop and implement strategies to intentionally focus on celebrating student diversity and success using a variety of school/district awareness campaigns as a mechanism for raising awareness of

	accomplishments, such as increased graduation rate.
1L	Use the position of the chief of communications to engage central office staff in strategic communications planning processes to help drive internal alignment and support for teaching and learning goals and benchmarks across the district. Focus on identifying indicators and results-based accountability measures to organize the district teams' work to have the greatest impact on students and schools.
6C	Continue to develop a clear communication and meeting plan for parents that includes processes and procedures to ensure that translation and interpreter services are provided in parent languages and in a user-friendly, timely manner.
6E	Re-evaluate and enhance practices for communicating and sharing EL reclassification information (the process and the data for reclassification rates).
9B	Develop a written multi-year plan for engaging parents and other stakeholders in learning that are aligned to the district's strategies (e.g., LCAP, SPSA) for improving academic, behavioral, and social-emotional learning.
12C	Develop proactive two-way district communication and engagement strategies to anticipate issues, provide consistent messaging, and answer important questions for multiple audiences through the Chief Information Office.
Theme 4: Instructional Practice and Strategies	
1J	Continue the work of SPSA development and monitoring and MTSS implementation that will provide an instructional framework within which instruction and support for academic, behavioral, and social-emotional well-being is differentiated and data-driven.
2B	Conduct a curriculum audit to identify and ensure all schools and students (e.g., students with disabilities, EL, homeless and foster youth) have standard-aligned curriculum materials and supports that are stimulating, rigorous, and accelerate grade-level content and language development.
3D	Develop and implement a walk-through tool to systematically monitor and support instruction and interventions in general education classes, RSP classes, and Special Day Classes (SDC). Use these data to ensure there is equitable access to good first teaching and differentiated intervention is provided for both general and special education students.
3E	Establish and implement a clear and defined vision for the value of inclusivity from the boardroom to the classroom. Ensure students with disabilities have equitable access to the same instruction and support as general education students (e.g., UDL, MTSS) to ensure success in the least restrictive environment.
3F	Delineate expectations for the provision of linguistically appropriate and culturally competent instruction aligned with core standards that are differentiated for students with reading and math performance levels significantly below those of their classroom peers.
3G	Develop and implement a plan that ensures ELs across all levels of language proficiency levels can access, fully engage with, and achieve rigorous grade-level academic content standards and English language proficiency goals.
4D	Ensure that there is a continuum of social-emotional, behavioral and mental health supports/resources in SCUSD and the process for accessing it is clear so that all schools and families, including homeless and foster youth, know how to access them.
6D	Continue to implement student engagement strategies to increase student voice, choice, and agency at schools and across the district.

8C	Continue to build the skill and capacity of IAS to systematically support the implementation of UDL practices and MTSS framework designed to accelerate improved student outcomes.
12B	Provide clarity around district strategies and benchmarks for improving teaching and learning, so they are clearly understood, implemented, supported, and monitored by central office staff and school teams, and shared with the board.
Theme 5: Professional Learning, Development, and Support	
2C	Research and train school sites where student equity data reflects the highest priority and provide school leaders the opportunity to strengthen their ability to mobilize others, model inquiry and reflection, and data-based decision-making.
4B	Provide the central office team with ongoing professional learning to better understand the Academic Integration Framework, develop strategies for use by school teams, and establish implementation benchmarks and accountability timelines for implementation.
7A	Establish ILTs at every school site and develop written expectations for ILTs' roles, responsibilities, and team membership. Work toward coherence and clarity around the coordination, communication, and cross function of school site committees and ILTs.
7B	Once ILTs are established, provide on-going site-based professional development and coaching on instruction, assessment, and data-driven decision-making.
7C	Ensure that school leader professional learning aligns with the work of ILTs and builds school capacity for sustaining data-based decision-making.
7D	Clarify the instructional vision, strategy, priorities, and desired outcomes. Engage the school-based committees to build a common language, common understanding of the instructional vision and their critical role in supporting the attainment of the vision.
8A2	Provide site administrators with professional learning and coaching opportunities to enhance their knowledge and skills to fulfill their roles and responsibilities as instructional leaders.
8B2	Deliver consistent leadership coaching and mentoring for principals that provides them the opportunity to reflect, monitor, adjust, and increase the effectiveness of their roles in strengthening instructional practices to meet the needs of diverse learners (e.g., gifted, homeless and foster youth, students with disabilities, and those at risk for failure).
8D	Develop a consistent principal coaching model for use by IASs and implement a support calendar that expects and provides for observing instruction in both general and special education settings and providing strengths-based and actionable feedback to site leaders.
9A	Develop a written, comprehensive multi-year professional learning and coaching plan based on best practices for improving effective instruction for veteran and new principals, teachers, and staff (classified and certificated) and have clear expectations for implementation and monitoring.
11B	Identify and establish the key strategies and practices for providing effective and continuously improving teaching and learning (e.g., UDL, MTSS), the process and structures for coaching and supporting principals and school teams and monitoring implementation of district goals.
11E	Continue to negotiate the expectations for the principal evaluation tool and coach and support principals to improve the instructional core.
11H	Establish a process for the cabinet to model and engage in ongoing dialogue and review of data around key performance indicators and benchmarks aligned with district goals in order to increase the skills, knowledge, and leadership capacity of the cabinet.

Theme 6: Continuous Improvement and Data Use

4A	Use the CA Dashboard expectations for SEL local performance measures to increase SEL implementation aligned with the Academic Integration Framework.
8A	Develop aligned, systemic processes, both qualitative and quantitative, that measure how, what, and how well district and school leaders are functioning in their current roles.
8E	Develop and implement user-friendly tools, expectations, timelines, and strategies to support site administrators' consistent use of quantitative and qualitative data to assess rates of growth for academic, behavioral, and social-emotional learning for all students.
10A	Given the current data platform, provide uniform processes whereby consumers have user-friendly and real-time data at their disposal. Increase the skill, capacity, and expertise of the current personnel needed to reach data governance priorities.
10C	Develop a well-articulated/operationalized set of expectations and routines for data use and accountability for those who support school leaders.
10D	Develop or refine protocols for data reporting and establishing quality-assurance mechanisms focused on reliable data in order to establish a culture of intentional and regular use that supports data-driven decision-making and efficacy to improve teaching and learning.
10E	Disaggregate data in meaningful ways to identify disparities in opportunity and outcomes as central to the district mission of equity, access, and racial justice.
10F	Provide time for central office staff and principals to increase their knowledge and skills on creating a culture of data to monitor continuous improvement at the school and classroom levels to increase accountability for teaching and learning goals.
10G	Ensure that, once collected, data are be used, analyzed, and acted upon leading to a continuous cycle of collection, organization, and synthesis to support informed decision-making across the district.
10H	Establish a data culture of customer service that results in responsiveness to data requests in a timely manner.
10I	Enable data systems to report on students' progress after graduation, including postsecondary access and completion, formal apprenticeships, military participation, and remediation rates in order to create feedback loops for the district.
11G	Develop a calendar to engage in continuous improvement and cycles of inquiry to assess district and school leadership culture, coherence, and professional learning that informs two-way communication with the superintendent to ensure district benchmarks and goals are met.

**IMPROVING
SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES
IN THE
SACRAMENTO UNIFIED
SCHOOL DISTRICT**

**Submitted to the Board of Education
of the
Sacramento City Unified School District
by the
Strategic Support Team
of the
Council of the Great City Schools**



Spring 2017

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The Council of the Great City Schools thanks the many individuals who contributed to this review of special education programs in the Sacramento Unified School District (SCUSD). Their efforts were critical to our ability to present the district with the best possible proposals for improving special education and related-services in the school system.

First, we thank, José L. Banda, the school district's superintendent. It is not easy to ask one's colleagues for the kind of reviews conducted by the Council's teams. It takes courage and openness and a real desire for change and improvement. He has these in abundance.

Second, we thank the SCUSD school board, which approved and supported this review. We hope this report meets your expectations and will help improve special education services across the school system.

Third, we thank staff members of the school district who contributed to this effort, particularly Becky Bryant, who together with Chief Academic Officer Iris Taylor organized and facilitated the interviews and provided the detailed data and documents requested by the team. The time and effort required to organize a review such as this are extraordinary, and their work was much appreciated.

Fourth, the Council thanks the many individuals who met with us, including central office administrators and personnel, principals, general and special educators, paraprofessionals and aides, related-services personnel, representatives from the SCTA and SEIU, and Community Advisory Council members. They work passionately to support children with disabilities and ensure the school district serves these students in the best possible manner.

Fifth, the Council thanks Neil Guthrie, student support services assistant superintendent with the Wichita Public Schools, and Sowmya Kumar, former special education services assistant superintendent for the Houston Independent School District. Their contributions to this review were enormous. We also thank their school systems for allowing them to participate in this project. The Council also greatly appreciates the contribution of Judy Elliott, a national consultant and former chief academic officer for the Los Angeles Unified School District, for her participation and significant expertise. The enthusiasm and generosity of these individuals and their districts serve as further examples of how the nation's urban public school systems are banding together to help each other improve outcomes for all urban students.

Finally, I thank Julie Wright Halbert, the Council's legislative counsel, who facilitated the work of the team prior to and during the team's site visit, and Sue Gamm, a nationally recognized expert in special education and a long-time consultant to the Council, who worked diligently with Ms. Halbert to prepare the final report. Their work was outstanding, as always, and critical to the success of this effort. Thank you.

Michael Casserly
Executive Director
Council of the Great City Schools

CHAPTER 1. PURPOSE AND ORIGIN OF THE PROJECT

José L. Banda, the superintendent of Sacramento City Unified School District (SCUSD), asked the Council of the Great City Schools (the Council) to review the district's services for students with disabilities and provide recommendations to improve performance and narrow the achievement gap between these students and their nondisabled peers. It was clear to the Council's team that the superintendent and his staff had a strong desire to improve student outcomes in this area. This report was designed to help SCUSD achieve its goal and to maximize the district's capacity to educate all students effectively.

The Work of the Strategic Support Team

To conduct its work, the Council assembled a team of experts who have successfully administered and operated special education programs in other major urban school districts across the country. These individuals also have firsthand expertise with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and are well versed in best practices in the administration and operation of special education programming.

The Council's Strategic Support Team (referred to throughout this report as the Council team or the team) visited the district on November 16-18, 2016. During this period, the Council team pursued its charge by conducting interviews and focus groups with district staff members and California Department of Education personnel, the Community Advisory Council executive committee, representatives from the SCTA and SEIU, and many others. (A list of those interviewed is presented in the appendices of this report.) In addition, the team reviewed numerous documents and reports, analyzed data, and developed initial recommendations and proposals before finalizing this report. (See the appendices for a list of documents reviewed.) On the final afternoon of its site visit, the team briefed the superintendent on the team's observations and preliminary recommendations.

This approach of providing technical assistance to urban school districts by using senior managers from other urban school systems is unique to the Council and its members. The organization finds it to be an effective approach for a number of reasons.

First, it allows the superintendent and staff members to work with a diverse set of talented, successful practitioners from around the country. The teams provide a pool of expertise that superintendents and staff can call on for advice as they implement the recommendations, face new challenges, and develop alternative solutions.

Second, the recommendations from urban school peers have power because the individuals who develop them have faced many of the same challenges encountered by the district requesting the review. No one can say that these individuals do not know what working in an urban school system is like or that their proposals have not been tested under the most rigorous conditions.

Third, using senior urban school managers from other urban school communities is faster and less expensive than retaining large management consulting firms that may have little to no

Improving Special Education Services in the Sacramento Unified School District

programmatic experience. The learning curve is rapid, and it would be difficult for any school system to buy on the open market the level of expertise offered by the Council’s teams.

Members of the Strategic Support Team for this project were:

<i>Dr. Judy Elliot</i> Former Chief Academic Officer Los Angeles Unified School District	<i>Sowmya Kumar</i> Former Assistant Superintendent Office of Special Education Houston Independent School District
<i>Sue Gamm, Esq.</i> Former Chief Specialized Services Officer Chicago Public Schools	<i>Julie Wright Halbert, Esq.</i> Legislative Counsel Council of the Great City Schools
<i>Dr. Neil Guthrie</i> Assistant Superintendent Student Support Services Wichita Public Schools	

Methodology and Organization of Findings

The findings in this report are based on information from multiple sources, including documents provided by SCUSD and other organizations; electronic student data provided by SCUSD; group and individual interviews; documents; and legal sources, including federal and state requirements and guidance documents. No one is personally referred to or quoted in the report, although school district position titles are referenced when necessary for contextual reasons.

Chapter 2 of this report provides background information about the district. Chapter 3 presents the Council Team’s findings and recommendations. These findings and recommendations focus specifically on areas that the superintendent and district leadership asked the Council’s team to address. These include the achievement of students with disabilities, including pathways to graduation; instructional supports and their relationship to student placements; organizational effectiveness; school leadership and oversight of special education; and use of fiscal resources.

A discussion of these areas is divided into four broad sections.

- I. Multi-tiered System of Supports
- II. Special Education Demographics and Eligibility for Services
- III. Teaching and Learning for Students with IEPs
- IV. Support for Teaching and Learning for Students with IEPs

The findings and recommendations sections of the report contain a summary of relevant information, along with descriptions of the district’s strengths, opportunities for improvement, and recommendations for change. Chapter 4 lists all recommendations for easy reference, and

provides a matrix showing various components or features of the recommendations. Finally, Chapter 5 presents a synopsis of the report and discusses the team's overarching conclusions.

The appendices include the following information:

- Appendix A compares special education student percentages and staffing ratios in 68 major school systems across the country.
- Appendix B lists the district's special education department's current and proposed organization.
- Appendix C lists documents reviewed by the team.
- Appendix D lists individuals the team interviewed individually or in groups, and presents the team's draft working agenda.
- Appendix E presents brief biographical sketches of team members.
- Appendix F presents a description of the Council of the Great City Schools and a list of Strategic Support Teams that the organization has fielded over the last 18 years.

CHAPTER 2. BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

TIME magazine's issue of August 25, 2002, highlighted Sacramento in an article entitled "America's Most Diverse City."¹ The article described the city as one in which "everyone's a minority—including whites." According to the *TIME* article, Sacramento's diversity is due in part to affordable real estate for middle-class households and innovative housing programs for low-income families. Also, the presence of state government agencies and college campuses located throughout the city provides a stable source of employment.

Of the city's inhabitants, 34.7 percent are white, 26.4 percent are Hispanic, 13.9 percent are African American, 18.3 percent are Asian, and 6.7 percent are smaller racial/ethnic groups.² SCUSD's demographics are also diverse, but the district has a higher composition of Hispanic students (37 percent) and a smaller composition of white students (18 percent) than the city. The composition of students who are Asian (17 percent), African American (18 percent), and smaller groups (10 percent) are more comparable to the city's composition. In addition, some 13.9 percent of all district students receive special education instruction. Furthermore, English learners (EL) comprise 18.6 percent of the total student enrollment while 38 percent of the district's students do not speak English at home. Some 28.7 percent of all ELs receive special education services. Overall, residents within SCUSD speak more than 40 languages.³

Established in 1854, SCUSD is one of the oldest school districts in the western part of the nation. With over 43,000 students, it is the state's 11th largest school district. The district directly educates students on roughly 77 campuses, and has some 6,000 students in 16 independent charter schools.⁴ In 2010-11, the district earned a California Distinguished School award, and California Achievement Awards for two schools. Also, SCUSD is home to the only public Waldorf-inspired high school in the U.S.

Like many other members of the Council of the Great City Schools, SCUSD is in a state that has adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). In addition, the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) system is based on the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments (Smarter Balance) in English language arts/literacy (ELA) and mathematics in grades three through eight and in grade eleven. An alternative ELA and math assessment for students with significant cognitive disabilities, which is based on alternative achievement standards derived from the CCSS, has been field-tested. Additional assessments are provided in science. Finally, Standards-based Tests in Spanish (STS) for reading/language arts in grades two through 11, which are optional, are for Spanish-speaking ELs who either receive instruction in their primary language or have been enrolled in a U.S. school for less than 12 months.

¹ Retrieved from <https://mail.aol.com/webmail-std/en-us/suite>. The research was conducted for *TIME* by the Civil Rights Project at Harvard University.

² Data from the US Census Bureau, updated April 18, 2015, retrieved from <http://statisticalatlas.com/place/California/Sacramento/Race-and-Ethnicity#overview>.

³ EL data provided by SCUSD, and other data retrieved from the district's website at <http://www.scusd.edu/about-us>.

⁴ Retrieved from <http://www.scusd.edu/charter-schools>.

SCUSD offers a wide variety of choices for its students. Some of these options are described below.

- ***Child Development and Preschool Programs.*** Early care and education is provided to some 3,000 typically developing infants, toddlers, and preschoolers and those with disabilities. Program options and approaches include center-based and home-based services, full-day/part-day preschool, infant/toddler playgroups, and before/after school-age care.
- ***Early Kinder (Transitional Kindergarten) Programs.*** Children who are five years of age between September 2nd and December 2nd have the option of enrolling in a two-year kindergarten program, which gives children an additional year of preparation so they enter kindergarten with stronger academic, social, and emotional skills needed for future success in school.
- ***Basic Schools.*** Two schools with admissions criteria and lottery entry provide successful traditional and new methods of instruction, which together emphasize rigorous academic achievement and good study habits.
- ***STEAM Schools.*** Two schools have a focus on science, technology, engineering, art, and mathematics. By integrating the arts into core subjects, students learn to be more creative, more innovative, and better problem solvers as they plan and construct complex projects across disciplines.
- ***Waldorf Schools.*** With an educational approach developed at the beginning of the 20th century, SCUSD's Waldorf schools take a "head, heart, and hands" approach to learning, addressing each child as an individual with innate talents and abilities. The district has two elementary schools, and the first Waldorf-inspired high school in the country.

CHAPTER 3. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents the Council team’s findings in four areas: the multi-tiered system of supports; special education demographics and eligibility for services; teaching and learning for students with IEPs; and support for teaching and learning for students with IEPs. Each section summarizes the team’s findings and describes areas of strength, opportunities for improvement, and recommendations for improving SCUSD special education services.

I. Multi-Tiered Systems of Support

As discussed in the Council of the Great City Schools document, *Common Core State Standards and Diverse Urban Students*, a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS)⁵ is meant to improve educational outcomes for all students. It focuses on prevention and on the early identification of students who may benefit from instructional interventions that remove barriers to learning or who might benefit from acceleration. And it is intended to include all students, including those who are gifted.

In a functioning MTSS framework, schools have systems in place to identify the needs of all students, as well as systems to monitor and evaluate progress throughout the school year, using multiple data measures (e.g., district assessments, attendance, suspension, grades, number of office referrals, etc.). Data are analyzed, and differentiated instruction and intervention are delivered. Teachers and leaders regularly review and monitor student progress to determine trends and identify instructional adjustments needed for remediation, intervention, and acceleration.

When a student fails to make adequate progress toward the academic standards after robust core instruction has been delivered and monitored, interventions are then put into place and their effects are tracked. Without this system in place, it is unlikely that schools will have the documentation necessary to determine whether the underachievement was due to inappropriate instruction and intervention or something else. In these cases there can be little confidence that students have been given the instruction, targeted interventions, and supports they needed. Nevertheless, when teachers and parents observe students who are struggling to learn and behave appropriately, there is a predictable desire to seek additional supports and/or legally protected special education services.

It is imperative that districts and schools have processes in place to help educators determine why a student is not performing or when they might need acceleration. When implemented as intended, the MTSS framework focuses on rigorous core instruction and provides strategic and targeted interventions that are available without regard to any particular disability status. When well implemented, MTSS leads to better student engagement and lowered disciplinary referrals, as well as fewer students requiring special education services. The framework can also help reduce the disproportionate placement of students from various

⁵ The MTSS framework reflects the merger of RTI, which typically focuses on academic achievement, and systems used to focus on improving positive student behavior. The term is used in the remaining portion of this report and includes RTI, Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS), or other systems for supporting positive student behavior.

racial/ethnic groups and those with developing levels of English proficiency who may fall into the ranks of those requiring at risk or special education services.

In recognition of MTSS as an appropriate systemwide framework for supporting student achievement and positive behavior, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)⁶ includes MTSS as a permissible use of Title I funds. The Act defines MTSS as “a comprehensive continuum of evidence-based, systemic practices to support a rapid response to students’ needs, with regular observation to facilitate data-based instructional decision-making.”

This section focuses on the California Department of Education’s (CDE) guidance on MTSS, and the extent to which SCUSD has implemented this framework to support student achievement/positive student behavior and to guide action when student progress is not evident, including referrals for special education services.

State Guidance for MTSS

According to the March 2015 report issued by California’s Statewide Task Force on Special Education, *One System: Reforming Education to Serve ALL Students*, as knowledge of MTSS grows, the benefits to all students, especially those with disabilities, becomes more evident. “Alignment of resources, professional learning, training, resources, leadership, and curriculum all uniquely benefit the special education environment to meet the individual goals for every student.”⁷

According to CDE’s webpage, which provides information on MTSS, the framework is integrated and comprehensive, focusing on CCSS, core instruction, differentiated learning, student-centered learning, individualized student needs, and the alignment of systems necessary for all students’ academic, behavioral, and social success.⁸ The framework incorporates response to instruction and intervention (RTI²) processes and supports special education, Title I, and Title III supports for English language learners (ELs), American-Indian students, and those in gifted and talented programs. CDE views MTSS as having the potential to provide intentional design/redesign of services/supports to quickly identify and match the needs of all students.

CDE describes MTSS as having a scope that is broader than the agency’s initial description of RTI² since it:

- Focuses on aligning the entire system of initiatives, supports, and resources.
- Promotes district participation in identifying and supporting systems for aligning resources.
- Systematically supports all students, including gifted students and high achievers.
- Enables a paradigm shift in student support by setting higher expectations for all students through the intentional design and redesign of integrated services, rather than the selection of a random components of RTI and intensive interventions.
- Endorses Universal Design for Learning (UDL) strategies so all students have opportunities

⁶ The Elementary and Secondary Education Act was reauthorized in 2015 as the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

⁷ California’s Statewide Task Force on Special Education, *One System: Reforming Education to Serve ALL Students*, page 6, retrieved from <http://www.corestandards.org/assets/application-to-students-with-disabilities.pdf>.

⁸ CDE webpage for MTSS, retrieved at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/ri/mtsscompri2.asp>.

for learning through differentiated content, processes, and products.

- Integrates instructional and intervention support so that systemic changes are sustainable and based on CCSS-aligned classroom instruction.
- Challenges all school staff to change the way they have traditionally worked across all school settings.

Core Components of MTSS Framework

CDE describes the framework for MTSS, including RTI², as having the following core components.⁹

- **Systemic and sustainable change.** MTSS principles promote continuous improvement at all levels of the system (district, school site, and grade/course levels). Collaborative restructuring efforts are made to align RTI² and CCSS, as well as identify key initiatives; collect, analyze, and review data; and implement supports and strategies that can sustain effective processes.
- **Problem-solving systems approach.** Collaborative teams use a ‘problem-solving systems’ method to identify learning issues, develop interventions, and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions in a multi-tiered system of service delivery.
- **High-quality, differentiated classroom instruction and research-based interventions.** All students receive high-quality, standards-based, culturally and linguistically relevant instruction in their general education classrooms by highly qualified teachers, who have high academic and behavioral expectations and use differentiated instructional strategies, such as UDL. When monitoring efforts indicate a lack of student progress, an appropriate research-based intervention is implemented. The interventions are designed to enhance the intensity of a students’ instructional experience.
- **Positive behavioral support.** District and school personnel collaboratively select and implement schoolwide, classroom, and research-based positive-behavior supports for achieving important social and academic outcomes. A strong focus on integrating instructional and intervention strategies supports systemic changes with strong, predictable, and consistent classroom management structures across the entire system.
- **Integrated data system.** District and site staff collaborate on creating an integrated data system that includes assessments, such as state tests, universal screening devices, diagnostics, progress-monitoring tools, and teacher observations to inform decisions about where and how to place tiered support, as well as data from parent surveys.
- **Fidelity of program implementation.** Student success requires the faithful implementation of MTSS and the effective delivery of instruction and content specific to the learning and/or behavioral needs of students.
- **Staff development and collaboration.** All school staff are trained on assessments, data analysis, programs, and research-based instructional practices, along with positive behavioral supports. Building-level, grade-level, or interdisciplinary teams use a collaborative approach

⁹ Also see CDE webpage for RTI², retrieved at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/ri/rticorecomponents.asp>.

to analyze student data and work together on the development, implementation, and monitoring of the intervention process.

- ***Parent/ family involvement.*** The involvement and active participation of parents/families at all stages of the instructional and intervention process are essential to improving the educational outcomes for their students. Parents/families are told about the progress of their students, and their input is valued in the decision-making process.
- ***Specific Learning Disability determination.*** Moreover, the RTI² approach may be an important component in determining whether a student has a specific learning disability. As part of determining eligibility for special education, the data from the RTI² process may be used to ensure that a student has received research-based instruction and interventions.

Although CDE's website provides a variety of resources useful for district implementation of MTSS, the state educational agency (unlike others, such as the Tennessee Department of Education and the Florida Department of Education) has not required its school districts to implement MTSS. Several districts have published information on their use of MTSS that SCUSD might find helpful. For example, the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) published a board policy setting forth expectations for all schools on MTSS implementation and practices.¹⁰ Also, the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) incorporates the use of MTSS and RTI² as critical elements of its strategic plan.¹¹

Sacramento City MTSS Practices

The district's development and use of the MTSS framework is in its infancy. Several years ago, an approach to implementing Response to Intervention (RTI), which addresses academic components of MTSS, was developed by a small group of individuals. While some schools have implemented MTSS to varying degrees, there is no consistency across the system in how core MTSS components described in CDE's framework are implemented.

The district's 2016-2021 Strategic Plan Implementation in the area of College, Career, and Life Ready Graduates calls for the expansion and improvement of interventions and academic supports for all students in order to close the achievement gap by:

- Building systems that lead to positive outcomes for students of color, low income students, English learners, foster care and homeless youth, students with disabilities, and all underperforming demographic groups.
- Expanding access to preschool and early kindergarten
- Implementing MTSS in order to provide a broad set of solutions for struggling students, and to reduce disproportional representation of subgroups in special education.

¹⁰ April 7, 2014 board policy (BUL-6269.0), retrieved from http://notebook.lausd.net/pls/ptl/docs/PAGE/CA_LAUSD/FLDR_ORGANIZATIONS/FLDR_SPECIAL_EDUCATION/BUL-6269.0%20MULTI%20TIERED%20BEHAVIOR%20SUPPORT%20SWD%20W%20ATTACHMENTS.PDF.

¹¹ Retrieved from <http://www.sfusd.edu/en/about-sfusd/strategic-plans-and-projects.html>.

- Offer more options for personalized learning including, but not limited to, tutoring, independent study, and credit recovery.

The chief academic officer is leading an inclusive cross-functional team of people, including relevant directors, principals, technology and finance representatives, etc., to develop a systemic MTSS framework. The district has contracted with the Orange County Office of Education to provide professional learning, and it is in a cohort of districts that are in the process of developing MTSS. The goal is to have a written plan for MTSS implementation by April 2017, which will then be taken to the Board of Education for approval.¹²

Academic Multi-Tiered Support

According to district representatives, SCUSD has engaged in a process of developing CCSS-aligned curriculum maps for English Language Arts (ELA) and math to guide what students should know, understand, and be able to do. The writing team has partnered with staff from various departments to outline differentiated supports for students with disabilities, English learners, and gifted and talented students. The maps are electronic and will be revised and updated on an annual basis. Communication about this and other curriculum-related information is shared with the district's academic team leaders, who meet on a monthly basis. To involve principals and to enable them to champion this work at their schools, the principals regularly attend professional learning sessions and periodically are accompanied by a team of their teachers. The goal is for these teams to collaboratively bring their knowledge back to school sites. Instructional rounds are used to provide feedback regarding the extent to which information is becoming embedded in teaching and learning. These processes are intended to increase the rigor of instruction required by the common core standards, and the pursuit of academic discourse to promote communication based on a common language and understanding.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

UDL is an evidence-based approach that is designed to meet the needs of students with a wide range of abilities, learning styles, learning preferences, and educational backgrounds, and includes those with low academic achievement, disabilities, and limited English proficiency. By applying the principles of UDL, students with varying abilities are able to access education and training. UDL supports educational practice that:

- Provides flexibility in the ways information is presented, in the ways students respond or demonstrate knowledge and skills, and in the ways students are engaged; and
- Reduces barriers to instruction, provides appropriate accommodations, supports, and challenges and maintains high achievement expectations for all students, including students with disabilities and students who are limited English proficient.¹³

¹² Subsequent to the Council team's on-site visit, the Superintendent placed this committee on hold to allow for an analysis of the composition of the committee, the timeline for development of the plan, and the need for external technical assistance and support.

¹³ See the National Center on Universal Design for Learning, retrieved at <http://www.udlcenter.org/>. UDL is referenced in the 2016 Every Student Succeeds Act, the U.S. Department of Education's National Educational 2010 Technology Plan, the 2008 High Education Opportunity Act (HEOA), and the 2006 National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard (NIMAS). Retrieved at <http://www.udlcenter.org/advocacy/referencestoUDL>.

Last summer, five district staff members attended a Harvard's Graduate School of Education course, Universal Design for Learning: Leading Inclusive Education for All Students. Staff members representing curriculum and instruction (C/I) were from English language arts, math, and special education. Inclusive learning specialists, including those working with English learners, have provided training on UDL for schools, and at a centralized location for interested personnel. Special education personnel are working to embed UDL in the context of professional learning sessions, which have focused on Academic Discourse and Quality tasks. As discussed above, these sessions are used to enable principals and teachers from each school to try out instructional strategies in classrooms and share practices with peers.

The small group of district personnel who are providing training on UDL would like to expand their base to all curricular areas and training specialists. One challenge to UDL implementation is related to the involvement of all instructional technology (IT) personnel and the need for UDL activities to interface with the district's various technology tools. There are also concerns that special educators alone are expected to carry the initiative forward. A districtwide coordination and implementation strategy for these components would establish a universal foundation for the use of this evidence-based practice.

Academic Strategic and Intensive Interventions

Currently, SCUSD does not have increasingly intensive interventions and support available systemwide for students. Schools eligible to use Title I funds have academic and behavior resources such as those described in the section below. Under the Every School Succeeds Act (ESSA), the district now has more flexibility for determining how it provides supplemental education services. The district's plan for Title I (Alternative Supports Program) outlines how schools will provide supports to students who are not achieving academically. Although these services only impact students in schools that are P1 years 2 and above, the district views this outline as an initial step in the provision of evidenced-based interventions and supports. The activities will expand to other schools in 2017-18, if feasible.

Many schools that do not have access to Title I funds struggle to find effective ways to address the academic needs of students falling behind. For example, a school that had funds last year for an intervention teacher was having difficulty maintaining the same level of support as before. As a general rule, strategic and intensive interventions at these schools depend on the creativity of individual principals and teachers.

SCTA Concerns

According to Sacramento City Teachers Association (SCTA) representatives, while they indicate they support the concept of MTSS, they do not support its implementation without a well thought out plan that has supports and resources provided. The district is expecting that an SCTA proposal will be forthcoming during contract negotiations. While there is merit to some issues raised by the SCTA, we know of no other major urban school district where union concerns explicitly and significantly delayed development and implementation of MTSS.

Social/Emotional Multi-Tiered Support

In 2011, SCUSD was a charter member of the Collaborating Districts Initiative (CDI) partnership between the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), the American Institutes for Research (AIR), and initially eight large school districts across the country.¹⁴ In addition, the district's work on SEL is being funded by a three-year, \$750,000 implementation grant from the NoVo Foundation. According to information posted on CASEL's website about SCUSD's implementation:¹⁵

A dedicated team supports all schools to build and sustain systemic SEL implementation and integration. Using the CASEL school guide, the district has trained 60 percent of its 75 schools on SEL schoolwide implementation. Most of these schools have developed SEL leadership structures and a clear vision and purpose, and are using a curriculum to teach SEL skills. They also are integrating SEL into their school culture and climate. The district aims to expand SEL teaching and practice to the remaining 40 percent of schools and deepen professional learning for all stakeholders.

In a study conducted for CASEL, the CDI's independent evaluator determined that, since implementation, SCUSD:

- Elementary school attendance increased in all years of CDI implementation.
- SEL implementation was significantly associated with reductions in elementary school suspensions.
- Suspension rates declined about 92 percent during the two years that high-implementation schools focused on restorative practices.¹⁶

Board Policy

Some focus group participants indicated that the district did not have a school board policy on social emotional learning and that work in this area was school specific. SCUSD's board policy on discipline (BP 5144, revised June 45 2014), however, is based on a foundation of social-emotional learning and restorative justice within a multi-tiered system of supports for core elements. It says--

Before consequences are given, students must first be supported in learning the skills necessary to enhance a positive school climate and avoid negative behavior. To that end, consistent and clear guidelines will be utilized to avoid disparate application and treatment, promote equity, and encourage individualized and customized responses to student behavior. ... Discipline practices should eliminate disparities in applying discipline by assuring equitable interventions and consequences across all schools and for all students, with special attention to those who have been disproportionately impacted. It is the intent of this policy to

¹⁴ Retrieved from <http://whhttp://www.casel.org/partner-districts/sacramento-city-unified-school-district/ww.casel.org/partner-districts/sacramento-city-unified-school-district/>.

¹⁵ Retrieved from <http://www.casel.org/partner-districts/sacramento-city-unified-school-district/>.

¹⁶ Retrieved from <http://www.casel.org/cdi-results/>.

minimize the excessive use of willful defiance as a reason to impose in-school and off-campus removals that often lead to poor educational outcomes, and encourage schools to use alternative means of correction such as participation in programs that are *restorative with positive behavior supports that include tiered interventions and other forms of correction that focuses on keeping students in school and learning*. (Emphasis added.)¹⁷

The board policy also requires the superintendent or designee to give the school board an annual plan designed to ensure that all district employees are provided mandatory professional development in the areas of:

- School-wide positive behavior interventions & supports (PBIS),
- Restorative practices and social and emotional learning,
- Implicit bias, and
- Cultural proficiency.

Schools are free to implement their own student discipline protocols consistent with the board policy as long as they are not in conflict with restorative justice practices.

SPARK Initiative

The Equity Office has taken the lead in developing a comprehensive plan for the district's **SPARK** initiative that serves as the first MTSS tier, which incorporates the following social emotional learning, PBIS, and restorative practices components:

- **Social Emotional Learning** designed to better academic performance, improved attitudes and behaviors, and reduced emotional distress;
- **Positive Relationships** through positive school climates;
- **Analysis of Data** by all staff to regularly inform and improve learning opportunities for all students;
- **Restorative Practices**. All staff will empower students to create restorative relationships with each other and will embody and model those principles themselves.
- **Kindness**. All staff will treat each student with respect and kindness every day.

As a part of the SPARK initiative, a subset of district schools received professional learning in the areas of PBIS and restorative practices. Also, the Equity Office and Curriculum Office have partnered to integrate SEL into the district's curriculum maps and professional learning.

¹⁷ Retrieved from <http://gamutonline.net/DisplayPolicy/277866/>.

SCTA Concerns

According to SCTA representatives, union members first became aware of SPARK when the initiative's activities were shared with the board of education.¹⁸ Union officials indicate that they support activities associated with SPARK, including worthwhile alternatives to suspension. However, they have significant concerns that the district has not put into place a comprehensive structure, including human and material resources, that is necessary to support successful implementation. As an example, they cite the 2014 board policy that did not produce anticipated outcomes because it was not accompanied by an effective infrastructure. Focus group participants indicated that because PBIS was introduced without sufficient support, its spotty implementation was exacerbated by high staff turnover and little accountability for ensuring that new staff were adequately trained. Based on the union's concerns, the district halted central office SPARK activities,¹⁹ and only some schools are implementing various components based on prior training and current resources. Although both the district and SCTA informed the Council's team of their desire to resolve these issues, there had not been much progress toward resolution when the team visited.

Social/Emotional Strategic and Intensive Interventions

Some 24 schools use Title I or other grants to fund student support centers. Under this model, a designated staff member coordinates external and school-based resources to support student's social/emotional needs. The schools operate their centers anywhere from an everyday activity to a one-day-per-week model. Center resources vary by school, and there is no formal relationship between each school's psychologists, social workers, and other support staff who could be leveraged to address students' social/emotional and mental health issues. Any coordination of these staff is dependent on the school site and the principal's leadership and commitment.

A common theme among focus group participants involved the extensive need to support the growing and more intensive mental health needs of students, which are not limited to those with identified disabilities. The district does not appear to have a structure for Tier 1 and 2 interventions and supports other than the student support centers and attention provided by individual psychologists, social workers, and other staff.

English Learners

SCUSD has held English language development (ELD) summer institutes for teachers of students who are ELs with the use of nine training specialists. One purpose of the institutes is to show teachers how they can embed ELD standards in instruction based on the common core curriculum. This training also supports ELs with disabilities. Some of this work is supported with a grant and assistance by WestEd, a national nonprofit research and service agency. Focus group

¹⁸ The district, however, indicated that the assistant superintendent for equity met with SCTA on Feb. 19, 2016, and presented the entire SPARK packet for SCTA comment prior to the April 21, 2016 board meeting. The district has dedicated 1.5 million dollars in resources to the Equity Office for training and staff to support SPARK.

¹⁹ The MOU states that only schools practicing SEL, PBIS, or RP at the time of the Board meeting where SPARK was introduced (4/21/16) may continue to do so.

participants indicated that more information and professional development was needed to improve ELD instructional practices.

Data Collection and Usage

Focus group participants and information provided by the district revealed several challenges facing the district with respect to the collection and use of data to inform instruction.

- **Data Dashboard.** SCUSD has developed a data dashboard that is in its beginning stages of implementation. In the near future, the dashboard will post real-time achievement data, student demographics and other information that school and central office staff can access. The dashboard, however, does not enable personnel to use search queries, nor does it have an early warning system that provides alerts for students, such as those with a high number of suspensions, poor attendance, or low academic achievement. Reportedly, an upcoming version of the dashboard will have this capability.
- **Benchmark Assessments.** School or district-wide benchmark assessments are a supplement to classroom assessments and provide consistency across classrooms and grade levels. Typically, teachers administer common benchmark assessments to all students in the same course and grade level in the district at prescribed intervals. Through these uniform benchmark assessments, teachers can evaluate how well their students are doing relative to the selected standards in not only their classrooms but also other grade-level classrooms in the district.²⁰

According to information provided in response to the Council team's request, the district uses Illuminate for its benchmark assessments. Use of this program, however, is based on a pool of items²¹ linked to state standards from which teachers self-select for their classroom assessments. Concerns were expressed about the extent to which the benchmark items were relevant, strategically selected, consistent, and sufficiently rigorous.²²

- **Problem Solving.** Schools inconsistently use student support teams (SSTs), problem solving, and data to inform decision-making, resulting in part from the absence of written protocols and district expectations.
- **Universal Screeners and Progress Monitoring Tools.** The district currently does not have a universal screening tool or progress monitoring tools to initially identify students in need of interventions and to support and measure student progress. There is interest in giving Title I schools access to a common universal screener with Every School Succeeds Act (ESSA) funds.

²⁰ California Department of Education, retrieved from <http://pubs.cde.ca.gov/tcsii/ch2/comnbchmrkassess.aspx>.

²¹ The Benchmarks are pre-built assessments from a pool of items. These were developed centrally in collaboration with SCTA and a team of teachers. Teachers also have the option of creating classroom level assessments in Illuminate using an item bank.

²² The district informed the Council team that in November it entered into an MOU with SCTA that suspended benchmark testing and established a committee to develop a system for monitoring student progress. The committee began meeting in February and no new assessments or processes for monitoring student progress have been agreed upon to date, April 2017.

- ***School Walk Throughs.*** The district has a common protocol for instructional rounds. The tool is used primarily for coaching, but it is also a data collection tool. The tool is being digitalized to facilitate the use of easy data collection and reporting.

Written Guidance for the Use of MTSS to Identify Students in Need of Special Education Evaluations

Nationwide, the referral of students for special education evaluations is increasingly embedded in the framework of multi-tiered systems of support. This trend is based on growing research showing that there is a difference between identifying students with obvious disabilities, e.g., blind/visual impairments, deaf/hearing impairments, physical disabilities, etc., and those with less obvious and more judgmental disabilities, e.g., specific learning disabilities, emotional disturbance, etc. For the latter category of disabilities, there are large disparities in incidence rates within and between school districts and states. In addition, disparities are large when considering race/ethnicity and ELL status. In some disability areas, e.g., autism and intellectual disabilities, the disability of students with more significant needs will be more obvious than the disability of students with higher achievement and less significant needs. For example, researchers reviewed data on all 305 school districts in Indiana. They found that disparities increased inversely with the severity of the disability. In other words, the more severe a disability, the more likely students were to be proportionately represented across all races/ethnicities.²³ Conversely, minority students were more likely to be over-represented when more mild disabilities were considered.

Although the SCUSD does not have written guidance for MTSS, the district's special education and multilingual departments both have written guidance, but with differing degrees of specificity, as well as varying requirements for the use of tiered interventions.

Special Education Procedural Handbook References to SSTs and RtI

The district's 2015-16 Special Education Procedural Handbook (Handbook) describes two processes for supporting the appropriate identification of students with disabilities: student support teams (SSTs) and response to intervention (RtI), which has been viewed as the academic component of MTSS.

- ***SSTs*** are described as school-based problem-solving groups to assist teachers, administrators, and school staff with interventions and strategies for dealing with the academic, social/emotional, and behavioral needs of students. Once activated, this proactive process is designed to assist teachers and students by generating additional classroom instructional strategies, classroom accommodations, and/or intervention plans. The team may also act as a resource for additional services or programs (i.e., reading comprehension groups, anger management groups, social skills groups, or 1:1 mental health counseling).

²³ S.J. Skiba, S.B. Simmons, S. Ritter, K. Kohler, M. Henderson, and T. Wu. "The Context of Minority Disproportionality: Local Perspectives on Special Education Referral – A Status Report (Indiana Education Policy Center, 2003) p. 18, retrieved at <http://www.indiana.edu/%7Eesafeschl/contextofmindisp.pdf>.

One purpose of the SSTs is to reduce the number of inappropriate referrals for special education. This provision references the Board of Education policy (§6164.5) of April 15, 2002, which states:

The Superintendent or designees shall establish Student Study Teams at each school site to address student needs. The Board expects Student Study Teams to identify the areas in which a student is having learning or behavior problems, and to develop plans or approaches that will enable the student to be successful. The Board expects that Student Study Teams will engage in a problem solving process, which will improve communications between the school and parents, provide support to teachers and monitor the effectiveness of interventions.

In addition, the Board's Administrative Rule §6164.5 of June 11, 2002 sets forth more specific requirements for the principal or designee at each school for the implementation of SSTs.

- ***Response to Intervention (RtI)***, which the Handbook describes as a “mandated requirement of IDEA 2004,”²⁴ is an effort to incorporate three tiers of intervention in order to ensure that all students succeed. Each of the three tiers, however, are described in vague terms, but the intensity of instruction/intervention for students is expected to be in direct proportion to their individual needs pursuant to a student's individual intervention plan. The interventions and student supports are to be research-based, and monitored for effectiveness in an ongoing manner. Referencing California law, “a student shall be referred for special education instruction and services only **after** the resources of the **general education program** have been considered and, where appropriate, utilized.”²⁵

Master Plan for English Learner Programs and Services

SCUSD's Master Plan for English Learner Programs and Services (ELL Master Plan) also describes the SST and RtI processes as they relate to referrals for special education services. The ELL Master Plan establishes that:

A student may not be referred for special education services unless and until it can be established that if the student has been provided with an effective instructional program and that research-based interventions, which have been implemented with fidelity over a significant period of time, have been confirmed not to work. ... The district has adopted a tiered service-delivery model to ensure that English learners received a complete and appropriate range of instructional services and interventions, through the general education program, prior to referral for special education.²⁶

²⁴ See page 9.

²⁵ 30 EC 56303

²⁶ See page 30.

An EL shall be referred for special education instruction and services only after the resources of the general education program have been **utilized and confirmed to be** insufficient or ineffective.²⁷ (Emphasis added.)

Relationship between SCUSD's MTSS Practices and Special Education Referrals

While the Special Education Procedural Handbook and ELL Master Plan have provided some guidance with respect to SSTs and RtI, these guidance documents are somewhat irrelevant given that SCUSD does not have a comprehensive district framework and the resources and professional learning necessary to support systemic practice with fidelity.

The absence of a comprehensive MTSS framework and implementation is having a demonstrably negative effect on the manner in which students are referred to and identified for special education services. Despite board policy, the SSTs are not consistently and effectively used. While some schools use them as intended, other schools appear to use these teams only as a means to justify a student's special education referral or to delay evaluations. Where strategic and intensive resources sufficient to meet students' academic and social/emotional needs are unavailable, special education is viewed as the only "place" in which a student can receive intervention and support. The next section of this report, which presents various demographic data about students who receive special education services, describes several areas that illustrate this concern.

AREAS OF STRENGTH

The following are areas of strength in the district's disability-prevalence rates and evaluation results.

- ***Multi-tiered System of Supports.*** The district's 2016-2021 Strategic Plan Implementation includes MTSS, along with other actions, as means to close achievement gaps.
- ***Curriculum Maps and Principal Leadership.*** SCUSD is using a multi-disciplinary process to develop CCSS-aligned curriculum maps for English Language Arts (ELA) and math to guide what students should know, understand, and be able to do. Principals and teacher teams attend professional learning sessions to collaboratively bring their knowledge back to school sites.
- ***Common Protocol.*** The district has a common protocol for conducting instructional rounds to support coaching, and collecting data from classroom visits.
- ***Universal Design for Learning.*** Last summer, five district staff members representing different departments attended Harvard's Graduate School of Education course, Universal Design for Learning: Leading Inclusive Education for All Students, and are providing training on UDL to schools.
- ***English Learners.*** The district has held English language development (ELD) summer institutes for teachers of students who are ELLs with the use of nine training specialists. This

²⁷ See page 31. Note that the EL Master Plan does not correctly cite the California provision, which is referenced correctly in the Special Education Procedural Handbook. Rather than ensuring that general education resources are "utilized and confirmed to be insufficient and ineffective," they must be "considered and, where appropriate, utilized

training also supports ELLs with disabilities.

- ***Social/Emotional Support.*** The district benefits from its participation in the Collaborating Districts Initiative (CDI) partnership with the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) and the American Institutes for Research (AIR). An independent study conducted for CASEL showed positive outcomes for the district. The district has attempted to initiate SPARK, which comprises five components, as Tier 1 universal practices.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

The following describes opportunities for improvements in the district's disability prevalence rates and student evaluation results.

- ***Multi-tiered System of Supports Implementation.*** The district's development and use of the MTSS framework is in its infancy. While some schools have implemented MTSS to varying degrees, there is no consistency across the system with respect to the core MTSS components described in CDE's framework.
- ***Universal Design for Learning.*** Instructional technology (IT) personnel have not been involved in UDL implementation and professional learning activities, which is necessary for UDL to interface with the district's various technology tools. There are concerns that special educators alone are expected to carry the initiative forward.
- ***Increasingly Intensive Interventions and Supports.*** Currently, SCUSD does not have increasingly intensive academic and social/emotional interventions and support available systemwide for students. Title I schools have more access to supplemental interventions but other schools must rely on their own creative means to address the academic needs of students falling behind.
- ***English Learners.*** More information and professional development is needed to improve ELD instructional practices.
- ***SCTA/District Collaboration.*** MTSS implementation has stalled because of SCTA's concerns about the lack of a comprehensive framework that is sufficiently resourced and supported. The issue is being discussed through contract negotiations based on a pending proposal from the SCTA. The SCTA has also halted implementation of the district's SPARK initiative for similar reasons. That program provides five evidence-based practices to support Tier 1 interventions and social/emotional learning. While there is merit to some issues raised by the SCTA, we know of no other school district that has had union concerns significantly delay development and implementation of MTSS.
- ***Data Collection and Usage.*** The following data-related issues merit attention, including several of which district representatives are aware: a dashboard without early warning capability; benchmark assessments that are not evidence-based and provided at reasonable intervals; a lack of written protocols and practices for data-based problem-solving of student needs; and a lack of access to universal screeners and progress monitoring tools.
- ***Relationship of MTSS to Special Education Referrals.*** Although the Special Education Procedural Handbook (Handbook) and Master Plan for English Learner Programs and

Services (ELL Master Plan) contain some guidance for referring students for special education evaluations, the district has no overall written protocol for MTSS or for making referral decisions. As a result, these two documents exist in a vacuum without systemic support. Moreover, the Handbook and ELL Master Plan have provisions that are inconsistent with each other, and with state guidance. The absence of professional learning in this area exacerbates this problem, and raises issues about the consistency and reliability of special education evaluation referrals.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. ***Systemwide MTSS Framework, Implementation Plan, and Oversight.*** As part of the district's theory of action, establish MTSS as the underlying structure for all work designed to improve student outcomes. Based on information from the CDE website and other sources, develop, distribute, and implement a comprehensive vision, framework, and action plan to support MTSS systemwide.²⁸ This collective work must communicate that MTSS is neither a mechanism for delaying special education evaluations when they warranted nor a process having the singular purpose of justifying such valuations. Rather, the work needs to facilitate a shared sense of urgency among all stakeholders to improve educational outcomes for all students.

We strongly recommend that the district use a consultant who has experience developing and implementing MTSS in various urban school districts to facilitate collaboration among the central office, schools, the SCTA, and other stakeholders. The use of a consultant with this expertise would enable the district to benefit from other school districts' experiences; help resolve SCTA issues regarding MTSS, including SPARK; and to expedite completion of the MTSS framework and implementation plan.

- a. ***District and School-based Leadership MTSS Teams.*** Establish leadership teams at the district and school levels to support MTSS planning and oversee implementation activities.
 - ***District MTSS Leadership Team.*** Ensure that the district MTSS leadership team includes representatives from all relevant stakeholder groups, e.g., area assistant superintendents, central office personnel, principals, all types of teachers (general, special, EL, gifted/talented), related-services personnel, SCTA representatives, etc. Plan a two-day overview and monthly meetings with the MTSS leadership team to continue to develop common language and planning for necessary implementation resources. Invite various advisory groups representing differing interests, such as the Community Advisory Committee (CAC) for special education, to give feedback to the leadership team.
 - ***School-Based Leadership Teams.*** Based on the district's comprehensive MTSS-implementation plan (Recommendation 1b below), identify school-based leadership teams (SBLT) at each site for training on and work toward the development of an implementation plan at each site. The SBLT is responsible for the health and wellness of the school and leads the MTSS work to ensure a common understanding of the framework. SBLTs will necessarily have defined responsibilities, such as

²⁸ CDE webpage for MTSS, retrieved at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/ri/mtsscompri2.asp>.

learning/applying/modeling the problem-solving process, providing professional learning and technical assistance opportunities for staff, monitoring implementation and needed supports, conducting school-based data days, and the like.

- a. *Implementation Plan.*** Have the district MTSS leadership team evaluate its current program infrastructure as it develops its MTSS framework and implementation plan, e.g., universal screeners, formative assessments, standard protocols for intervention/support, curricular materials, supplemental and intensive resources, data platforms, use of data, professional learning, budget allocations, etc. Embed universal design for learning (UDL) into the MTSS framework,²⁹ and incorporate the areas discussed below. As a part of the plan include benchmark and on-going district wide and school-based progress monitoring to support the evaluation of MTSS implementation. When finalized, post the MTSS implementation plan on the district's website along with relevant links to district information/resources, and publicly available resources. Ensure that the district's Strategic Plan intentionally embeds and utilizes the MTSS framework in its goals and activities. Embed relevant aspects of the MTSS framework in the district's Strategic Plan and school-based planning templates.
- b. *Map Resources and Analyze Gaps.*** As part of a comprehensive planning process, conduct an assessment of current MTSS-related human and material resources provided by the district and independently funded by schools. As part of this process, consider the current roles of school psychologists and speech/language pathologists, and how they may be adjusted/reallocated to support students proactively within general education. Compare these resources to evidence-based resources in use, and plan for filling gaps. Conduct an analysis of currently used resources by schools to assess their return on investment in terms of improved student outcomes. Identify those that are supporting/accelerating student learning and those that are not. Consider having the district sponsor appropriate evidence-based resources from which all schools can choose to implement. As part of this process, consider how additional Title I resources provided to schools could enhance district resources to meet student needs.
- b. *Written Expectations.*** Establish a school board policy³⁰ and written expectations for the district's MTSS framework (for academics in addition to social/emotional learning/restorative justice) that is consistent with the district's theory of action. Ensure that the MTSS framework includes all grades, and supports linguistically appropriate and culturally competent instruction. Develop a multi-year implementation plan that includes regular board updates. Address all areas of MTSS described in the current program literature, including expectations for the following:

 - Use of MTSS for systemic and sustainable change;

²⁹ Consider expanding the district leadership team's knowledge of UDL by having representatives from IT and departments in addition to past participants attend the Harvard University UDL summer program, having the team receive training from district personnel with UDL expertise, etc.

³⁰ April 7, 2014 board policy (BUL-6269.0), retrieved from April http://notebook.lausd.net/pls/ptl/docs/PAGE/CA_LAUSD/FLDR_ORGANIZATIONS/FLDR_SPECIAL_EDUCATION/BUL-6269.0%20MULTI%20TIERED%20BEHAVIOR%20SUPPORT%20SWD%20W%20ATTACHMENTS.PDF.

- High-quality, differentiated classroom instruction and research-based academic and behavior interventions and supports aligned with student needs;
- Evidence-based universal screening, benchmark assessments, and progress monitoring;³¹
- Use of school-based leadership teams and problem-solving methodology;
- Fidelity of implementation;
- Professional learning, technical assistance, and collaboration;
- Parent/family involvement in the MTSS process; and
- Use of MTSS to identify students in need of special education evaluations and to consider in the assessment process. More information about this process is provided as part of the recommendations in Section II, Disability Prevalence Rates and 2014-15 Evaluation Outcomes.

- c. **Professional Learning.** Based on the MTSS framework, implementation plan, and written expectations, develop a professional-learning curriculum that is targeted to different audiences, e.g., special education teachers, related-services personnel, paraprofessionals, parents, etc. Provide at least four to five days of training for school-based leadership teams over two consecutive years. Ground training in the Learning Forward Standards for Professional Learning.³² Consider how access to training will be supported and budgeted, e.g., through the use of stipends, funds for substitute coverage, incentives for after-school and Saturday training, summer training, etc.

Embed the following components in the district’s MTSS implementation plan —

- **Cross-Functional Teams.** Cross-train individuals from different departments to ensure a common language and common understanding of MTSS that can be applied to district offices in order to intentionally align and support the work of schools as they work toward implementation. Maximize their knowledge and skills in MTSS in order to provide direct support, mentoring, coaching, and technical assistance to principals and teachers.
- **Develop the Capacity of High-Quality Trainers.** Develop a plan to develop the capacity of internal staff to deliver data-driven professional development and the critical components of MTSS. Ensure that all trainers are knowledgeable and experienced in data analysis, problem solving, and effective professional development for adult learners.
- **Access to Differentiated Learning.** Ensure that professional learning is engaging and differentiated according to the audience’s skills, experience, and need. Have professional learning and technical assistance available to new personnel and those needing additional support.

³¹ See the evaluation tool available on the Center on Response to Intervention website to determine the research-based value of tools being considered.³¹

³² Retrieved from <http://www.learningforward.org/standards#.UMvVD7Yt0kU>

- **Multiple Formats.** Use multiple formats (e.g., videos, webinars, and narrative text) and presentation approaches (e.g., school-based, small groups).
 - **Coaching/Modeling.** Develop a plan for coaching and technical assistance to support principals and school-based leadership teams in practices highlighted in training sessions and materials.
 - **School Walk Throughs.** Establish a common, differentiated electronic protocol for conducting instructional rounds, collecting data from classroom visits, and informing teachers of results and observations. It is important that the protocol be aligned with the teaching and learning framework of the district.
 - **Exemplary Implementation Models.** Provide a forum where schools can highlight and share best practices, lessons learned, victories, and challenges in implementing MTSS for all students (e.g., gifted, English learners, students with IEPs, students who are twice exceptional). Encourage staff to visit exemplary schools, and set aside time for that to happen.
 - **District Website.** Develop and provide a well-informed and resourced interactive web page that includes links to other local and national sites. Highlight schools within the district and share stories about the impact of MTSS on student outcomes using multiple measures.
- d. **Data Analysis and Reports.** Establish an early warning system that measures students on track for graduation. Ensure that key performance indicators across elementary, middle and high schools are established, and analysis (e.g., custom reports) are designed to enable the superintendent, administrators, principals, teachers, and related-services personnel to review student growth, identify patterns, solve problems, and make informed decisions.
- e. **Monitoring and Accountability.** Evaluate the effectiveness, fidelity, and results of MTSS implementation, and include the following in the assessment –
- **Baseline Data and Fidelity Assessments.** Develop a standard protocol for school-site baseline data on instructional practices and supports using multiple measures (academic, suspension, attendance, etc.), for assessing academic and behavioral outcomes, and for measuring the fidelity of program implementation. For example, consider using evaluation tools and protocols provided at no cost through the federally funded Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports website.³³
 - **Data Checks.** Conduct at least three health and wellness checks per year at the school level to facilitate the monitoring and impact of MTSS implementation. In addition, using data and reports associated with Recommendation 1f, have the superintendent host regular data conversations with administrators and principals on key

³³ Several tools are available for monitoring fidelity, such as Florida’s MTSS school level tool, retrieved at http://floridarti.usf.edu/resources/presentations/2014/nasp/StockslagerCastillo/NASP%202014_School%20Level%20MTSS%20Instrument_Final.pdf; and tools available from the RTI Action Network, retrieved from <http://www.rtinetwork.org/essential/tieredinstruction/tier1/accurate-decision-making-within-a-multi-tier-system-of-supports-critical-areas-in-tier-1>.

performance indicators to discuss results, anomalies, support needed, follow-up activities, and outcomes.

- ***Timely Communication and Feedback.*** Design feedback loops involving central office, school personnel, parents, and the community to inform current as well as future work. Use this process to provide regular and timely feedback to the district MTSS leadership team about barriers that are beyond the control of local schools or where schools require additional assistance.

II. Disability Prevalence Rates and 2014-15 Evaluation Outcomes

This section presents demographic characteristics of SCUSD students with disabilities who have individualized education programs (IEPs).³⁴ When available, SCUSD data are compared with students at state and national levels, and with other urban school districts across the country. In addition, data are analyzed by grade, by school, by race/ethnicity, and for students who are also English language learners (ELLs), so readers can fully understand the context in which SCUSD services are provided.

This section also provides information about the results of the district’s special education evaluations that were completed during the 2015-16 school year.

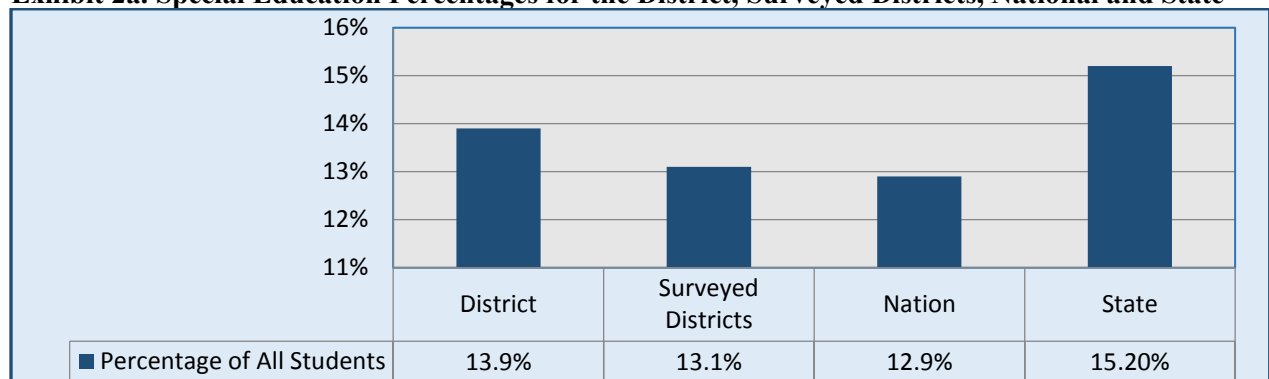
District Prevalence Rates

In this subsection, the incidence of SCUSD students receiving special education services is compared to urban school districts across the country and to the nation as a whole. Also, incidence data are disaggregated for pre-K and kindergarten children, and school-age students by disability area, grade, race/ethnicity, and English learner status.³⁵

Comparison of SCUSD, Urban Districts, National, and State Special Education Rates

SCUSD enrolls 6,519 students with IEPs who are three through 21 years of age, including those in separate schools (in and out of the district) and charter schools. This number is 13.9 percent of all students enrolled in the district. This figure is somewhat higher than the 13.1 percent average across 72 urban school districts on which we have data.³⁶ SCUSD ranked 32nd among districts in the percentage of students with disabilities. Percentages ranged from 8 percent to 25 percent among these districts.³⁷

Exhibit 2a. Special Education Percentages for the District, Surveyed Districts, National and State



³⁴ Students with disabilities who have IEPs and receive special education services are also referred to as students with IEPs. These data are limited to students with a disability under the IDEA, and does not include students who are gifted.

³⁵ Unless otherwise stated, all SCUSD data were provided by the district to the Council’s team and are for the 2015-16 school year.

³⁶ Most data were provided by school districts that responded to a survey conducted by the Urban Special Education Leadership Collaborative; the Council team or members of the team obtained the remaining data during district reviews. The rates by district are provided in Appendix A. Incidence Rates and Staffing Survey Results.

³⁷ The data covers several years, but in most cases, ratios do not change dramatically from year to year.

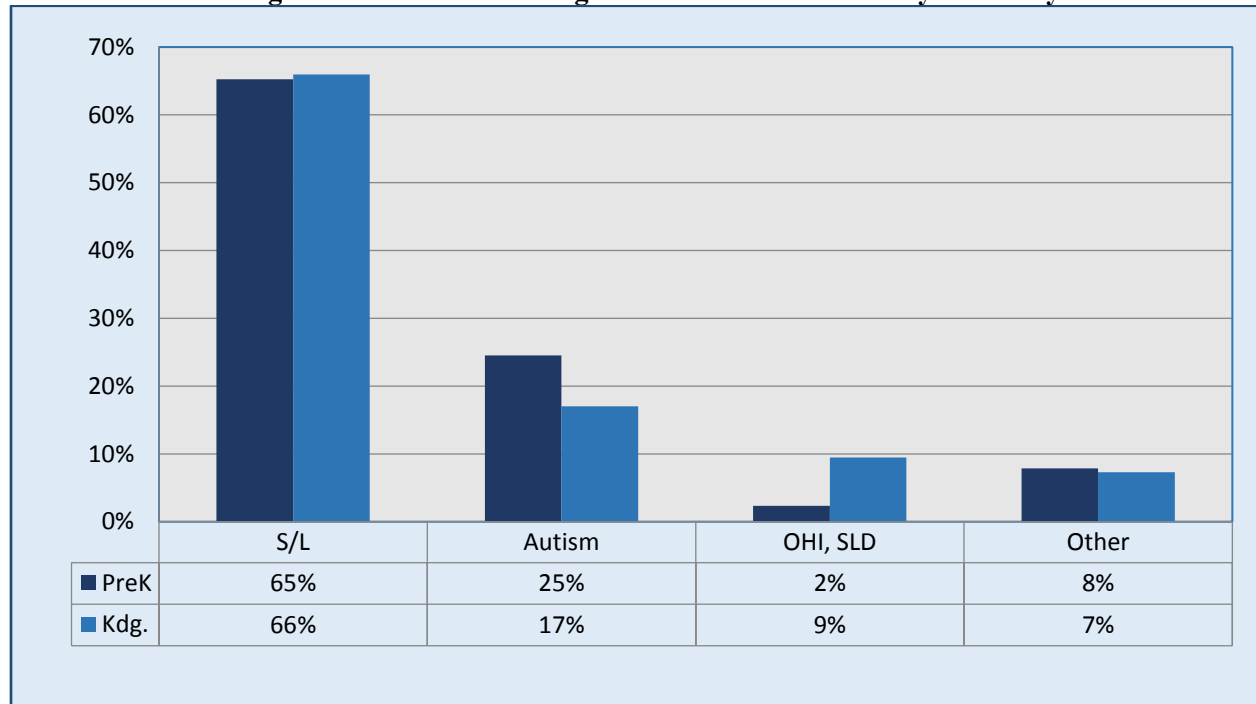
The district’s 13.9 percent special education rate is less than the state’s 15.2 percentage, but is higher than the 12.9 percent national figure, which has decreased since 2004-05, when it was 13.8 percent.³⁸

Special Education Percentages for SCUSD Pre-K and Kindergarten Children

SCUSD enrolls many more children with IEPs in pre-K (636) compared to kindergarten (370). Exhibit 2b shows the percentages of pre-K and kindergarten children with IEPs by disability areas.

- **Speech/Language Impairment (S/L).** In both grades, some 65 percent of these children are identified as having an S/L disability.
- **Autism.** Pre-K and kindergarten students have markedly different autism percentages. Some 25 percent of pre-K children with IEPs are identified as having autism compared to 17 percent in kindergarten.
- **Other Health Impairment (OHI) and Specific Learning Disability (SLD).** For the combined areas of OHI and SLD, only 2 percent of pre-K children with IEPs are identified compared to 9 percent of kindergarteners. This difference is reflected in the increased number of children identified with SLD (2 in pre-K to 14 in kindergarten) and with OHI (13 in pre-K to 21 in kindergarten).
- **Other Areas.** The remaining students have other disabilities.

Exhibit 2b. Percentages of Pre-K and Kindergarten Children with IEP by Disability Area

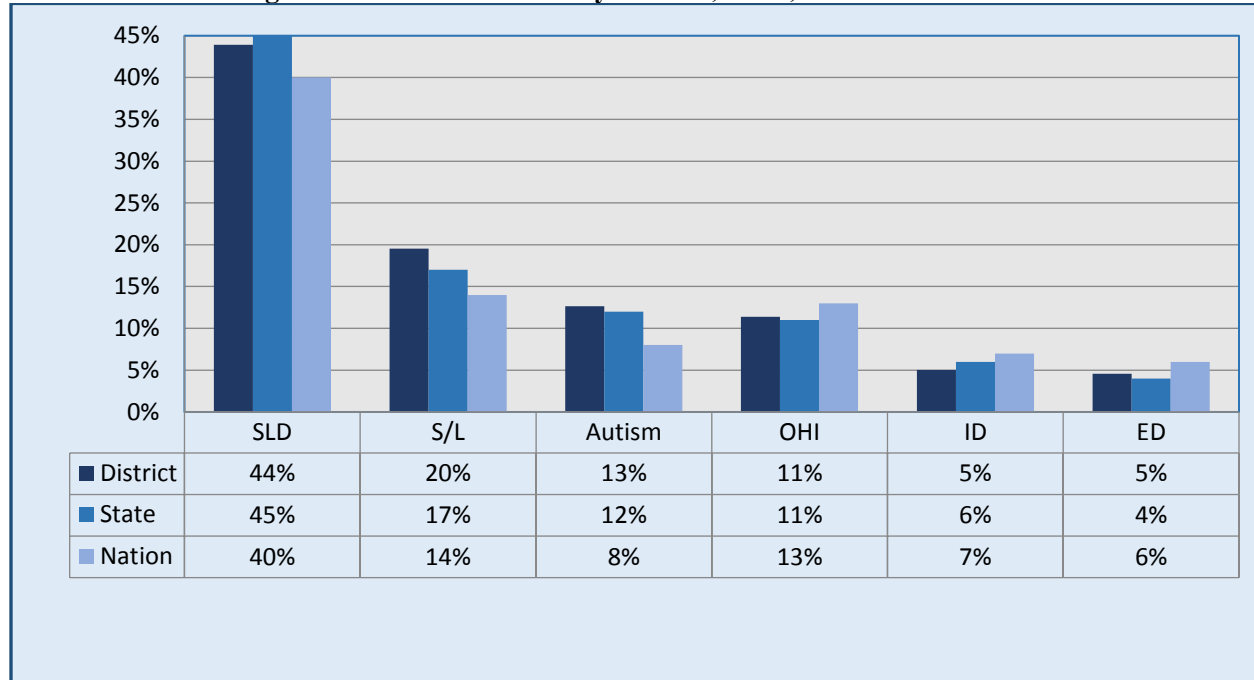


³⁸ U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2015). *Digest of Education Statistics, 2013* (NCES 2015-011), Chapter 2. The rates are based on 2011-12 data based on students 3 through 21 years of age. <http://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=64>.

Disability Prevalence Rates by District, State and Nation

SCUSD students with IEPs are identified as having a particular disability at proportions similar to those at the state level. Notable areas in which the district and state exceed national rates involve specific learning disabilities, speech/language, and autism. (See Exhibit 1b.)

Exhibit 2c. Percentage of Students with IEPs by District, State, and Nation³⁹



SCUSD Disability Rates by Grade

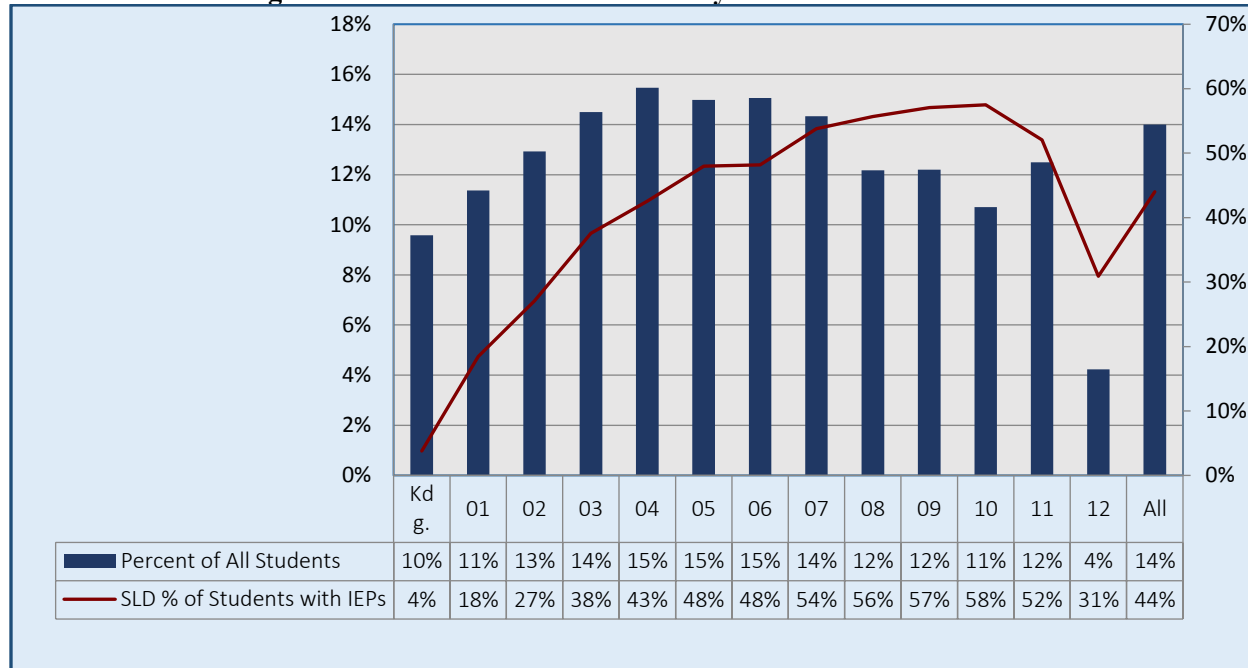
Exhibit 2d shows the district’s overall rate of students with IEPs is 14 percent; however, the disability rates vary by grade. The percentage of children in kindergarten (10 percent) increases steadily to fourth grade (15 percent) where it remains relatively stable through seventh grade (14 percent). Inexplicably, the percentage decreases at eighth grade (12 percent) where it remains somewhat consistent through eleventh grade, and then drops in twelfth grade to a low of four percent.⁴⁰ This pattern is not one that is typical among other school districts.

When looking only at students with a specific learning disability, the disability rate increases significantly from kindergarten (4 percent) to tenth grade (58 percent), and then declines somewhat in eleventh grade (52 percent) and significantly in twelfth grade (31 percent). The decrease in twelfth grade may be due to students who have dropped out of school.

³⁹ National and state data are based on the U.S. Department of Education’s 2014 IDEA Part B Child Count and Educational Environment database, retrieved from 2014-15 USDE IDEA Section 618 State Level Data Files, retrieved at <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/osepidea/618-data/state-level-data-files/index.html#bccee>. Unless otherwise stated, all SCUSD data were provided by the district to the Council’s team.

⁴⁰ The chart does not include students with IEPs remaining in school past 12th grade to receive postsecondary education. There are 76 students in this group, which comprise 57 percent with an intellectual disability, 16 percent with autism, and small percentages with other disability areas.

Exhibit 2d. Percentages of SCUSD Students with IEPs by Grade



SCUSD Disability Incidence by Race/Ethnicity

This subsection discusses the extent to which SCUSD students from each of the most common racial/ethnic groups are proportionate to each other in being identified as disabled.

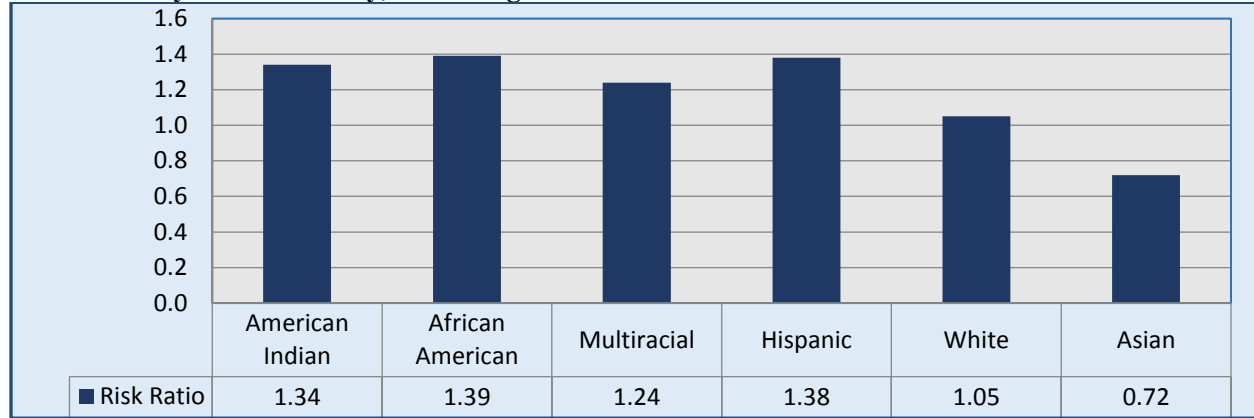
Race/Ethnicity Prevalence for Students with IEPs

According to CDE’s latest FY 2014 State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report of July 1, 2016, the agency uses an E-formula to determine racial/ethnic disproportionality, which according to the report falls under the broad category of composition measures. On December 12, 2015, the United States Department of Education (USDE or ED) issued a final rule that established a uniform national measurement of significant disproportionality. The department developed the risk ratio measure (and alternative risk ratio for small cell numbers), to measure the likelihood that students from one racial/ethnic group compared to other groups have the characteristic being measured. By the 2018-19 school year, states must use this measure and identify the threshold of risk it will use to determine significant disproportionality.⁴¹ In the meantime, SCUSD should take note of any risk ratios for racial/ethnic groups that are 2 or higher, or are under 0.5.

Exhibit 2e shows risk ratios for the most common student racial/ethnic groups. These figures show that African American students are 1.39 more likely and Hispanic students are 1.38 more likely to have an IEP compared to students outside of their racial/ethnic group. Asian students have the lowest risk ratio (0.72). Using a measure of “2,” these risks for identification are not disproportionately or unusually high.

⁴¹ As of the date of this report, the regulation is still in effect; however, further action by Congress or Education Department could change this status.

Exhibit 2e. By Race/Ethnicity, Percentages of All Enrolled Students and of All Students with IEPs

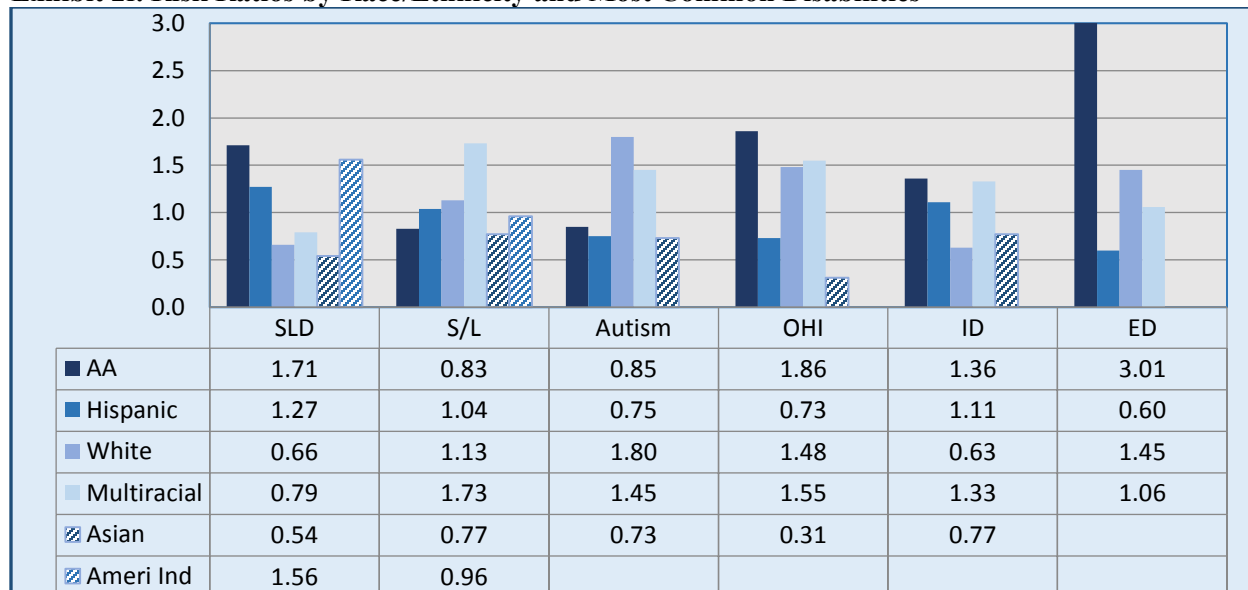


Race/Ethnicity Prevalence by Disability Area

Exhibit 2f shows the risk ratio of students by the most prevalent race/ethnic groups compared to all other groups in the most common disability areas. These data show that the risk for almost all student groups of having a specific disability is less than “2.” The exception is for African American students, who are three times more likely than other students to have an emotional disturbance. Several racial/ethnic groups have a risk ratio approaching a “2” for various other disabilities, including:

- ***Specific Learning Disability.*** The risk ratio for African American students is 1.71.
- ***Speech/Language Impairment.*** The risk ratio for multiracial students is 1.73.
- ***Autism.*** The risk ratio for white students is 1.80.
- ***Other Health Impairment.*** The risk ratio for African American students is 1.86.

Exhibit 2f. Risk Ratios by Race/Ethnicity and Most Common Disabilities



Prior Findings by California Department of Education

According to district representatives, four years ago the California Department of Education (CDE) made a finding of significant disproportionality in the area of emotional disturbance (ED) with respect to the district's identification of white and African American students, and again in 2014-15 with respect to African American students. With this finding, the district was required to use 15 percent of its IDEA funds for coordinated, early intervention services to supplement general education social/emotional supports for students without disabilities.⁴² The district reports that it is no longer significantly disproportionate in any area of identification. As discussed above, beginning with the 2018-19 school year CDE must use a risk ratio to measure significant disproportionality. Although the state will have some time to identify the threshold of risk, SCUSD should take note of its high 3.01 ED risk ratio among African American students.

With CDE's first identification of the significant disproportionality, the district's special education department initiated specialized ERMHS teams (discussed below) for students suspected of having ED. According to the district, these teams reduced the number of students identified. At the same time, the district expanded behavioral support services and its implementation of social/emotional learning.

Use of Educationally Related Mental Health Services (ERMHS) Teams

Focus group participants expressed several concerns about the use of ERMHS teams for students suspected of having an emotional disturbance—along with the use of autism teams.

- These teams have a primary “gate keeping” function for ED and autism eligibility for special education, and there are frequent disagreements between team members and school personnel. Reportedly, some school personnel believe they have to suspend students (where they otherwise might not have) in order to “build” a case that would support eligibility.
- School personnel reach out to the team only after they believe they have intervened with resources within their control, and completed a plethora of screening paperwork. This structure promotes antagonism when team members provide feedback that school efforts are not sufficient, or they do not observe the same level of need as school personnel.
- Team members are not readily available to schools because of the large number of requests for assistance. This circumstance could result in referral and evaluation delays.
- The teams' expertise is not used to support intervention activities or technical assistance and coaching for teachers having students with behavior or social/emotional issues, regardless of whether they qualify for services.

⁴² The U.S. Department of Education's December 12, 2016 final rule allows school districts to use 15 percent of IDEA funds for coordinated, early intervening services for students without disabilities.

District representatives indicate that psychologists will be trained to evaluate students suspected of having ED and autism.⁴³

SCUSD Disability English Learners

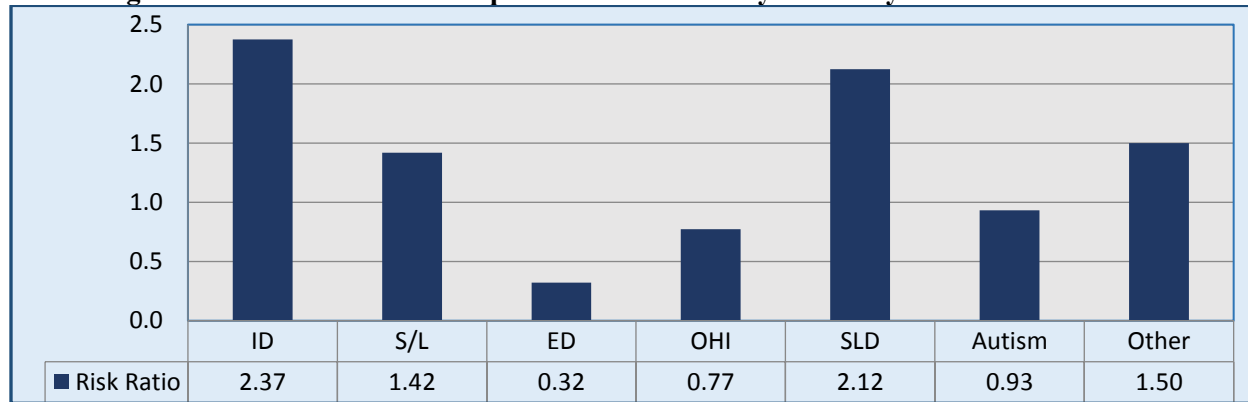
This subsection discusses the extent to which SCUSD students who are English language learners (ELL) have disability percentages that are proportionate to students who are not ELL. It also includes information about the assessment of ELLs thought to have a disability, as well as communication with parents who are ELLs.

Disparities by Language Status (ELL and Non-ELL)

Overall, 19 percent of all students who are ELLs have an IEP, compared to 13 percent of students who are not ELLs. Using a risk ratio measure, ELLs are 1.48 times more likely than non-ELLs to have an IEP.

As seen in Exhibit 2g, ELLs are 2.37 times more likely than non-ELLs to have an intellectual disability, and 2.12 times more likely to have a specific learning disability. With a risk ratio of 0.32, ELLs are much less likely than non-ELLs to have an emotional disability.

Exhibit 2g. Risk Ratios for ELLs Compared to Non-ELLs by Disability Areas



Assessments of ELL Students

Focus group participants and the district provided the following information about assessments for ELL students.

- Assessments.** According to the ELL Master Plan, whenever possible, assessments will be conducted by trained bilingual personnel and in the student’s most proficient language. The Special Education Procedural Handbook, however, follows the federal and state requirements that assessments must be conducted by qualified bilingual personnel in a student’s “primary language, unless it is not feasible to do so. Further, the assessment report must address the validity and reliability of the assessments in light of the student’s

⁴³ Psychologists are trained during their graduate training programs on assessing all areas of suspected disabilities. Professional learning will be offered to staff to improve their ability to evaluate and rule in or rule out ED and autism when student presents with characteristics of both disability areas.

language and interpreted in a language that is accessible to the student's parents."⁴⁴ In addition, the evaluation team must include one staff person with certification in ELL instruction.⁴⁵

- ***Bilingual Assessments.*** The district has only two bilingual Spanish psychologist, and the psychologist's caseload is not limited to ELLs who speak Spanish.
- ***Parent Notices.*** According to the ELL Master Plan, where possible, the assessment plan will be communicated to the parent in a language the parent understands. In addition, schools ensure parents are provided notice, where feasible, in the language the parent best understands and that appropriate support is provided to ensure meaningful participation in the IEP development and monitoring process. However, this information does not accurately reflect information relevant to these issues in the Special Education Procedural Handbook. This document specifies that a trained interpreter must be provided at IEP meetings upon parental request.⁴⁶ Further, IEP meeting notices are in the parent's primary language, and they inform parents of their right to interpretation services. For all English learners, the IEP and reports are to be translated for ELL parents upon their request.⁴⁷
- ***Interoffice Communication and Professional Learning.*** Reportedly, although ELL personnel at the central office have a positive relationship with special education program specialists and inclusive practices coaches, they do not have an established relationship with such personnel as psychologists and speech/language pathologists. Such interoffice collaboration would benefit the professional development that school psychologists and speech/language pathologists receive periodically about assessments for ELL students. Collaboration also would enable ELL personnel to become better informed about their role in the special education evaluation and IEP process.

Special Education Eligibility and Timeliness

SCUSD provided the Council team with data showing the numbers of students who were referred for an evaluation during the 2015-16 school year, whether they qualified for an IEP, and the results by disability area.

Evaluations Completed and Qualification for IEPs

Exhibit 2h shows the percentages of students with completed evaluations who were eligible for special education services in 2015-16, and the percentage of students with evaluations that were not yet completed. These data show that a much higher percentage of all students referred for a speech/language-only evaluation were evaluated, had evaluations completed, and qualified for services, compared to students with a full team evaluation. The data did not show the extent to which the pending evaluations were timely.

- ***Speech/Language-Only Evaluation.*** Of the 495 students referred for an evaluation for speech/language needs, 95 percent were completed. Of the 470 completed evaluations, 91

⁴⁴ See page 29.

⁴⁵ See page 46.

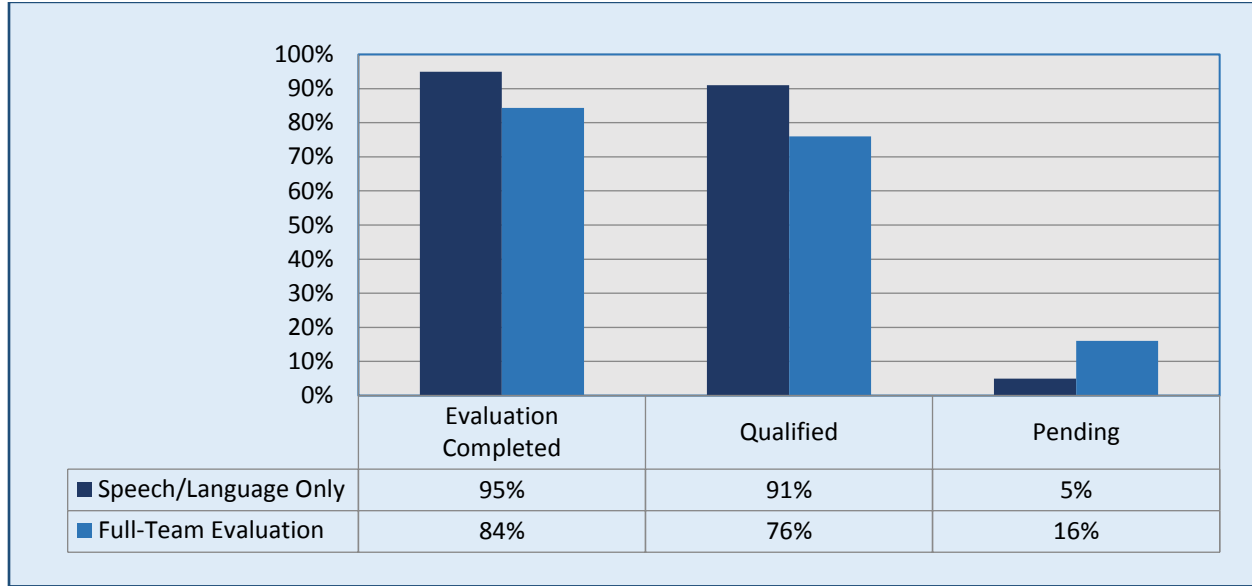
⁴⁶ See page 46.

⁴⁷ See page 48.

percent were qualified for services. Of the referred students, only five percent were pending at the end of the school year.

- **Full Team Evaluations.** Of the 936 students referred for a full evaluation, 16 percent had evaluations that were not yet completed. Of the 789 completed evaluations, 76 percent qualified for an IEP.

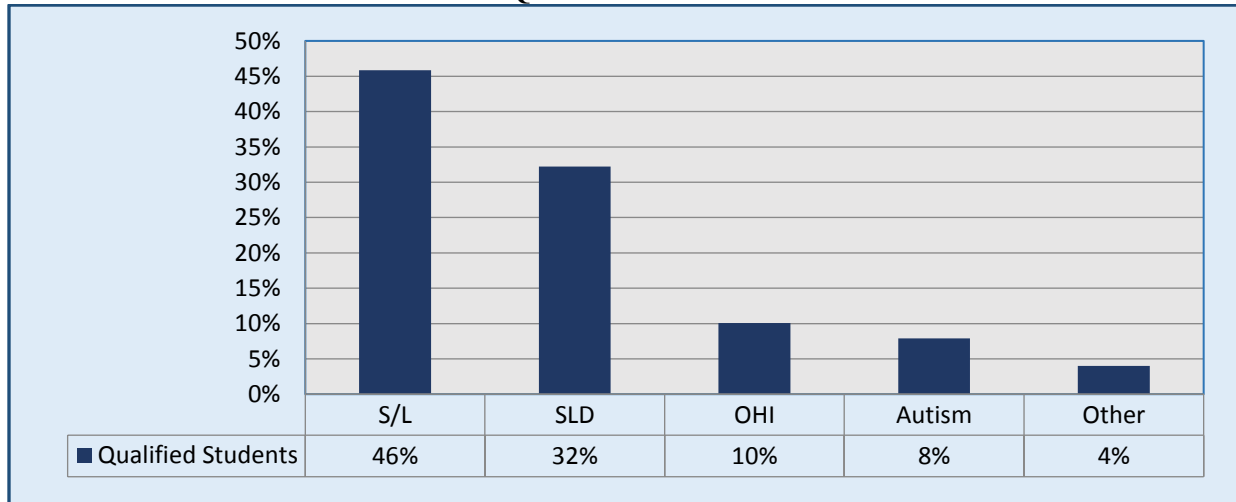
Exhibit 2h. Referrals for Evaluations and Results



Evaluation Results

Of the 1,025 students who qualified for special education, they comprised the following disability areas: 46 percent had a speech/language impairment; 32 percent had a specific learning disability; 10 percent had other health impairments, 8 percent had autism, and 4 percent had another disability. The large percentage of students with speech/language impairments is most likely due to the influx of young children who enrolled in the district for the first time.

Exhibit 2i. Disabilities of Students Who Qualified for IEPs



AREAS OF STRENGTH

The following describes areas of strength in the district's identification of students with disabilities.

- ***District and State Disability Rates.*** SCUSD's 13.9 percent special education rate is somewhat higher than the surveyed district's 13.1 percent rate and the national rate of 12.9 percent, but is lower than the state's 15.2 percentage. The district's students are identified as having a particular disability at proportions similar to state levels.
- ***Proportionate Ratio/Ethnic Risk for Special Education.*** Data shows that students from all racial/ethnic groups are proportionately identified as needing special education.
- ***Progress in Significant Disproportionality for Emotional Disturbance Category.*** Using a variety of strategies, including expanding behavioral support services and implementing social/emotional learning, the district effectively addressed the state's 2014-15 finding that African American students were categorized as emotionally disturbed at significantly disproportionate rates. We note, however, that these students continue to be three times more likely than others to be in this category of disability. Although the state does not currently use a risk ratio to measure significant disproportionality, a new U.S. Department of Education regulation requires all states to use this measure by 2018-19.
- ***Change in Evaluation Process.*** The district reports that psychologists will be trained to evaluate⁴⁸ students suspected of having any disability, including emotional disturbance and autism, so that the Educationally Related Mental Health Services (ERMHS) teams will have more time to provide technical assistance and support.
- ***English Learners.*** ELLs are 1.48 times more likely than non-ELLs to receive special education. This rate is not considered to be significantly disproportionate.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

The following areas are opportunities for improvements in the district's identification of students with disabilities.

- ***Preschool and Kindergarten Disparate Data.*** Unlike other districts with which the Council's team has worked, SCUSD enrolls many more children with IEPs in pre-K (636) than in kindergarten (370). Furthermore, 25 percent of pre-K children have autism, compared to 17 percent of kindergarteners. The reason for this disparity is not readily apparent, but it raises the question as to how the district works to ensure that referrals in pre-school programs are appropriate and are being monitored.
- ***Disability by Grade.*** The number and percentage of students with IEPs by grade decreases from 14 percent in the seventh grade to 12 percent in the eighth grade, where it remains somewhat consistent through the eleventh grade. The district indicated that these anomalies may be due to an enrollment bubble that is reported to CDE, but further review by the

⁴⁸ The special education department is considering a change in the assessment process from specialized teams to site psychologists being responsible for the full range of assessments. Current stakeholder input is being gathered to guide the department towards a decision for the 2017-2018 school year

Council would be necessary before the team could make an assessment.

- ***Significant Racial Disproportionality.*** Several racial/ethnic groups are approaching a rate of being twice as likely to be identified for a particular disability, and African American students have the highest risk ratio (1.86) for identification in the “other health impairment” category.
- ***Educationally Related Mental Health Services (ERMHS) Team Practices.*** Various concerns were raised about ERMHS team practices, including: serving a gate keeping function for students who may have an emotional disturbance or autism; the relationship between some ERMHS team members and school personnel; students’ access to timely evaluations; and school personnel access to ERMHS team expertise.
- ***English Learners.*** ELLs are 2.37 times more likely than non-ELLs to have an intellectual disability, and 2.12 times more likely to have a specific learning disability. However, the district has only one bilingual Spanish psychologist, and her caseload is not limited to ELLs who speak Spanish. The ELL Master Plan contains requirements for evaluating ELLs, for providing parents written information in their native language, and for providing translation services to parents. This guidance is not always consistent with information in the Special Education Procedural Handbook, which conforms to state requirements. Furthermore, there is a need for greater collaboration between central office ELL staff and psychologists and speech/language pathologists to better inform each other about how to evaluate and address the needs of ELLs requiring special education.
- ***Timely Evaluations.*** There is a wide disparity between the percentage of students evaluated and qualified to receive special education services to address only a speech/language disability, and those needing special education services based on other disability categories (91 percent and 76 percent, respectively). There was also a large difference between these two groups in the percentage of referred evaluations that were not completed (5 percent and 16 percent, respectively). The data did not show the extent to which the pending evaluations were timely.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. ***Special Education Referral, Assessment, and Eligibility.*** Improve consistency and appropriateness of referrals, assessments, and eligibility decisions for special education.
 - a. ***Data Review.*** With a multidisciplinary team of individuals inside and outside of the special education department, review Exhibits 2a through 2i and their associated analysis (along with other relevant data), and develop a hypothesis about--
 - Comparatively high number of students with IEPs and with autism in pre-K compared to kindergarten;
 - Pattern of students with IEPs by grade;
 - Likelihood that African American students have an other health impairment compared to other students with IEPs;
 - Likelihood that English learners have an intellectual disability and specific learning disability compared to non-ELLs;

- High percentage (91 percent) of students assessed for speech/language-only services qualify compared to other disabilities (76 percent) who qualify for services; and
 - High percentage (16 percent) of pending 2015-16 full evaluations compared to speech/language-only evaluations (5 percent).
- b. *Written Expectations.*** For any area that the multi-disciplinary team identifies as problematic, review current processes for referral, assessment, and eligibility, and amend those processes to provide more guidance. Ensure that the special education procedural manual and ELL master plan incorporate the additional guidance. Have both documents provide appropriate information regarding translation services for and written notices to parents who are ELL, and ensure that assessments are linguistically and culturally appropriate for ELL students. Specify that personnel who assess students should have access to sufficient and all current assessment tools.
- c. *Educationally Related Mental Health Services (ERMHS) Teams.*** With a representative group of special education department personnel and school-based personnel knowledgeable about the ERMHS process, review concerns discussed in this report and revise the process so that the team's expertise can be used more appropriately to support teaching and learning, and schools are more accountable for following written expectations.
- d. *Data Analysis and Reports.*** Develop user-friendly summary reports for the district's leadership showing data similar to and as appropriate in addition to Exhibits 2a through 2i. As appropriate, share data by area and by school. As part of this process, address the issues that made it difficult for the district to provide the Council team with data aligned with the state's performance plan indicators for special education (i.e., special/residential schools and suspensions), and supplement the data with these reports. Consider how these data are handled and reviewed by district leadership on a regular basis.
- e. *Differentiated Professional Learning.*** Plan for and provide all relevant district stakeholders with the professional learning they need to implement the recommendations in this section. As part of this process, have special education and ELL department personnel collaborate on the referral and assessment needs of ELL students. (Coordinate this activity with Recommendation 1f.)
- f. *Monitoring and Accountability.*** Develop a process for ongoing monitoring of expected referral, evaluation, and eligibility practices. Rather than using a traditional record-review model, review files so that school-based personnel are aware of issues and problems, and will better understand the need for follow-up action. Enable staff to observe best practices shown by others and receive coaching that will improve their knowledge and skills. (Coordinate this activity with Recommendation 1g.)

III. Teaching and Learning for Students with Disabilities

USDE has moved from a compliance-only posture towards special education to a Results-Driven Accountability (RDA) model. This change is based on data showing that the educational outcomes of America's children and youth with disabilities have not improved as expected, despite significant federal efforts to close achievement gaps. The accountability system that existed prior to the new one placed substantial emphasis on procedural compliance, but it often did not consider how requirements affected the learning outcomes of students.⁴⁹

The USDE's Office of Special Education Programs' (OSEP) vision for RDA was for all accountability components to be aligned to supporting states in improving results for students with disabilities. This approach is consistent with IDEA, which requires that the primary focus of the federal program be on improving educational results and functional outcomes for students with disabilities, along with meeting IDEA requirements. RDA fulfills these requirements by focusing both on outcomes for students with disabilities and on the compliance portions of the law.⁵⁰

According to its July 1, 2016 State Performance Plan (SPP)/Annual Performance Report (APR), the state is implementing ED's Results Driven Accountability (RDA) priorities by using all indicators (compliance and performance) to make compliance determinations. California's newly required State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) focuses on the proficiency rates of students with disabilities who are eligible for free and reduced priced meals, foster youth, or English learners.

This section of the report is devoted to results and how SCUSD is supporting teaching and learning for students with IEPs, including young children ages three to five years. This section has the following subsections:

- Education of Young Children Ages Three to Five Years
- Student Achievement on NAEP and Statewide Assessments
- Educational Settings for Students with Disabilities
- Suspension and Expulsion Rates
- Academic Instruction, Interventions, and Supports
- Instruction for Students in SDC Programs
- Professional Learning

Education of Young Children Ages Three to Five Years

This subsection addresses academic outcomes for children with IEPs, their educational settings, and feedback from focus group participants.

⁴⁹ April 5, 2012, RDA Summary, U.S. Department of Education at www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/osep/rda-summary.doc.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

Achievement Outcomes for Children with IEPs (Three to Five Years of Age)

One of the indicators in California's SPP relates to the achievement of young children with disabilities in three areas: appropriate behavior, acquisition and use of knowledge and skills, and positive social/emotional skills. In each of these three areas, calculations are made on the percentage of children in the following two areas: (1) children who entered an early childhood program below developmental expectations for their age but who have substantially increased developmentally by age six when they exit a program, and (2) children functioning within expectations by age six or have attained those expectations by the time they exit the program.

For SCUSD students substantially improving their behavior and social/emotional skills and acquiring and using knowledge/skills, the district ranged between 3.3 and 10.7 percentage points below state targets. The district's gap with state targets was larger for students exiting with skills within age expectations, with percentage point differences ranging between 11.9 and 23.4.

Summarized below are the district's performance ratings in three categories for each of the two areas (substantially increased skills and functioning within standards). The percentages of children meeting standards and each of the state's targets are shown in Exhibit 3a.⁵¹

Substantially Increased Skills

For SCUSD children who entered an early childhood program below developmental expectations for their age but who substantially increased developmentally by age six when they exited the program, the following statistics compare the 2014-15 rates of SCUSD children meeting standards to state targets based on the state's SPP report.

- ***Appropriate Behavior to Meet Needs.*** 64.2 percent met standards, which was 8.5 percentage points below the state's target.
- ***Acquisition/Use of Knowledge/Skills.*** 66.7 percent met standards, which was 3.3 percentage points below the state's target.
- ***Positive Social/Emotional Skills.*** 64.3 percent met standards, which was 10.7 percentage points below the state's target.

Functioning Within Age Expectations

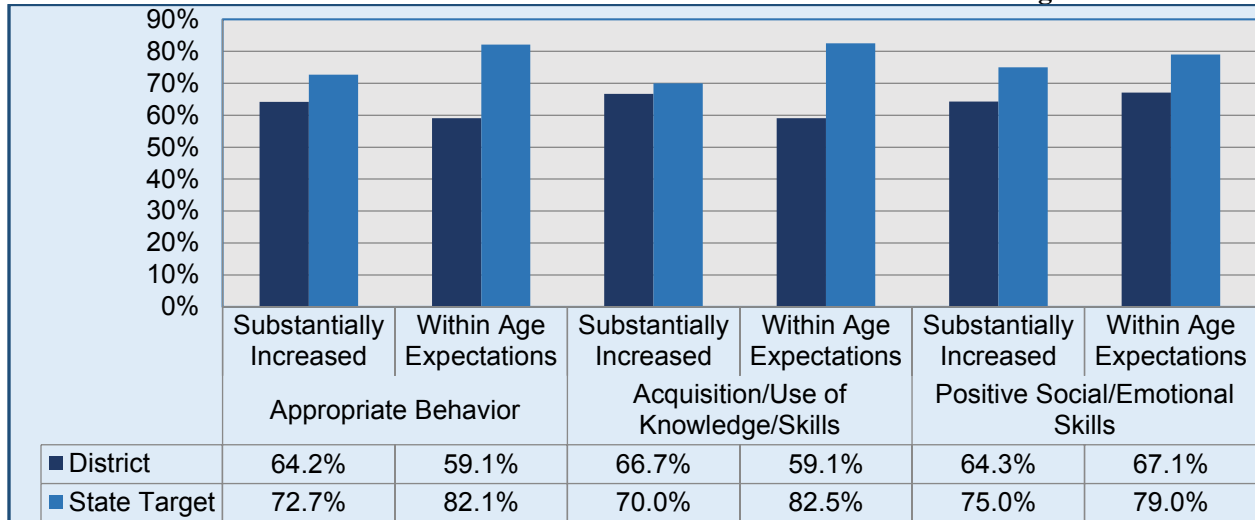
For children who were functioning within expectations by six years of age or had attained those expectations by the time they exited the program, the following data compare the percentages of children in Sacramento meeting the standards in 2014-15 to state performance target percentages for that year. (See Exhibit 3a.)

- ***Appropriate Behavior to Meet Needs.*** 59.1 percent met standards, which was 23.0 percentage points below the state target.
- ***Acquisition/Use of Knowledge/Skills.*** 59.1 percent met standards, which was 23.4 percentage points below the state target.

⁵¹ Retrieved from <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/ds/documents/indrptlea1415s.pdf>.

- **Positive Social/Emotional Skills.** 67.1 percent met standards, which was 11.9 percentage points below the state target.

Exhibit 3a. 2014-15 Outcomes for District/State Children Three to Five Years of Age with IEPs



Educational Settings of Young Children Three to Five Years of Age

...[M]ost 3- to 5-year-olds with disabilities learn best when they attend preschools alongside their age-mates without disabilities to the greatest extent possible. These settings provide both language and behavioral models that assist in children’s development and help all children learn to be productively engaged with diverse peers.⁵²

Studies have shown that when children with disabilities are included in the regular classroom setting, they demonstrate higher levels of social play, are more likely to initiate activities, and show substantial gains in key skills—cognitive skills, motor skills, and self-help skills. Participating in activities with typically developing peers allows children with disabilities to learn through modeling, and this learning helps them prepare for the real world. Researchers have found that typically developing children in inclusive classrooms are better able to accept differences and are more likely to see their classmates achieving despite their disabilities. They are also more aware of the needs of others.⁵³

The importance of inclusive education is underscored by a federal requirement, which requires that the extent to which young children (three to five years of age) receive the majority of their services in regular early childhood programs, i.e., inclusively or in separate settings, be included as a state performance-plan indicator.

⁵² California’s Statewide Task Force on Special Education, *One System: Reforming Education to Serve ALL Students*, March 2015, retrieved from <http://www.smcoe.org/assets/files/about-smcoe/superintendents-office/statewide-special-education-task-force/Task%20Force%20Report%205.18.15.pdf>.

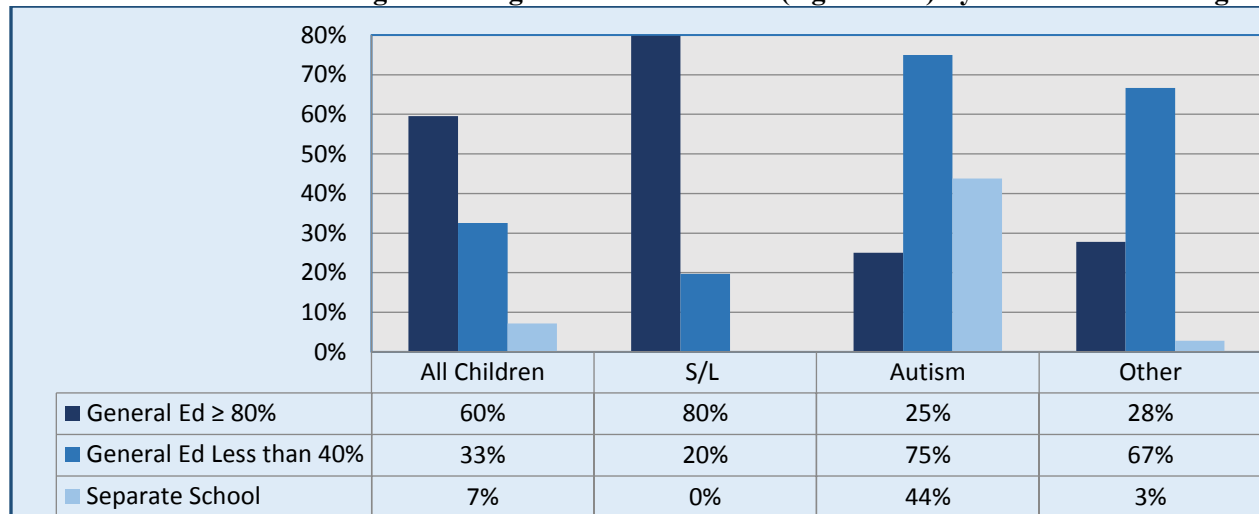
⁵³ Ronnie W. Jeter, *The Benefits of Inclusion in Early Childhood Programs* at <http://www.turben.com/article/83/274/The-Benefits-of-Inclusion-in-Early-Childhood-Programs>

District Educational Setting Rates

Exhibit 3b shows 2015-16 SCUSD percentages of three- to five-year-old children with disabilities who were educated in various educational settings. One educational setting, in general education less than 80 percent to 40 percent of the time, was not included because the overall figure was only one percent.

- **General Education At Least 80 Percent of the Time.** Overall, 60 percent of all children were educated inclusively with their typical peers. The 80 percent of all children with speech/language impairments educated in this setting was the highest figure for all disability areas.
- **General Education Less Than 40 Percent of the Time.** Some 33 percent of all children were educated most of the day in separate classes apart from their typical peers. By comparison, 75 percent of all students with autism and 67 percent of students representing seven different disability areas were educated in this setting.
- **Separate Schools.** Some 7 percent of all children were educated in a separate school. This figure was much higher (44 percent) for students with autism.

Exhibit 3b. 2015-16 Percentage of Young Children with IEPs (Ages 3 to 5) by Educational Setting



Student Achievement on the NAEP and Statewide Assessments for Grades 3-12

Beginning in 2015, USDE developed a determination rating based on the results driven accountability framework described earlier. Two matrices were used for this purpose, with 50 percent of the ratings based on results and 50 percent based on compliance.⁵⁴ The results component are calculated using the following indicators:

- Fourth/eighth graders participating in regular statewide assessments for reading and math
- Fourth/eighth graders scoring at or above basic in reading and math on the National

⁵⁴ For a full explanation of ED’s methodology, see How the Department Made Determinations under Section 616(d) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in 2015: Part B <http://www2.ed.gov/fund/data/report/idea/partbspap/2015/2015-part-b-how-determinations-made.pdf>

Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)

- Fourth/eighth graders included in NAEP testing for reading and math
- Students exiting school by graduating with a regular high school diploma
- Students exiting school by dropping out

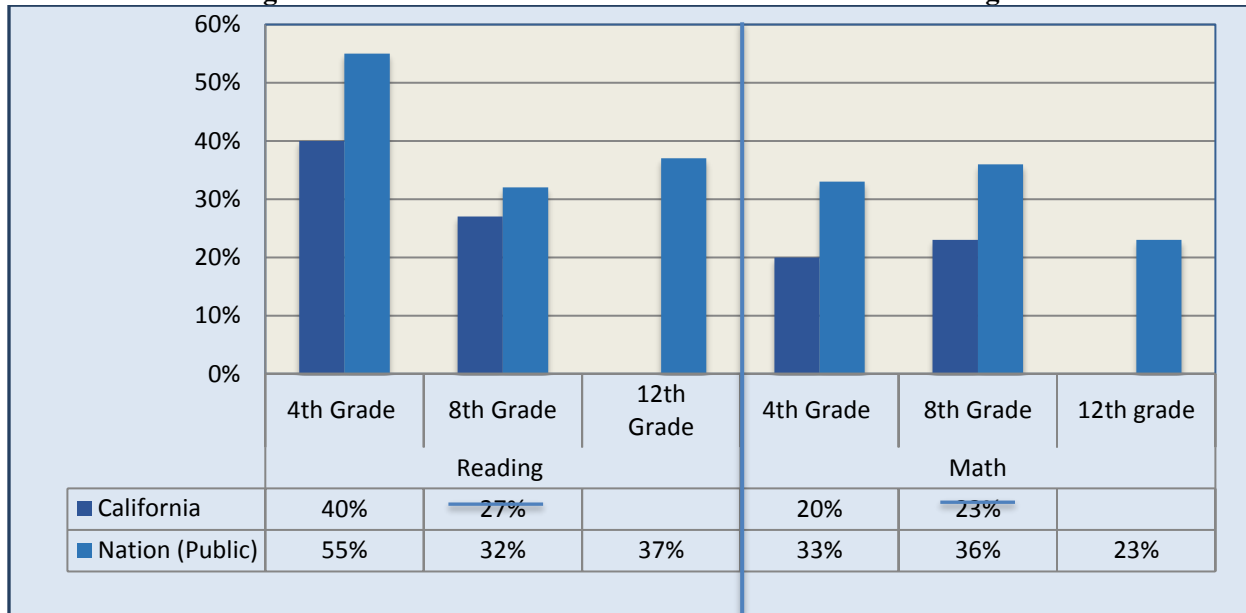
The information in this subsection discusses the achievement of California students on NAEP, as well as the performance of SCUSD students with disabilities on statewide assessments. In addition, graduation and dropout rates are assessed.

NAEP Achievement Rates for Fourth, Eighth, and Twelfth Grade Students with IEPs

In partnership with the National Assessment Governing Board and the Council of the Great City Schools, the Trial Urban District Assessment (TUDA) was created in 2002 to support improvements in student achievement in the nation’s large urban districts. In 2015, 21 urban school districts voluntarily participated in TUDA and are able to track the achievement of their students by subgroup on a single comparable assessment. SCUSD does not participate in TUDA, so district achievement rates on NAEP are not available, but comparing state and national performance for students with disabilities provides a useful benchmark for SCUSD.⁵⁵

Exhibit 3c compares national and California data for students with disabilities who scored at or above basic levels on NAEP in reading and in math at grades four and eight. State data are not yet available for grade 12.

Exhibit 3c. Percentage of Students with IEPs at Basic/Above on NAEP Reading and Math



In general, achievement rates on NAEP were lower in California among fourth graders in reading than nationwide.

⁵⁵ The Nation's Report Card, retrieved from <http://www.nationsreportcard.gov/>.

Reading. In California, the percentage of students with disabilities scoring at levels basic/above in reading was 15 percentage points below the national average in fourth grade and 5 percentage points below in eighth grade.

- **4th Grade.** The percentage scoring basic/above was 40 percent at the state level and 55 percent at the national level.
- **8th Grade.** The percentage scoring basic/above was 27 percent at the state level and 32 percent at the national level.
- **12th Grade.** At the national level, 37 percent of students with disabilities scored at the basic/above level.

Math. In California, the percentages of students with disabilities scoring at basic/above levels in both fourth and eighth grades were 13 percentage points below the nation’s public school peers.

- **4th Grade.** In the state, 20 percent of students with disabilities scored at basic/above levels; the national percentage was 33 percent.
- **8th Grade.** In the state, 23 percent of students with disabilities scored at basic/above levels; the national percentage was 36 percent.
- **12th Grade.** Only 23 percent of the nation’s students scored at the basic/above level.

Statewide Assessments⁵⁶

The California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) System is based on the Smarter Balanced Assessments. Optional interim assessments and a digital library with tools and practices are available to help teachers use formative assessments to improve teaching and learning in all grades.

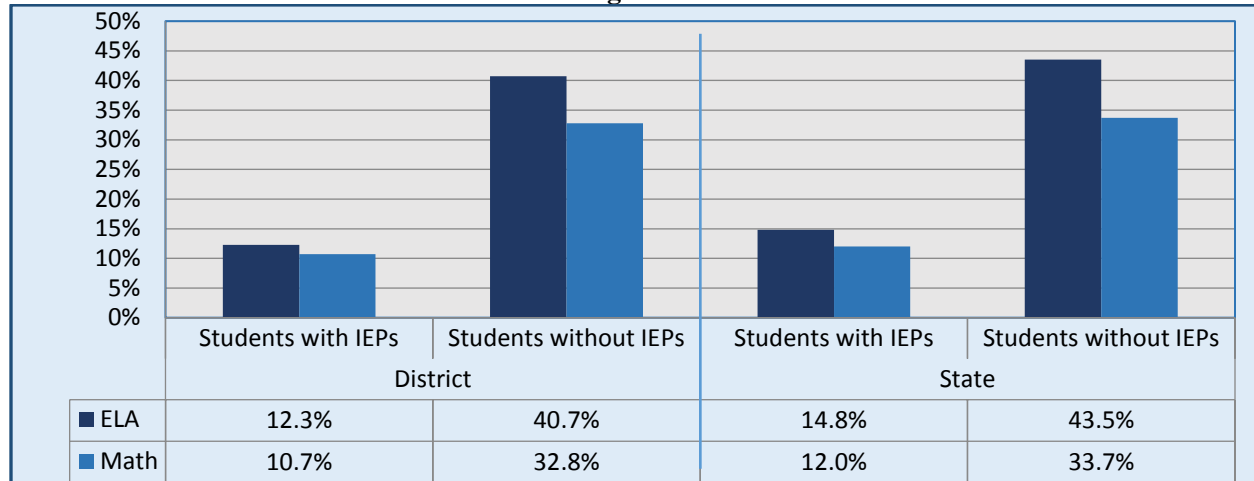
Statewide English Language Arts (ELA) and Math Assessments

Exhibit 3d shows district and state percentages of students with and without disabilities who scored proficient on statewide ELA and math assessments in 2014-15. In both subject areas, a larger percentage of California students were proficient than were district students with and without IEPs. The achievement gaps were greater in ELA than math.

- **English Language Arts.** Some 12.3 percent of the district’s students with IEPs were proficient in ELA, which was 2.5 percentage points below the state figure. There was a 28.4 percentage point achievement gap between the district’s students with and without IEPs. The state gap was slightly higher (28.7 percentage points).
- **Math.** A smaller 10.7 percent of the district’s students with IEPs were proficient in math, which was 1.3 percentage points below the state figure. Some 22.1 percentage points separated the achievement of students with and without IEPs; the state gap was slightly smaller (21.7 percentage points).

⁵⁶ Achievement data was not provided by SCUSD. Information for this section was retrieved from the CDE website. The district’s data was retrieved from <http://ayp.cde.ca.gov/reports/Acnt2015/2015APRDstAYPReport.aspx?cYear=&allCds=3467439&cChoice=AYP14b> and the state data was retrieved from <http://ayp.cde.ca.gov/reports/acnt2015/2015APRStAYPReport.aspx>.

Exhibit 3d. ELA and Math: Proficient Percentages of State/District Students with/ without IEPs



Educational Settings for Students with Disabilities

Research has consistently shown a positive relationship between effective and inclusive instruction and better outcomes for students with disabilities, including higher academic performance, higher likelihood of employment, higher participation rates in postsecondary education, and greater integration into the community. The 10-year National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS 2) described the characteristics, experiences, and outcomes of a nationally representative sample of more than 11,000 youth ages 13 through 16 who were receiving special education services in grade seven or above when the study began in 2001. The study found that, while more time spent in general education classrooms was associated with lower *grades* for students with disabilities compared to their non-disabled peers, students who spent more time in general settings were closer to grade level on standardized math and language *tests* than were students with disabilities who spent more time in separate settings.⁵⁷ Research also shows that including students with a range of disabilities in general education classes does not affect the achievement of their non-disabled peers.⁵⁸

Similar results were found in a comprehensive study of school districts in Massachusetts. Students with disabilities who were in full-inclusion settings (spending 80 percent or more of the school day in general education classrooms) appeared to outperform similar students who were not included to the same extent in general education classrooms with their non-disabled peers. On average, these students earned higher scores on the statewide assessment (MCAS), graduated high school at higher rates, and were more likely to remain in their local school districts longer than students who were educated in substantially separate placements (spending less than 40

⁵⁷ Review of Special Education in the Houston Independent School District, Thomas Hehir & Associates Boston, Massachusetts, page 25, retrieved at http://www.houstonisd.org/cms/lib2/TX01001591/Centricity/Domain/7946/HISD__Special_Education_Report_2011_Final.pdf.

⁵⁸ See A. Kalamouka, P. Farrell, A. Dyson, & I. Kaplan. (2007, December). The impact of placing pupils with special educational needs in mainstream schools on the achievement of their peers. *Educational Research*, 49(4), 365–382.

percent of the day in a general education classroom). These findings were consistent across the elementary, middle, and high school years, as well as across subject areas.⁵⁹

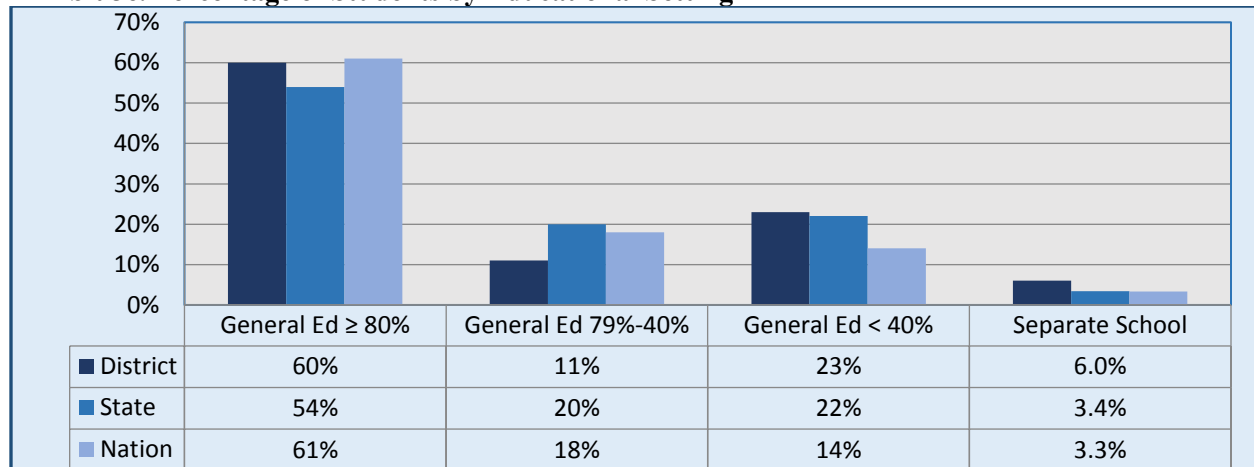
The SPP tracks students educated in one of three educational settings and sets targets for each: (1) time in general education 80 percent or more of the day, (2) time in general education less than 40 percent of the day, i.e., in separate classes, or (3) time in separate schools. States are expected to collect data for a fourth educational setting (in general education between 79 percent and 40 percent of the time), but the SPP indicator does not monitor this setting.

The information below describes SCUSD’s reporting of these data, and provides data for district educational setting rates compared to state and national averages, rates by grade, by race/ethnicity, and by ELL status.

Comparison of Rates for District, State, and Nation

Data in Exhibit 3e show the composition of SCUSD’s students with disabilities in the four educational settings, which are based on indicators established by the USDOE. Data compare SCUSD with California and national rates.⁶⁰

Exhibit 3e. Percentage of Students by Educational Setting



- ***In General Education at Least 80 Percent of the Time.*** The district’s 60 percent rate for students in this inclusive setting was 6 percentage points higher than the state’s rate and slightly below (1 percentage point) the nation’s rate.
- ***In General Education Between 40 and 79 percent of the Time.*** The district’s 11 percent rate for this setting was lower than state and national rates (9 points and 7 points lower, respectively).
- ***In General Education Less than 40 Percent of the Time.*** Generally considered to be a self-

⁵⁹ Thomas Hehir & Associates (2014, August) Review of Special Education in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts: A Synthesis Report, Boston, Massachusetts, retrieved at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/hehir/2014-09synthesis.pdf>

⁶⁰ The data are 2015-16 school year numbers that the district provided to the Council team, 2012-13 state and national data was retrieved from <http://www2.ed.gov/fund/data/report/idea/partbspap/2013/tn-acc-stateprofile-11-12.pdf>.

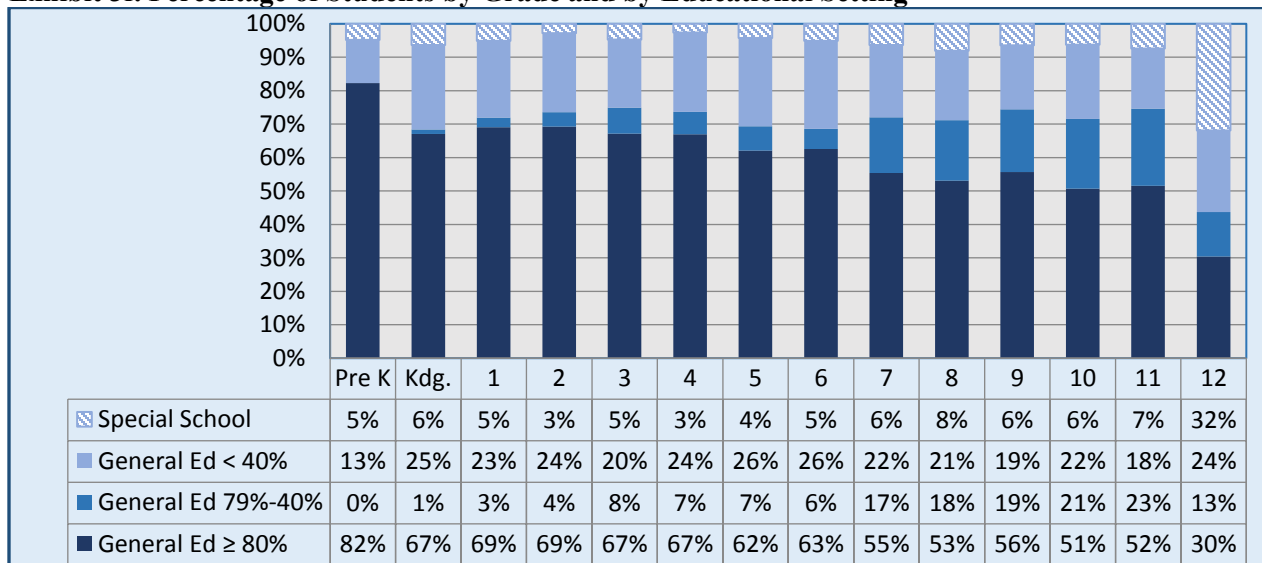
contained special education class setting, the district’s 23 percent rate was higher than state and national rates (1 point and 9 points lower, respectively).

- **Separate Schools.** The district’s 6.0 percent of students with disabilities who attended separate schools, including residential schools (both in and out of the district) was 2.6 percentage points higher than the state level and 2.7 percentage points higher than the national level.

Educational Setting Rates by Grade

As shown by Exhibit 3f, as the grades progress, larger percentages of district students are educated in separate schools, while smaller percentages of students are educated inclusively and in self-contained placements (less than 40 percent in general education).

Exhibit 3f. Percentage of Students by Grade and by Educational Setting



- **In General Education at Least 80 Percent of the Time.** Between kindergarten and fifth grade, percentages of students with IEPs in this setting ranged from 67 percent to 62 percent, but fell in sixth (63 percent), seventh (55 percent), and eighth grades (53 percent). At the high school level, the figures ranged between 56 percent (ninth grade) to 52 percent (eleventh grade).
- **In General Education Between 40 and 79 percent of the Time.** Between kindergarten and sixth grade, percentages ranged from 1 percent (kindergarten) to 8 percent (third grade). The rates increased in seventh (17 percent) and eighth grade (18 percent), and again in high school, from ninth grade (19 percent) through eleventh grade (23 percent).
- **In General Education Less than 40 Percent of the Time.** At the elementary level, the percentages for this self-contained setting ranged between 20 percent (third grade) and 26 percent (sixth grade). The rates decreased steadily beginning at seventh grade (22 percent) through eleventh grade (23 percent) as they increased in two other educational settings (general education between 79 percent and 40 percent, and special schools).
- **Separate Schools.** The percentages of students with disabilities in this most restrictive setting

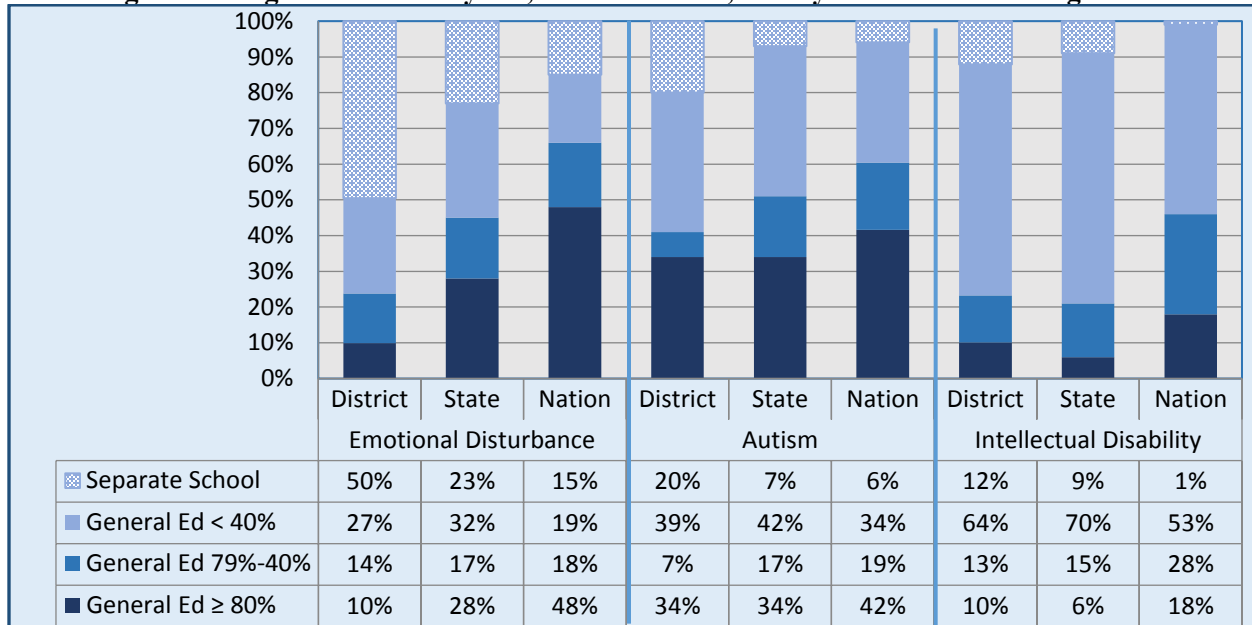
fluctuated with no apparent pattern with a low of 3 percent (second and fourth grades) and high of 8 percent (eighth grade). The 32 percent rate for twelfth graders is related to students who remain in school past the age of 18 (when most students graduate) to receive postsecondary transition services and activities.

Educational Setting Rates by Most Common Disability Areas

Exhibit 3g and 3h show the percentages of students in SCUSD, the nation, and the state by six major disability areas and by educational setting. In every category of disability, the district educates students in more restrictive environments at higher rates than the nation, and, in most areas, higher than the state.

Emotional Disturbance, Autism, and Intellectual Disabilities

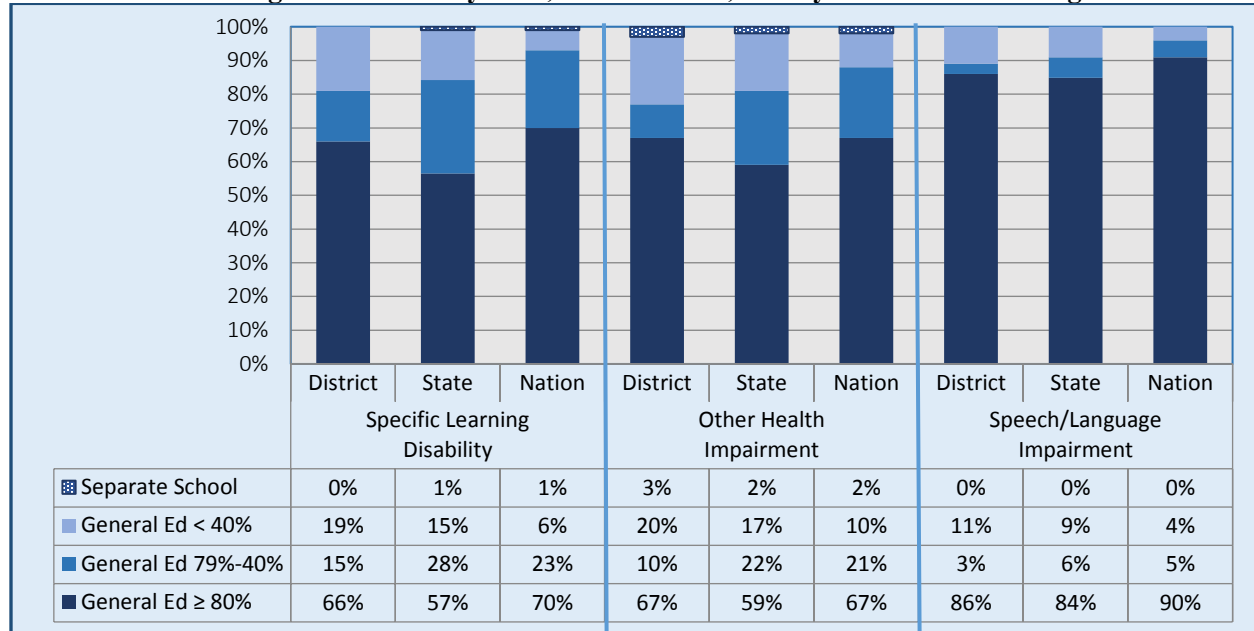
Exhibit 3g. Percentage of Students by ED, Autism and ID, and by Educational Setting



- **ED.** In the area of emotional disturbance, the district’s figure of 50 percent of students educated in separate schools was 35 percentage points higher than the nation’s and 27 points higher than the state’s. Further, for students educated in general education at least 80 percent of the time, the district’s figure of 10 percent was lower than the nation’s 48 percent and the state’s 28 percent.
- **Autism.** In the area of autism, the district’s figure of 20 percent of students educated in separate schools was 14 percentage points higher than the nation’s and 13 points higher than the state’s.
- **ID.** In the area of intellectual disability, the district’s figure of 64 percent of students in self-contained settings less than 40 percent of the time was 11 percentage points higher than the nation’s but seven points lower than the state’s. The district’s figure of 12 percent of ID students educated in separate schools was 11 percentage points higher than the nation’s and three points higher than the state’s.

Specific Learning Disability, Other Health Impairment, and Speech/Language Impairment

Exhibit 3h. Percentage of Students by SLD, OHI and SLI, and by Educational Setting

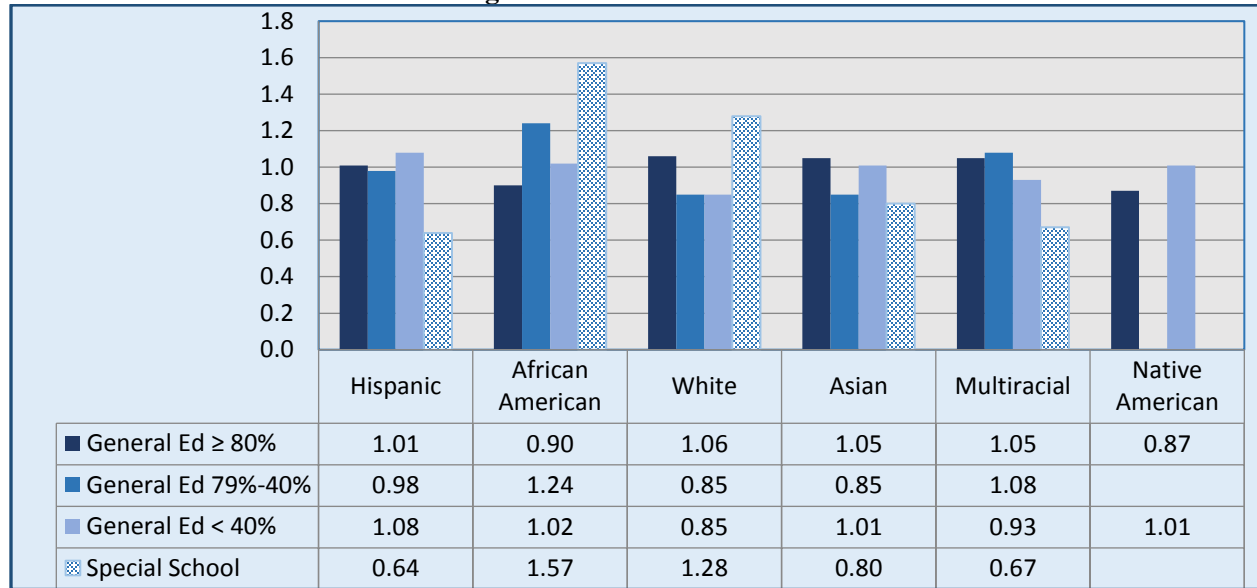


- **SLD.** Nineteen percent of district students with a specific learning disability were educated in general education settings less than 40% of the time—13 percentage points higher than the nation’s and 4 points higher than the state’s.
- **OHI.** Twenty percent of district students with other health impairments were educated in general education settings less than 40% of the time—10 percentage points higher than the nation’s and 3 points higher than the state’s. For separate schools, the district’s 3 percent figure is higher than the nation and state, both at 2 percent.
- **SLI.** Eleven percent of district students with a speech/language impairment were educated in general education settings less than 40% of the time—7 percentage points higher than the nation’s and 2 points higher than the state’s.

Educational Setting Rates by Race/Ethnicity

Using a risk ratio, Exhibit 3i shows the likelihood that students from each racial/ethnic group will be educated in the designated educational settings compared to students in all other racial/ethnic groups. A risk ratio of “1” reflects no risk. Higher numbers reflect greater risk or likelihood of placement. These data show that the risk for students from any racial/ethnic group of being placed in a specific educational setting was close to “2,” a level that should raise concerns. The highest area of risk was for African American students, who were 1.57 times more likely than other students to be educated in separate schools.

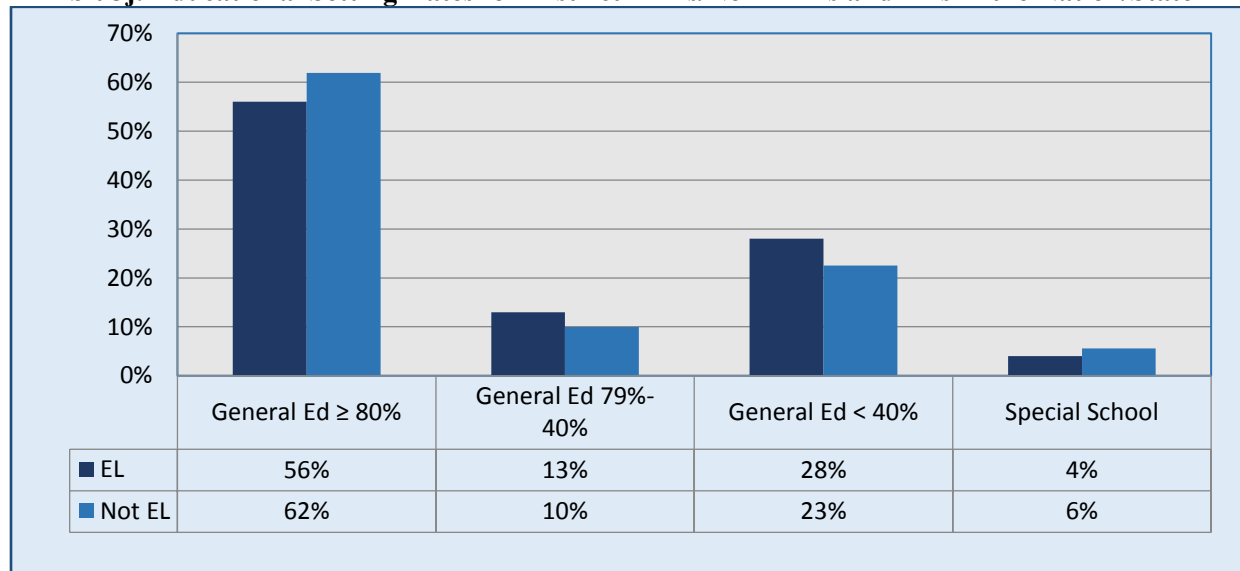
Exhibit 3i. SCUSD Educational Setting Risk Ratios



Educational Setting Rates for ELLs

Except for the separate school setting, SCUSD students who were English learners were educated in more restrictive settings more frequently than were students who were not ELLs. (See Exhibit 3j.) The differences, however, were not significant. Some 56 percent of ELLs with IEPs, compared to 62 percent of non-ELLs, were educated in *least* restrictive settings (general education at least 80 percent of the time), and 4 percent of ELLs compared to 6 percent of non-ELs were educated in the *most* restrictive setting (special schools). A larger percent of ELLs (28 percent), compared to non-ELLs (23 percent), were educated in general education less than 40 percent of the time.

Exhibit 3j. Educational Setting Rates for District ELLs/Non-ELLs and ELs in the Nation/State



Suspension and Expulsion Rates

Another critical issue that affects the achievement of students with disabilities is the extent to which they are suspended. Indicator 4 of the state performance plan measures out-of-suspensions of more than 10 days for students with and without IEPs, as well as suspensions for students with IEPs by race/ethnicity. Under the newly released USDOE guidelines, significant disproportionality is to be measured (using a risk ratio and alternate risk ratio for small cell numbers) for:

- Out of school suspensions (OSS) of 1-10 days, and more than 10 days;
- In-school suspensions (ISS) of 1-10 days, and more than 10 days;
- Removals to an interim alternative education setting; and
- Removals by a hearing officer.

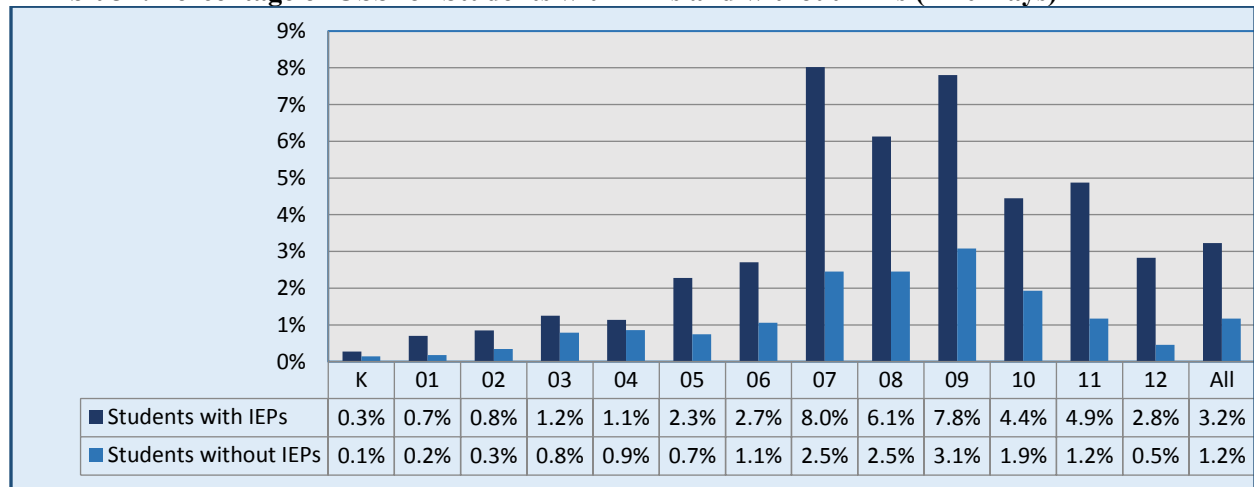
Out-of-School Suspensions

The information below describes the district’s OSSs by grade and by race/ethnicity for students with and without IEPs for periods of 1-10 days and more than 10 days. In every category, students with IEPs were suspended at rates that were higher than for students without IEPs, and the rates increased significantly at seventh grade. Also, African American students with IEPs had suspension rates and risks of suspension far higher than other students with IEPs.

OSSs for 1-10 Days by Grade

Exhibit 3k shows the percentage of students with and without IEPs receiving an out-of-school suspension (OSS) for 1 to 10 days by grade. Overall, 3.2 percent of students with IEPs were suspended, compared to 1.2 percent of students without IEPs. Students with IEPs were 2.5 times more likely than those without IEPs to be suspended. In each grade, students with IEPs were suspended at rates that were much higher than students without IEPs. The suspension rates for both sets of students increased significantly beginning at the seventh grade, when 8.0 percent (from 2.7 percent) of students with IEPs were suspended, compared to 2.5 percent (from 1.1 percent) of those without IEPs.

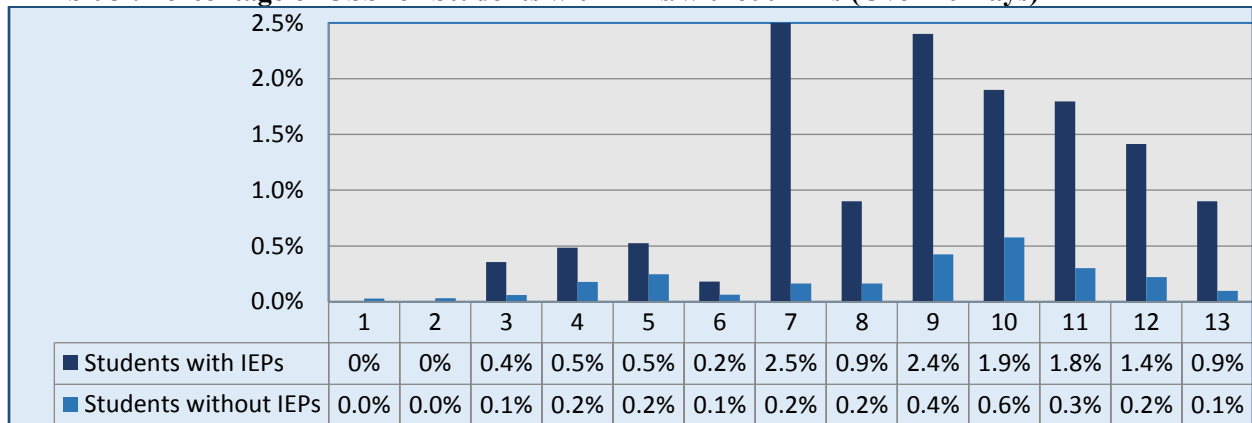
Exhibit 3k. Percentage of OSS for Students with IEPs and without IEPs (1-10 Days)



OSSs for More than 10 Days by Grade

As shown on Exhibit 3l, OSSs of more than 10 days were received by 0.9 percent of all students with IEPs, compared to 0.1 percent of students without IEPs, meaning that students with IEPs were 5.05 times more likely than those without IEPs to be suspended for this period of time. The numbers of suspensions escalated for students with IEPs beginning in the seventh grade, when the percentage increased to 2.5 percent (from 0.2 percent) of students with IEPs receiving OSSs, while the figure for those without IEPs only increased to 0.2 percent (from 0.1 percent).

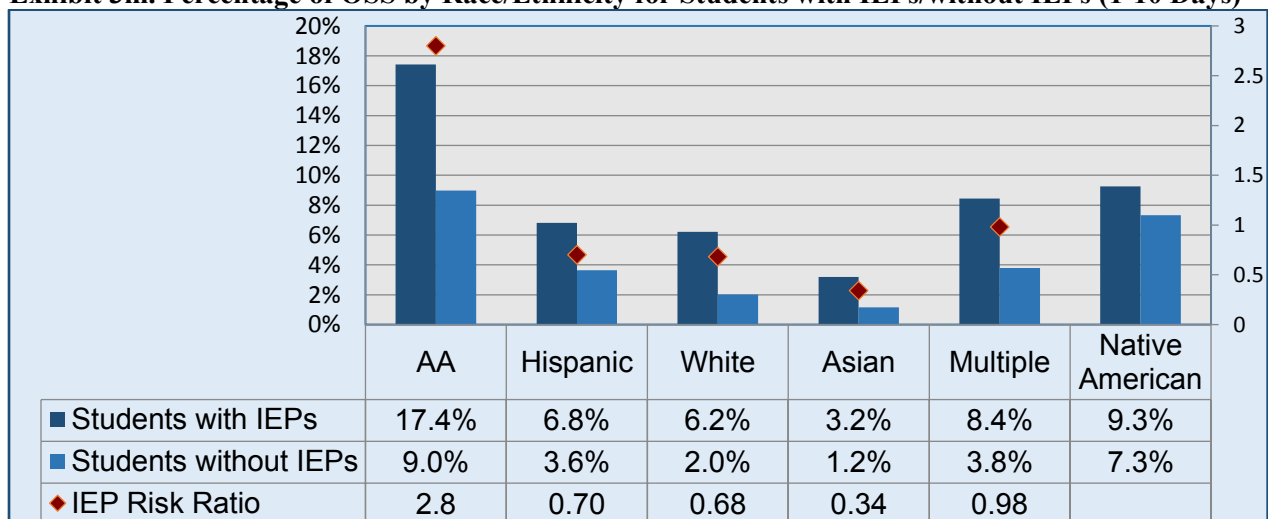
Exhibit 3l. Percentage of OSS for Students with IEPs/without IEPs (Over 10 Days)



OSSs for 1-10 Days by Race/Ethnicity

Exhibit 3m shows that 17.4 percent of African American students with IEPs received an OSS for 1-10 days, compared to 9.0 percent of African American students without IEPs. African American students with IEPs were 2.8 times more likely than all other students with IEPs to receive an OSS. This disparity was much higher than for any other racial/ethnic group.⁶¹

Exhibit 3m. Percentage of OSS by Race/Ethnicity for Students with IEPs/without IEPs (1-10 Days)



⁶¹ A risk ratio was not calculated for the Native American group because the numbers were too small.

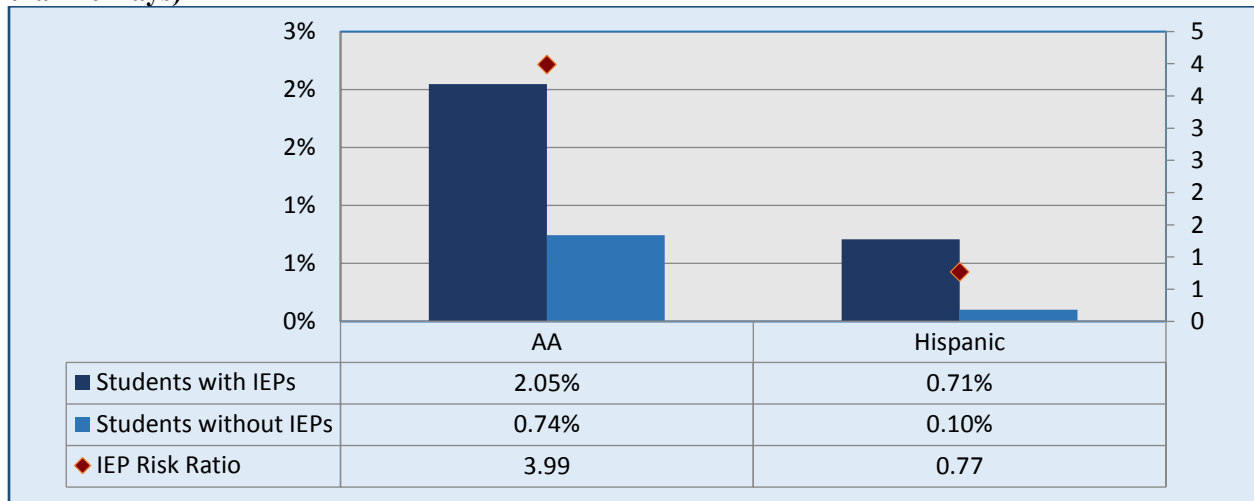
OSSs for More than 10 Days by Race/Ethnicity

In 2014-15, SCUSD was not found by the California Department of Education to have disproportionately high suspension rates based on race or ethnicity. Under the California state performance plan, school districts have disproportionate suspensions when students (three through 21 years of age) from a given racial or ethnic group are suspended out-of-school for more than 10 days at a rate that is higher than the state’s for all students.

A denominator of at least 20 and numerator of at least two are required to perform this calculation for a district. According to the state’s 2014-15 Special Education Annual Performance Report, the statewide average for suspensions for more than 10 days was 2.43 percent.

As shown by Exhibit 3n, which is based on data provided by SCUSD, 2.05 percent of African American students with IEPs and 0.71 percent of Hispanic students with IEPs were suspended for more than 10 days.⁶² African American students with IEPs were 3.99 times more likely to receive an OSS for this period of time, compared to all other students with IEPs. This large risk ratio is large and disconcerting.

Exhibit 3n. Percentage of OSS and Risk Ratios for African American and Hispanic Students (More than 10 Days)



In School Suspensions

The ISS patterns by grade and race/ethnicity mirror the OSS patterns described above.

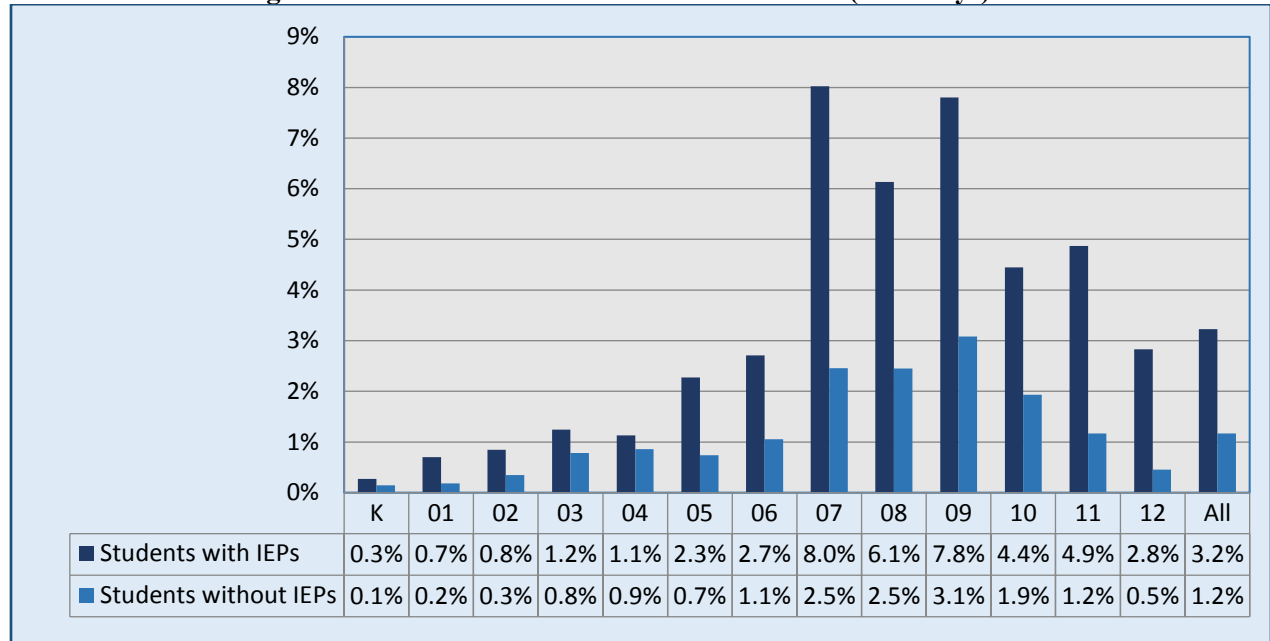
ISSs for 1-10 Days by Grade

Exhibit 3o shows that 3.2 percent of all students with IEPs received ISSs for 1-10 days, compared to 1.2 percent of students without IEPs. Students with IEPs were 2.76 times more likely than those without IEPs to receive an ISS. At seventh grade, the percentage of ISSs increases significantly, from 2.7 percent to 8.0 percent of students with IEPs suspended for 1-10 days. The percentage of students without IEPs receiving an ISS increased from 1.1 percent to 2.5

⁶² The numbers of students from other racial/ethnic groups did not meet the minimum numbers necessary to report.

percent. The pattern was similar to that of OSSs for both groups of students reported above. Only one student with an IEP received an ISS for more than 10 days.

Exhibit 3o. Percentage of ISS for Students with IEPs/without IEPs (1-10 Days)



Collective Bargaining Agreement Provision on Safety Conditions

Article 11 of the SCTA and SCUSD Collective Bargaining Agreement has a provision that states, “[b]ehavior which is inimical to a proper and positive learning environment shall be cause for a removal from a classroom.” In these circumstances, the teacher must notify the administrator/designated to provide for the student’s continuous supervision. (11.1.1) Given the proportionately larger percentages of in-school and out-of-school suspensions received by students with IEPs, including OSSs of more than 10 days, the application of this provision merits scrutiny. Further, as applied to students with disabilities, there could be circumstances when an unconditional removal of a student would not be consistent with relevant IDEA procedures.

Academic Instruction, Intervention, and Supports

A fundamental goal of the common core state standards (CCSS) was to create a culture of high expectations for all students. In a statement on the application of the common core to students with disabilities, the CCSS website includes a statement that reinforces its inclusionary intent:

Students with disabilities ... must be challenged to excel within the general curriculum and be prepared for success in their post-school lives, including college and/or careers.” These common standards provide historic opportunity to

improve access to rigorous academic content standards for students with disabilities.⁶³

The statement emphasizes the supports and accommodations students with disabilities need in order to meet high academic standards and fully demonstrate their conceptual and procedural knowledge and skills in ELA (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) and mathematics. These supports and accommodations should ensure that students have full access to the common core's content and allow students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills. These expectations for students with disabilities include the following elements:

- ***Instruction and related services*** designed to meet the unique needs of students with disabilities and enable them to access the general education curriculum.
- ***Teachers and specialized instructional support personnel*** who are prepared and qualified to deliver high-quality, evidence-based, and individualized instruction and support.
- ***Instructional supports for learning*** that are based on the principles of universal design for learning (UDL), which foster student engagement by presenting information in multiple ways and allowing diverse avenues of action and expression.⁶⁴
- ***Instructional accommodations*** that reflect changes in materials (e.g., assistive technology) or procedures that do not change or dilute the standards but allow students to learn within the CCSS framework.

The general education curriculum refers to the full range of courses, activities, lessons, and materials routinely used by the general population of a school. Students with disabilities have access to this curriculum when they are actively engaged in learning the content and skills that are being taught to all students. To participate with success in the general curriculum, a student with a disability may need additional supports and services, such as instructional supports for learning, instructional accommodations, scaffolding, assistive technology, and services. Through a universal design for learning (UDL) approach, information is presented in multiple ways, allowing diverse avenues of learning and expression.⁶⁵

When special educators teach students from multiple grades in one self-contained class, it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, for them to focus on each grade's content standards with any depth or effectiveness. When schools are organized in an inclusive manner, they are better able to support students with various disabilities and enable them to attend the school they would otherwise attend if not disabled, that is, their home school. This model enables more students with disabilities to attend school in their community, supports a more natural proportion of

⁶³ Retrieved at <http://www.corestandards.org/assets/application-to-students-with-disabilities.pdf>.

⁶⁴ UDL is defined as “a scientifically valid framework for guiding educational practice that (a) provides flexibility in the ways information is presented, in the ways students respond or demonstrate knowledge and skills, and in the ways students are engaged; and (b) reduces barriers in instruction, provides appropriate accommodations, supports, and challenges, and maintains high achievement expectations for all students, including students with disabilities and students who are limited English proficient.” by Higher Education Opportunity Act (PL 110-135). See the National Center on Universal Design for Learning at <http://www.udlcenter.org/>.

⁶⁵ TDOE Special Education Framework 2014, retrieved from http://www.tennessee.gov/assets/entities/education/attachments/sped_framework_implementation_guide.pdf.

students with disabilities at each school, and reduces transportation time and costs. Still, general education instruction must be meaningful for students with disabilities, and their presence in the classroom, alone, is insufficient to make it so.

The March 2015 Statewide Task Force on Special Education reported achievement data for students with disabilities that was similar to the data reported earlier in this report for SCUSD. The Council's findings and recommendations are consistent with the Statewide Task Force recommendations. These proposals were designed for the majority of students who do not have significant intellectual disabilities and could be achieving at the same high standards as their general education peers. They also apply to students with significant intellectual disabilities who may achieve at higher rates than previously realized. Neither of these outcomes will occur, however, without appropriate services and supports. The outcomes are meant to increase the independence, quality of life, and employment opportunities and lifetime earnings for individuals with disabilities compared to their peers without disabilities, and to reduce the school-to-prison pipeline for these students.⁶⁶

Instead of opening a door to a brighter future, special education for many students is a dead end. Once identified as needing special services, particularly for learning disabilities, students rarely catch up to their peers. Those who do not require separate settings in order to succeed end up spending most of their instructional time apart from general education settings, where instruction is often academically richer and the social interactions more reflective of the world that students will inhabit as adults. Special education too often becomes a place student go, rather than a set of supports to help students succeed.⁶⁷

SCUSD's Movement toward More Inclusive Instruction

According to information provided by the district, there are six inclusive-practices schools in which students with IEPs were educated in general education classes. This initiative began about six years ago with a nationally known consultant but has not expanded due to fiscal restraints. However, district personnel have targeted 11 schools at which they want to expand co-teaching practices. Their goal is to modify the traditional resource program where students are removed from general education classes to receive instruction. Inclusive coaches are assigned to the combined 17 schools, which include the original six inclusive-practices schools and the additional 11 that are using a co-teaching model for some core curriculum classes. The coaches observe instruction, and provide feedback to teachers. Reportedly, the training has gone well; participants have enjoyed the opportunity to collaborate, and parents favor the service delivery.

There was a perception amongst some interviewees that SCUSD's version of inclusion was the same as "co-teaching."⁶⁸ This more exclusive co-teaching model negates other approaches that are effective, such as consultation/collaboration, and the grouping of students

⁶⁶ According to the California's Statewide Task Force on Special Education report, "Some researchers have found that upwards of 70 percent of juveniles who are arrested had been identified as needing special education services. This would mean the vast majority of adults in the burgeoning prison system were at one time students with disabilities." Page 4, retrieved from <http://www.smcoe.org/assets/files/about-smcoe/superintendents-office/statewide-special-education-task-force/Task%20Force%20Report%205.18.15.pdf>.

⁶⁷ *Id.*

⁶⁸ It should be noted that the district defines inclusive practices to be more than just "co-teaching."

(with and without IEPs) across classes for common tiered-intervention. Still, there does not appear to be a systemwide culture of inclusivity in the district that promotes services based on student needs. Instead, the district relies on a traditional special day class (SDC) structure for students with more significant needs.

Focus group participants provided additional feedback about the district's efforts in this area.

- ***Inclusive Practices Viewpoints.*** Some focus group members indicated that the district's inclusive-practices schools were doing well, provided excellent examples of effective inclusive practices, and wondered how the practice might be expanded and remain effective. Others expressed concern that the district does not have structures in place to ensure that the inclusive coaches are used effectively in their schools, and that their influence was limited when school leadership does not actively support their activities.
- ***Co-Teaching.*** There was a strong sense that in some schools co-teachers believed that their caseloads were too high to provide effective supports to their students. For example, two special educators reported that they teach students from kindergarten through sixth grades with conflicting co-teaching class schedules. While it was reported that the district's consultant did not recommend a single model for all schools, there were concerns that there was not a consistent use of the most effective co-teaching models.
- ***Student Outcomes.*** There was a perception that co-teaching had not improved student outcomes. There were no data⁶⁹ to compare the achievement of students with similar characteristics who had been taught with and without co-teaching, or data to determine the extent to which the instructional model was implemented with fidelity.
- ***Support for Students.*** There were also concerns that students from SDCs who were now in general education classes, especially at the high school level, did not have a single "anchor." Some special educators with large caseloads lacked the time to check in with students—who might have multiple teachers.
- ***Common Message.*** The school system continues to fight the divide between special and general education, with no clear single message to reinforce a collaborative approach to delivering instruction, enhancing teacher capacity, and meeting student needs.
- ***SCTA.*** SCTA representatives raised various issues about inclusive practices, e.g., the lack of resource availability and capacity, which were similar to those that the team heard from other focus groups at the central office and school level.

The district understands that the Tentative Agreement with SCTA precludes inclusive-practice schools initiative from being expanded until the SCTA's concerns are addressed. Unfortunately, there does not seem to be a clear path for identifying issues and how they could be resolved to SCTA's satisfaction. Union representatives claimed that the union was not against inclusion, but they did have concerns.

⁶⁹ Although the district collected data during the early years of co-teaching, the activity stopped because of teacher workload and data-collection burden. Based on a sample of student work completed in inclusive settings and traditional SDC settings for students with similar characteristics, the district found that students educated in inclusive settings engaged in more rigorous work.

Impact of the Collective Bargaining Agreement's Appendix D and Tentative Agreement

Appendix D of the district's Collective Bargaining Agreement between SCUSD and the SCTA (Agreement) pertains to "Special Education – Student Inclusion." During the team's visit to the district, many focus group members referred to Appendix D as being problematic and interfering with the district's efforts to educate students in a more inclusive and effective manner.

- **Language Replacing Appendix D's Section 1.** SCTA and SCUSD negotiated a Tentative Agreement for the 2014-15 and 15-16 fiscal years, which was executed on September 4, 2014. Number 18 of the Tentative Agreement states:

The Parties agree to create a new Section 1 under Appendix D understanding and using the following:

Consistent with Special Education laws and student needs, the District has the discretion to place any special education student in any classroom or setting including general education. The parties agree that the language in Appendix D needs further discussion and understanding to mutually develop quality supports for the special education and the student *inclusion program*. (Italics added.)

Effective beginning September 2014-15 school year, the Parties agree to establish a workgroup to discuss the negotiable effects of the District's student *inclusion program*. (Italics added.) The workgroup will be asked to complete its work as soon as possible in the 2014-15 school year.

As of the Council team's visit, the workgroup had still not yet completed its work, and there was no anticipated completion date. Union representatives indicated that they wanted to renegotiate Appendix D, and to hold discussions with the district about MTSS and inclusive practices. The representatives claimed that they supported these efforts, but wanted to ensure that appropriate training and resources are in place. They were disappointed with what they perceived to be the district's poor communication and non-responsiveness in the negotiations. Management had their own version of events.

Currently, the Tentative Agreement terms modify Section 1 of Appendix D only to the extent that the district has the discretion to place students with disabilities in any classroom or setting, including general education, consistent with special education laws and student needs. Regardless of this provision, several focus group participants indicated that general educators could refuse to educate students with IEPs in their classrooms.

The following provisions of Appendix D are problematic as well:

- **Three Models of Inclusion.** Appendix D describes three types of inclusion with reference to the 1993-94 school year. These models pertain to: 1) one student with a severe disability enrolled in a regular class; 2) whole class collaborative inclusion; and 3) special education class spread among regular education classes.
 - **Acceptance by Regular Education Teacher.** All three models have a specific condition that a regular education teacher must agree to accept or receive "special education

students.” (Sections 1.1.4, 1.2.2, and 1.3.2) Presumably, but not explicitly stated in Number 18 of the Tentative Agreement, the teacher’s discretion is overridden by the district’s placement discretion consistent with special education laws and student needs.

- ***One Student with a Severe Disability Enrolled in a Regular Class.*** Under this model, a student who is classified as having a severe disability is enrolled in a regular education class. (Section 1) The regular educator is to receive a \$50 monthly stipend (presumably for each student), an additional 60 minutes for prep time or a release day each month for training and collaboration. (Sections 1.1-5)

According to focus group participants, the teachers of students with severe disabilities who are fully included in general education classes are generally co-teaching with special educators. The Agreement neither changes the stipend nor adjusts any other general educator benefits when this instructional model, or any other model providing substantial support to the general educator, is used.⁷⁰

- ***Whole Class Collaborative Inclusion.*** This co-teaching model requires either a regular education class reduction of two students—or 25 percent of the special education class, whichever is greater—and a reduction of the special education class by two students. Again, the provision applies to “regular education teachers who agree to accept special education students...” (Sections 1.2.1-4)
- ***Special Education Class Spread among Regular Education Classes.*** Students with IEPs will include additional aide time, specialist time, and time of others as determined appropriate. Each regular education classroom must have three students below the regular maximum. (Sections 1.3.1-3)

Presumably, this model pertains to SDCs and is applicable only when all students from an SDC through the IEP process are “spread among regular education classes.” This provision could apply to the fully inclusive practices model that was implemented in six schools several years ago. Typically, inclusive practices are not initiated with a full-scale transfer of students from an SDC to regular classes. Such a practice disproportionately impacts the school’s regular education classes, while schools without SDCs never would have their regular education classes impacted in this manner.⁷¹ If, based on an IEP, it would be appropriate for a student in an SDC to be educated full time in a regular classroom, the student could return to his/her home school without such an impact.

Difference between “Inclusive Education” and SCUSD’s “Inclusion Program”

Inclusive education, in its most basic definition, means that students with disabilities are supported members of chronologically age-appropriate general education classes in their home schools, receiving the specialized instruction

⁷⁰ This concern reflects the ambiguous nature of the definition of severe disability that was never operationally defined and makes the interpretation difficult.

⁷¹ See Exhibit 3p below, which shows that 18 (25 percent) of 72 schools have no SDCs.

delineated by their IEPs within the context of the core curriculum and general class activities.⁷²

Inclusive education is neither defined nor implemented as a “program.” Rather, inclusive education reflects a vision and practice that enables students with disabilities to receive meaningful differentiated instruction within general education classes and supplemental interventions either inside or outside the general education class. Because each student has different needs, instruction and services must be flexible and not be provided within a fixed programmatic structure.

In two instances, the Tentative Agreement refers to the district’s “inclusion program,” and Appendix D describes three specific models. The district’s current initiative, which includes the original six inclusive-practices schools and 11 additional schools, is based on a co-teaching model, and the movement of students from resource classes and SDCs to general education classes. This narrow approach does not address how schools could support newly identified students with IEPs in general education classes in their home schools (or schools of choice) with flexible services, differentiated core instruction, and necessary interventions. Other strategies, which rely heavily on collaboration and problem solving, in addition to co-teaching could also be used to benefit teaching and learning.

Instruction for Students in SDC Programs

School districts that operate without an MTSS framework often organize special education by programs predicated on a theory of “specialization” for groups of students with a preconceived set of common characteristics. In reality, such programs include students with a large range of achievement and behavior, as well as students with characteristics that fall between program types. In some circumstances, students develop behavioral issues because of the influence of peers. Such specialization can perpetuate the myth that student needs can be addressed fully with correct program matches based upon a prescribed set of characteristics. If a student is not succeeding, then it is presumed to be because he or she is simply in the wrong program, so a new one is sought in order to provide a better fit. In such circumstances, there is pressure to create more specialized and categorical programs rather than creating a broad framework for general-education instruction and behavioral supports based on student need.

Application of 1 Percent Rule for Participation of Students in Alternate Assessment

The California Alternate Assessments are used for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. Under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and the recently issued implementing regulations, it is expected that no more than 1 percent of all students in grades taking a statewide assessment will participate in an alternate assessment. Although ESSA does not prohibit school districts from having a higher percentage of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who take this assessment, states must keep statewide participation at 1 percent unless they get a waiver. To avoid or to support a waiver request, states may ask districts to justify any alternate assessment rates that exceed 1 percent. States and districts cannot use the

⁷² Statewide Special Education Task Force, Conceptual Framework for Special Education Task Force Successful Educational Evidence Based Practices, 2014-2015, page 3, retrieved from <http://www.smcoe.org/assets/files/about-smcoe/superintendents-office/statewide-special-education-task-force/EBP%20-%20Final%203.2.15.pdf>.

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scores from alternative assessments to boost their proficiency rates in math or English by more than 1 percentage point. Note, however, the law has no limit on the number of students who could take these assessments.

For grades in which students are tested, 876 students are educated in separate classes more than 60 percent of the time and 130 are in separate schools, for a total of 1,006 students. Based on data provided by SCUSD, 258 students comprise 1 percent of all students in grades taking a statewide assessment.

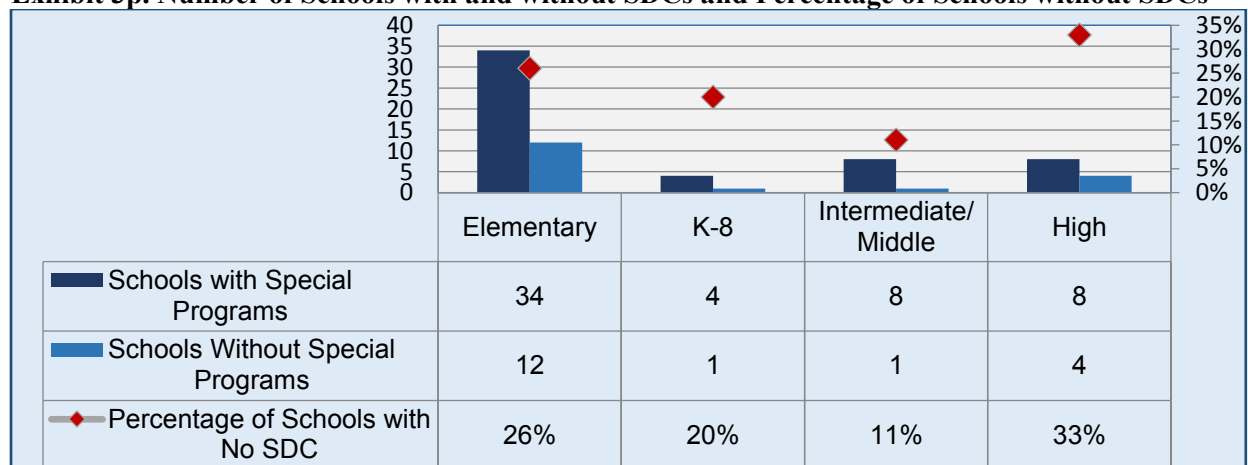
These data present two issues. First, the number of students educated most or all of the time in SDCs or separate schools far exceeds the 258 students who are permitted to take an alternate assessment without concern over federal or state monitoring. Second, for those students taking regular assessments, the data raises the questions: 1) to what extent are these students receiving instruction that is based on California’s common core standards, and 2) to what extent are they receiving academic and positive behavioral interventions that will enable them to close the gap between their present levels of achievement and grade-level standards? District personnel are conducting a review of the curriculum currently in use for students who take alternate assessments to ensure it is aligned with state standards.

The following subsections describe the district’s configuration of SDCs, and provide focus group feedback on various challenges to instruction.

Configuration of Special Day Classes

Based on data provided by the district, 18 of 71 schools (25 percent) do not have SDCs. As shown by Exhibit 3p, 26 percent of elementary schools, 20 percent of K-8 schools, 11 percent of middle schools, and 33 percent of high schools do not host an SDC. District representatives explained that there are many configurations of schools--large and small, multi-grade, etc.—which impact the ability to operate SDC(s) on certain sites.

Exhibit 3p. Number of Schools with and without SDCs and Percentage of Schools without SDCs

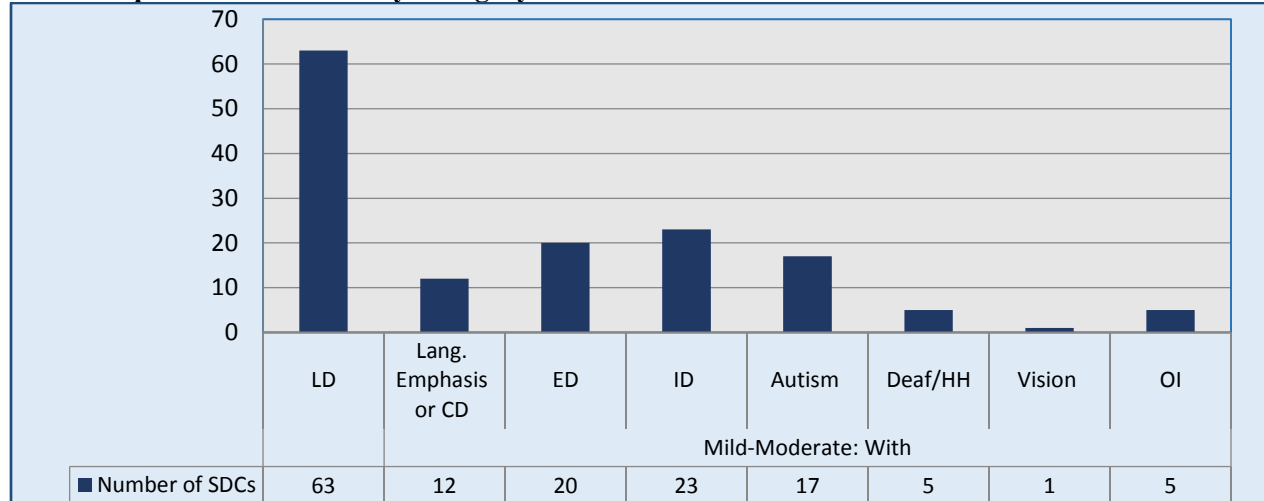


SCUSD’s configuration of special day classes (SDC) is organized primarily by eight disability categories. The 63 SDCs that educate students with learning disabilities comprise 43 percent of the 146 SDCs. The remaining seven categories, which apply to students with mild to

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moderate disabilities, and the number of SDCs in each are as follows: communication disability (12),⁷³ emotional disturbance (20), intellectual disability (23), autism (17), deaf/hard of hearing (5), vision (1), and orthopedic impairment (5). (Exhibit 3q.)

Exhibit 3q. Number of SDCs by Category



From preschool through intermediate grade/middle school, the number of SDCs steadily increases, and then decreases by 20 classes at the high school level: preschool (14), primary/K-8 (33), intermediate/middle school (65), and high school (45). (Exhibit 3r.)

Exhibit 3r. Number of SDCs by Grade Level

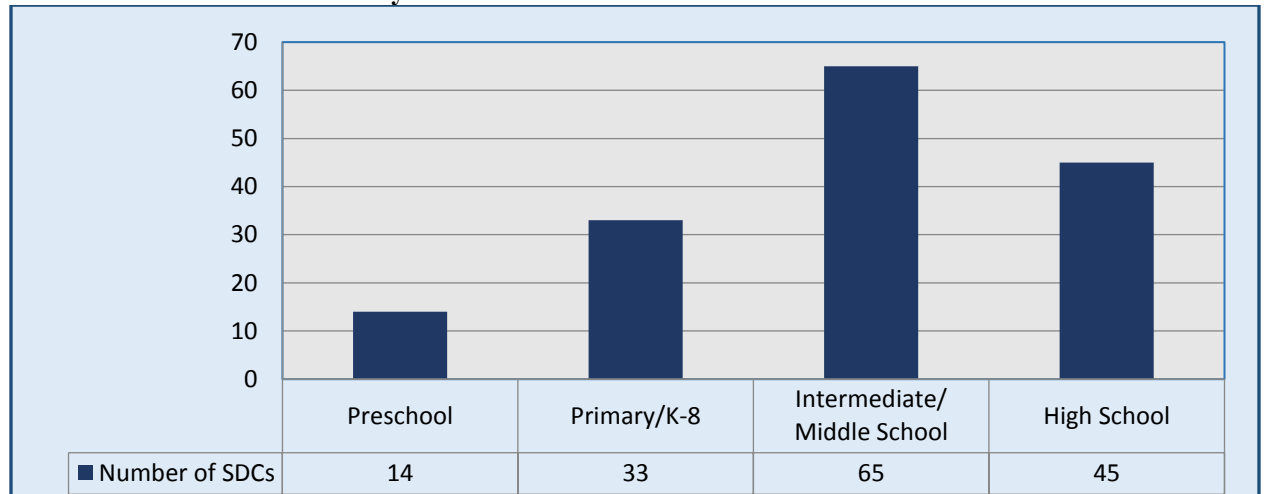


Exhibit 3s shows the number of SDCs by category and grade level. Intellectual disability comprises the only category with more classes at the high school level (9) than at the intermediate/middle school level (8). This circumstance is most likely related to students

⁷³ “Communicatively Disabled” SDCs have been taught by speech/language specialists who emphasize the development of language and pragmatics, and social skills. With personnel shortages, classes may be taught by special educators. According to SCUSD, most students in this SDC program has autism and are usually higher functioning, but they cannot tolerate the sensory input of a large classroom, or their behavioral needs require a smaller student to teacher ratio.

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remaining in school beyond 18 years of age to receive postsecondary transition services. The largest decline of classes occurs for learning disability (28 to 18), and communication disability (9 to 4). The number of classes for students with emotional disturbance increases significantly from primary to the intermediate/middle school level (1 to 11), and then decreases from intermediate/middle school to high school (11 to 8).

Exhibit 3s. Number of SDCs by Category and Grade Level

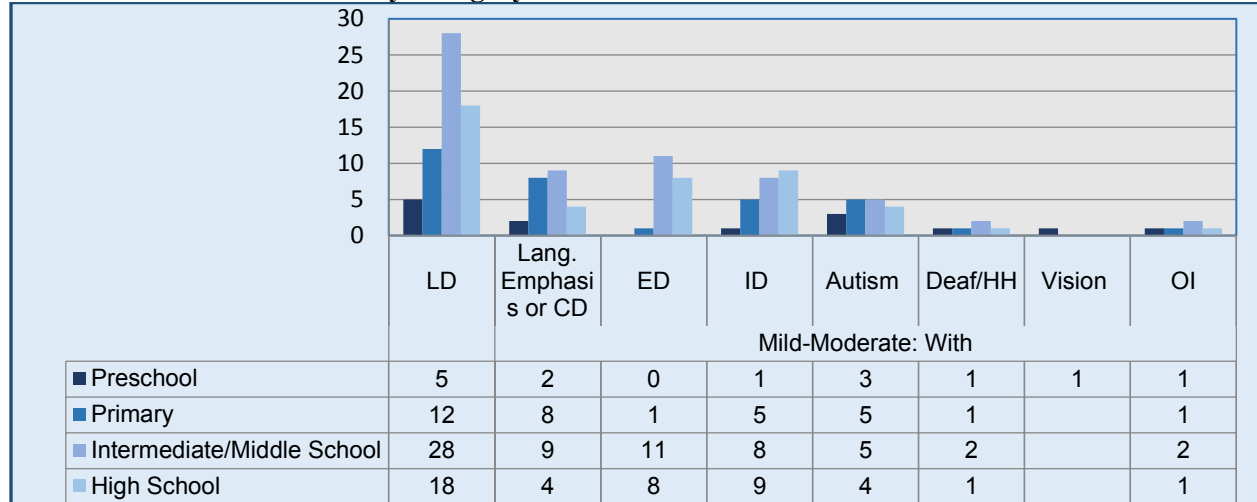
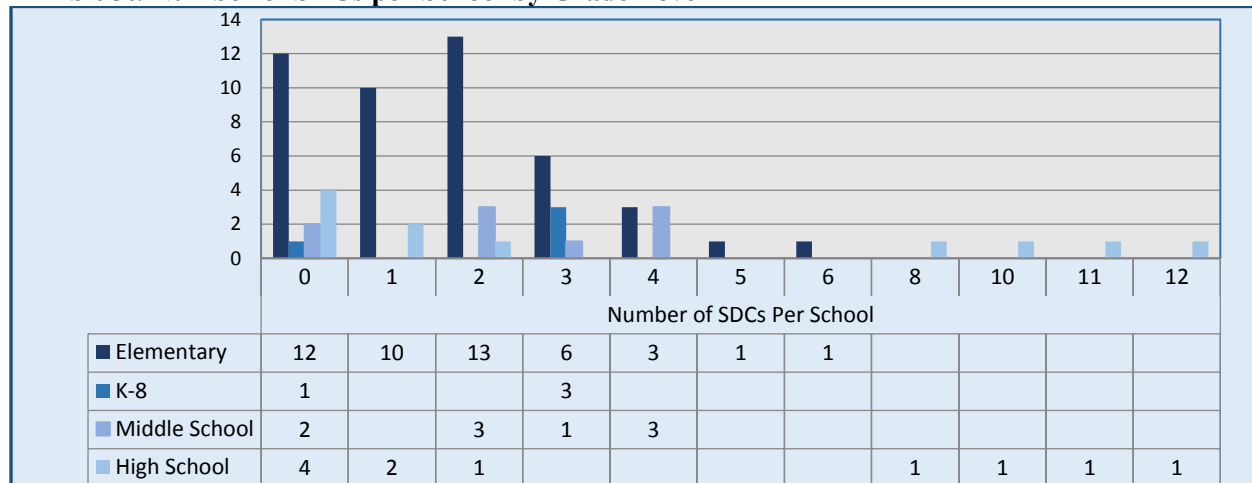


Exhibit 3t shows the number of classes per school and by grade level. The largest figure pertains to the 19 schools with no SDCs. Most schools with SDCs have one (12 schools), two (17 schools), or three (10 schools) classes. Two elementary schools have 5 or 6 classes, and four high schools have 8 to 12 classes.

Exhibit 3t. Number of SDCs per School by Grade Level



Focus Group Participant Feedback about SDCs

Several systemic concerns were raised by focus group participants about the challenges facing special educators in SDCs. While we met an educator who has been teaching in the same SDC program for over 25 years, there were reports that others leave their SDC positions for a variety of reasons.

- **Multiple Grades and High Caseloads.** With three grade levels of students in their classes, teachers have difficulty keeping up with the different expectations for all. When an IEP is developed for one child the educator's task may appear to be manageable, but the task becomes challenging with high caseloads. The use of paraeducators does not compensate for this circumstance. Special education teacher vacancies for SDCs, such as two in one school, further exacerbate the situation.
- **Variety of Student Needs.** Although the district has eight different SDC programs, a common theme voiced in focus groups was that there were students in classes whose needs appeared to "not fit" with the needs of other students.
- **Literacy Interventions.** Some 63 SDCs for students with learning disabilities was the largest SDC program, yet there was a dearth of evidence-based interventions specifically designed to improve literacy for students achieving far below their peers in this setting.

Support for Students' Social/Emotional Needs

The mental health needs of students with disabilities have also been a growing issue during the last few years. The law governing the provision of mental health services in California changed a few years ago from a county-based to a school district-based resource, which is now provided through the special education process. SCUSD's education-related mental health service (ERMHS) teams are used to assess students' needs for designated instruction and support (DIS services). According to the district's Special Education Procedural Handbook, DIS service options include:

- **Consultation** to the teacher, student or parent by a behavior intervention specialist, psychologist, and/or social worker;
- **Collaboration** with a student's private mental-health provider;
- **Individual or small group counseling** or family counseling by a psychologist or social worker, or by the district's chosen community agency.
- **Assistance and training** to staff, collection of data, or monitoring of a behavior intervention plan (BIP) or positive behavior support plan by a behavior intervention specialist.

A large number of focus group participants shared anecdotes about students exhibiting severe behaviors and having significant social/emotional needs, and expressed frustration with the ERMHS process. Specifically, the following challenges were noted.

- **Modeling and Coaching.** Behavior intervention specialists do not model interventions or coach teachers. As a result, their suggestions are not viewed as particularly worthwhile, leaving teachers without effective support and resources. This perception may be due to the large number of requests for assessments that the behavior specialists receive.
- **Gatekeeping.** Many perceive that the process for obtaining effective services for students takes too long, and requires exhaustive documentation. In some cases, personnel believed that they had to suspend students they might not have otherwise suspended to document the need for this last step.
- **Assessment Priority.** School psychologists want to provide mental health services and

support, but their obligation to conduct formal assessments prevents them from doing so.

- ***Collaboration with Student Support Services.*** There is minimal interaction between the ERMHS process and student support services personnel who have expertise in addressing these areas of need.

Further affecting the support for students with significant behavioral and mental health challenges is the district's use of private agencies for behavioral and individual aides to supplement district-employed aides. We heard many concerns about paraprofessionals,⁷⁴ including their training, retention, and ability to collaborate with staff. More information about paraprofessionals, including how their need is determined, is discussed below. (See section IV. Support for Teaching and Learning.)

Unquestionably, school personnel and parents are frustrated when students exhibit serious behavior and mental health issues that do not appear to be satisfactorily addressed. The answer to this problem, however, does not always require the student's removal from school and placement somewhere else, such as the district's John Morse Therapeutic Center. Individuals with expertise can and should provide information to school personnel, and model and coach teachers to act and talk differently to students to de-escalate and prevent difficult situations. They also need to be able to identify and arrange for additional support, which can be phased out over time. School leadership and personnel also need to be accountable for following up with recommendations when they are properly resourced and supported. This process also needs to be proactive in providing professional learning opportunities and individual support for teachers who are new—especially those who come from other countries and may lack the knowledge and skills to address the behavior and mental health issues of their students. Given the cost of nonpublic day schools (almost \$11 million for 357 students in 2015-16), the high cost for the district's own therapeutic center and transportation, an approach that can leverage these funds and apply them to meet student needs effectively within regular schools, preferably at the student's home school, is worth exploring.

To be clear, the team noted that the Morse Center was opened to provide an in-district option for students who would otherwise be placed in nonpublic schools (NPSs). This action has addressed both the high cost of NPSs and improved quality of instruction. Reportedly, the school has a high success rate for transitioning students back to comprehensive campuses in less restrictive settings.

Administrative Review Teams

Two program specialists, a behavior intervention specialist, two psychologists, and a social worker conduct semi-monthly meetings where school site personnel can ask this multi-disciplinary group for suggestions about students with behavioral and academic problems. School-based personnel perceive that this administrative review is necessary prior to IEP meetings for students who may require nonpublic special day schools. In such cases, the team may provide alternative suggestions instead of a special day school, such as the development and implementation of a BIP. Some school-based staff understand that the IEP team determines

⁷⁴ The term paraprofessional is used in a generic manner and includes the various categories of aides used by the district.

student needs; others believe that the team's recommendations must be followed at IEP meetings. This latter misperception, if accurate, needs to be addressed. This miscue is good reason to develop feedback loops to ensure that what staff are hearing is what is intended.

Assistive Technology

According to the National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities, assistive technology (AT) increases a student's opportunities for education, social interactions, and meaningful employment. It also supports student learning in a least restrictive environment. Assistive technology is a tool designed to help students benefit from the general curriculum and access extracurricular activities in home, school, and work environments.⁷⁵

An educational technology coordinator housed in the curriculum/instruction department supports the integration of technology into the curriculum and classroom instruction. Assistive technology is coordinated within the special education department by a group of AT and speech/language specialists who focus on assessments and the provision of augmented and alternative communication services and devices. Through the district's electronic IEP system, information is collected about student needs, available AT, student observations, etc.

Focus group participants expressed concern about the length of time it takes students to receive AT devices. District representatives reported an influx of AT assessment requests at the end of 2015-16, with demand continuing this year based on the increasing knowledge of school personnel and parents about the benefits of AT. Inclusion and AT specialists have conducted training on UDL to expand knowledge about the use of technology for all students, and there is growing interest in this instructional approach.

Postsecondary Transition Services and Support

In California, school districts are to begin transition planning for students with IEPs when each student is 16 years old. The planning process includes age-appropriate transition assessments, transition services, courses of study that will reasonably enable students to meet postsecondary goals, and annual IEP goals related to students' transitional needs. Transition services and supports prepare students for employment and independent living through a coordinated set of activities that promote movement from school to post-school activities, including postsecondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, and community participation.

The state performance plan (SPP) for special education includes four indicators on postsecondary transitions for youth with IEPs:

Indicator 1. Percentage graduating from high school with a regular diploma

Indicator 2. Percentage of students with IEPs dropping out of high school

Indicator 13. Percentage of students with IEPs with all required transition components

Indicator 14. Percentage of youth with IEPs who were within one year of leaving high schools:

⁷⁵ <http://www.parentcenterhub.org/repository/iep/>.

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- Enrolled in higher education;
- Same as above or competitively employed; and
- Same as above or in other postsecondary education or training program.

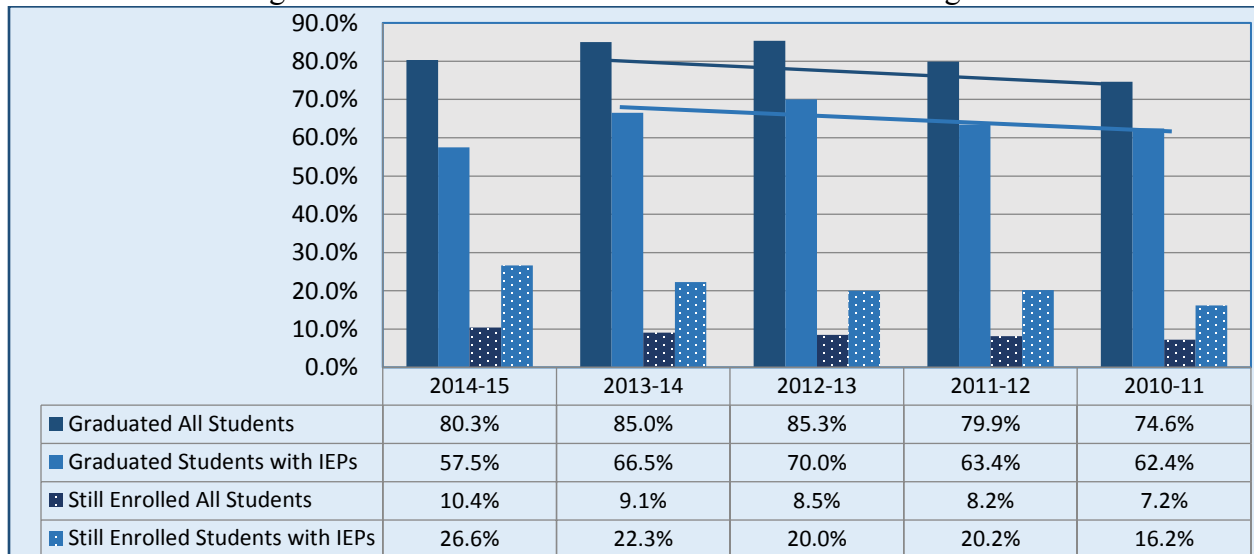
The information below summarizes SCUSD’s progress on each of these indicators and the district’s support of postsecondary transition activities and services, including community-based work experiences.

Graduation Rates

Exhibit 3u shows the percentages of students with and without IEPs, who graduated from the district and were still enrolled in school. These data were provided by SCUSD.

- **Graduation Rates.** The graduation rate from 2010-11 to 2014-15 increased by 5.7 percentage points to 80.3 percent for all students, while the rate for students with IEPs decreased by 4.9 percentage points to 57.5 percent. Students with IEPs earned their highest rate in 2012-13, 70 percent.
- **Still Enrolled.** For students with and without IEPs, the percentage of graduated students still enrolled from 2010-11 to 2014-15 increased to 26.6 percent (10.4 percentage points). This increase was larger than for all students (5.7 percentage points). Students with IEPs may remain in school beyond 12th grade to receive postsecondary transition services and activities. Thus, one would expect a larger portion of these students to continue in school compared to other students.

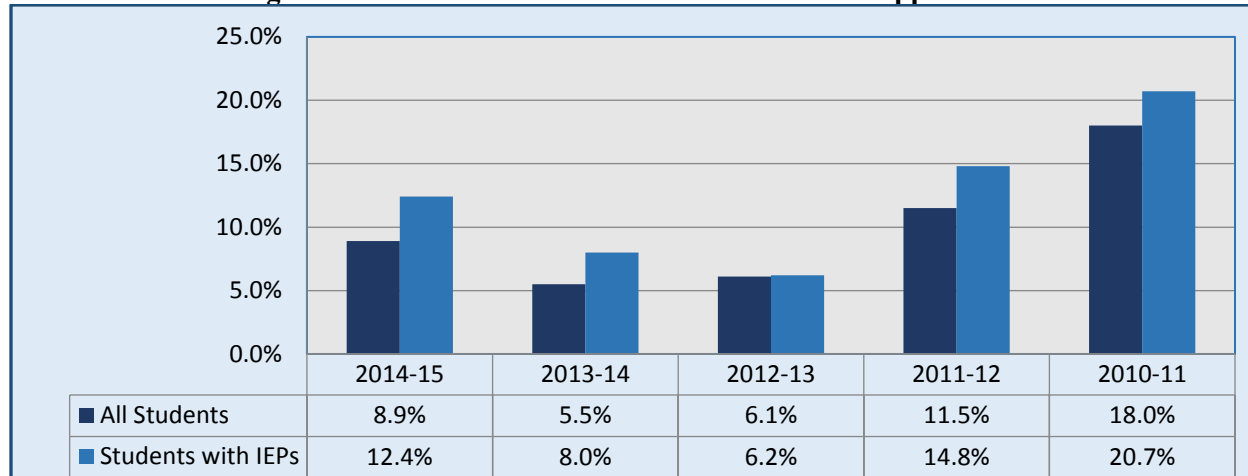
Exhibit 3u. Percentages of District Students with/without IEPs Graduating and Still Enrolled



Dropout Rates

Exhibit 3v compares dropout rates for all students and students with IEPs from 2010-11 to 2014-15.

Exhibit 3v. Percentage of District Students with/without IEPs who Dropped Out of School



During this period, the dropout rates decreased significantly for all students (9.1 percentage points) and students with IEPs (8.3 percentage points). The 2014-15 rate for students with IEPs (12.4 percent) was only 3.5 percentage points more than the rate for all students (8.9 percent). However, in 2012-13 students with IEPs had their lowest dropout rate (6.2 percent).

IEP Compliance and Post School Experience

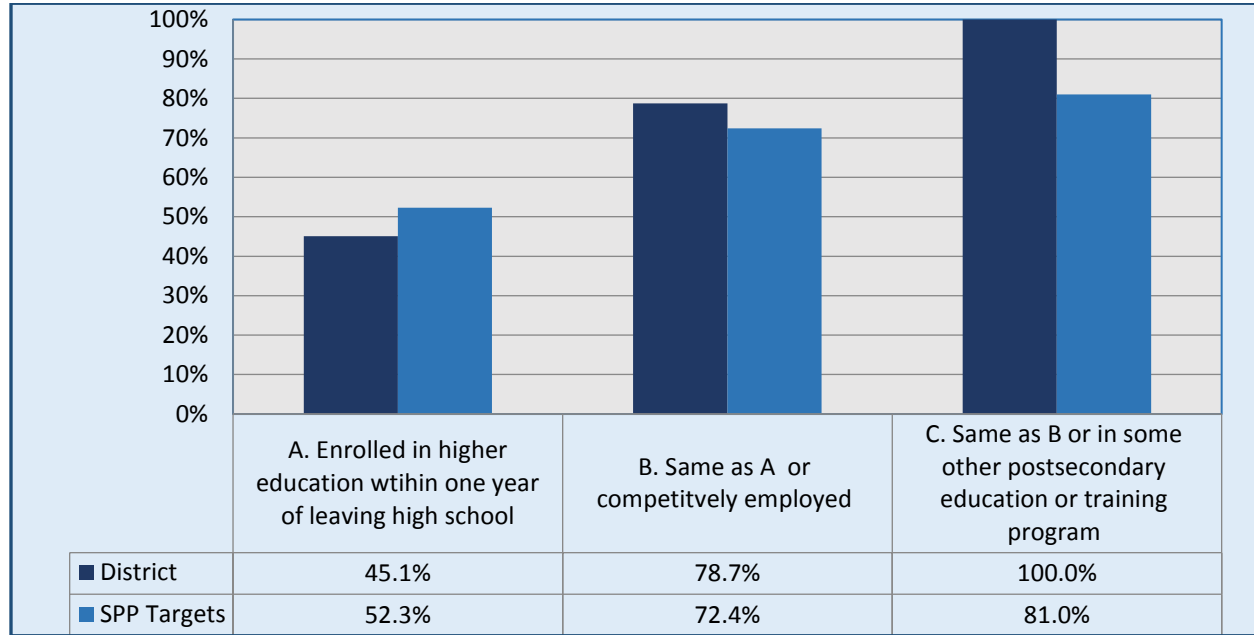
Indicator 13 of the SPP measures the percent of students aged 16 and above with an IEP that included all eight coordinated, measureable, annual IEP goals and transition services that reasonably enable the student to meet their postsecondary goals. According to the state’s 2014-15 report, of 1,261 youth, 94.8 percent of IEPs met this criterion.⁷⁶ The compliance rate for this indicator is 100 percent.

Indicator 14 has targets for the percentage of students with IEPs engaged in various activities within one year of leaving high school. Exhibit 3q compares district outcomes among former student respondents on the SPP targets. These targets include:

- **Enrolled in Higher Education.** Some 45.1 percent of former district students with IEPs met this indicator, compared to the 52.3 percent SPP target.
- **Enrolled in Higher Education or Competitively Employed.** Some 78.7 percent of former district students with IEPs met this indicator, compared to the state’s 70 percent rate and the 72.4 percent SPP target.
- **Enrolled in Higher Education, Competitively Employed, or Engaged in Other Postsecondary Education or Training Program.** All of the district’s former students with IEPs met this indicator, which exceeded the SPP’s target of 81 percent.

⁷⁶ Retrieved from <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/ds/documents/indrptlea1415s.pdf>.

Exhibit 3q. Percent of Students Engaged in Various Activities One Year after Leaving High School



Importance of Community-Based Work Experiences for Students with Disabilities

Based on data from the National Longitudinal Transition Study-2, students with IEPs often have poor postsecondary outcomes in employment, education, and independent living. For instance, based on data from 2009 (the most recent available), 60 percent of survey respondents across disability groups indicated that they were currently in a paid job, and 15 percent indicated that they were attending postsecondary education. Large numbers of students with disabilities who are able either to work or participate in higher education do not participate in these post-school activities.⁷⁷ According to an American Institutes for Research study:

Previous studies have demonstrated that students with disabilities who have work experiences while in high school are more likely to be employed after high school.⁷⁸ Often the work experience in which they were enrolled led directly to a postsecondary job for a student. For these students, it is important to have occupationally specific CTE programs, with appropriate instructional and adaptive support services and accommodations, available in high school.⁷⁹

The National Collaboration on Workforce and Disability affirmed this finding by reporting that “[w]hile work experiences are beneficial to all youth, they are particularly valuable for youth with disabilities. For youth with disabilities, one of the most important research findings shows

⁷⁷ National Longitudinal Transition Study-2. Retrieved from <http://www.nlts2.org/>

⁷⁸ National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth, 2011.

⁷⁹ Improving College and Career Readiness for Students with Disabilities American Institutes for Research <http://www.ccrscenter.org/sites/default/files/Improving%20College%20and%20Career%20Readiness%20for%20Students%20with%20Disabilities.pdf>

that work experience during high school (paid or unpaid) helps them get jobs at higher wages after they graduate.”⁸⁰ The National Collaboration research showed that quality, work-based learning experiences have the following features:

- Experiences provide exposure to a wide range of work sites in order to help youth make informed choices about career selections.
- Experiences are age and stage appropriate, ranging from site visits and tours to job shadowing, internships (unpaid and paid), and paid work experience.
- Work-site learning is structured and links back to classroom instruction.
- A trained mentor helps structure the learning at the worksite.
- Periodic assessment and feedback is built into the training.
- Youth are fully involved in choosing and structuring their experiences.
- Outcomes are clear and measurable.

According to district representatives, postsecondary transition services and support is considered to be an area of continual growth for the special education department. This work includes the need to improve the quality of transition planning and implementation. SCUSD operates an adult transition program for students who are 18-22 years old with moderate to severe disabilities and have not graduated from high school with a diploma. These students receive community work experiences in a variety of environments in addition to on-campus learning. Staff members who are certified in community-based instruction accompany the students. Also, several postsecondary transition classes are housed at or near universities that are accessible to public transportation.

College/career learning pathways are open to all students, including those with disabilities. Instruction wraps academics around a career focus, and the program provides cross-curricular design across units. The special education department’s transition specialist manages the following three state grants to support postsecondary transition services and activities for students with IEPs. The programs have received positive evaluations.

- ***WorkAbility*** provides for comprehensive pre-employment skills training, employment placement and follow-up for high school students with IEPs making the transition from school to work, independent living, and postsecondary education or training. Approximately 110 students were in paid placements during July. Reportedly, the district has met grant requirements and received positive state evaluations.
- The ***Transition Partnership Program (TPP)*** helps to connect high school students with disabilities to the state’s rehabilitation department and transition to work. State evaluations of this program have also been positive.
- ***Work Experience*** supports formal vocational/transition assessments and reports for students with IEPs, and training for case managers to effectively engage in transition planning.

⁸⁰ <http://www.ncwd-youth.info/work-based-learning>

Focus group participants shared the following concerns about the opportunities available to students with disabilities to engage in relevant postsecondary transition activities and community-based work experiences:

- Support from school leadership was needed for special educators to implement and provide training to effectively engage students in postsecondary transition activities.
- Continued funding was necessary to support paid community work experiences. As minimum wage requirements increase, the opportunity for students to be paid for work experiences decreases. This is occurring at the same time that there is a greater demand for students to have community work experiences.⁸¹
- Training on postsecondary transition is offered to school personnel, but it is not required and depends on personal interest rather than identified need.

Professional Learning

The professional learning association, Learning Forward, has developed its third version of *Standards for Professional Learning* outlining features of professional learning that result in effective teaching practices, supportive leadership, and improved student results. The standards are based on seven elements listed in Exhibit 3r.⁸²

Exhibit 3r. Standards for Professional Learning

Standards for Professional Learning

Learning Communities. Occurs within learning communities committed to continuous improvement, collective responsibility, and goal alignment.

Resources. Requires prioritizing, monitoring, and coordinating resources for educator learning.

Learning Designs. Integrates theories, research, and models of human learning to achieve its intended outcomes.

Outcomes. Aligns its outcomes with educator performance and student curriculum standards.

Leadership. Requires skillful leaders who develop capacity, advocate, and create support systems for professional learning.

Data. Uses a variety of sources and types of student, educator, and system data to plan, assess, and evaluate professional learning.

Implementation. Applies research on change and sustains support for implementation of professional learning for long-term change.

Professional Learning in SCUSD

Currently, the district has no days set aside for professional learning. All professional learning is linked to a weekly hour for collaboration, which does not appear to be meeting all needs. Although central office personnel reported that professional development is offered, it is

⁸¹ Retrieved from <http://www.rnelsonlawgroup.com/Articles/California-s-Rules-for-Unpaid-Interns-and-Trainees.shtml>

⁸² As a trainee, however, students may meet state requirements to be paid less than the minimum wage. Retrieved from <https://www.learningforward.org/standards#.UMvVD7Yt0kU>.

voluntary in nature, as it is conducted afterschool or on Saturdays. Hence, there is widespread concern that necessary information for principals, general education teachers, and special education teachers linked to improved outcomes for students with disabilities, is not being received.

Collaborative Time

Beginning in 2016-17, all schools were required to increase instructional time on four days in order to allow for collaboration on such activities as grade-level and job alike meetings, training, and other collaborative work. Principals develop the professional learning activities collaboratively with teachers, and there are many competing interests for the limited available time. As a result, it is difficult to schedule time for training on the many subjects pertinent to students with disabilities. Generally, priority areas involve compliance, IEP development, co-training for the 17 schools involved in the district's inclusive-schools initiative, and training for new teachers, such as those who recently arrived from the Philippines.

Compensation for Professional Learning

Section 2 of the Agreement requires that the district offer training for school personnel, parents—including those having children with IEPs, and others as appropriate. Also, Section 5 specifies that special education workshops shall be provided for training and professional improvement, and be open to regular educators teaching students with IEPs.

Despite these provisions, professional learning provided by the district outside the regular workday is poorly attended. Furthermore, it was reported that the union discourages teachers from attending uncompensated training. As a result, most professional learning takes place during collaborative time where participation is mutually agreed upon with teachers. In addition, limited funds have prevented the district from providing personnel with compensated professional learning after school or on Saturdays to address district initiatives, instructional strategies, and behavioral supports, as well as training on IEP development.

Focus Group Participant Feedback

Focus group participants shared the following concerns and challenges associated with their ability to provide and access professional learning.

- ***Training Conflicts.*** With collaborative time scheduled on the same day districtwide, it is difficult for special education program specialists and others to provide all of the training requested across the school system. Also, it is difficult for special educators who cross subject areas and grades to participate in all relevant sessions, as they must rotate from one to another.
- ***Job Alike Discussions.*** Special educators have no time to meet across schools to discuss common issues and access information based on their common needs. Some have relied on emails to communicate with others.
- ***Intern Special Educators.*** Many special educators who are interns with no training or experience are struggling in the classroom.
- ***Access to Districtwide Training.*** Special education coaches no longer provide systemwide

training because teachers are unable to attend due to the shift to site-collaborative time required at each school.

- **General/Special Educator Collaboration.** Collaborative time is not used to enable special and general educators to talk about common students, and it is difficult for them to find other common time for this purpose.

Facilitating Parental and Community Involvement

A large body of research demonstrates the positive effects of parent-professional collaboration on outcomes for students with disabilities.⁸³ Effective collaboration is often grounded in a strong staff-parent relationship and the combined expertise of parents and professionals in helping students with disabilities meet their goals. Many parents want to fully participate in planning for their child(ren) and supporting changes in services. Nonetheless, collaboration tends to be more difficult when parents are new to the country, when language differences present barriers, and when parents come from poor or low socioeconomic environments.

Generally, support for meaningful parent involvement varies by school. There are 47 school-based parent resource centers, which are established at the discretion of schools. Typically, Title I dollars are used to fund part-time parent liaisons. In addition, the district has parent facilitators who provide training, and predominantly work with parents who are English learners, parent teacher organizations, and the special education Community Advisory Council (CAC).

The CAC for special education is an active group that meets monthly to provide training for parents of students with disabilities in SCUSD. The areas of training are based on a needs assessment that parents fill out at the end of the previous school year. District special education staff members assist the CAC by providing logistical support and training expertise.

The CAC met with the Council's team and discussed concerns related to three major areas that parents would like to have addressed. Many of these concerns relate to those discussed elsewhere in this report. These concerns included:

- **Understanding Students.** Parents who have concerns about their child's achievement or behavior, particularly those who are English learners, frequently do not understand the special education process. There is a desire to have teachers explain the process, including how to request a special education evaluation when that is their intent. Parents also want teachers to directly recommend at IEP meetings the specialized instruction, related services, and supplementary aides and supports a student needs rather than asking the parent to do so. The CAC would also like to have a better understanding about students receiving special education, such as their characteristics, where they are educated, the length of time they have

⁸³ A.T. Henderson, & K. L. Mapp. (2002). *A new wave of evidence: The impact of school, family, and community connections on student achievement*. Southwest Education Development Laboratory. Cited in *Fostering Parent and Professional Collaboration Research Brief*, Technical Assistance ALLIANCE for Parent Centers, National Parent Technical Assistance Center at http://wsm.ezsitedesigner.com/share/scrapbook/47/472535/1.7_Fostering_Parent_and_Professional_Collaboration.pdf.

been educated in SDCs, their movement into less restrictive environments, their educational outcomes, etc. They would like to have this information sorted by grade level, schools, etc.

- ***Understanding the Effectiveness of Services Students Are Receiving.*** Parents would like to have more information about such education-related issues as: how goals are set, how they are adapted if not achieved, evidence-based practices, assistive technology and training. They would also like to see the leadership at the district, area, and school levels be held accountable for such activities as having IEPs implemented as written and implementing effective evidence-based reading and behavior interventions with trained and knowledgeable personnel. Parents also noted the need for high quality professional development that is based on what teachers and others need to know to effectively teach and provide support to children with disabilities. Furthermore, based on the district's practice of transporting students to other schools to receive special education instruction and services, the distance makes it more difficult for parents to communicate with teachers and participate in their children's education. There is a desire that the money spent on busing be used instead for instruction and support.
- ***District Leadership and Capacity.*** SCUSD is largely a decentralized system of schools that have broad discretion over important issues, such as professional learning (addressed above). There are few, if any, districtwide expectations relating to the education of students in SDCs, their inclusion in general education classes, and their overall engagement in the culture of a school. These issues are more challenging and critical for older students. While some schools have an approach to education that is inclusive and embraces students with different abilities and talents, others do not have this philosophy. Some schools effectively practice social/emotional learning and positive behavioral supports and others do not, relying on school removals of the child to address problematic behavior. The CAC did, however, express its appreciation for the support parents receive from special education department

Overall Observations

The district's desire to educate students with and without IEPs in inclusive settings is based on sound research and best practice. The inclusive-practice schools initiative has evolved in a system of schools that does not have a shared vision of inclusivity from school-to-school. As a result, the initiative has had several unanticipated consequences

One of the consequences is that some teachers have students that the teachers perceive to require SDCs. By the nature of their full inclusive structure, these schools no longer house SDCs. The current system is not flexible, nor is it adept at providing the resources schools need to meet students' more intensive needs. Instead, the district relies on the traditional method of transferring students to other schools that have the relevant SDC.

The district's continued reliance on SDCs requires most students to travel on buses from their home schools to other schools. When classes are filled within a school's geographic feeder system, students must travel to distant schools. (Parents may visit various SDC options and choose the one they prefer.) These factors contribute to expensive and long transportation routes with funds that could be used for resources to support students at their home schools. (See the Transportation section below under Support for Teaching and Learning.)

Overall, there is broad recognition by district personnel that general and special education must come together to jointly plan and implement activities designed to increase the achievement and improve the behavior of students with disabilities. There is a desire to be more proactive than reactive, to increase access to professional learning, and to share exemplary practices between schools. This work includes the use of evidence-based practices and data to identify exemplary practices with positive outcomes, as well as those that are not succeeding. Success also requires the involvement of parents and district partnership with unions.

AREAS OF STRENGTH

The following are areas of strength in the district's support for teaching and learning of students with disabilities.

- **Early Childhood Educational Settings.** Overall, 60 percent of all children were educated inclusively with their typically-developing peers.
- **School-Aged Educational Settings.** The district's 60 percent rate for students educated in general education at least 80 percent of the time is 6 percentage points higher than the state's rate and slightly below (1 percentage point) the nation's rate. Also, the district's 14 percent rate for students educated outside of general education more than 60 percent of the time is lower than state and national rates.
- **Educational Settings by Race/Ethnicity and EL Status.** Students are educated in settings that are not significantly disproportionate based on race/ethnicity. Except for the separate school setting, SCUSD students who are English learners are educated in more restrictive settings than are students who are not ELs. The differences, however, are not significant.
- **Inclusive Schools Initiative.** The district initiated an inclusive-schools movement, but it has not expanded significantly due to fiscal restraints. Eleven schools have been targeted in addition to the original six inclusive-practices schools to work with coaches to improve educational outcomes.
- **SDC Curriculum Aligned with Common Core.** District personnel are conducting a review of the curriculum currently in use for students who take alternate assessments to ensure that it is aligned with state standards.
- **Assistive Technology.** A group of AT and speech/language specialists focus on assessments and the provision of augmented and alternative communication services and devices. Through the district's electronic IEP system, information is collected about student needs, available AT, student observations, etc. Inclusion and AT specialists have conducted training on UDL to expand knowledge about the technology, and there is growing interest in this instructional approach.
- **Dropout Rates.** Between 2010-11 and 2014-15, dropout rates decreased for both students with IEPs (9.1 percentage points) and for all students (8.3 percentage points). The 2014-15 rate for students with IEPs (12.4 percent) was only 3.5 percentage points higher than the rate among all students (8.9 percent). In 2012-13 students with IEPs had their lowest dropout rate (6.2 percent).
- **Postsecondary Transition Activities and Services.** With 94.8 percent of IEPs meeting

requirements for postsecondary transition activities and services, the district almost met the state's 100 percent compliance target. The district almost met state targets for students enrolled in higher education, being competitively employed, and/or engaged in other postsecondary education or training programs. Students 18 to 22 years of age with moderate to severe disabilities who have not yet graduated from high school with a diploma have various community work experiences. Also, with the support of three state grants, a variety of transition services and activities are provided to students with IEPs.

- ***Parental and Community Involvement.*** Schools fund 47 school-based parent resource centers, typically with Title I funds that are used for part-time parent liaisons. The district also has parent facilitators who provide training, and predominantly work with parents who are English learners, parent teacher organizations, and the Community Advisory Council (CAC) for special education. The CAC is an active group that meets monthly to provide training for parents of students with disabilities in SCUSD.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

The following areas are opportunities for improvement in the teaching and learning of students with disabilities.

Children 3 to 5 Years of Age Data

- ***Educational Outcomes.*** For the state performance plan indicator dealing with students substantially improving their behavior and social/emotional skills and acquiring/using knowledge/skills, the district ranged between 3.3 and 10.7 percentage points below state targets. The district's gap with state targets was larger for students exiting with skills within age expectations, with percentage point differences ranging between 11.9 and 23.4.
- ***Educational Settings.*** While 7 percent of all children are educated in separate schools, almost half (44 percent) of students with autism are educated in this setting.

School-Aged Students Data

- ***Academic Outcomes.*** In both ELA and math, a larger percentage of California students with and without IEPs were proficient, compared to district students. The achievement gaps between California and district students were greater for ELA than math.
- ***Education More than 60 Percent of Time Outside of General Education.*** The district's 23 percent rate for students educated in this setting is higher than state and national rates.
- ***Separate School Settings.*** The district's 6.0 percent of students with IEPs attending separate schools is 2.6 percentage points higher than the state level and 2.7 percentage points higher than the national level.
- ***Educational Settings by Grade.*** The percentage of students educated inclusively decreases from pre-K and early grades through middle and high school, while the percentage of students in general education between 79 percent and 40 percent of the time and in separate schools increases.
- ***Educational Settings by Disability Category.*** In every area, the district educates students in more restrictive settings at rates that are larger than the nation and the state.

- **OSS by Days.** For students with out-of-school suspensions for 1-10 days and over 10 days, students with IEPs are suspended at higher rates than students without IEPs, and the rates increase significantly at seventh grade. Also, African American students with IEPs are 2.5 times more likely than all other students with IEPs to receive an OSS for 1-10 days, and they are 3.99 times more likely to be suspended for more than 10 days.
- **Suspensions by Grade.** In each grade, students with IEPs receive out-of-school and in-school suspensions at rates that are much higher than students without IEPs. Out-of-school and in-school suspension rates for students with IEPs are highest in seventh through ninth grade. OSSs of more than 10 days peak at seventh and ninth grades.
- **Graduation Rates.** Between 2010-11 and 2014-15, the graduation rate for students without IEPs increased by 5.7 percentage, while the rate for students with IEPs decreased by 4.9 percentage points.

Instructional Models and Practices

- **Inclusive Education.** Inclusive education is viewed as a “program” rather than a vision and practice that enables students with disabilities to receive meaningful differentiated instruction within general education classes and interventions either inside or outside the general education class. The co-teaching model is viewed as the tool for inclusive practices, which discounts other effective models, such as consultation/collaboration, and the grouping of students with shared needs (with and without IEPs) across classes for tiered interventions. The inclusive-practices schools’ model requires students needing an SDC to transfer out of the school to be educated. There does not appear to be a systemwide culture of inclusivity that promotes services based on student needs. Instead, the district relies on a traditional SDC structure for students with more significant needs. There is a lack of training and support that would emphasize the value of inclusive instruction and how to achieve it successfully. Focus group participants shared various concerns about inclusive practices and challenges to becoming more inclusive.
- **SCTA/District Issues Impacting Inclusive Education.** The district believes that the inclusive-practice schools initiative cannot be expanded until the union’s concerns are addressed, but there does not seem to be a clear path for identifying issues and determining how they could be resolved. SCTA representatives claimed that the union is not against inclusion, but they do have concerns. Furthermore, Appendix D to the Collective Bargaining Agreement contains several problematic provisions that are detailed above and require revision.
- **Restrictive Educational Settings.** One percent of students taking state assessments, or some 258 students, may take an alternate assessment without asking for a state waiver. Some students educated inclusively may have a significant cognitive disability, but not all of the 876 students in special classes more than 60 percent of the time, or all of the 136 students in special schools, may be eligible for an alternate assessment. Using these two settings as a guide, only 26 percent of 1,006 students could take an alternate assessment absent a state waiver. Assuming that a significant percentage of these students will take a regular assessment, there are significant questions about the extent to which they are receiving instruction based on the common core curriculum and the intensive interventions they need.

- **SDCs.** Many district schools (24 percent overall and 35 percent of elementary schools) have no SDCs. Although most schools with SDCs have 1, 2 or 3, two elementary schools have 5 or 6 SDCs, and four high schools have 8 to 12 SDCs. Focus group participants shared the many challenges associated with teaching SDCs, and believe the challenges account for the high mobility of SDC teachers and relatively large number of SDC teacher vacancies.
- **Social/Emotional Support.** A large number of focus group participants shared anecdotes about students exhibiting severe behaviors and having significant social/emotional needs, and expressed frustration with the ERMHS process. The district's reliance on private agencies for behavioral and individual aides is another source of frustration.
- **Administrative Review Teams.** There was not a clear understanding about the purpose of the administrative review teams and how their suggestions interact with IEP team decision-making.
- **Assistive Technology.** There are concerns about the length of time it takes for students to receive AT devices.
- **Postsecondary Transition Activities and Services.** Focus group participants provided various concerns about students' access to relevant postsecondary transition activities and community-based work experiences. These included: support from school leadership, continued funding for community work, and training for school personnel.

Professional Learning

Currently, the district has no days set aside for professional learning. All professional learning is linked to a weekly hour for collaboration, which does not appear to be meeting all needs. Hence, there is widespread concern that necessary information for principals, general education teachers, and special education teachers linked to improved outcomes for students with disabilities, is not being received. Focus group participants shared concerns and challenges about their ability to provide and access professional learning.

Parental and Community Involvement

Meeting with the Council's team, CAC representatives shared specific concerns in three major areas: 1) the need for district personnel to understand the needs of students with disabilities and to help parents access services for them; 2) the need for district personnel to understand the effectiveness of services provided to students and be held accountable for evidence-based practices; and 3) expectations for district leadership to increase instructional capacity. Many of these and other concerns were also reported by other focus group participants and have been described throughout this document.

RECOMMENDATIONS

3. **Academic Achievement and Social/Emotional Well-Being for Students with IEPs.** Review and address relevant data, and follow-up with actions such as the following –
 - a. **Data Review.** With a multidisciplinary team of individuals in and outside the special education department, review Exhibits 3a through 3q and their accompanying analysis

(along with other relevant data), and develop hypothesis about problematic patterns, such as:

- Weak educational outcomes for early childhood students with IEPs compared to state targets;
- High percentage of young children with autism educated in separate schools;
- Low educational outcomes on state assessments for students with and without IEPs compared to the state;
- High percentage of students in more restrictive settings by disability area and in separate schools compared to the nation and state;
- Variability of educational setting placements by grade;
- High OSS rates for students with IEPs compared to those without IEPs;
- Disproportionately high OSS rates for African American students;
- Higher in- and out-of-school suspensions for students with IEPs compared to those without IEPs, especially at the seventh through ninth grades; and
- Declining graduation rate for students with IEPs as the graduation rate for students without IEPs was increasing.

b. *Inclusive Education Vision.* Have the extended cabinet establish a clear and defined vision for the value of inclusivity. Embed in that vision language from the common core state standards website and March 2015 statewide task force on special education to clarify the district’s support for higher academic outcomes and the social/emotional well-being of students. Highlight the importance of providing students educated in general education classes with the differentiated and scaffolded instruction they need to learn. Emphasize that instruction needs to be linguistically appropriate and culturally relevant, and aligned with common core standards. These expectations will be easier to meet as teachers become more familiar with and base their instruction on the principles of UDL. At the same time, the vision should reinforce the importance of evidence-based academic and positive behavior interventions/supports that increase in intensity with specified student needs.⁸⁴ The implementation of this vision will require substantial changes to Appendix D of the SCUSD/SCTA collective bargaining agreement, which portrays inclusive education as occurring in three static models.

c. *Implementation Plan.* Based on the data review and the district’s inclusive education vision, have the extended cabinet develop a written multi-year action plan that provides written expectations, professional learning, data analytics, and accountability (as specified below). Upon completion of the overall plan, establish a uniform way for school-based teams to embed local implementation activities into their school-based planning documents. In addition –

- ***Resource Specialist Program (RSP) Services.*** Develop ways to reduce the current practice of RSP teachers reporting/supporting more than one school and mitigate the

⁸⁴ The suggested activities are not intended to be a blueprint or to be exclusive. They are provided as a basis for discussion and further development.

impact it has on collaborating with general education teachers and providing necessary interventions for students.

- **Resource Allocation.** Review how services are currently configured and how they can be shifted to meet the needs of more students in their neighborhood schools and schools of choice. This shift may reduce reliance on student transportation, and allow savings to be reallocated to instruction and interventions.
- **Regular vs. Alternate Assessments.** Determine how many students in SDCs and separate schools take an alternate assessment, and ascertain the extent to which the number correlates with 1 percent of all students who take the regular state assessment. Also, determine how many students in SDCs and separate schools take a regular state assessment, and address the extent to which they are receiving instruction aligned with common core standards.
- **Special Day Class Structure.** Review focus group comments about SDCs, such as those concerning instruction of students in multiple grades, the impact of teacher vacancies, reliance on paraprofessionals, caseloads, etc. In addition, discuss the equity ramifications associated with schools without SDCs, and their reliance on other schools to provide educational support. Also consider transportation expenses and how these funds could be used differently. Review the specifications for each SDC and clarify criteria for more flexible instructional and service adaptations, program specifications, and the like. Develop protocols for providing rigorous instruction and supports to students in SDCs, including personnel training and quality control processes.
- **Separate Schools.** Review the characteristics of students attending separate schools, and the reasons why the district is unable to meet their needs (especially young children with autism). With stakeholders, define the kinds of high-quality instruction and supports needed to keep students in regular schools or to attract them back to the district. Consider average special school costs per child (in and outside of the district), including transportation costs and how funds could be shifted to support this initiative.
- **Social/Emotional Supports and Interventions.** Review the ERMHS process for providing designated instruction and services (DIS) in order to maximize the use of behavior specialists for purposes of modeling interventions, coaching teachers, and providing effective technical assistance. As discussed below, better leverage the expertise of all staff qualified to provide supports for students' social/emotional needs, such as psychologists and social workers, as well as staff from the John Morse Therapeutic Center.
- **Related Services.** Consider the manner in which related services are provided (e.g., push-in versus pull-out) and the extent to which personnel are able to engage in general education MTSS activities), the extent to which occupational and/or physical therapy is provided at sites away from schools, and how these practices could change to improve their impact.

Feedback. Have the team collect feedback on the draft plan from stakeholders at varying grade levels, special/general education administrators, principals, general/special

education teachers, related-service providers, teacher assistants, CAC, other parent-based and community-based organizations, etc. Continue this feedback loop as the plan is implemented to address concerns.

- d. Written Expectations.* Develop and provide guidance on the implementation of practices designed to promote student achievement and positive behavior, including the following.
- ***Differentiated Instruction.*** Delineate expectations for the provision of linguistically appropriate and culturally competent instruction aligned with core standards that are differentiated for students with reading and math performance levels significantly below those of their classroom peers.
 - ***Co-Teaching.*** Delineate effective co-teaching models. Do not expand co-teaching until there is data showing achievement gains based on the current instructional co-teaching model. Conduct a data analysis on the impact of service delivery and student performance (e.g., co-teaching vs. RSP).
 - ***Increasingly Intensive Academic Interventions.*** Identify targeted interventions for English language arts and math that will fill instructional gaps for students with disabilities who are behind academically. Describe flexible groupings for students with and without IEPs when there is a need for common interventions. Consider how groupings need to adjust based on changing student needs.
 - ***English Learners.*** Describe models for providing ELLs with IEPs the linguistic support they require when receiving special education and related services.⁸⁵
 - ***Documentation for ERMHS Services.*** Establish expectations for individual schools on the reasonable documentation personnel must gather to show a student's need for ERMHS services. Clarify that the suspension of students should not be the basis for determining a student's need for intervention and support.
 - ***Administrative Support Teams.*** Reconstitute the purpose of the administrative review teams as groups devoted to problem-solving for students with behavioral and academic concerns. Make it clear that their advice does not substitute for the IEP team's consideration, and that students are not to be suspended either in-school or out-of-school to justify service needs. Coordinate this review with student support services.
 - ***IEP Decision Making.*** Provide guidance to IEP teams on determining the extent to which students would benefit from general education classes, and specifying the supports needed to provide instruction based on the core curriculum and evidence-based interventions.
 - ***Personnel Roles and Staffing.*** Identify the number and type of personnel available to support students with disabilities in general education classes and to provide interventions inside or outside of the class. Specify and differentiate their roles. In

⁸⁵ See *Meeting the Needs of English Learners with Disabilities*, which was prepared by a staff member from the Santa Barbara County SELPA, retrieved from <http://www.sonomaselpa.org/docs/els-with-disabilities.pdf>.

addition, address staffing ratios for students in SDCs and how staffing needs to be adjusted when students need support in order to benefit from general education. (See Recommendation 6a.)

- ***Planned Collaboration.*** Provide ways to better structuring time to promote more collaboration between general and special educators, various types of paraprofessionals, and related-services personnel in order to discuss instruction and intervention for students they share.
 - ***Progress Monitoring and Problem Solving.*** Monitor the progress of students with disabilities on instruction and interventions, as well as progress on IEP goals.
 - ***Assistive Technology.*** Specify and monitor a reasonable time frame for students to receive AT devices, and consider the resources needed to meet the time frame.
 - ***Music Therapy.*** Provide specific entry and exit criteria for students believed to need music therapy to benefit from special education instruction.
 - ***Postsecondary Transition Activities and Supports.*** Delineate school leadership responsibility for ensuring students with IEPs have access to high quality postsecondary transition activities and supports, and identify funding for community work.
- e. Differentiated Professional Learning and Parent Training.*** Embed in the professional learning curriculum mentioned in Recommendation 1e and the content needed to carry out Recommendation 3. In addition, consider –
- How and when personnel will be provided access to training in each critical area;
 - How key information will be communicated effectively;
 - How information will be used; and
 - What additional coaching and supports may be needed.

Review training and information-sharing opportunities for parents and community partners, and identify topics for the 2017-18 school year, including areas mentioned in this report and what data suggest might be needed. As part of this process, consider how professional learning will be provided within the current weekly collaborative time limitations.

- f. Data Analysis and Reports.*** In addition to ensuring that activities described in Recommendation 1e include data and analysis of academic instruction and behavior/emotional supports for students with disabilities, consider the following actions–
- ***Data Reporting.*** Report data using the charts in this report as a guide, expanding upon them to better target patterns and areas of concern.
 - ***Risk Ratios.*** To the extent possible and when appropriate, report disparities on indicators using a risk ratio.
 - ***Progress Monitoring.*** Establish common school-based data collection and reporting

systems to monitor the progress of students with disabilities, both academically and behaviorally. Ensure that benchmark and progress-monitoring data on students taking alternate assessments are included.

To the extent possible, embed data in the dashboard system used for all students.

- g. *Monitoring and Accountability.*** Expect that all principals are responsible for overseeing special education in their buildings, and that area assistant superintendents hold principals accountable for this responsibility. Embed the following activities in the monitoring and accountability systems described in Recommendation 1g.
- ***Baseline Data.*** To the extent possible, collect baseline data on the use of interventions with students with IEPs. Include data on educational setting rates, achievement, suspension/expulsion rates, and graduation and dropout rates, and begin evaluating the effects of interventions. In each area, consider collecting and analyzing data by race/ethnicity and gender, and develop risk ratios by indicator/subgroups.
 - ***Data Collection and Reports.*** Review data, data collection issues, and reports that are requested by the superintendent and school board. Begin including baseline data described above, as well as special education state performance plan indicators. Provide regular updates on the status of special education reforms. Develop protocols for reporting data to inform decision-making. Produce templates for user-friendly summary reports showing academic and behavioral interventions and outcomes for students with disabilities. Review necessary changes in programs and interventions based on the data. Plan follow-up activities to collect data that the district does not currently collect and produce reports it currently does not produce.
 - ***Data Checks.*** Include information on students with disabilities in data discussion sessions in order to develop follow-up actions and track outcomes.
 - ***Fidelity Assessments and Walk-Throughs.*** Review current walk-through tools used to monitor instruction and interventions in general education classes, RSP classes, and SDCs to see how students are being taught and engaged, and how consistent instruction is across schools for students with disabilities. Provide guidance such as that called for in Recommendation 3c. Initiate technical assistance, professional development, coaching, and mentoring to improve practices.
 - ***Timely Communication and Feedback.*** Establish a process for timely feedback to the district's MTSS leadership team on barriers to problem-solving activities, particularly when they are beyond the control of local schools. Require the schools to seek assistance in resolving problems.

IV. Support for Teaching and Learning for Students with Disabilities

This section summarizes SCUSD’s supports for teaching and learning for students with disabilities. The information covers interdepartmental collaboration, administration and operation of special education, fiscal issues, and accountability.

Interdepartmental and School Leadership Interaction and Collaboration

Given concerns about student achievement and social/emotional wellness generally, and for students with disabilities in particular, as well as the high costs and legal implications of special education, it is essential that central office staff and school leadership collaborate effectively. When this does not occur, communication and accountability suffers.

Central Office Organization

In addition to the superintendent and deputy superintendent, there are seven chief officers. One chief oversees academics, and the others oversee business, communications, human resources, information, operations, and strategy. Although the district’s organizational chart shows all of these chiefs reporting to the interim deputy superintendent, the Council team was informed that they report directly to the superintendent.

Deputy Superintendent Reports

Five assistant superintendents report to the deputy superintendent. One is responsible for equity, and four are area assistant superintendents (AAS). Also, the deputy oversees a director for teacher and leadership development.

- **Equity.** The equity assistant superintendent oversees two directors (one for student hearings/placements, including alternative education, behavior/reentry, attendance, dropout prevention, and reentry; and one for social and emotional learning).
- **AASs.** The AASs each oversee about 17 schools that represent all grade levels. Also, each AAS has several districtwide responsibilities, which are shown in Exhibit 4a below.

Exhibit 4a. AAS Programmatic Responsibilities

Area 1	Area 2	Area 3	Area 4
School, Family and Community Partnerships Matriculation and Orientation Center	Enrollment Center	Athletics Integrated Support Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Support (10 staff for social/emotional and 4 staff for learning. • Health • Homeless • Bullying Prevention 	Youth Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth Services • Foster Services

Chief Academic Officer Reports

Seven staff members report to the chief academic officer (CAO). These individuals oversee: curriculum and instruction (C&I), special education, multilingual literacy, child development, gifted and talented education (GATE), college/career readiness, state and federal programs, and adult education.

Collaboration between Offices and Departments

Several meetings are scheduled regularly for the executive cabinet, extended cabinet, academic team, and networks. Also, informal collaboration between departments occurs episodically.

- ***Extended Cabinet Meetings.*** The extended cabinet, which includes the assistant superintendents and directors, meets every other week to discuss relevant issues and obtain feedback. During recent meetings, the group reviewed special education data and discussed results. Other discussions have concerned the social/emotional needs of students and how they are being addressed.
- ***Deputy Superintendent, AASs, and CAO Meetings.*** Periodically, the deputy superintendent, AASs and the CAO meet to discuss areas of concern.
- ***Network Team.*** Most but not all principals meet within networks that are based on feeder patterns. Lead principals from each network also meet with the deputy superintendent to review relevant issues discussed during network meetings. The deputy superintendent also shares information with the AASs who do not participate in the network meetings.
- ***Academic Office Team.*** Academic office team meetings include all central office leaders who are involved with teaching/learning and representative members of their staff. In addition to assistant superintendents, directors, and coordinators, special education training specialists and program specialist attend. The team represents staff from the various departments in the academic office including child development, curriculum and instruction, state/federal programs, GATE, career and college readiness, multilingual education, and adult education.
- ***Academic Office Principal Meeting.*** In an effort to build consistency across the district and work more closely with school personnel, principals attend monthly meeting and include teachers at every third meeting.
- ***Cross Department Collaboration.*** There is informal collaboration between the leadership of special education and integrated-support services. Also, human resources and special education work together with principals on recruitment fairs.

Effectiveness of SCUSD's Current Organization

Based on the feedback of focus group participants, the central office organization could be improved to maximize support of and collaboration with schools. The district does not appear to have a clear vision and theory of action that is consistently communicated with school personnel. The district is functioning as a system of schools that provides inconsistent teaching

and learning opportunities across schools, rather than a school system built on a foundation of equity and excellence. Schools have a high degree of autonomy without recognized non-negotiables. These circumstances, detailed below, have produced weak shared ownership and accountability for special education.

- ***Siloed Teaching & Learning Support.*** The following are examples of ways in which personnel supporting teaching and learning are not aligned to schools for maximum effect.
 - ***Fragmented Leadership.*** AASs are absent from the executive cabinet and are not well connected to the academic office. As a result, the AASs are unable to communicate important information that they glean from their school visits and discussions with their principals. Although the deputy superintendent receives periodic feedback from lead network principals, it does not compare to the type of feedback provided by the daily interaction between AASs and principals. The different reporting lines for the CAO and AASs have limited their interaction and opportunities for joint problem solving and collaboration. There is a desire to have the CAO, as well as the other chiefs, visit schools more frequently to directly observe school and student issues.
 - ***Network Principal Structure.*** Most principals meet regularly through six informal networks that are generally— but not always—based on elementary, middle and high school feeder patterns. Each network has a lead principal that represents them in a separate meeting that the deputy superintendent leads. The deputy shares information from the lead principal meeting with the AASs who do not participate in the network meetings. This communication process is likely to leave out information AASs would like to have, however. During the team’s discussions with principals, some expressed their opinion that the network meeting structure was not effective. They reported that discussions at these meetings are less useful when the network’s schools are not fully aligned with feeder patterns, and they would be more beneficial if schools were aligned by grade level.
 - ***AAS Bifurcated Responsibilities.*** AAS responsibilities are divided between supervision of principals and districtwide programs. This bifurcation reduces the support AASs are able to provide to both principals and programs.
 - ***Non-alignment of AASs & Special Education Program Specialists.*** The special education program specialists are assigned to schools that do not line up with those for which the AASs have oversight. As a result, program specialists have schools supervised by several AASs, and AASs have schools supported by many program specialists. This structure makes it more difficult for each group to collaborate and address special education issues for schools they have in common. Issues include ensuring effective compliance and problem-solving for stronger special education instruction and supports. Furthermore, it makes it more difficult for program specialists to attend AAS/principal meetings, even if they were invited. (This circumstance is also true in other departments with staff assigned by school area.)
 - ***Separate Physical Health Support.*** Personnel in two separate departments support the physical health needs of students. The special education director oversees one set for students with IEPs (including individualized nursing care through nonpublic agencies for

some 51 students), and the Area 3 AAS oversees the other set (with a vacant director⁸⁶) for regular school nurses. When feasible, students are supported by the school's regular nurse. Typically, school districts have one administrator who coordinates all physical health needs regardless of a student's disability.

- ***Separate Social/Emotional Support.*** Personnel who support the social/emotional well-being of students are divided into four separate components. These personnel, along with their respective supervisors, include: the special education director (social workers, psychologists, behavior specialists) the Area 3 AAS (student support services), the Area 4 AAS (youth development), and the equity assistant superintendent (social emotional learning). With the varied mental health needs of students, such fragmentation makes it more difficult for personnel who work in this area to be effective. For example, CASEL related training does not include the special education department's social workers and psychologists, even though this information is relevant to their work.
- ***Separate Departmental Administration and Operation of Section 504 and IDEA.*** While there is considerable overlap in student requirements under Section 504 and IDEA, they differ in that Section 504 also includes students with disabilities who receive only related services and supplementary aids under IDEA. In spite of the close association between the activities required under these two legal mandates, they are administered separately in different departments (Area 3's health division for Section 504 and the special education department for IDEA). By having the health division oversee Section 504, students who may qualify for academic or social/emotional disabilities may not be sufficiently addressed. Furthermore, this separation has led to having two different teams potentially providing support for the same student when that student may not be eligible for an IEP but may be eligible for a Section 504 plan--even though the participants may be the same.

The cumulative effect of these and other circumstances has led to a lack of coherence in these components, and has diminished the respect school personnel have for the work of the central office. These issues have also contributed to the strong push by schools to maintain their local autonomy.

- ***Disjointed District/School Visions and Actions.*** Because of the lack of agreed-upon non-negotiables, AASs are less able to hold principals accountable for student outcomes. As discussed above, district and school interests are not always the same. Principals filter information to protect their schools from district mandates they do not fully embrace, and are disinclined to engage central office personnel when it does not meet their individual purposes. Two anecdotes exemplify this finding. First, unlike any other district where the Council's team has conducted a special education review, some principals interviewed strongly objected to having special education program specialists providing more support for teaching/learning in their schools, especially if they could be freed up from their compliance focus. Second, only half of the 18 principals invited chose to show up for our focus group. Of those who participated, the majority represented full inclusion schools. This proportion of attendance was small compared to other SCUSD focus groups, and to other focus groups in other school district reviews.
- ***Insufficient Cross-Departmental and School Collaboration.*** In addition to the examples of

⁸⁶ This position was vacant at the time of the visit.

cross-departmental collaboration described above, other needs that were cited included:

- More aggressive human resource recruiting and position processing to fill numerous vacant special education positions;
- Regularly scheduled meetings between transportation and special education to address long and costly routes.
- More effective practices at the district’s enrollment center to ensure that communication with the special education department is continuously effective, regardless of rotating staff and summer schedules, so that incoming students with IEPs are placed appropriately and in a timely manner.
- More consistent and timely responses from department personnel to schools, e.g., transportation, human resources, and special education.

Generally, personnel from both central office and schools seek professional learning and information, especially those who are new. Conditions such as those described above are associated with what is seen as a constant turnover of leadership (20 of 76 new principals last year, several interim positions at the highest administrative levels, etc.⁸⁷). There is also agreement that the AAS role is more reactive than proactive, and they see themselves as “fire fighters.” Other departmental personnel voiced this theme as well. Restructuring within departments does not address these issues. To leverage the knowledge and expertise of SCUSD leaders and staff members we met, personnel need to be aligned in a manner that will maximize their collective efforts.

Administration and Operation of Special Education

Special Education Organizational Structure

Exhibit 4b shows the special education department’s personnel and organizational functions under the special education/special education local plan area (SELPA) director and three supervisors. A fourth supervisor position was vacant at the time of the Council’s visit, and the duties of this position were transferred to the other three supervisors. As with other central office departments, special education was cut dramatically in 2010, which has made it more difficult for personnel to carry out their responsibilities.

Exhibit 4b. Special Education Department Organization and Functions

Special Education/ SELPA Director	Supervisor 1	Supervisor 2	Supervisor 3
60 direct reports	83 direct reports	74.5 direct reports	29 direct reports
3 supervisors 12 program specialists	50 speech/language pathologists (SLPs) 5 SLP assistants	41 IEP designated instructional paraprofessionals (DIP) (school-based)	11 transition workability program staff 5 occupational therapists & COTAs (OT assistants)

⁸⁷ Numbers were current as of the time of the review.

Improving Special Education Services in the Sacramento Unified School District

Special Education/ SELPA Director	Supervisor 1	Supervisor 2	Supervisor 3
30 psychologists 12 SELPA support staff 3 inclusive practices coaches 1 budget technician	7 hearing interpreters 5 preschool teachers 8 instruction aides 1 individual instruction specialist (home/hospital) 6 adult transition program 1 office technician	14 behavior intervention specialists and I/As 5 health aides 6 Social Workers	5 assistive technology staff 4 adapted PE specialists 3 Shriner's Hospital teachers
		1.0 office technicians II	

Additional Supervisor Responsibilities		
Supervisor 1	Supervisor 2	Supervisor 3
Deaf Task Force	Extended school year	
New students with IEPs placement	Administrative review team	Monthly CAO meetings
Personnel work re: posting and interviewing for vacant special education positions	Compliance (with director/assistant), and special education procedural manual	Alternate standards curriculum
Job fairs, etc.	Residential placement	Field trips
Paperwork for teachers over their contract limit	Behavior review and pre-expulsion hearings for students with IEPs (with student hearing/placement director)	Special educator induction (with induction coordinator)
Staff development	Compensatory education and tutoring	New teachers not in induction program
	County Office of Education programs	Nursing services
	Special Arts	PT and music therapy
		Special Olympics
		Surrogate parents (with foster youth services)
		Department staff appreciation/team building
		Special education website

Observations about the Organization of the Special Education Department

The special education department's current structure has components that limit its effectiveness. These include:

- Span of Personnel Oversight.*** The special education director and two supervisors have an unrealistically high number of people to supervise. With direct reports numbering 61, 83, and 74.5, respectively, it is not realistic for the director and supervisors to carry out their supervisory responsibilities as expected.

- **Human Resources Work.** Each supervisor carries out a fair amount of work related to human resources, which is excessive because of the high turnover rates of teachers and aides.
- **Schools Aligned with AASs.** As discussed above, program specialists are not assigned to schools in a manner that is aligned with the AASs. Although they were aligned in the past, as their numbers changed, so did their organization.
- **Personnel with Similar Expertise.** Personnel who address physical health and social/emotional health are separate from other personnel supporting students without IEPs but have similar needs.
- **School-based Positions.** Several supervisory functions involve oversight of school-based preschool special educators and instructional aides. Several positions are for two classes at a newly reopened school, and it is anticipated that their supervision will transfer to the principal next school year. The other positions are at sites without a site administrator, so the special education department provides their supervision.
- **Postsecondary Transition.** Each group supporting postsecondary transition activities (6 with the adult transition program and 11 with the transition workability program) reports to different supervisors. In the past, the two groups reported to the same supervisor. But with the current vacant supervisor position, the two postsecondary transitions groups were divided up and now report to two different supervisors. All supervisor assignments will be re-evaluated when the additional supervisor is hired.

Focus Group Feedback about Special Education Department Operation

Focus group participants, including CAC parents, generally expressed positive comments about the special education director. Special education teachers believe the director supports their efforts, and that she is responsive despite her broad responsibilities.

Overall, special education personnel we met appeared to be committed to students, and eager to improve their support to schools. More specific feedback is provided below.

- **Compliance Focus.** Program specialists and other special education personnel are focused primarily on compliance because of their fear of litigation. At the same time, there are concerns about the quality of IEPs, timely access to IEPs by aides, and their implementation. Interviewees, however, reported the lack of structured English language support for students, including students with IEPs and 504 plans.
- **Program Specialists.** Program specialists are each assigned to 8 to 10 schools. They provide advice on special education service delivery, compliance, IEP development, etc. Several concerns emerged with respect to these personnel.
 - **IEP Role.** Program specialists serve as the district’s representative in all initial and IEP reevaluations--as well as complicated IEPs. They are encouraged to and want to support teaching/learning, but compliance priorities take most of their time. According to most AASs and principals with whom we spoke, program specialists are not needed at each of these IEP meetings. Their sense was that psychologists had a good understanding of the

eligibility process and student needs, and could chair these meetings without the program specialists.

- ***Gatekeeping Function.*** Although the program specialists are viewed as gatekeepers, they bear the school-based burden of maintaining compliance, as most principals do not actively engage in special education.
- ***Office Administration.*** Central office special education assistants reported a variety of concerns related to inconsistent work ethic and inequitable workloads. Access to staff members' calendars and the opportunity to provide input during departmental staff meetings would improve their work quality, according to assistants. A classification study was conducted for the assistants about a year ago, but the group was unaware of the results.

There was a strong belief among interviewees that most complaints relate to special education, and that program specialists are not always sufficiently responsive. Yet, special education is not widely owned by AASs and principals, except to communicate a need for more teachers or aides, or a compliance problem. Absent a sense of shared responsibility and accountability at the district, area, and school levels, and use of consistent rules, communication, and training, an army of program specialists would probably still be insufficient to meet all expectations and student needs.

School-based Special Education and Related Services Support

This subsection presents data on staff-to-student ratios in special education, i.e., speech/language pathologists, psychologists, nurses, occupational therapists (OTs), and physical therapists (PTs). SCUSD ratios are compared to other urban school districts on which we have data.⁸⁸ (All districts did not report data in each area.) These data are based on full time equivalent (FTE) staff members and not on the number of positions *per se*. Also, the Council team presumes that FTE data includes vacant positions.

The data do not give precise comparisons, so results need to be used with caution. District data are not consistently reported (e.g., some districts include contractual personnel and others may exclude them) and data are sometimes affected by varying placement types used by a school district. The data may count all students with IEPs, including those placed in charters, agencies, and nonpublic schools, while other districts will not count these students. Still, these data are the best available and are useful as a *rough guide* to staffing ratios. Appendix B has detailed data on each school district.

Special Educators

The following is information on special education teacher staffing ratios and information provided by district and focus group participants.

⁸⁸ Much of the data were provided by the school districts that responded to a survey conducted by the Urban Special Education Leadership Collaborative; Council team or members of the team collected the remaining data during district reviews.

Special Education Teacher Staffing Ratios

Exhibit 4c shows the district’s student-to-special-education teacher ratios, compared to 71 other urban school districts. With 288 full-time-equivalent (FTE) special educators,⁸⁹ SCUSD has an average of 22.6 students with IEPs (including those with speech/language impairments) for every special educator.⁹⁰ This ratio is much higher than the 14.5 teacher-student average of all districts on which we have data, and ranks SCUSD as 66th among the 71 reporting districts.

Exhibit 4c. Average Number Students for Each Special Educator

Areas of Comparison	Special Education Teachers
Number of SCUSD Staff FTE	288.1
SCUSD Student w/IEP-to-Staff Ratios	22.6:1
All District Average Ratios	14.5:1
Range of All District Ratios	7–37:1
SCUSD Ranking Among Districts ⁹¹	66th of 71 districts

Allocation of Positions and Hiring

According to district personnel, special education teachers are allocated based on the projected numbers of students in each relevant service area, e.g., resource, special day by type, and the projected number of students at each site for the following year. Students also have the opportunity to apply for open enrollment, which affects the allocation at some schools. The district’s business office sponsors a one-stop staffing event each December or at the beginning of January. At that time, schools are shown their staffing projections. In addition to principals, representatives from the human resources department, the budget office, the AAS’s, and the special education director go through staffing projections line-by-line.

Focus group participants raised the following concerns related to hiring decisions and multiple school assignments for resource providers.

- **Hiring.** The Council team received various explanations about who is responsible for selecting school-based special educators. Some interviewees reported that the special education department makes the selections, and others reported that the principal does. A third answer was that the selection is a joint effort between the principal and special education department, but the special education department “decides.” This process is different from that of school districts that enable principals to hire their own staff, including special educators—an approach which supports principal accountability for special education services.
- **Resource Teachers.** Reportedly, a larger than usual number of resource teachers have students at more than one school. Of the five such teachers we spoke with, four had students

⁸⁹ The FTE number includes teachers for: resource programs (106.1), SDCs (154), home/hospital (3), inclusion specialists (2), inclusion coaches (3), and deaf/hard of hearing (5).

⁹⁰ Although special educators for the most part do not instruct students with a speech/language impairment only, as SLPs are the primary providers, these students were included as students with IEPs for all surveyed districts.

⁹¹ Ranking begins with districts having a low average number of students to one staff person.

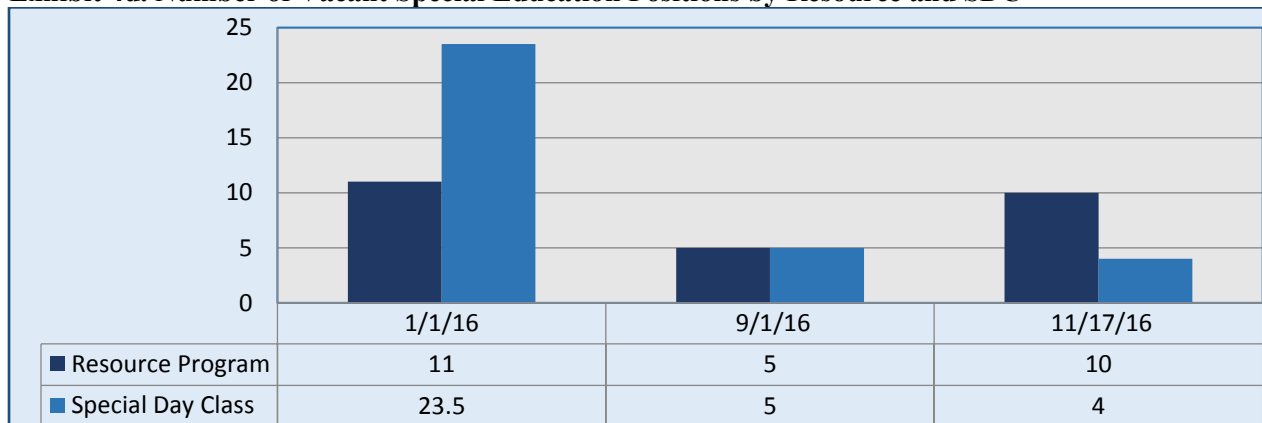
enrolled in two different schools. Almost all districts we have reviewed are able to have resource special educators report to one school only. The district’s distinction may be related to its reliance on SDCs, which does not enable these teachers to be fully embedded in each school’s culture and learning environment.

Vacant Special Education Teacher Positions

A common theme of focus group participants concerned vacant positions, and students who continue to be taught by substitutes or new teachers who lack adequate understanding of teaching and learning. Special education teacher shortages have been an historic issue.

Exhibit 4d shows the number of vacant special education teacher positions at three times, including the number of resource and SDC vacancies. The largest number of vacancies was in January 2016, with 11 resource teachers and 23.5 SDC teachers. By November 2016, SDC teacher vacancies decreased to four, but resource teacher vacancies remained at 10. At the time of the Council’s visit in November, at least one of these vacant positions was for a pre-K/kindergarten SDC for young children with autism, which had five IEP designated instruction paraprofessionals (DIPs). Since the Council team’s visit, the classroom for young children was staffed with a special education teacher.

Exhibit 4d. Number of Vacant Special Education Positions by Resource and SDC



Reportedly, one reason the district has had difficulty filling special education (as well as other) positions pertains to a collective bargaining provision that prevents the district from posting vacant teacher positions outside of the district, and from offering new employment until July 1st of each year. This late delay negatively affects district hires because most other districts around SCUSD start school in early August and have earlier hire dates. The district has initiated several activities to reduce special educator vacancies, but they have fallen short of their goals. These efforts included:

- ***Pool of Teachers.*** For this school year, the human resources office established a pool of teachers with contracts for 2015-16 without specifying a school location. However, the pool was not sufficient to meet the hiring demand.
- ***Philippines Recruitment.*** The district aggressively recruited 12 special educators from the Philippines, and worked with a vender to assist the new teachers with cultural support,

housing, etc. Nevertheless, more was needed to enable these new hires to understand the needs of their students, some of which are intensive.

For 2016-17 the district is revitalizing a prior partnership with SAC State University to recruit graduating teachers before other districts can hire them. Also, by using some teacher credential changes applicable to intern programs, the district hopes to have a cohort of 24 new teachers next school year. Other suggestions that were mentioned included the use of a hiring bonus of about \$5,000, which has been a strategy successfully employed by other districts.

There are some who question whether human resources’ recruitment efforts have been sufficiently aggressive. The absence of a full-time person in human resources to address special education and related services personnel is problematic. From the vantage point of schools and parents, any personnel vacancy in a critical area such as special education is not satisfactory.

Paraeducators

The following is information about paraeducator⁹² ratios and information from district and focus group participants.

Paraeducators Staffing Ratios

Exhibit 4e shows the district’s student-to-paraeducator ratios, compared to 71 other urban school districts. With 246.2 FTE paraeducators, SCUSD has an average of 26.5 students with IEPs for every paraeducator.⁹³ This ratio is much higher than the 15.3 paraeducator-student average of all districts on which we have data, and ranks SCUSD as 67th among the 71 reporting districts.

Exhibit 4e. Average Number Students for Each Paraeducator

Areas of Comparison	Paraeducators
Number of SCUSD Staff FTE	246.2
SCUSD IEPs-to-Staff Ratios	26.5:1
All District Average Ratios	15.3:1
Range of All District Ratios	5.26–56:1
SCUSD Ranking Among Districts ⁹⁴	67th of 71 districts

Paraeducator Vacancies

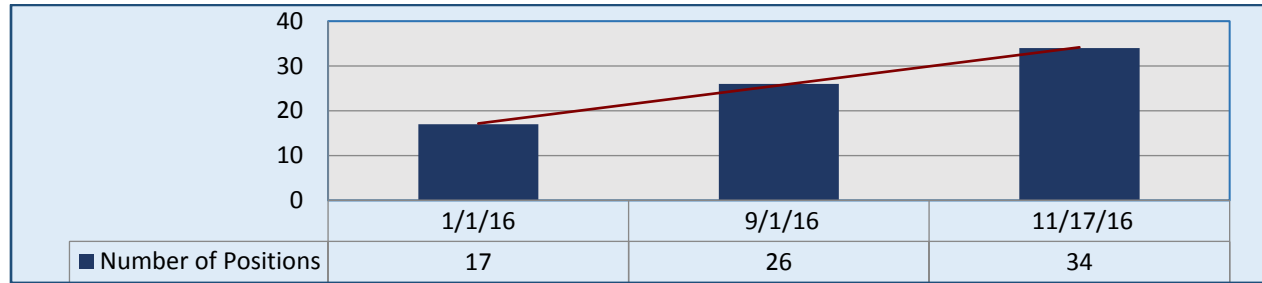
Exhibit 4f shows that from January 1, 2016 to November 17, 2016, the number of vacant paraeducator positions doubled from 17 to 34. The November vacancy figure represented 14 percent of the 246 paraeducator positions. As with the special educator vacancy situation, the absence of a full workforce negatively affects the education of students with IEPs.

⁹² The term paraeducator is used generically and includes both general instructional aides and IEP designated instruction paraprofessionals (DIPs).

⁹³ Although special educators for the most part do not instruct students with a speech/language impairment only, as SLPs are the primary providers, these students were included as students with IEPs for all surveyed districts.

⁹⁴ Ranking begins with districts having a low average number of students to one staff person.

Exhibit 4f. Number of Vacant Paraeducator Positions



Allocation of Paraeducators

The district has two types of instructional aides: general instructional aides and IEP designated instructional paraprofessionals (DIP). Instructional aides are assigned to special education programs at school sites. The DIPs are assigned to students with IEPs that require an individual or shared aide, and they assist behavior intervention specialists to implement students’ behavior intervention plans.

- **General Aides.** Elementary resource-service program (RSPs) teachers each have 2.5 hours of aide time. Middle and high school allocations vary based on student enrollment and number of teachers in the program. Generally, each SDC class has one aide assigned, while an SDC for students with moderate to severe disabilities have two aides. School principals hire these aides.
- **DIPs.** The district’s inclusion teachers assess students referred for additional adult support to help students access the curriculum. The assessment results are shared at IEP meetings for the team’s review and determination of need. The DIPs working with the behavioral intervention specialists are hired and supervised centrally by the special education department.⁹⁵ Most of the district’s paraeducators that are centrally employed are DIPs. The district supervisor, inclusion specialist, and nonpublic agency staff meet at least monthly to discuss students and the possible fading of support.

Focus Group Participant Feedback

Focus group participants expressed the following concerns about paraeducators.

- **Use of Private Agencies.** The district contracts with three private agencies for some 200 behavioral and individual aides--in addition to district-employed aides. We heard many concerns about paraeducators and their lack of training, poor retention, and restrictions on collaboration with student teachers. Most of these concerns applied to one vendor supplying behavioral aides. The team was told that paraeducators hired through vendors were generally better trained than those hired directly by the district, and that they could be replaced if needed. However, some focus group participants disputed the claim that paraeducators from the vendor were well trained. Paraeducators from another vendor participated in a two-week training program focused on skills and knowledge they needed to work with their students and on their assigned tasks. Furthermore, depending on the agency in question, the

⁹⁵ Most of the district’s paraeducators are hired by the site and are general aides.

paraeducators are not permitted to collaborate with teachers about such areas as the student’s daily schedule, and what they need academically. Instead, this activity must be cleared with their supervisor. This requirement appears to interfere with the ongoing communication teachers and paraeducators must have to support their students. Either way, the district does not appear to have a way of differentiating the effectiveness of paraeducators.

- **Multiple Paraprofessionals for the Same Students.** Reportedly, some students have two different paraeducators, one for inclusion and the other for behavior.⁹⁶ This arrangement—though rare—appears to be unnecessary, costly, and confusing for teachers and parents.
- **Paraprofessional Role.** Reportedly, some general educators expect the paraeducator to teach an included student themselves, rather than have the paraeducator support the general and/or special educator’s instruction.
- **IEP Attendance.** The paraeducators that the special education department supervises is permitted to attend IEP meetings only if the special education supervisor approves the activity. It would be more effective and efficient to have this activity approved by appropriate personnel at the school site.

Related Services Staffing Ratios and Focus Group Participant Feedback

Staffing ratios and other data on related-services personnel are summarized below and detailed in Exhibit 4e.

- **Psychologists.** With 29.7 FTE psychologists, including five interns, there was one psychologist for every 219.5 students with IEPs, compared to the district average of 119 students. SCUSD ranked 47th of the 63 reporting districts in their number of psychologists.
- **Speech/Language Pathologist (SLP).** With 50.8 FTE speech/language pathologists (SLPs), there was one SLP for every 128.3 students with IEPs in SCUSD, compared with the district average of 173 students. SCUSD ranked 53rd of 70 reporting districts in their number of SLPs.
- **Other Related Services.** The district provided small FTE numbers for social workers and nurses employed by the special education department, but it did not include personnel hired on a contractual basis or employed by other departments. Because these data are not complete, staff ratios were not computed to compare to other districts. Also, no data were provided for physical therapists (PT). Data for other districts are available in Appendix A.

Exhibit 4e. Average Number Students for Each Speech/Language Pathologist and Psychologist

Related-Services Areas	Psychologists	SLPs	Social Worker	Nurses	OT	PT
Number of SCUSD Staff FTE	29.7	50.8	8	5	2	NA
SCUSD Students w/IEPs-to-Staff	219.5:1	128.3				
All District Average Ratio	119:1	173:1				
Range of All District Ratios	26–596:1	31–376:1				
SCUSD Ranking	47 th of 63	53 rd of 70				

⁹⁶ District reports this situation would occur very rarely based on a student’s individual needs.

Focus Group Participant Feedback

Focus group participants expressed the following concerns about the management of SLPs and psychologists.

- ***Speech/Language Pathologists.*** SCUSD has had to rely on private agencies to contract for at least 10 SLPs to compensate for positions that the district has been unable to fill. Many SLPs have gone to nonpublic agencies, which enable them to have smaller caseloads and better salaries. Reportedly, SLPs leave the district for reasons such as the following:
 - ***Caseloads.*** SLPs have caseloads that begin with some 60 students at the beginning of the school year and usually reach 80 or so by the end of the school year. This arrangement leaves the SLPs no time to work with general education students having speech/language issues that could be addressed through an MTSS framework.
 - ***Professional Learning.*** Rather than discussing strategies for improving instruction during SLP meetings, the focus reportedly is on avoiding litigation.
 - ***SLP Assistants.*** The special education department currently employs five SLP assistants, which the district uses to enhance support for SLPs.⁹⁷
- ***Psychologists.*** The following concerns were expressed in the area of school psychology.
 - ***Role.*** Psychologists primarily are engaged in completing special education assessments, and they have high caseloads. This test-reliant process reflects an outdated model of psychological support. The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) and district psychologists support a role that enables psychologists to engage in MTSS, which includes the gathering and review of data, problem solving, and providing interventions.
 - ***Assessment Tools.*** Psychologists lack tools to support valid and nondiscriminatory assessments.
 - ***Vacancies.*** There are two vacant psychologist positions, and one psychologist is working through a private contract. The five psychology interns do not have much access to training.
- ***Occupational and Physical Therapists.*** Generally, OT/PT services are provided on site and through clinic-based services depending on student need. However, it is not unusual for occupational and physical therapy to be provided at the site of a private vendor, with parents being reimbursed for the child's transportation. This model does not support coordination with the students' special education, which the therapy is supposed to benefit. In addition, this model is not consistent with research that shows the benefits of school-based occupational therapy, including the use of a consultative model for students receiving special education.⁹⁸

⁹⁷ This footnote refers to SLPAs to support SLPs. In addition, CODAs are used to support occupational therapists.

⁹⁸ Occupational Therapy: Effective School-Based Practices within a Policy Context, Prepared for the Center on Personnel Studies in Special Education, June 2007, retrieved from http://copsse.education.ufl.edu/docs/OT_CP_081307/1/OT_CP_081307.pdf. Also see, *What's the difference? Clinic-Based Versus School-Based Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy*, retrieved from <https://blog.easystand.com/2011/04/clinic-based-versus-school-based-physical-therapy-and-occupational-therapy/>.

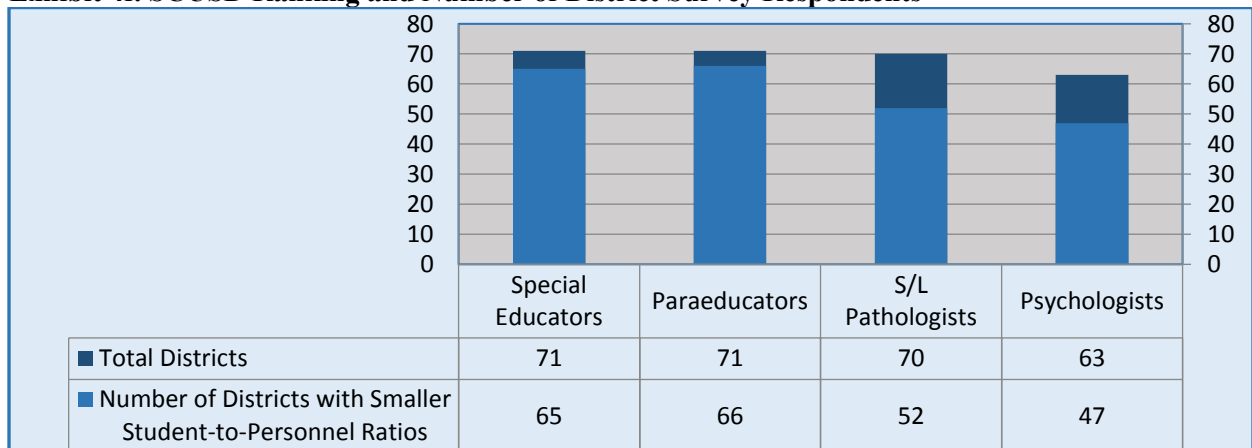
- **Music Therapists.** IDEA does not specifically list music therapy as a related service; however, that list is not exclusive. The state’s Title V regulation does refer to music therapy, which is to be provided by a registered musical therapist. Initially, music therapy was provided to students who lacked mobility and the ability to communicate. The service has expanded to other students regardless of their functioning level. Reportedly, students assessed for this service typically qualify, and there is no exit criteria.
- **Leadership.** Generally, there was concern about the lack of supervision for related services personnel, particularly for individuals who were new to the profession. The SLPs do not currently have a lead provider, but the psychologist has a full caseload and “lead is in name only.” The seven behavior intervention specialists (BIS) do not have a lead BIS, which is especially problematic when one is absent and others have to have their schedules adjusted to cover student needs. There were also overarching concerns that related-service providers are not being asked for feedback on their need for materials and workspace, and replies to their emails are not always timely. Lead personnel can be useful to supervisors when they do not have the expertise related to each provider group supervised. However, the leads need to have their caseloads reduced to have sufficient time to carry out their expected responsibilities.

Overall School District Rankings

Exhibit 4f shows the number of districts having smaller staff-to-student ratios, i.e., fewer students with IEPs per staff member in each area, compared with SCUSD and other districts on which we have data. In all areas, the district had much larger ratios compared to most other districts.

- **Special Educators.** Sixty-five of 71 districts (92 percent) have smaller ratios than SCUSD.
- **Paraprofessionals.** Sixty-six of 71 districts (93 percent) have smaller ratios than SCUSD.
- **Speech/Language Pathologists.** Fifty-two of 70 districts (74 percent) have smaller ratios than SCUSD.
- **Psychologists.** Forty-seven of 63 districts (74 percent) have smaller ratios than SCUSD.

Exhibit 4f. SCUSD Ranking and Number of District Survey Respondents



Compliance and Fiscal Issues

Information in this subsection focuses on issues related to compliance, access to information, dispute resolution, fiscal issues, and accountability.

Compliance Support and Access to Information

The following provides information about the district's data efficacy, maintenance of special education records, the electronic IEP system, the procedural handbook, requirements for IEP meeting participation, and the special education webpage.

- ***SCUSD Data Efficacy.*** The Council's team asked the district to provide data to support the charts, tables, and analysis included in this report. In several areas, the data did not have or did not provide the information requested.
 - ***Special School Reporting.*** The district was asked to report the number of students with IEPs by each of the educational settings that the state and U.S. Department of Education monitors. (State Performance Plan Indicators 5, 9, and 10). The district's report did not show any figures for students placed by the district in special schools operated by the district or nonpublic agencies.⁹⁹ Instead, the educational settings for these students were included in the less restrictive setting of general education less than 40 percent of the time, and between 79 percent and 40 percent of the time.
 - ***Suspensions.*** Rather than providing suspension data on students with and without IEPs by the number of suspension days in the manner monitored by State Performance Plan Indicator 4, the district reported only suspensions for all students by the reasons for suspensions.

Not only were these data important for the Council team to assess district practices, they are also important for the district to assess regularly and before it receives its annual state report based on prior year figures. Only after several discussions was the district able to produce relevant data on the topics that were analyzed in this report.

- ***Maintenance of Special Education Records.*** The district maintains all special education records centrally, even though most of these records are/could be maintained on the district's SEIS system. Furthermore, there is no requirement that schools maintain all special education records for their students. The maintenance of these records at the central office, which requires school office staff to send and special education department staff to manage, is unnecessary and costly. Other school districts, such as the Chicago Public Schools, have not had centralized record filing since the early 1990s.
- ***Usage and Access to Electronic IEP System.*** Various concerns were expressed about training in and access to the district's electronic IEP record system.
 - ***Training.*** There is no structured training in place for new personnel or those who need to supplement their knowledge of the district's IEP system and special education procedures. Although webinars are available, there is a desire for direct professional

⁹⁹ Reportedly, this reporting issue has been corrected.

development. Without a good understanding of the IEP system and relevant procedures, noncompliance issues are more likely to arise.

- **General Educator Access.** Reportedly, general education teachers do not have access to the electronic IEP system--even on a “read only” basis.
- **SIS.** The student information system does not have a field to denote students who have an IEP or 504 disability. This notice, which other districts include in their systems, provides an alert to unaware teachers that there may be information they require to meet student needs.
- **Special Education Procedural Handbook.** The district’s special education procedural handbook, which provides information on special education compliance, is on the special education department’s webpage.¹⁰⁰ Although it is a fairly comprehensive document, the document has a PDF format. As a result, it is not web-based with links to important resources and more detailed information, and it is not easily updated.¹⁰¹ Although the manual is posted online, focus group members (including special education and related services personnel) generally were unaware of its existence.
- **Collective Bargaining Agreement Reference to IEP Meeting Participation.** SCTA/SCUSD Collective Bargaining Agreement’s Appendix D contains written information about which individuals are required to attend IEP meetings. Section 4c) of the Appendix pertains to IEP meeting attendance. The section specifies that “[r]egular education teachers shall have the rights, *but are not required,* to attend IEP meetings.” (Italics added.)

In 1997, IDEA was reauthorized to require at least one of a student’s regular education teachers to participate in the IEP meeting if a student is, or may be, participating in the regular education environment.¹⁰² As part of IDEA’s reauthorization in 2004, a provision was added to allow an IEP team member to be excused or not participate under specific circumstances.¹⁰³ None of these circumstances are based on the regular education teacher’s preference or blanket permission not to attend.

- **Department of Special Education Webpage.** The special education department has a webpage that provides the department’s mission statement, and links to the following five areas of information:
 - Parent Resources with links to the state’s parent notification form and the special education procedural handbook;
 - Community Advisory Committee (CAC) with information for parents;
 - Special education staff with names, phone numbers, and links to send messages;
 - Alternative Dispute Resolution with three ways to resolve disputes without filing complaints or due process hearing requests; and

¹⁰⁰ Retrieved from http://www.scusd.edu/sites/main/files/file-attachments/special_education_procedural_handbook.pdf.

¹⁰¹ See for example, Houston Independent School District’s web-based special education document.¹⁰¹

¹⁰² 34 C.F.R. §300.321(a)(2)

¹⁰³ 34 C.F.R. §300.321(e)

- Local Plan for Special Education.

The department is missing an opportunity to fill its webpage with links to the many publicly available resources that are of interest to district personnel and parents. See, for example, the webpage hosted by the Anchorage School District’s special education department.¹⁰⁴

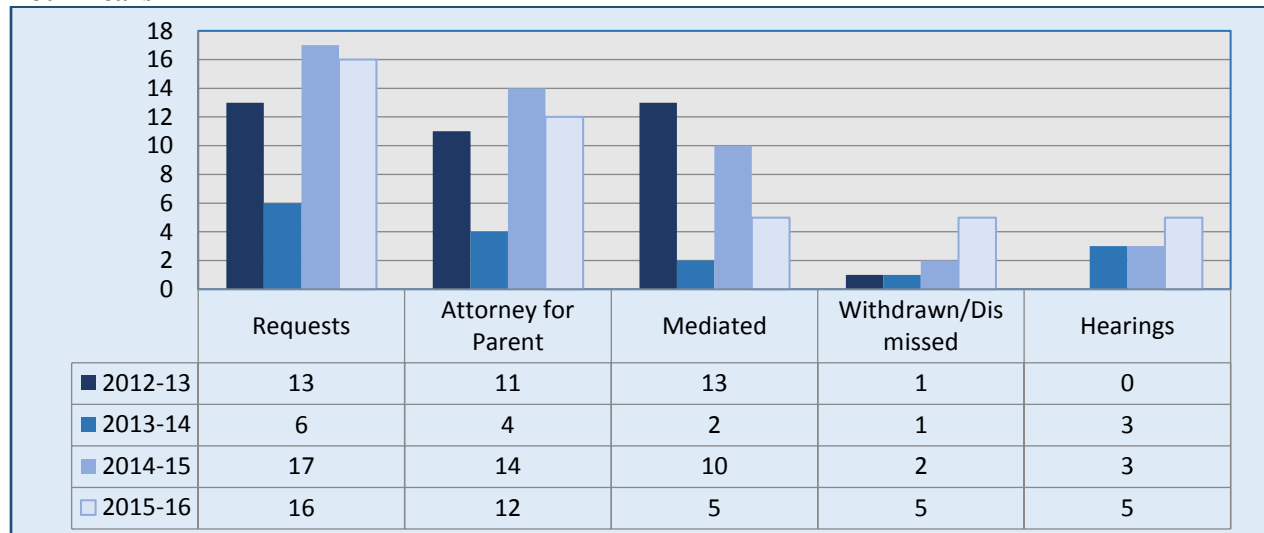
Dispute Resolution

Data on due process hearing requests over the past four years, and information about the reasons for these requests, are provided below.

Due Process Hearing Requests

Special education litigation has historically ebbed and flowed depending on issues within the community, relationships with sites and central staff, and the impact of similar litigation decisions in other areas of the state. Based on information provided by the district for the last four years (2012-13 through 2015-16), parents filed 52 requests for due process hearings. Of these requests, 30 (58 percent) disputes were mediated, 9 (17 percent) were withdrawn or dismissed, and 11 (21 percent) proceeded to a hearing. Attorneys represented parents in 41 (79 percent) of the cases. The yearly figures are shown in Exhibit 4g. Overall the cases reflected 35 different schools. Three schools each had two requests, two schools each had three requests, and the nonpublic schools had five requests. The team was unable to compare these data with other districts.

Exhibit 4g. Number of Due Process Requests, Parent Attorneys, Mediations, and Hearings Over Four Years



Due Process Associated Costs

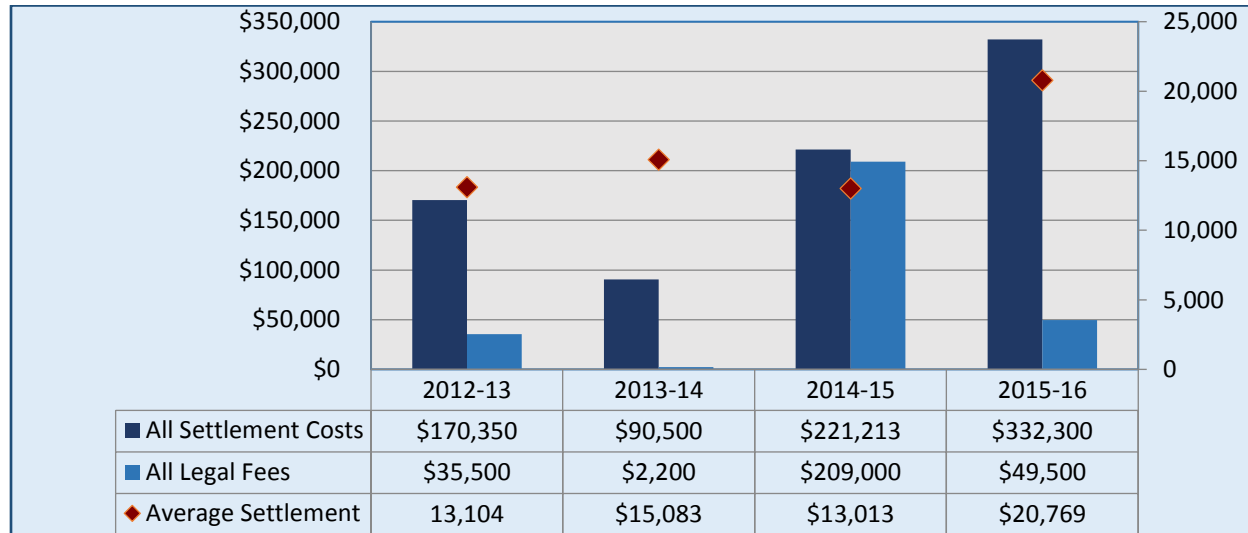
Over these four years, the average settlement cost was \$61,969. The total settlement costs reached \$814,463.00, and legal fees added \$296,200. In total, the district’s cost was \$904,713. Some of these costs may decrease as two cases are being negotiated. Also, legal fees associated

¹⁰⁴ Retrieved from <http://asdk12.org/sped/>.

with one case may change because the case is pending in Federal Court. Exhibit 4h shows these costs by year.

In general, cases are lasting longer than before, so costs are going up. This may be due to the fact that there are more procedures now than in the past, and there is an increase in time opposing counsel is calling witnesses and presenting evidence. Moreover, the office of administrative hearings went through a staffing shift in the last few years. There has been substantial turnover in administrative law judges (ALJs), so it is now more common to see judges with little experience in this area. For its part, the special education division has tried out various strategies over the years in terms of training ALJs.

Exhibit 4h. Costs Associated with Due Process Over Four Years



Due Process Hearing Issue Trends

Several major reasons were given to explain the high costs associated with due process.

- **Shifting of Mental Health Services to Schools.** Between 1984 and August 2011, county mental health agencies in California funded and provided such mental health services as: individual, group, and family therapy; case management; and services provided in both community-based and residential treatment programs. These decisions were made through an expanded IEP team decision.¹⁰⁵ The California legislature transferred these services to school districts, beginning with the 2011-2012 school year. All funds previously used to pay for these services were transferred to SELPAs and school districts. Although school districts in other states have always provided these services pursuant to students’ IEPs, this expectation was new for California school districts. Five due process cases during the past four years led to residential treatment; and associated costs can reach more than \$300,000 per child. Prior to 2012-13, SCUSD had no students placed in residential care. One attorney stated that this

¹⁰⁵ “School Psychologists are the Best Equipped to Deliver Mental Health Services in the Schools,” California Association of School Psychologists, retrieved from http://www.casponline.org/pdfs/pdfs/casp_mental_health_papers.pdf.

basis for due process hearing requests is a trend across the 30 California districts she represents.

- ***Shifting Legal Standards.*** There has been some shift by administrative law judges (ALJs) hearing due process cases to depart from the current *Rowley* U.S. Supreme Court standard for determining a student’s “benefit from education” to a higher standard, especially for mental health issues, and deferring to the expertise of school district witnesses. Also, a 9th circuit court case that addressed a student’s out-of-school behavior is having an influence on ALJ considerations.

Overall, focus group participants indicated that the district’s approach to due process was reactive rather than proactive, and involved principals who were not consistently engaged in the special education process, including in mediation and due process. Specifically, the most common procedural compliance issues cited included:

- Proper members of the IEP team not being present at meetings;
- Goals/objectives not being clear and measurable, and periodic progress monitoring reports being missing;
- All IEP designated services not being provided;
- Clear documentation not explaining why services are reduced or terminated;
- Placement offers not being clearly written;
- All areas of suspected disability not being assessed;
- Appropriate and measurable postsecondary transition plans and goals not being developed and implemented;
- Educationally related mental health services and academic supports not being assessed and implemented in a timely manner.

Actions Taken and Planned to Address Legal Issues

According to information provided by district representatives, the following activities are being implemented to address the underlying legal issues that face the district with respect to due process.

- Program specialists are providing monthly training on quality IEP development and implementation/monitoring of IEPs. Such training occurred more frequently prior to the provision of site collaborative time, which was created this school year.
- Administrative staff and program specialists are maintaining strong communication and collaboration with schools to provide support and training when a pattern of deficiency in IEP development and implementation is detected.
- Schools with noted deficiencies are receiving targeted professional learning.
- The special education director and supervisors are attending “difficult” IEP meetings to provide support and guidance to site staff and IEP teams.

- For complicated IEPs, time is being taken after the meeting and before the document is finalized to ensure all decisions are well documented and defensible. Before providing consent, parents are given an ample opportunity to review and reconvene with staff.
- IEP paperwork is being randomly audited at each site to identify areas of needed improvement, monitoring and professional learning for specific case managers.
- Ongoing professional learning is being provided for parents on IEP development, strategies for home, and implementation of the common core curriculum.
- The district is funding an alternate dispute resolution specialist for 2016-17 to provide independent consultation to parents before seeking legal representation.
- An additional program specialist and supervisory position will support the monitoring of more IEPs, and provide a higher level of support to specific sites where training and monitoring is needed

The actions above are proactive and targeted. They do not include, however, any role for principals to play with respect to oversight of special education in their schools. With all responsibility placed on special education department personnel and the absence of accountability by school leaders, disputes may decrease some, but not to the maximum extent possible if more shared ownership existed.

Medi-Cal

Beginning with the 2014-15 school year, the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) increased the required documentation to support Medi-Cal reimbursement, documentation that exceeds federal requirements. To address these issues, the district has implemented a system to support the electronic documentation of Medi-Cal eligible services for all students with IEPs, including those who are enrolled in Medi-Cal. Training was provided to facilitate the documentation process.

Reportedly, personnel are struggling with the new electronic documentation process, and not all personnel are using it to track the services required to bill for Medi-Cal reimbursement. Some personnel feel that their caseloads are too large to document services electronically, or simply record that service notes are on file, which is not sufficient for Medi-Cal. District officials have not communicated a clear message that relevant personnel must use the electronic tracking system to document related services, or indicated the frequency by which information are required to be uploaded. Furthermore, there are no stated consequences for any failure to comply. These circumstances are likely to decrease substantially the district's Medi-Cal reimbursement.

Transportation

In addition to other areas discussed above, transportation services comprise a high special education cost area, and there are various concerns about the effectiveness of these services.

Transportation Costs

During 2015-16, there were 107 special education bus routes to transport students to district, nonpublic, and county school programs. With an average cost of some \$96,000 per driver/route, the service's total cost was over \$10,000,000. Reasons for this high cost include the following:

- ***SDCs and Special Schools.*** The district's reliance on a large proportion of SDCs and special schools to educate students with disabilities.
- ***Bell Times.*** Scheduling common bell times that do not allow for buses to run two routes each day. This is now a common transportation pattern for many urban school districts.

Transportation Effectiveness

Focus group participants expressed the following concerns about transportation services.

- ***Length of Routes.*** Reportedly, most transportation routes are not longer than 60 minutes. However, there were estimates that some routes, including those for preschoolers, run as long as 1.5 hours.
- ***Use of Technology.*** Technology is not used to report each student's transportation needs, which delays communications and service initiation.
- ***Bus Driver Shortage.*** There is a shortage of bus drivers, which has affected the number of buses that can operate. (This is a nationwide issue.)
- ***Shortened School Days.*** In some cases, students have a shortened school day because they arrive late and leave early to accommodate bus-route schedules.

Accountability

In the fall of 2011, the Council of the Great City Schools published its report *Pieces of the Puzzle: Factors in the Improvement of Urban School Districts on the National Assessment of Educational Progress*.¹⁰⁶ The report summarized research the Council conducted with the American Institutes for Research (AIR) on characteristics of urban school districts that had made the greatest academic improvements and had the highest overall performance on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). The first characteristic involved a district's clear statement of goals and districtwide accountability for results. This helps to create a culture of shared responsibility for student achievement.

Other research found similar results and articulated barriers to effective teaching and learning.¹⁰⁷ School districts that effectively support school leadership often demonstrate a capacity to facilitate learning and development, address barriers to learning and teaching, and

¹⁰⁶ Available at

http://www.cgcs.org/cms/lib/DC00001581/Centricity/Domain/4/Pieces%20of%20the%20Puzzle_FullReport.pdf

¹⁰⁷ Toward a School District Infrastructure that More Effectively Addresses Barriers to Learning and Teaching, A Center Policy & Practice Brief, Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA. November 2011, at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/briefs/toward%20a%20school%20district%20infrastructure.pdf>.

govern and manage the district in ways that prioritize good instruction. In pursuing these goals, districts showing improvement have mechanisms for systemic planning, program implementation, evaluation, and accountability. During the team’s review of SCUSD documents and discussions with district personnel, it identified the following issues concerning accountability.

Elements of State Structure

California law requires school districts and schools to develop a Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP), and allocate resources based on a Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF). In addition, the state has established several databases to collect data to assess student achievement and other related indicators. Related but not aligned with these components is the federal Results Driven Accountability framework for students with disabilities.

Local Control and Accountability Plan

California law requires each school district to annually develop an LCAP and complete an associated template to provide details on its actions and expenditures to support student outcomes and overall performance. The LCAP must describe the school district’s and each school’s goals and specific actions to achieve those goals for all pupils and each subgroup of students identified in the Education Code, including students with disabilities. The instructions for completing the LCAP are detailed, and include a requirement for the meaningful engagement of parents, students, and other stakeholders, including those representing relevant subgroups of students.

The purpose of the LCAP is to link transparency and accountability directly to the local budgeting process, and pair local level fiscal and instructional planning with stakeholders to ensure “more cooperative and comprehensive discussions about how to improve outcomes for all students.”¹⁰⁸ But as of March 2015, the California statewide special education task force reported that California still had separate instructional services, accountability patterns, and reporting requirements for students with disabilities. Specifically, the state had not embedded the federal Results Driven Accountability indicators within the LCAP framework. “This separation contributes to a special education system that is ‘siloe’d’ in much of its implementation and is less effective than it could be.”¹⁰⁹

Local Control Funding Formula

In addition to the LCAP, the state’s LCFF was designed to ensure that students receive the appropriate supports and services by providing more funding for students with the greatest needs, specifically English language learners, low-income students, and foster youth. However, the LCFF does not direct special education dollars, and “it remains to be seen how the separate special education dollars fit into this picture, and more importantly, how students who have disabilities and other needs will be served.”¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸, page 1, retrieved from <http://www.smcoe.org/assets/files/about-smcoe/superintendents-office/statewide-special-education-task-force/Task%20Force%20Report%205.18.15.pdf>.

¹⁰⁹ *Id.*

¹¹⁰ *Id.* at page 24.

SCUSD Accountability, Core Values, and Practices

The information below reviews how the district is using its Single Plan of Achievement, Strategic Plan, and data, and how it is balancing school autonomy and districtwide expectations to establish a shared accountability for all students, students with disabilities in particular.

Single Plan of Achievement

SCUSD uses the Single Plan for Student Achievement template to implement the state's LCAP requirement. Although the Single Plan is used to address Title I and LCAP expenditures, the template specifically states that it includes students with disabilities. Our review of the template provided to the Council team included achievement data for all students, but it was not sorted by subgroup. Focus groups reported to the Council team that students with disabilities were not included in school priorities or specified implementation activities.

According to district representatives, a new LCAP is being developed, along with a new benchmark system and a new set of key performance indicators (KPIs). Also, staff members expect to complete a data dashboard by mid-February. While the dashboard will include additional data strands, another upgrade is anticipated to make the dashboard more robust. There is an understanding that students with disabilities will be included in this accountability system.

SCUSD's Strategic Plan

The district's Strategic Plan for 2016-2021 includes accountability as one of its four core values. Specifically, SCUSD is committed "to transparency and ongoing review of data [to] create a culture focused on results and continuous improvement in a fiscally sustainable manner."

The Strategic Plan cites the following four goals for the district:

- College, career and life-ready graduates;
- Safe, emotionally healthy and engaged students;
- Family and community empowerment; and
- Operational excellence.

The Council's team reviewed the Strategic Plan actions and proposed services to identify components that specifically affected students with disabilities. In this regard, the Plan calls for the expansion and improvement of interventions and academic supports for all students in order to close the achievement gap by:

- Building systems that lead to positive outcomes for students of color, low income, English learners, foster and homeless youth, students with disabilities, and all underperforming demographic groups;
- Implementing MTSS in order to provide a broad set of solutions for struggling students, and
- Reducing disproportional representation of subgroups in special education.

The action related to the provision of culturally relevant social, emotional, and health supports to ensure positive school climates is particularly relevant to students with disabilities. Also, the area of increasing parent empowerment would include the CAC.

Data

California's system of data collection makes it difficult for the state's school districts, including SCUSD, to produce consistent reports across different databases. Currently, the state stores information about students receiving special education in the following databases and/or management systems: California Special Education Management Information System (CASEMIS), California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data system (CALPADS), California Basic Educational Data System (CBEDS), the Special Education Non-Public School and Agency Database, and the Special Education Personnel Database. These databases have inconsistent definitions and time periods for data collection, which causes reports to be dramatically different from each other. These differences affect the ability to accurately and consistently identify and monitor students receiving special education, and to evaluate service effectiveness. As a result, there are concerns about the validity and reliability of data, including data reported to ED's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), and the extent to which it is useful to inform policy.¹¹¹

District representatives view the state as emerging from a "data desert," which has significantly impacted the district. School districts are responsible for their own data strands, for how to use the data, and how to introduce growth measures at the school site. There is a tension between the district and SCTA regarding the transparency of data. While the SCTA's position prevents the public and school stakeholders from understanding each school's outcomes compared to others in the district, it is also cognizant of unanticipated consequences that could arise.

School Autonomy vs. Districtwide Expectations

Our discussions with focus group participants revealed a strong perception that the district's current culture is based in school autonomy with no accountability. The following examples show the basis for this perception.

- ***Funding Decisions.*** Many decisions regarding how funds are used are made at the school level. As discussed throughout this report, local decision-making has resulted in fragmented and inconsistent access to evidence-based materials and practices across the district. There is concern that funds are being used for ineffective activities.
- ***Compliant Operations.*** Principals are not consistently involved with their staff to proactively address special education compliance issues. Those who are involved are aware of IEP data that shows approaching due dates for evaluations/IEP meetings, and dates that have not been met. They also ensure that IEPs being developed are meaningful for each child.
- ***Area Assistant Superintendents.*** There is a perception that the AASs have low expectations for principal performance around special education, and spend more time reacting to problematic and operational issues rather than to activities supporting instruction.

¹¹¹ *Id.* At page 46.

- ***Finger Pointing.*** While some feel there is no accountability for teacher performance, others cite the lack of accountability for principals, as well as for central office. Much of this finger pointing is the result of unclear expectations that are accompanied by inadequate human and physical resources.

A more centralized approach would help to address these issues by providing districtwide performance indicators, guidance on the purchasing of evidence-based materials, provision of professional learning, etc. However, with a lack of trust by principals and school-based staff in central office decision-making, any radical movement in this regard is likely to be met with a high level of resistance. A collaborative process between schools and central office is necessary for a balanced and effective outcome. Such a process should produce a system of shared accountability for all students, including students with disabilities, which is based on expectations and consequences, and includes technical assistance and support.

AREAS OF STRENGTH

The following are areas of strength in the district's support for teaching and learning of students with disabilities.

- ***Central Office Collaboration.*** Several meetings are scheduled for the executive cabinet, extended cabinet, academic team, and networks to meet regularly. Also, informal collaboration between departments occurs on a periodic basis.
- ***Special Education Department Operation.*** With a few exceptions, the special education director is viewed positively, especially considering her workload and responsibilities. Also, department personnel we met appear to be committed to students and eager to improve their support for schools. Of special note is the department's employment of personnel dedicated to special education financial transactions.
- ***Partnership with SAC State University.*** The district is revitalizing a prior partnership with SAC State University to recruit graduating teachers before other districts do. Also, by using some teacher credential changes applicable to intern programs, the district hopes to have a cohort of 24 teachers next school year.
- ***Special Education Procedural Handbook.*** The district's special education procedural handbook, which provides information on special education compliance, is on the special education department's webpage reference list of parent resources.
- ***Activities Designed to Address Due Process Issues.*** The special education department has taken various steps to address the underlying legal issues related to due process, such as training, monitoring, involvement in complex IEP meetings, and alternate dispute resolution.
- ***Medi-Cal.*** The district has implemented a system to support the electronic documentation of Medi-Cal-eligible services for all students with IEPs, including those who are enrolled in Medi-Cal. Training was provided to facilitate the documentation process.
- ***Single Plan of Achievement.*** The district's Single Plan of Achievement Plan template contains no figures on disaggregated subgroups, such as students with disabilities.

Recognizing the need to include students with disabilities, the district is developing a new LCAP document, benchmark system, data dashboard, and KPIs.

- **Strategic Plan.** The district's Strategic Plan has sound core values and goals, which are inclusive of students with disabilities and articulate support for the CAC and the development of an MTSS framework and practices.
- **Data.** District representatives recognize the need to improve the district's data collection and reporting capacities.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

The following describes opportunities to improve teaching and learning for students with disabilities.

Central Office Collaboration

The organization of the central office could be improved to maximize its support for and collaboration with schools. The district does not appear to have a clear vision and theory of action that is consistently communicated through a common language. The district is functioning as a system of schools that provides inconsistent teaching and learning opportunities, rather than a school system built on a foundation of equity and excellence. Schools have a high degree of autonomy without recognized non-negotiables. A number of circumstances, such as those described below, have produced a lack of shared ownership and accountability for special education.

- **Siloed Teaching & Learning Support.** Personnel supporting teaching and learning are not aligned for maximum effect. Leadership is fragmented by the absence of area assistant superintendents from the executive cabinet and their operational distance from the academic office. Network principal meetings are not structured to maximize communication and problem solving. AASs must supervise both principals and large districtwide departments and programs. Moreover, AASs and special education program specialists do not have the same sets of schools. Two sets of personnel support the physical health needs of students, and four sets of personnel support the social/emotional well-being of students. Also, there is separate administration for special education and Section 504 student services.
- **Disjointed District/School Visions and Actions.** Because of the lack of recognized non-negotiables, AASs are less able to hold principals accountable for student outcomes. Principals filter information to protect their schools from district mandates they do not fully embrace, and are disinclined to engage with central office personnel when it does not meet their individual purposes.
- **Insufficient Cross-Departmental and School Collaboration.** Insufficient collaboration has contributed to special education personnel vacancies, transportation issues, ineffective and untimely placement of students with IEPs from the centralized enrollment center, and inconsistent and untimely responses to schools by central office personnel.

To leverage the knowledge and expertise of SCUSD leaders and staff members we met, personnel need to be better aligned to maximize their collective efforts.

Administration and Operation of Special Education

- ***Special Education Department's Organization and Operation.*** As with other central office departments, special education was cut dramatically in 2010, which has made it more difficult for personnel to carry out their responsibilities. Nevertheless, the special education department's organization is not structured for maximum effectiveness. Although necessary, the program specialists' primary focus on compliance and gatekeeping leaves little time for them to support teaching and learning. There are also concerns related to the management of department assistants. The absence of shared responsibility and interdisciplinary accountability between central office and schools exacerbates these issues.
- ***Student/Personnel Ratios.*** Based on survey data that the Council team has collected, SCUSD has larger student-per-staff ratios compared to 70 other urban school districts. When compared to the Oakland Unified School District, for instance, which we recently reviewed, Sacramento City's ratios were larger except for paraprofessionals (which was also large). Smaller ratios in districts other than SCUSD or Oakland Unified School District are: special educators (92 percent and 44 percent, respectively), paraprofessionals (93 percent and 96 percent, respectively), speech/language pathologists (74 percent and 69 percent, respectively), and psychologists (74 percent and 33 percent, respectively). Complete data were not provided for social workers, nurses, occupational therapists (OT), and physical therapists (PT).
- ***Personnel Vacancies.*** Also, the presence of teacher, paraprofessional, speech/language pathologist, and psychologist vacancies has an impact on teaching and learning, and may increase reliance on the use of designated instructional paraprofessionals. A provision of the SCTA contract that limits district hiring for school positions until July 1st of each year is viewed as having a negative impact on the district's hiring prospects. Several methods used to boost teacher hires, i.e., the early hiring of a teaching pool for non-specified schools and the recruitment of teachers from the Philippines, have been useful in helping to fill vacant positions, but these efforts have been insufficient. There is also an inconsistent understanding about a principal's authority to hire special educators. These issues brought into question the lack of a full-time human resources staff member to focus on this complex personnel area.
- ***Paraprofessional Usage.*** The district has relied on three private agencies to hire some 200 behavior and individual aides to supplement paraprofessionals who are district employed. There are many concerns about one vendor, in particular, with respect to their training and ability to communicate with school personnel.
- ***Personnel Concerns.*** Additional concerns related to speech/language pathologists include high caseloads that leave little opportunity for the provision of general education interventions, little administrative support, and limited access to professional learning. Concerns related to psychologists include an overreliance on assessments. Also, some occupational and physical therapy offerings depend on students traveling off-site for private therapy, which does not foster collaboration with teachers. Music therapy is provided without any apparent guidance for determining need. Finally, the limited supervision of related-services providers is problematic. This circumstance is a result of the supervisors' large span of responsibilities.

Compliance

- ***Data and Special Education Records.*** The district does not routinely report educational setting and suspension data for students in special education in a manner that is aligned with state and federal reporting templates. The district maintains all special education records centrally even though most of these records are/could be maintained on the district's SEIS system. Furthermore, although the district uses an electronic IEP record system, there were concerns about training, access by general educators, and migration of disability data to the student information system.
- ***Special Education Procedural Handbook.*** The district's document is not web-based with links to important resources and more detailed information, and is not readily assessable to stakeholders or able to be updated easily.¹¹² Also, the special education webpage has minimal information and is underutilized as a mechanism for communicating with parents and other stakeholders. Information contained in the SCTA/SCUSD Appendix D at Section 4c) pertaining to IEP attendance by regular education teachers is inconsistent with the handbook and federal/state requirements.
- ***Dispute Resolution.*** Settlement and legal costs associated with due process have increased over the last several years. The following issues are thought to be reasons: the shifting of state mental health services, including residential placement, from counties to schools; the local legal trend that has increased the standard for determining a student's benefit from education; procedural errors; and a lack of principal leadership and oversight.

Fiscal Issues

- ***Transportation.*** Transportation services are a high special education cost area, and there are various concerns about the effectiveness of these services. These concerns are related to the transportation of students to SDCs and special schools, the use of common bell times, long bus routes, a lack of technology for efficiency and communication, driver shortages, and routes that result in shortened school days for some students.
- ***Medi-Cal.*** Not all related services personnel are using the electronic process to track services required to bill for Medi-Cal reimbursement. There does not appear to be sufficient proactive steps being taken to address documentation concerns, provide written expectations, or articulate consequences for failure to comply. These circumstances are likely to substantially decrease the district's Medi-Cal reimbursement.

Accountability

- ***Single Plan of Achievement.*** District schools annually complete a Single Plan of Achievement template to show how each will expend Title I and other funds. Although the Plan is intended to include student subgroups, including students with disabilities, the sample template provided to the Council team contained no figures with disaggregated subgroups.

¹¹² See for example, Houston Independent School District's web-based special education document.¹¹²

- **Data.** The district and SCTA have not resolved differences regarding the transparency of school-based data, and the extent to which various data outcomes will be visible to stakeholders.
- **School Autonomy vs. Districtwide Expectations.** There is a strong perception that the district's current culture is based on school autonomy with no accountability. Critical areas that are impacted include funding decisions, special education compliance, the role of area assistant superintendents, and unclear expectations accompanied by inadequate human and physical resources.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are offered to improve support for teaching and learning for students with disabilities.

4. **Interoffice Collaboration.** With a representative group of principals, the AASs, the deputy superintendent, and the chief academic officer, discuss the optimum configuration for principals to communicate with each other and central office leadership. Follow up based on these discussions.
 5. **Special Education and Support Services Organization.** Consider the following organization proposal to more effectively support students with disabilities as well as all students with respect to social/emotional learning and physical/mental health concerns. (See Appendix B for a proposed organization table.)
 - a. **Department of Special Education and Student Support Services.** Group together support for special education and student support services to improve collaboration between personnel with expertise in social/emotional learning and students with physical and mental health concerns. Have an executive director with three direct reports in the following areas: 1) specially designed instruction, 2) SELPA/special education operations, and 3) student support services. Allocate office technicians to each area based on need, and have appropriate personnel attend CAO meetings.
 - b. **Specially Designed Instruction.** Have two supervisors report to the director: one for area support and the other for districtwide services.
 - **Area Support.** Have the following personnel report to the area support supervisor, assigning them to schools that align with a single area assistant superintendent –
 - Program specialists*
 - Behavior intervention specialists who collaborate with student support services personnel*
 - Inclusive practice coaches
 - Designated instructional paraprofessionals.* Employ the DIPs at the school site when supporting specific students pursuant to their IEPs, and have principals provide supervision. Maintain a relatively small number of DIPs to deploy for crisis intervention.
- Have the area support unit manage the following additional functions –
- Placement of new students with IEPs

- SDC coordination
- Behavior review and pre-expulsion hearings for students with IEPs (with student hearing/placement director)
- Field trips
- ***Districtwide Services.*** Have the following personnel report to the districtwide services supervisor –
 - Speech/language pathologists and hearing interpreters*
 - Preschool coordination
 - Home/hospital instruction*
 - Assistive technology*
 - Occupational therapy*
 - Postsecondary transition*
 - Adapted PE*
 - Extended school year coordination

Have the districtwide unit also manage the following additional functions –

- Deaf Task Force
- Coordination of staff development
- Residential placement
- Special Arts program
- County Office of Education programs
- Alternate standards curriculum
- Extended school year coordination
- ***Other Specially Designed Instruction Personnel***
 - Based on the number of personnel in each area designated with an asterisk, designate leadership for the area to provide support to the respective group members and to coordinate activities with the director and other leadership personnel within and outside of the specially designed instruction unit. This structure is essential to support communication, supervision, and collaboration.
 - Employ DIPs at the school site when supporting specific students pursuant to IEPs with principal supervision.¹¹³ Maintain a relatively small number of DIPs by area to deploy for crisis intervention.
 - Employ preschool personnel at the school site. Maintain specially designed instruction coordination for preschool students with IEPs in collaboration with administrative support for general education preschoolers.
 - Move responsibility for processing paperwork for special education teachers with students over the contract limit to human resources.
 - Have preschool personnel be employed at the school site, but maintain support for preschool coordination.

- c. ***SELPA/Special Education Operations.*** . Have the SELPA/Special Education Operations director, with SELPA support staff, the budget technician, and others as appropriate –

¹¹³ Note Recommendation 6c regarding the review of paraprofessionals and their respective roles, and employment status.

- Coordinate policy and compliance requirements
- Shift to a web-based special education policy and procedures information system
- Manage due process, complaint management, and alternate dispute resolution
- Coordinate internal monitoring
- Coordinate surrogate parents
- Coordinate and track the provision of compensatory education and tutoring.

d. *Student Support Services.* Have the following units report to the student support services director—

- Social workers, including those that support students with IEPs
- School psychologists
- Social/emotional learning
- Nurses/health aides
- Behavior/reentry
- Youth development
- Family and community partnerships

With the exception of social workers and health aides supporting students with IEPs and psychologists, these units are currently housed together. The combination of these personnel will enable staff to better collaborate, support students with common issues, manage Section 504, and manage Medi-Cal.

6. *School-Based Special Education Personnel.* Ensure that personnel who support students with IEPs are employed in sufficient numbers, and are available to meet student needs.

a. *Student-Staff Ratios.* On a regular basis with the AAS, review the staffing ratios summarized in this report (see Appendix A). *NOTE: Relatively low or high student-to-personnel ratios do not necessarily mean that any given area is staffed inappropriately; however, the ratios should prompt further review.* Ensure that adequate numbers of special education and related-services personnel are at each school to carry out their expected responsibilities. Based on a full review, consider the changes needed in the short and long term.

a. *Hiring Practices.* Review hiring practices for special educators and paraprofessionals employed by the district, and modify them if necessary to allow principals to select staff for their schools. Provide assistance to principals for them to carry out this responsibility, such as prescreening and identifying high-quality applicants. Under the current collective bargaining agreement terms, continue to have an applicant pool, and enable principals to select personnel for the next school year at the appropriate time. Encourage principals with expected or potential vacancies to participate in the process of selecting personnel from the applicant pool to increase their satisfaction with the quality of hires. Consider moving the induction program for all personnel to human resources, and ensure that it provides new personnel, especially those who come from other countries, with the training they need to be successful. Develop and implement a support program for new teachers from other countries in order to facilitate their adjustment to the culture, community and school based responsibilities of teaching and learning in the United States.

b. **Staff Shortages, Retention, and Recruitment.** Convene a diverse group of stakeholders such as principals, special educators, CAC representatives, and SCTA representatives. Have a high-level district official with decision-making authority convene the group to—

- **Recruitment/Retention.** Specifically, the group should discuss the need to recruit special education, paraprofessional, and related services personnel vacancies, and to address relevant high staff turnover. Have the group identify proactive and aggressive strategies to:
 - Promote recruitment/retention (including those discussed in this report);
 - Improve communication about high-quality applicants;
 - Support internship programs, such as the collaboration with Cal State to recruit speech/language pathologists;
 - Use assistants to support related services personnel;
 - Improve working conditions and access to essential materials, such as assessment tools for psychologists; and
 - Bolster recruitment activities.

Include in these strategies the need for bilingual personnel with special education and related-services expertise. Until the vacancy issues are resolved, have human resources consider committing a full-time person to implementing these strategies with the assistance, and continue to review the success of these and other strategies.

- **Paraprofessional Usage.** The group should consider –
 - **An audit.** Auditing contractual aides would help the district determine the quality of training, retention, communication (between teacher and aide), and cost effectiveness. Depending on the results, reconsider the balance between district and private employment.
 - **Roles.** The district should review the roles of the three paraprofessionals types, and the value of this and other approaches, such as using a highly trained group of paraeducators to train and support one set of paraprofessionals for students with IEPs;
 - **Communication.** The district should also review the differences between how educators and paraprofessionals are allowed to communicate with schools based on the paraprofessionals' hiring status, as well as their participation in IEP meetings and other mechanisms for collaboration.

Based on the outcome of these discussions, develop a plan for improving the usage and effectiveness of paraprofessionals.

7. **Compliance Support and Access to Information.** Consider the following actions to improve compliance and access to student special education records.

a. **Special Education Procedure Manual.** Update on an annual basis the *Special Education Procedures* document to include relevant written expectations developed in accordance with these recommendations. Provide public access to the information by posting it as a webpage with links to more detailed information and online resources. Collaborate with

CAC and other stakeholders to identify relevant information and resource links. Ensure staff members are available to update the information regularly with current information and resources. Provide training to stakeholders and parents to boost their understanding of the *Procedures*' contents. Ensure training is accessible to parents with diverse linguistic needs and sensory limitations.

- b. SCUSD/SCTA Collective Bargaining Agreement.* Ensure all provisions, such as attendance of regular education teachers at IEP meetings, comply with federal and state laws.
- c. Department of Special Education Webpage.* To the extent possible, enhance the special education webpage with links to information for stakeholders, including district and publicly available resources.¹¹⁴
- d. Dispute Resolution.* To reduce future disputes and resolve disputes quickly and effectively, consider the following actions—

 - **High Level Attention.** Provide information to the extended cabinet and a representative group of principals on the costs of special education disputes and current processes in order to facilitate a discussion about the role and accountability of principals for the operation and administration of special education at their respective school sites.
 - **Principal Involvement.** Establish written expectations for principals, and how they will be supported and monitored. As part of these expectations, provide principals with CDE, OCR, and due process complaints, and have principals take a leading role in their resolution. Have principals attend due process hearings to address issues in their schools.
 - **AASs.** Involve area assistant superintendents to support compliance, resolve complaints, and address due process matters.
 - **Red Alerts.** Establish a “red alert” system for validated complaints and due process to inform all relevant stakeholders about the issues and ways to avoid them in the future.
- e. Special Education Records.* Consider the following actions to improve access to student special education information –

 - **Training.** Ensure hands-on special education IEP training is available for new personnel and for those who need to supplement their knowledge to support the development of effective IEPs and compliance practices.
 - **Access.** Provide general educators with access to the IEP system, using read only access for inapplicable provisions.
 - **Notice.** Add a disability field for IEPs and Section 504 to the student information system to notify teachers of students with disabilities, and the need to obtain additional information. If possible, migrate this data from other systems to avoid double entry of the information.

¹¹⁴ See, for example, the Anchorage School District’s special education webpage, retrieved from <http://asdk12.org/sped/>.

- **Record Maintenance.** Develop a plan to stop sending all special education records to the central office and require schools to maintain the records according to privacy requirements. To the maximum extent, scan records to the electronic system to avoid record loss and to maximize their organization.
8. **Fiscal Considerations.** Pursue the following activities to enhance revenue and shift more funds toward improving instruction at home schools, schools of choice, and SDCs.
- a. **Medicaid Revenue Enhancement.** To increase Medicaid revenue, survey users of the district's new electronic documentation process through focus groups, an electronic survey, or other means to understand the challenges associated with its use. Take follow up actions based on the results, and execute accountability for usage and monitoring, including central office, school leadership, and others users of the system. Establish a group that will continually review usage and monitoring trends, and identify ways to maximize billing opportunities.
 - b. **Potential Transportation Efficiencies.** Consider the following actions to enhance transportation efficiency.
 - **Maximize Technology.** To make transportation more efficient, research how other school districts have used technology to enhance the communication of student needs. As quickly as possible, move to an electronic process for managing requests for transportation. Council staff can provide support for this activity.
 - **Reduce Long Routes.** Identify all students by the length of their bus routes to address the routes that are excessive.¹¹⁵ Based on this information, identify ways to reduce the routes.
 - **Comparable Length of School Day.** Review student routes to ensure that no student with IEPs have a shortened school day due to transportation schedules.
 - **Transportation Point Person.** Establish a point person in the transportation department to handle special education busing reimbursement.¹¹⁶
 - c. **Long-Term Capacity Building.** Begin putting together a long-term plan to reduce the district's reliance on special schools. For such a plan to be successful, the district must build the capacity of each school to provide appropriate and equitable educational support. To support this process, consider the amount of transportation savings, and the expertise of district staff (including John Morse school personnel) that can be leveraged to build school capacity. (See also Recommendation 3c.)
9. **Shared Accountability for Student Achievement.** Consider the following actions that would strengthen the district's shared accountability for student achievement.
- a. **State Structure.** Work with other school districts to influence the CDE and legislature if necessary, to implement the March 2015 California statewide special education task force recommendations. Specifically, there is a need for universal accountability patterns and

¹¹⁵ Districts with good technology are able to sort this data easily and quickly.

¹¹⁶ Team recognizes there is a transportation supervisor in the special education department but this responsibility needs to be embedded within the district's transportation department to maximize coordination with transportation functions.

reporting requirements for all students, including those with disabilities, and the inclusion of the federal Results Driven Accountability indicators within the LCAP framework.

- b. Single Plan of Achievement and Data Dashboard.* Ensure that school-based planning and dashboards include data and actions relevant to the achievement of students with disabilities, including special education state performance plan indicators.
 - c. Strategic Plan.* Supplement the district's next iteration of its strategic plan with action necessary for the implementation of the Council team's recommendations.
 - d. Data.* Review all the data elements contained in these recommendations and consolidate them into a comprehensive plan for implementation. (See Chapter 4's Recommendation Matrix, which identifies data and reporting elements.) As part of SCUSD's work with other districts pursuant to Recommendation 10a, address the state data collection issues that make reporting unnecessarily complex and time consuming.
 - e. SCUSD/SCTA Collective Bargaining Agreement.* Consider requesting Council assistance in facilitating discussions between the SCUSD and SCTA to help resolve the issues identified in this report as well as others that may exist.
 - f. Professional Learning.* Review all the recommendations related to professional learning to map out coordinated implementation activities. (See Chapter 4's Recommendation Matrix, which identifies training components.)
 - g. Shared Accountability for Actions.* Review the information in this report and relevant recommendations pertaining to the need for districtwide expectations, and shared accountability with school and district personnel. Establish clear processes that track when and how resources and training have been made available, and follow up on initiatives that have been announced or launched. There is no justification for actions not carried out as expected. (See Chapter 4's Recommendation Matrix, which identifies accountability components.)
- 10. Internal Project Manager.** Consider appointing an internal project manager reporting to the superintendent to support the execution of the district's plan and initiatives, including activities to follow up on the recommendations in this report. Have the project manager report on relevant data, the status of implementation, and barriers to execution that require interdepartmental collaboration, the superintendent's involvement, or the need for any adjustments to the plan.

CHAPTER 4. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter summarizes the recommendations made in Chapter 3 in two ways. The first way lists the recommendations and the functional categories into which each one falls. The categories include accountability, planning, criteria/process, training, data/reports, and cross-references. The second way simply lists all the recommendations so the reader can see them in one place.

Recommendation Matrix

The exhibit below lists the recommendations from the previous chapter in table form corresponding to their functional categories.

Recommendations	Planning	Standards/Procedures	Training	Data/Reports/Tech	Accountability
I. Multi-tiered Systems of Support					
1. Broad, Systemwide MTSS Framework, and Plan for Implementation and Oversight. Using information from CDE’s website as well as other sources, develop and communicate a comprehensive written vision, framework, and action plan that supports MTSS.					
f. District and School-based Leadership MTSS Teams. Establish leadership teams at the district and school levels to support MTSS planning and oversee implementation activities.	X				
b. Implementation Plan. Have the district MTSS leadership team evaluate its current program infrastructure as it develops its MTSS framework and implementation plan, e.g., universal screeners, formative assessments, standard protocols for intervention/support, curricular materials, supplemental and intensive resources, data platforms, use of data, professional learning, budget allocations, etc. Embed universal design for learning (UDL) into the MTSS framework, and incorporate the areas discussed below. As a part of the plan include benchmark and on-going district wide and school based progress monitoring to support the evaluation of MTSS implementation. When finalized, post the MTSS implementation plan on the district’s website along with information relevant links to district information/resources, and publicly available resources. Ensure that the district’s Strategic Plan intentionally embeds and utilizes the MTSS framework in its goals and activities. Embed relevant aspects of the MTSS framework in the district’s Strategic Plan and school-based planning templates.	X	X			
c. Map Resources and Analyze Gaps. As part of a comprehensive planning process, conduct an assessment of current MTSS-related human and material resources provided by the district and independently funded by schools. As part of this process, consider the current roles of school psychologists and speech/language pathologists, and how they may be adjusted/reallocated to support students proactively within general education. Compare these resources to evidence-based resources in use, and plan for filling gaps. Conduct a data analysis of currently used resources by schools to	X			X	

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	evaluate the return on investment in terms of improved student outcomes. Identify which are supporting/accelerating student learning and those that are not. Consider having the district sponsor appropriate evidence-based resources from which all schools can choose to implement. As part of this process, consider how additional Title I resources provided to schools, can enhance the district provided resources based on the needs of students.				
<i>d. Written Expectations.</i> Establish a school board policy and written expectations for the district’s MTSS framework (for academics in addition to social/emotional learning/restorative justice) that is consistent with the district’s theory of action. Ensure that the MTSS framework includes all grades, and supports linguistically appropriate and culturally competent instruction. Develop a multi-year implementation plan that includes regular board updates.	X	X			
<i>e. Professional Learning.</i> Based on the MTSS framework, implementation plan, and written expectations, develop a professional-learning curriculum that is targeted to different audiences, e.g., special education teachers, related-services personnel, paraprofessionals, parents, etc. Provide at least four to five days of training for school-based leadership teams for two consecutive years. Ground training in the Learning Forward Standards for Professional Learning. Consider and budget for how access to training will be supported, e.g., through the use of stipends, funds for substitute coverage, incentives for after-school and Saturday training, summer training, etc. Embed specified components in the district’s MTSS implementation plan.			X		
<i>g. Data Analysis and Reports.</i> Establish an early warning system that highlights students on track for graduation. Ensure key performance indicators, across elementary, middle and high schools are established data collection systems, and analysis (e.g., custom reports) are designed to enable the superintendent, administrators, principals, teachers, and related-services personnel to review student growth, identify patterns, solve problems, and make informed decisions.				X	
<i>h. Monitoring and Accountability.</i> Evaluate the effectiveness, fidelity, and results of MTSS implementation, and include specified areas in the assessment.					X
II. Special Education Demographics and Referral/Eligibility for Services					
2. <i>Special Education Referral, Assessment, and Eligibility.</i> Improve consistency and appropriateness of referrals, assessments, and eligibility decisions for special education.					
<i>a. Data Review.</i> With a multidisciplinary team of individuals inside and outside of the special education department, review Exhibits 2a through 2i and their associated analysis (along with other relevant data), and develop a hypothesis about areas, including those identified in the recommendations.				X	
<i>b. Written Expectations.</i> For any area that the multi-disciplinary team identifies as problematic, review current processes for referral, assessment, and eligibility, and amend those processes to provide more guidance. Ensure that the special education procedural manual and ELL master plan incorporate the additional guidance. Have both documents provide appropriate information regarding translation services for and written notices to parents who are ELL, and ensure that assessments are linguistically		X			

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Recommendations	Planning	Standards/Procedures	Training	Data/Repts/Tech	Accountability
and culturally appropriate for ELL students. Specify that personnel who assess students should have access to sufficient and all current assessment tools.					
c. <i>Educationally Related Mental Health Services (ERMHS) Teams.</i> With a representative group of special education department personnel and school-based personnel knowledgeable about the ERMHS process, review concerns discussed in this report and revise the process so that the team’s expertise can be used more appropriately to support teaching and learning, and schools are more accountable for following written expectations.		X			
d. <i>Data Analysis and Reports.</i> Develop user-friendly summary reports for district leadership showing data similar to, and as appropriate in addition to Exhibits 2a - 2i. Share data by area and by school. As part of this process, address issues making it difficult for the district to provide the Council team with data aligned with the state performance plan indicators for special education (i.e., special/residential schools and suspensions), and supplement data with these reports. Consider how these data are attended to and reviewed by district leadership on a regular basis.				X	
e. <i>Differentiated Professional Learning.</i> Plan for and provide all relevant district stakeholders with the professional learning they need to implement the recommendations in this section. As part of this process, have special education and ELL department personnel collaborate on the referral and assessment needs of ELL students. (Coordinate this activity with Recommendation 1f.)			X		
f. <i>Monitoring and Accountability.</i> Develop a process for ongoing monitoring of expected referral, evaluation, and eligibility practices. Rather than using a traditional record-review model, review files so that school-based personnel are aware of issues and problems, and will better understand the need for follow-up action. Enable staff to observe best practices shown by others and receive coaching that will improve their knowledge and skills. (Coordinate this activity with Recommendation 1g.)					X
III. Teaching and Learning for Students with Disabilities					
3. <i>Academic Achievement and Social/Emotional Well-Being for Students with IEPs.</i> Review and address relevant data, and follow-up with actions such as the following –					
a. <i>Data Review.</i> With a multidisciplinary team of individuals in and outside the special education department, review Exhibits 3a through 3q and their accompanying analysis (along with other relevant data), and develop hypothesis about problematic patterns, such as those identified in the recommendations.				X	
h. <i>Inclusive Education Vision.</i> Have the extended cabinet establish a clear and defined vision for the value of inclusivity. Embed in that vision language from the common core state standards website and March 2015 statewide task force on special education to clarify the district’s support for higher academic outcomes and the social/emotional well-being of students. Highlight the importance of providing students educated in general education classes with the differentiated and scaffolded instruction they need to learn. Emphasize that instruction needs to be linguistically appropriate and culturally relevant, and aligned with common core standards. These expectations will be easier to meet as teachers become more familiar with and base their instruction on the principles of UDL. At the same time, the vision should reinforce the importance of	X				

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Recommendations	Planning	Standards/Procedures	Training	Data/Repts/Tech	Accountability
evidence-based academic and positive behavior interventions/supports that increase in intensity with specified student needs. The implementation of this vision will require substantial changes to Appendix D of the SCUSD/SCTA collective bargaining agreement, which portrays inclusive education as occurring in three static models.					
c. Implementation Plan. Based on the data review and the district’s inclusive education vision, have the extended cabinet develop a written multi-year action plan that provides written expectations, professional learning, data analytics, and accountability (as specified below). Upon completion of the overall plan, establish a uniform way for school-based teams to embed local implementation activities into their school-based planning documents. In addition, include those areas identified in the recommendations. Establish a feedback loop as described in the full recommendation.	X				
d. Written Expectations. Develop and provide guidance on the implementation of practices designed to promote student achievement and positive behavior, including the areas specified in the recommendations.		X			
e. Differentiated Professional Learning and Parent Training. Embed in the professional learning curriculum mentioned in Recommendation 1e and the content needed to carry out Recommendation 3. Consider those areas listed in the full recommendation. Review training and information-sharing opportunities for parents and community partners, and identify topics for the 2017-18 school year, including areas mentioned in this report and what data suggest might be needed. As part of this process, consider how professional learning will be provided within the current weekly collaborative time limitations.			X		
f. Data Analysis and Reports. In addition to ensuring that activities described in Recommendation 1e include data and analysis of academic instruction and behavior/emotional supports for students with disabilities, consider the actions specified in the recommendations. Also, to the extent possible, embed data in the dashboard system used for all students.				X	
g. Monitoring and Accountability. Expect that all principals are responsible for overseeing special education in their buildings, and that area assistant superintendents hold principals accountable for this responsibility. Embed the activities identified in the recommendation for this area in the monitoring/accountability systems described in Recommendation 1g.					X
IV. Support for Teaching and Learning for Students with IEPs					
4. Interoffice Collaboration. With a representative group of principals, the AASs, the deputy superintendent, and the chief academic officer, discuss the optimum configuration for principals to communicate with each other and central office leadership. Follow up based on these discussions.	X				
5. Special Education and Support Services Organization. Consider organization proposal fully described in the recommendations and at Appendix B to more effectively support students with disabilities as well as all students with respect to social/emotional learning and physical/mental health concerns.	X				
6. School-Based Special Education Personnel. Ensure that personnel who support students with IEPs are employed					

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Recommendations	Planning	Standards/Procedures	Training	Data/Repts/Tech	Accountability
in sufficient numbers, and are available to meet student needs.					
<p>c. <i>Student-Staff Ratios.</i> On a regular basis with the AAS, review the staffing ratios summarized in this report (see Appendix A). <i>NOTE: Relatively low or high student-to-personnel ratios do not necessarily mean that any given area is staffed inappropriately; however, the ratios should prompt further review.</i> Ensure that adequate numbers of special education and related-services personnel are at each school to carry out their expected responsibilities. Based on a full review, consider the changes needed in the short and long term.</p>				X	
<p>b. <i>Hiring Practices.</i> Review hiring practices for special educators and paraprofessionals employed by the district, and modify them if necessary to allow principals to select staff for their schools. Provide assistance to principals for them to carry out this responsibility, such as prescreening and identifying high-quality applicants. Under the current collective bargaining agreement terms, continue to have an applicant pool, and enable principals to select personnel for the next school year at the appropriate time. Encourage principals with expected or potential vacancies to participate in the process of selecting personnel from the applicant pool to increase their satisfaction with the quality of hires. Consider moving the induction program for all personnel to human resources, and ensure that it provides new personnel, especially those who come from other countries, with the training they need to be successful. need to be successful. Develop and implement a support program for new teachers from other countries to facilitate the adjustment to the culture, community and school based responsibilities of teaching and learning in the United States.</p>	X	X	X		
<p>c. <i>Staff Shortages, Retention, and Recruitment.</i> Convene a diverse group of stakeholders such as principals, special educators, CAC representatives, and SCTA representatives. Have a high-level district official with decision-making authority convene the group to discuss recruitment/retention and paraprofessional usage as described in the recommendation. Based on the outcome of these discussions, develop a plan for improving the usage and effectiveness of paraprofessionals.</p>	X				
<p>7. <i>Compliance Support and Access to Information.</i> Consider the following actions to improve compliance and access to student special education records.</p>					
<p>a. <i>Special Education Procedure Manual.</i> Update on an annual basis the <i>Special Education Procedures</i> document to include relevant written expectations developed in accordance with these recommendations. Provide public access to the information by posting it as a webpage with links to more detailed information and online resources. Collaborate with CAC and other stakeholders to identify relevant information and resource links. Ensure staff members are available to update the information regularly with current information and resources. Provide training to stakeholders and parents to boost their understanding of the <i>Procedures'</i> contents. Ensure training is accessible to parents with diverse linguistic needs and sensory limitations.</p>		X	X		
<p>b. <i>SCUSD/SCTA Collective Bargaining Agreement.</i> Ensure all provisions, such as attendance of regular education teachers at IEP meetings, comply with federal and state laws.</p>	X				X

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<i>c. Department of Special Education Webpage.</i> To the extent possible, enhance the special education webpage with links to information for stakeholders, including district and publicly available resources.				X	
<i>d. Dispute Resolution.</i> To reduce future disputes and resolve disputes quickly and effectively, consider the actions specified for this recommendation.	X	X			
<i>e. Special Education Records.</i> Consider the specified actions described in the recommendation to improve access to student special education information.	X			X	
8. Fiscal Considerations. Pursue the following activities to enhance revenue and shift more funds toward improving instruction at home schools, schools of choice, and SDCs.					
<i>a. Medicaid Revenue Enhancement.</i> To increase Medicaid revenue, survey users of the district’s new electronic documentation process through focus groups, an electronic survey, or other means to understand the challenges associated with its use. Take follow up actions based on the results, and execute accountability for usage and monitoring, including central office, school leadership, and others users of the system. Establish a group that will continually review usage and monitoring trends, and identify ways to maximize billing opportunities.	X			X	
<i>b. Potential Transportation Efficiencies.</i> Consider the following actions to enhance transportation efficiency.	X	X		X	
<i>c. Long-Term Capacity Building.</i> Begin putting together a long-term plan to reduce the district’s reliance on special schools. For such a plan to be successful, the district must build the capacity of each school to provide appropriate and equitable educational support. To support this process, consider the amount of transportation savings, and the expertise of district staff (including John Morse school personnel) that can be leveraged to build school capacity. (See also Recommendation 3c.)	X				
9. Shared Accountability for Student Achievement. Consider the following actions that would strengthen the district’s shared accountability for student achievement.					
<i>a. State Structure.</i> Work with other school districts to influence the CDE and legislature if necessary, to implement the March 2015 California statewide special education task force recommendations. Specifically, there is a need for universal accountability patterns and reporting requirements for all students, including those with disabilities, and the inclusion of the federal Results Driven Accountability indicators within the LCAP framework.	X			X	
<i>b. Single Plan of Achievement and Data Dashboard.</i> Ensure that school-based planning and dashboards include data and actions relevant to the achievement of students with disabilities, including special education state performance plan indicators.	X			X	
<i>c. Strategic Plan.</i> Supplement the district’s next iteration of the strategic plan with action necessary for the implementation of the Council team’s recommendations.	X				
<i>d. Data.</i> Review all data elements contained in these recommendations and consolidate them into a comprehensive plan for implementation. (See Chapter 4’s				X	

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Recommendations	Planning	Standards/Procedures	Training	Data/Repts/Tech	Accountability
Recommendation Matrix, which identifies data and reporting elements.) As part of SCUSD’s work with other districts pursuant to Recommendation 10a, address state data collection issues making reporting unnecessarily complex and time consuming.					
<i>e. SCUSD/SCTA Collective Bargaining Agreement.</i> Consider requesting Council assistance in facilitating discussions between the SCUSD and SCTA to help resolve the issues identified in this report as well as others that may exist.	X				X
<i>f. Professional Learning.</i> Review all the recommendations related to professional learning to map out coordinated implementation activities. (See Chapter 4’s Recommendation Matrix, which identifies training components.)			X		
<i>g. Shared Accountability for Actions.</i> Review the information in this report and relevant recommendations pertaining to the need for districtwide expectations, and shared accountability with school and district personnel. Establish clear processes that track when and how resources and training have been made available, and follow up on initiatives that have been announced or launched. There is no justification for actions not carried out as expected. (See Chapter 4’s Recommendation Matrix, which identifies accountability components.)					X
<i>10. Internal Project Manager.</i> Consider appointing an internal project manager reporting to the superintendent to support the execution of the district’s plan and initiatives, including activities to follow up on the recommendations in this report. Have the project manager report on relevant data, the status of implementation, and barriers to execution that require interdepartmental collaboration, the superintendent’s involvement, or the need for any adjustments to the plan.	X				X

Recommendations

The following is a comprehensive list of all recommendations prepared by the Strategic Support Team of the Council of the Great City Schools for the Sacramento Unified School District. Detailed recommendations are found in the body of the report.

1. Systemwide MTSS Framework, Implementation Plan, and Oversight. As part of the district's theory of action, establish MTSS as the underlying structure for all work designed to improve student outcomes. Based on information from the CDE website and other sources, develop, distribute, and implement a comprehensive vision, framework, and action plan to support MTSS systemwide.¹¹⁷ This collective work must communicate that MTSS is neither a mechanism for delaying special education evaluations when they warranted nor a process having the singular purpose of justifying such valuations. Rather, the work needs to facilitate a shared sense of urgency among all stakeholders to improve educational outcomes for all students.

We strongly recommend that the district use a consultant who has experience developing and implementing MTSS in various urban school districts to facilitate collaboration among the central office, schools, the SCTA, and other stakeholders. The use of a consultant with this expertise would enable the district to benefit from other school districts' experiences; help resolve SCTA issues regarding MTSS, including SPARK; and to expedite completion of the MTSS framework and implementation plan.

a. District and School-based Leadership MTSS Teams. Establish leadership teams at the district and school levels to support MTSS planning and oversee implementation activities.

- **District MTSS Leadership Team.** Ensure that the district MTSS leadership team includes representatives from all relevant stakeholder groups, e.g., area assistant superintendents, central office personnel, principals, all types of teachers (general, special, EL, gifted/talented), related-services personnel, SCTA representatives, etc. Plan a two-day overview and monthly meetings with the MTSS leadership team to continue to develop common language and planning for necessary implementation resources. Invite various advisory groups representing differing interests, such as the Community Advisory Committee (CAC) for special education, to give feedback to the leadership team.
- **School-Based Leadership Teams.** Based on the district's comprehensive MTSS-implementation plan (Recommendation 1b below), identify school-based leadership teams (SBLT) at each site for training on and work toward the development of an implementation plan at each site. The SBLT is responsible for the health and wellness of the school and leads the MTSS work to ensure a common understanding of the framework. SBLTs will necessarily have defined responsibilities, such as learning/applying/modeling the problem-solving process, providing professional learning and technical assistance opportunities for staff, monitoring implementation and needed supports, conducting school-based data days, and the like.

¹¹⁷ CDE webpage for MTSS, retrieved at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/ri/mtsscompri2.asp>.

- b. *Implementation Plan.*** Have the district MTSS leadership team evaluate its current program infrastructure as it develops its MTSS framework and implementation plan, e.g., universal screeners, formative assessments, standard protocols for intervention/support, curricular materials, supplemental and intensive resources, data platforms, use of data, professional learning, budget allocations, etc. Embed universal design for learning (UDL) into the MTSS framework,¹¹⁸ and incorporate the areas discussed below. As a part of the plan include benchmark and on-going district wide and school based progress monitoring to support the evaluation of MTSS implementation. When finalized, post the MTSS implementation plan on the district's website along with information relevant links to district information/resources, and publicly available resources. Ensure that the district's Strategic Plan intentionally embeds and utilizes the MTSS framework in its goals and activities. Embed relevant aspects of the MTSS framework in the district's Strategic Plan and school-based planning templates.
- c. *Map Resources and Analyze Gaps.*** As part of a comprehensive planning process, conduct an assessment of current MTSS-related human and material resources provided by the district and independently funded by schools. As part of this process, consider the current roles of school psychologists and speech/language pathologists, and how they may be adjusted/reallocated to support students proactively within general education. Compare these resources to evidence-based resources in use, and plan for filling gaps. Conduct an analysis of currently used resources by schools to assess their return on investment in terms of improved student outcomes. Identify those that are supporting/accelerating student learning and those that are not. Consider having the district sponsor appropriate evidence-based resources from which all schools can choose to implement. As part of this process, consider how additional Title I resources provided to schools could enhance district resources to meet student needs.
- d. *Written Expectations.*** Establish a school board policy¹¹⁹ and written expectations for the district's MTSS framework (for academics in addition to social/emotional learning/restorative justice) that is consistent with the district's theory of action. Ensure that the MTSS framework includes all grades, and supports linguistically appropriate and culturally competent instruction. Develop a multi-year implementation plan that includes regular board updates. Address all areas of MTSS described in the current program literature, including expectations for the following:
- Use of MTSS for systemic and sustainable change;
 - High-quality, differentiated classroom instruction and research-based academic and behavior interventions and supports aligned with student needs;

¹¹⁸ Consider expanding the district leadership team's knowledge of UDL by having representatives from IT and departments in addition to past participants attend the Harvard University UDL summer program, having the team receive training from district personnel with UDL expertise, etc.

¹¹⁹ April 7, 2014 board policy (BUL-6269.0), retrieved from April http://notebook.lausd.net/pls/ptl/docs/PAGE/CA_LAUSD/FLDR_ORGANIZATIONS/FLDR_SPECIAL_EDUCATION/BUL-6269.0%20MULTI%20TIERED%20BEHAVIOR%20SUPPORT%20SWD%20W%20ATTACHMENTS.PDF.

- Evidence-based universal screening, benchmark assessments, and progress monitoring.¹²⁰
 - Use of school based leadership teams and problem-solving methodology;
 - Fidelity of implementation;
 - Professional learning, technical assistance, and collaboration;
 - Parent/family involvement in the MTSS process; and
 - Use of MTSS to identify students in need of special education evaluations and to consider in the assessment process. More information about this process is provided as part of the recommendations in Section II, Disability Prevalence Rates and 2014-15 Evaluation Outcomes.
- e. **Professional Learning.** Based on the MTSS framework, implementation plan, and written expectations, develop a professional-learning curriculum that is targeted to different audiences, e.g., special education teachers, related-services personnel, paraprofessionals, parents, etc. Provide at least four to five days of training for school-based leadership teams over two consecutive years. Ground training in the Learning Forward Standards for Professional Learning.¹²¹ Consider how access to training will be supported and budgeted, e.g., through the use of stipends, funds for substitute coverage, incentives for after-school and Saturday training, summer training, etc.

Embed the following components in the district's MTSS implementation plan —

- **Cross-Functional Teams.** Cross-train individuals from different departments to ensure a common language and common understanding of MTSS that can be applied to district offices in order to intentionally align and support the work of schools as they work toward implementation. Maximize their knowledge and skills in MTSS in order to provide direct support, mentoring, coaching, and technical assistance to principals and teachers.
- **Develop the Capacity of High-Quality Trainers.** Develop a plan to develop the capacity of internal staff to deliver data-driven professional development and the critical components of MTSS. Ensure that all trainers are knowledgeable and experienced in data analysis, problem solving, and effective professional development for adult learners.
- **Access to Differentiated Learning.** Ensure that professional learning is engaging and differentiated according to the audience's skills, experience, and need. Have professional learning and technical assistance available to new personnel and those needing additional support.
- **Multiple Formats.** Use multiple formats (e.g., videos, webinars, and narrative text) and presentation approaches (e.g., school-based, small groups).

¹²⁰ See the evaluation tool available on the Center on Response to Intervention website to determine the research-based value of tools being considered.¹²⁰

¹²¹ Retrieved from <http://www.learningforward.org/standards#.UMvVD7Yt0kU>

- **Coaching/Modeling.** Develop a plan for coaching and technical assistance to support principals and school-based leadership teams in practices highlighted in training sessions and materials.
 - **School Walk Throughs.** Establish a common, differentiated electronic protocol for conducting instructional rounds, collecting data from classroom visits, and informing teachers of results and observations. It is important that the protocol be aligned with the teaching and learning framework of the district.
 - **Exemplary Implementation Models.** Provide a forum where schools can highlight and share best practices, lessons learned, victories, and challenges in implementing MTSS for all students (e.g., gifted, English learners, students with IEPs, students who are twice exceptional). Encourage staff to visit exemplary schools, and set aside time for that to happen.
 - **District Website.** Develop and provide a well-informed and resourced interactive web page that includes links to other local and national sites. Highlight schools within the district and share stories about the impact of MTSS on student outcomes using multiple measures.
- d. Data Analysis and Reports.** Establish an early warning system that measures students on track for graduation. Ensure that key performance indicators across elementary, middle and high schools are established, and analysis (e.g., custom reports) are designed to enable the superintendent, administrators, principals, teachers, and related-services personnel to review student growth, identify patterns, solve problems, and make informed decisions.
- e. Monitoring and Accountability.** Evaluate the effectiveness, fidelity, and results of MTSS implementation, and include the following in the assessment –
- **Baseline Data and Fidelity Assessments.** Develop a standard protocol for school-site baseline data on instructional practices and supports using multiple measures (academic, suspension, attendance, etc.), for assessing academic and behavioral outcomes, and for measuring the fidelity of program implementation. For example, consider using evaluation tools and protocols provided at no cost through the federally funded Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports website.¹²²
 - **Data Checks.** Conduct at least three health and wellness checks per year at the school level to facilitate the monitoring and impact of MTSS implementation. In addition, using data and reports associated with Recommendation 1f, have the superintendent host regular data conversations with administrators and principals on key performance indicators to discuss results, anomalies, support needed, follow-up activities, and outcomes.

¹²² Several tools are available for monitoring fidelity, such as Florida’s MTSS school level tool, retrieved at http://floridarti.usf.edu/resources/presentations/2014/nasp/StockslagerCastillo/NASP%202014_School%20Level%20MTSS%20Instrument_Final.pdf; and tools available from the RTI Action Network, retrieved from <http://www.rtinetwork.org/essential/tieredinstruction/tier1/accurate-decision-making-within-a-multi-tier-system-of-supports-critical-areas-in-tier-1>.

- ***Timely Communication and Feedback.*** Design feedback loops involving central office, school personnel, parents, and the community to inform current as well as future work. Use this process to provide regular and timely feedback to the district MTSS leadership team about barriers that are beyond the control of local schools or where schools require additional assistance.
2. ***Special Education Referral, Assessment, and Eligibility.*** Improve consistency and appropriateness of referrals, assessments, and eligibility decisions for special education.
- a. ***Data Review.*** With a multidisciplinary team of individuals inside and outside of the special education department, review Exhibits 2a through 2i and their associated analysis (along with other relevant data), and develop a hypothesis about--
- Comparatively high number of students with IEPs and with autism in pre-K compared to kindergarten;
 - Pattern of students with IEPs by grade;
 - Likelihood that African American students have an other health impairment compared to other students with IEPs;
 - Likelihood that English learners have an intellectual disability and specific learning disability compared to non-ELLs.
 - High percentage (91 percent) of students assessed for speech/language only services qualify compared to other disabilities (76 percent) who qualify for services;
 - High percentage (16 percent) of pending 2015-16 full evaluations compared to speech/language-only evaluations (5 percent).
- b. ***Written Expectations.*** For any area that the multi-disciplinary team identifies as problematic, review current processes for referral, assessment, and eligibility, and amend those processes to provide more guidance. Ensure that the special education procedural manual and ELL master plan incorporate the additional guidance. Have both documents provide appropriate information regarding translation services for and written notices to parents who are ELL, and ensure that assessments are linguistically and culturally appropriate for ELL students. Specify that personnel who assess students should have access to sufficient and all current assessment tools.
- c. ***Educationally Related Mental Health Services (ERMHS) Teams.*** With a representative group of special education department personnel and school-based personnel knowledgeable about the ERMHS process, review concerns discussed in this report and revise the process so that the team's expertise can be used more appropriately to support teaching and learning, and schools are more accountable for following written expectations.
- d. ***Data Analysis and Reports.*** Develop user-friendly summary reports for the district's leadership showing data similar to and as appropriate in addition to Exhibits 2a through 2i. As appropriate, share data by area and by school. As part of this process, address the issues that made it difficult for the district to provide the Council team with data aligned with the state's performance plan indicators for special education (i.e., special/residential schools and suspensions), and supplement the data with these reports. Consider how these data are handled and reviewed by district leadership on a regular basis

- e. Differentiated Professional Learning.* Plan for and provide all relevant district stakeholders with the professional learning they need to implement the recommendations in this section. As part of this process, have special education and ELL department personnel collaborate on the referral and assessment needs of ELL students. (Coordinate this activity with Recommendation 1f.)
- f. Monitoring and Accountability.* Develop a process for ongoing monitoring of expected referral, evaluation, and eligibility practices. Rather than using a traditional record-review model, review files so that school-based personnel are aware of issues and problems, and will better understand the need for follow-up action. Enable staff to observe best practices shown by others and receive coaching that will improve their knowledge and skills. (Coordinate this activity with Recommendation 1g.)

3. Academic Achievement and Social/Emotional Well-Being for Students with IEPs. Review and address relevant data, and follow-up with actions such as the following –

- a. Data Review.* With a multidisciplinary team of individuals in and outside the special education department, review Exhibits 3a through 3q and their accompanying analysis (along with other relevant data), and develop hypothesis about problematic patterns, such as:
- Weak educational outcomes for early childhood students with IEPs compared to state targets;
 - High percentage of young children with autism educated in separate schools;
 - Low educational outcomes on state assessments for students with and without IEPs compared to the state;
 - High percentage of students in more restrictive settings by disability area and in separate schools compared to the nation and state;
 - Variability of educational setting placements by grade;
 - High OSS rates for students with IEPs compared to those without IEPs;
 - Disproportionately high OSS rates for African American students;
 - Higher in- and out-of-school suspensions for students with IEPs compared to those without IEPs, especially at the seventh through ninth grades; and
 - Declining graduation rate for students with IEPs as the graduation rate for students without IEPs was increasing.
- b. Inclusive Education Vision.* Have the extended cabinet establish a clear and defined vision for the value of inclusivity. Embed in that vision language from the common core state standards website and March 2015 statewide task force on special education to clarify the district’s support for higher academic outcomes and the social/emotional well-being of students. Highlight the importance of providing students educated in general education classes with the differentiated and scaffolded instruction they need to learn. Emphasize that instruction needs to be linguistically appropriate and culturally relevant, and aligned with common core standards. These expectations will be easier to meet as teachers become more familiar with and base their instruction on the principles of UDL. At the same time, the vision should reinforce the importance of evidence-based academic

and positive behavior interventions/supports that increase in intensity with specified student needs.¹²³ The implementation of this vision will require substantial changes to Appendix D of the SCUSD/SCTA collective bargaining agreement, which portrays inclusive education as occurring in three static models.

c. *Implementation Plan.* Based on the data review and the district’s inclusive education vision, have the extended cabinet develop a written multi-year action plan that provides written expectations, professional learning, data analytics, and accountability (as specified below). Upon completion of the overall plan, establish a uniform way for school-based teams to embed local implementation activities into their school-based planning documents. In addition –

- ***Resource Specialist Program (RSP) Services.*** Develop ways to reduce the current practice of RSP teachers reporting/supporting more than one school and mitigate the impact it has on collaborating with general education teachers and providing necessary interventions for students
- ***Resource Allocation.*** Review how services are currently configured and how they can be shifted to meet the needs of more students in their neighborhood schools and schools of choice. This shift may reduce reliance on student transportation, and allow savings to be reallocated to instruction and interventions.
- ***Regular vs. Alternate Assessments.*** Determine how many students in SDCs and separate schools take an alternate assessment, and ascertain the extent to which the number correlates with 1 percent of all students who take the regular state assessment. Also, determine how many students in SDCs and separate schools take a regular state assessment, and address the extent to which they are receiving instruction aligned with common core standards.
- ***Special Day Class Structure.*** Review focus group comments about SDCs, such as those concerning instruction of students in multiple grades, the impact of teacher vacancies, reliance on paraprofessionals, caseloads, etc. In addition, discuss the equity ramifications associated with schools without SDCs, and their reliance on other schools to provide educational support. Also consider transportation expenses and how these funds could be used differently. Review the specifications for each SDC and clarify criteria for more flexible instructional and service adaptations, program specifications, and the like. Develop protocols for providing rigorous instruction and supports to students in SDCs, including personnel training and quality control processes.
- ***Separate Schools.*** Review the characteristics of students attending separate schools, and the reasons why the district is unable to meet their needs (especially young children with autism). With stakeholders, define the kinds of high-quality instruction and supports needed to keep students in regular schools or to attract them back to the district. Consider average special school costs per child (in and outside of the district), including transportation costs and how funds could be shifted to support this

¹²³ The suggested activities are not intended to be a blueprint or to be exclusive. They are provided as a basis for discussion and further development.

initiative.

- ***Social/Emotional Supports and Interventions.*** Review the ERMHS process for providing designated instruction and services (DIS) in order to maximize the use of behavior specialists for purposes of modeling interventions, coaching teachers, and providing effective technical assistance. As discussed below, better leverage the expertise of all staff qualified to provide supports for students' social/emotional needs, such as psychologists and social workers, as well as staff from the John Morse Therapeutic Center.
- ***Related Services.*** Consider the manner in which related services are provided (e.g., push-in versus pull-out) and the extent to which personnel are able to engage in general education MTSS activities), the extent to which occupational and/or physical therapy is provided at sites away from schools, and how these practices could change to improve their impact.

Feedback. Have the team collect feedback on the draft plan from stakeholders at varying grade levels, special/general education administrators, principals, general/special education teachers, related-service providers, teacher assistants, CAC, other parent-based and community-based organizations, etc. Continue this feedback loop as the plan is implemented to address concerns.

- d. ***Written Expectations.*** Develop and provide guidance on the implementation of practices designed to promote student achievement and positive behavior, including the following.
- ***Differentiated Instruction.*** Delineate expectations for the provision of linguistically appropriate and culturally competent instruction aligned with core standards that are differentiated for students with reading and math performance levels significantly below those of their classroom peers.
 - ***Co-Teaching.*** Delineate effective co-teaching models. Do not expand co-teaching until there is data showing achievement gains based on the current instructional co-teaching model. Conduct a data analysis on the impact of service delivery and student performance (e.g., co-teaching vs. RSP).
 - ***Increasingly Intensive Academic Interventions.*** Identify targeted interventions for English language arts and math that will fill instructional gaps for students with disabilities who are behind academically. Describe flexible groupings for students with and without IEPs when there is a need for common interventions. Consider how groupings need to adjust based on changing student needs.
 - ***English Learners.*** Describe models for providing ELLs with IEPs the linguistic support they require when receiving special education and related services.¹²⁴
 - ***Documentation for ERMHS Services.*** Establish expectations for individual schools on the reasonable documentation personnel must gather to show a student's need for

¹²⁴ See *Meeting the Needs of English Learners with Disabilities*, which was prepared by a staff member from the Santa Barbara County SELPA, retrieved from <http://www.sonomaselpa.org/docs/els-with-disabilities.pdf>.

ERMHS services. Clarify that the suspension of students should not be the basis for determining a student's need for intervention and support.

- ***Administrative Support Teams.*** Reconstitute the purpose of the administrative review teams as groups devoted to problem-solving for students with behavioral and academic concerns. Make it clear that their advice does not substitute for the IEP team's consideration, and that students are not to be suspended either in-school or out-of-school to justify service needs. Coordinate this review with student support services.
 - ***IEP Decision Making.*** Provide guidance to IEP teams on determining the extent to which students would benefit from general education classes, and specifying the supports needed to provide instruction based on the core curriculum and evidence-based interventions.
 - ***Personnel Roles and Staffing.*** Identify the number and type of personnel available to support students with disabilities in general education classes and to provide interventions inside or outside of the class. Specify and differentiate their roles. In addition, address staffing ratios for students in SDCs and how staffing needs to be adjusted when students need support in order to benefit from general education. (See Recommendation 6a.)
 - ***Planned Collaboration.*** Provide ways to better structuring time to promote more collaboration between general and special educators, various types of paraprofessionals, and related-services personnel in order to discuss instruction and intervention for students they share.
 - ***Progress Monitoring and Problem Solving.*** Monitor the progress of students with disabilities on instruction and interventions, as well as progress on IEP goals.
 - ***Assistive Technology.*** Specify and monitor a reasonable time frame for students to receive AT devices, and consider the resources needed to meet the time frame.
 - ***Music Therapy.*** Provide specific entry and exit criteria for students believed to need music therapy to benefit from special education instruction.
 - ***Postsecondary Transition Activities and Supports.*** Delineate school leadership responsibility for ensuring students with IEPs have access to high quality postsecondary transition activities and supports, and identify funding for community work.
- e. ***Differentiated Professional Learning and Parent Training.*** Embed in the professional learning curriculum mentioned in Recommendation 1e and the content needed to carry out Recommendation 3. In addition, consider –
- How and when personnel will be provided access to training in each critical area;
 - How key information will be communicated effectively;
 - How information will be used; and
 - What additional coaching and supports may be needed.

Review training and information-sharing opportunities for parents and community partners, and identify topics for the 2017-18 school year, including areas mentioned in this report and what data suggest might be needed. As part of this process, consider how professional learning will be provided within the current weekly collaborative time limitations.

f. Data Analysis and Reports. In addition to ensuring that activities described in Recommendation 1e include data and analysis of academic instruction and behavior/emotional supports for students with disabilities, consider the following actions–

- **Data Reporting.** Report data using the charts in this report as a guide, expanding upon them to better target patterns and areas of concern.
- **Risk Ratios.** To the extent possible and when appropriate, report disparities on indicators using a risk ratio.
- **Progress Monitoring.** Establish common school-based data collection and reporting systems to monitor the progress of students with disabilities, both academically and behaviorally. Ensure that benchmark and progress-monitoring data on students taking alternate assessments are included.

To the extent possible, embed data in the dashboard system used for all students.

g. Monitoring and Accountability. Expect that all principals are responsible for overseeing special education in their buildings, and that area assistant superintendents hold principals accountable for this responsibility. Embed the following activities in the monitoring and accountability systems described in Recommendation 1g.

- **Baseline Data.** To the extent possible, collect baseline data on the use of interventions with students with IEPs. Include data on educational setting rates, achievement, suspension/expulsion rates, and graduation and dropout rates, and begin evaluating the effects of interventions. In each area, consider collecting and analyzing data by race/ethnicity and gender, and develop risk ratios by indicator/subgroups.
- **Data Collection and Reports.** Review data, data collection issues, and reports that are requested by the superintendent and school board. Begin including baseline data described above, as well as special education state performance plan indicators. Provide regular updates on the status of special education reforms. Develop protocols for reporting data to inform decision-making. Produce templates for user-friendly summary reports showing academic and behavioral interventions and outcomes for students with disabilities. Review necessary changes in programs and interventions based on the data. Plan follow-up activities to collect data that the district does not currently collect and produce reports it currently does not produce.
- **Data Checks.** Include information on students with disabilities in data discussion sessions in order to develop follow-up actions and track outcomes.
- **Fidelity Assessments and Walk-Throughs.** Review current walk-through tools used to monitor instruction and interventions in general education classes, RSP classes, and SDCs to see how students are being taught and engaged, and how consistent

instruction is across schools for students with disabilities. Provide guidance such as that called for in Recommendation 3c. Initiate technical assistance, professional development, coaching, and mentoring to improve practices.

- ***Timely Communication and Feedback.*** Establish a process for timely feedback to the district’s MTSS leadership team on barriers to problem-solving activities, particularly when they are beyond the control of local schools. Require the schools to seek assistance in resolving problems.
4. ***Interoffice Collaboration.*** With a representative group of principals, the AASs, the deputy superintendent, and the chief academic officer, discuss the optimum configuration for principals to communicate with each other and central office leadership. Follow up based on these discussions.
5. ***Special Education and Support Services Organization.*** Consider the following organization proposal to more effectively support students with disabilities as well as all students with respect to social/emotional learning and physical/mental health concerns. (See Appendix B for a proposed organization table.)
- a. ***Department of Special Education and Student Support Services.*** Group together support for special education and student support services to improve collaboration between personnel with expertise in social/emotional learning and students with physical and mental health concerns. Have an executive director with three direct reports in the following areas: 1) specially designed instruction, 2) SELPA/special education operations, and 3) student support services. Allocate office technicians to each area based on need, and have appropriate personnel attend CAO meetings.
- b. ***Specially Designed Instruction.*** Have two supervisors report to the director: one for area support and the other for districtwide services.
- ***Area Support.*** Have the following personnel report to the area support supervisor, assigning them to schools that align with a single area assistant superintendent –
 - Program specialists*
 - Behavior intervention specialists who collaborate with student support services personnel*
 - Inclusive practice coaches
 - Designated instructional paraprofessionals.* Employ the DIPs at the school site when supporting specific students pursuant to their IEPs, and have principals provide supervision. Maintain a relatively small number of DIPs to deploy for crisis intervention.
- Have the area support unit manage the following additional functions –
- Placement of new students with IEPs
 - SDC coordination
 - Behavior review and pre-expulsion hearings for students with IEPs (with student hearing/placement director)
 - Field trips

- ***Districtwide Services.*** Have the following personnel report to the districtwide services supervisor –
 - Speech/language pathologists and hearing interpreters*
 - Preschool coordination
 - Home/hospital instruction*
 - Assistive technology*
 - Occupational therapy*
 - Postsecondary transition*
 - Adapted PE*
 - Extended school year coordination

Have the districtwide unit also manage the following additional functions –

- Deaf Task Force
 - Coordination of staff development
 - Residential placement
 - Special Arts program
 - County Office of Education programs
 - Alternate standards curriculum
 - Extended school year coordination
- ***Other Specially Designed Instruction Personnel***
 - Based on the number of personnel in each area designated with an asterisk, designate leadership for the area to provide support to the respective group members and to coordinate activities with the director and other leadership personnel within and outside of the specially designed instruction unit. This structure is essential to support communication, supervision, and collaboration.
 - Employ DIPs at the school site when supporting specific students pursuant to IEPs with principal supervision.¹²⁵ Maintain a relatively small number of DIPs by area to deploy for crisis intervention.
 - Employ preschool personnel at the school site. Maintain specially designed instruction coordination for preschool students with IEPs in collaboration with administrative support for general education preschoolers.
 - Move responsibility for processing paperwork for special education teachers with students over the contract limit to human resources.
 - Have preschool personnel be employed at the school site, but maintain support for preschool coordination.

c. ***SELPA/Special Education Operations.*** Have the SELPA/Special Education Operations director, with SELPA support staff, the budget technician, and others as appropriate –

- Coordinate policy and compliance requirements
- Shift to a web-based special education policy and procedures information system
- Manage due process, complaint management, and alternate dispute resolution

¹²⁵ Note Recommendation 6c regarding the review of paraprofessionals and their respective roles, and employment status.

- Coordinate internal monitoring
- Coordinate surrogate parents
- Coordinate and track the provision of compensatory education and tutoring.

d. *Student Support Services.* Have the following units report to the student support services director—

- Social workers, including those that support students with IEPs
- School psychologists
- Social/emotional learning
- Nurses/health aides
- Behavior/reentry
- Youth development
- Family and community partnerships

With the exception of social workers and health aides supporting students with IEPs and psychologists, these units are currently housed together. The combination of these personnel will enable staff to better collaborate, support students with common issues, manage Section 504, and manage Medi-Cal.

6. *School-Based Special Education Personnel.* Ensure that personnel who support students with IEPs are employed in sufficient numbers, and are available to meet student needs.

a. *Student-Staff Ratios.* On a regular basis with the AAS, review the staffing ratios summarized in this report (see Appendix A). *NOTE: Relatively low or high student-to-personnel ratios do not necessarily mean that any given area is staffed inappropriately; however, the ratios should prompt further review.* Ensure that adequate numbers of special education and related-services personnel are at each school to carry out their expected responsibilities. Based on a full review, consider the changes needed in the short and long term.

b. *Hiring Practices.* Review hiring practices for special educators and paraprofessionals employed by the district, and modify them if necessary to allow principals to select staff for their schools. Provide assistance to principals for them to carry out this responsibility, such as prescreening and identifying high-quality applicants. Under the current collective bargaining agreement terms, continue to have an applicant pool, and enable principals to select personnel for the next school year at the appropriate time. Encourage principals with expected or potential vacancies to participate in the process of selecting personnel from the applicant pool to increase their satisfaction with the quality of hires. Consider moving the induction program for all personnel to human resources, and ensure that it provides new personnel, especially those who come from other countries, with the training they need to be successful. Develop and implement a support program for new teachers from other countries in order to facilitate their adjustment to the culture, community and school based responsibilities of teaching and learning in the United States.

c. *Staff Shortages, Retention, and Recruitment.* Convene a diverse group of stakeholders such as principals, special educators, CAC representatives, and SCTA representatives. Have a high-level district official with decision-making authority convene the group to—

- **Recruitment/Retention.** Specifically, the group should discuss the need to recruit special education, paraprofessional, and related services personnel vacancies, and to address relevant high staff turnover. Have the group identify proactive and aggressive strategies to:
 - Promote recruitment/retention (including those discussed in this report);
 - Improve communication about high-quality applicants;
 - Support internship programs, such as the collaboration with Cal State to recruit speech/language pathologists;
 - Use assistants to support related services personnel;
 - Improve working conditions and access to essential materials, such as assessment tools for psychologists; and
 - Bolster recruitment activities.

Include in these strategies the need for bilingual personnel with special education and related-services expertise. Until the vacancy issues are resolved, have human resources consider committing a full-time person to implementing these strategies with the assistance, and continue to review the success of these and other strategies.

- **Paraprofessional Usage.** The group should consider –
 - **An audit.** Auditing contractual aides would help the district determine the quality of training, retention, communication (between teacher and aide), and cost effectiveness. Depending on the results, reconsider the balance between district and private employment.
 - **Roles.** The district should review the roles of the three paraprofessionals types, and the value of this and other approaches, such as using a highly trained group of paraeducators to train and support one set of paraprofessionals for students with IEPs;
 - **Communication.** The district should also review the differences between how educators and paraprofessionals are allowed to communicate with schools based on the paraprofessionals' hiring status, as well as their participation in IEP meetings and other mechanisms for collaboration.

Based on the outcome of these discussions, develop a plan for improving the usage and effectiveness of paraprofessionals.

7. **Compliance Support and Access to Information.** Consider the following actions to improve compliance and access to student special education records.
 - a. **Special Education Procedure Manual.** Update on an annual basis the *Special Education Procedures* document to include relevant written expectations developed in accordance with these recommendations. Provide public access to the information by posting it as a webpage with links to more detailed information and online resources. Collaborate with CAC and other stakeholders to identify relevant information and resource links. Ensure staff members are available to update the information regularly with current information and resources. Provide training to stakeholders and parents to boost their understanding

of the *Procedures*' contents. Ensure training is accessible to parents with diverse linguistic needs and sensory limitations.

- b. SCUSD/SCTA Collective Bargaining Agreement.* Ensure all provisions, such as attendance of regular education teachers at IEP meetings, comply with federal and state laws.
- c. Department of Special Education Webpage.* To the extent possible, enhance the special education webpage with links to information for stakeholders, including district and publicly available resources.¹²⁶
- d. Dispute Resolution.* To reduce future disputes and resolve disputes quickly and effectively, consider the following actions—

 - **High Level Attention.** Provide information to the extended cabinet and a representative group of principals on the costs of special education disputes and current processes in order to facilitate a discussion about the role and accountability of principals for the operation and administration of special education at their respective school sites.
 - **Principal Involvement.** Establish written expectations for principals, and how they will be supported and monitored. As part of these expectations, provide principals with CDE, OCR, and due process complaints, and have principals take a leading role in their resolution. Have principals attend due process hearings to address issues in their schools.
 - **AASs.** Involve area assistant superintendents to support compliance, resolve complaints, and address due process matters.
 - **Red Alerts.** Establish a “red alert” system for validated complaints and due process to inform all relevant stakeholders about the issues and ways to avoid them in the future.
- e. Special Education Records.* Consider the following actions to improve access to student special education information –

 - **Training.** Ensure hands-on special education IEP training is available for new personnel and for those who need to supplement their knowledge to support the development of effective IEPs and compliance practices.
 - **Access.** Provide general educators with access to the IEP system, using read only access for inapplicable provisions.
 - **Notice.** Add a disability field for IEPs and Section 504 to the student information system to notify teachers of students with disabilities, and the need to obtain additional information. If possible, migrate this data from other systems to avoid double entry of the information.
 - **Record Maintenance.** Develop a plan to stop sending all special education records to the central office and require schools to maintain the records according to privacy

¹²⁶ See, for example, the Anchorage School District’s special education webpage, retrieved from <http://asdk12.org/sped/>.

requirements. To the maximum extent, scan records to the electronic system to avoid record loss and to maximize their organization.

8. **Fiscal Considerations.** Pursue the following activities to enhance revenue and shift more funds toward improving instruction at home schools, schools of choice, and SDCs.
 - a. **Medicaid Revenue Enhancement.** To increase Medicaid revenue, survey users of the district's new electronic documentation process through focus groups, an electronic survey, or other means to understand the challenges associated with its use. Take follow up actions based on the results, and execute accountability for usage and monitoring, including central office, school leadership, and others users of the system. Establish a group that will continually review usage and monitoring trends, and identify ways to maximize billing opportunities.
 - b. **Potential Transportation Efficiencies.** Consider the following actions to enhance transportation efficiency.
 - **Maximize Technology.** To make transportation more efficient, research how other school districts have used technology to enhance the communication of student needs. As quickly as possible, move to an electronic process for managing requests for transportation. Council staff can provide support for this activity.
 - **Reduce Long Routes.** Identify all students by the length of their bus routes to address the routes that are excessive.¹²⁷ Based on this information, identify ways to reduce the routes.
 - **Comparable Length of School Day.** Review student routes to ensure that no student with IEPs have a shortened school day due to transportation schedules.
 - **Transportation Point Person.** Establish a point person in transportation to handle special education busing reimbursement.
 - c. **Long-Term Capacity Building.** Begin putting together a long-term plan to reduce the district's reliance on special schools. For such a plan to be successful, the district must build the capacity of each school to provide appropriate and equitable educational support. To support this process, consider the amount of transportation savings, and the expertise of district staff (including John Morse school personnel) that can be leveraged to build school capacity. (See also Recommendation 3c.)
9. **Shared Accountability for Student Achievement.** Consider the following actions that would strengthen the district's shared accountability for student achievement.
 - a. **State Structure.** Work with other school districts to influence the CDE and legislature if necessary, to implement the March 2015 California statewide special education task force recommendations. Specifically, there is a need for universal accountability patterns and reporting requirements for all students, including those with disabilities, and the inclusion of the federal Results Driven Accountability indicators within the LCAP framework.
 - b. **Single Plan of Achievement and Data Dashboard.** Ensure that school-based planning

¹²⁷ Districts with good technology are able to sort this data easily and quickly.

and dashboards include data and actions relevant to the achievement of students with disabilities, including special education state performance plan indicators.

- c. Strategic Plan.* Supplement the district’s next iteration of its strategic plan with action necessary for the implementation of the Council team’s recommendations.
 - d. Data.* Review all the data elements contained in these recommendations and consolidate them into a comprehensive plan for implementation. (See Chapter 4’s Recommendation Matrix, which identifies data and reporting elements.) As part of SCUSD’s work with other districts pursuant to Recommendation 10a, address the state data collection issues that make reporting unnecessarily complex and time consuming.
 - e. SCUSD/SCTA Collective Bargaining Agreement.* Consider requesting Council assistance in facilitating discussions between the SCUSD and SCTA to help resolve the issues identified in this report as well as others that may exist.
 - f. Professional Learning.* Review all the recommendations related to professional learning to map out coordinated implementation activities. (See Chapter 4’s Recommendation Matrix, which identifies training components.)
 - g. Shared Accountability for Actions.* Review the information in this report and relevant recommendations pertaining to the need for districtwide expectations, and shared accountability with school and district personnel. Establish clear processes that track when and how resources and training have been made available, and follow up on initiatives that have been announced or launched. There is no justification for actions not carried out as expected. (See Chapter 4’s Recommendation Matrix, which identifies accountability components.)
- 10. Internal Project Manager.** Consider appointing an internal project manager reporting to the superintendent to support the execution of the district’s plan and initiatives, including activities to follow up on the recommendations in this report. Have the project manager report on relevant data, the status of implementation, and barriers to execution that require interdepartmental collaboration, the superintendent’s involvement, or the need for any adjustments to the plan.

CHAPTER 5. SYNOPSIS AND DISCUSSION

The Sacramento Unified School District asked the Council of the Great City Schools to review the district's special education programs and to make recommendations on how to improve services for students with disabilities. To conduct its work, the Council assembled a team of special education experts with strong reputations for improving services in their own districts. The Council team visited Sacramento in November, conducted numerous interviews, reviewed documents, and analyzed data. At the end of the visit, the team formulated preliminary recommendations and held a conference call with the superintendent to discuss high-level observations and proposals.

The Council has reviewed numerous special education programs in big city schools across the country, and the organization is not always able to point out positive features of each school district's work with students with disabilities. In this case, however, the SCUSD has a number of things it can be proud of.

For instance, the district does not appear to have an unusually high percentage of its students identified for special education. At 13.9 percent, the district's identification rate is comparable to state and national averages.

In addition, while there are some racial groups that are identified at higher rates than other groups, most rates do not rise to traditional levels of disproportionality. In addition, identification rates for English Language Learners appear not be either disproportionately high or low. Moreover, the state's 2014-15 finding of disproportionate identification of African American students in the area of emotional disturbance was promptly and successfully addressed by the district.

At the same time, there are disparities in identification rates among various student groups in individual disability areas that warrant the school system's attention and vigilance.

Programmatically, the district has pursued efforts in the areas of MTSS, Universal Design for Learning, and social/emotional support. Its work in these areas is uneven at best because of the site-based theory of action the school system uses. But it is developing capacity in these areas.

In addition, the district's rate of educating students with disabilities in general education settings at least 80 percent of the time is higher than the state rate and near the national rate. Conversely, the district's rate of educating students with disabilities outside of general education more than 60 percent of the time is lower than state and national rates.

In addition, with 94.8 percent of IEPs meeting requirements for postsecondary transition activities and services, the district almost met the state's 100 percent compliance target. And the district has almost met state targets for students enrolled in higher education, being competitively employed, and/or engaged in other postsecondary education or training programs. The district's transition services are much better than most other districts the Council's team has reviewed.

At the same time, the district has considerable work to do in order to make its special education services a model. For example, the district's organizational structure is not as well defined around the needs of students with disabilities as is optimal. In fact, there are substantial organizational disconnects that make it harder for staff to collaborate in the ways they say they want to. The system's operational challenges are serious as well, particularly in the areas of transportation and paraprofessional hiring.

In addition, as was noted, district efforts to implement a systemic MTSS system is fractured, and efforts to broaden its implementation is stalled over disagreements with the union. The district's data systems are also not capable of readily producing the kinds of data that it needs to improve achievement or to produce necessary reports.

It was also clear that suspension rates were higher among students with disabilities than among students without disabilities. And the graduation rate among students with disabilities dipped at the same time that the district's overall graduation rate improved.

The Council also found that staffing levels to carry out an adequate special education staffing program were low, along with some organizational mismatches referred to earlier. Moreover, there were critical staff vacancies. And the system's ability to maximize Medicaid reimbursements were not being realized.

To address these and other issues, the Council of the Great City Schools has provided numerous recommendations to help the Sacramento schools move forward on behalf of its students with disabilities. These proposals can be grouped into three big buckets: organizational, instructional, and operational.

The organizational proposals are generally meant to create greater coherence in the district's special educational programming and less siloing of staff. The instructional recommendations are meant to take the good work the district has done around MTSS and UDL to scale. And the operational proposals are designed to remove barriers in how smoothly the district's special education program runs.

Interestingly, many of the challenges that the district faces have been addressed at least in part by a number of other urban school systems—like the District of Columbia and Baltimore—that Sacramento can turn to for approaches.

The Sacramento school district clearly has the talent and the commitment to do much better for its students with disabilities, particularly in areas of achievement and opportunity. The Council hopes that this report will help the district create an integrated set of services for its students. The Council and its member districts stand ready to help.

APPENDICES

Improving Special Education Services in the Sacramento Unified School District

Appendix A. Incidence Rate and Staffing Survey Results

The Urban Special Education Leadership Collaborative and the Council of the Great City Schools, including its team members who conducted school district special education reviews, collected the data reported in these tables. *The data do not give precise comparisons, so the results need to be used with caution.* District data are not consistently reported (e.g., some districts include contractual personnel and others may exclude them) and are sometimes affected by varying placement types used by a school district. The data may count all students with IEPs, including those placed in charters, agencies, and nonpublic schools. Still, these data are the best available and are useful as a rough guide to staffing ratios.

	Total Enrollment	Incidence		Sp Educator			Paraeducator			Speech/Lang			Psychologist		
		% SpEd	SpEd Enr	Number	Ratio To:		Number	Ratio To:		Number	Ratio To:		Number	Ratio To:	
					Sp Ed	All		Sp Ed	All		Sp Ed	All		Sp Ed	All
Agawam Public Schools	4,347	15%	656	39	17	112	100	7	44	15	44	290	3	219	1449
Atlanta Public Schools	43,443	11%	4,950	431	11	101	224	22	194	65	76	688	22	225	1975
Anchorage School Dist	48,154	14.1%	6,779	716.8	9.5	67.2	786.4	8.6	61.2	65	104	741	44.7	151	1010
Arlington VA Pub Sch	21231	13.9%	2952	343	8.6	62	262	11	81	38	77	574	22	134	923
Austin Pub S D	84676	10%	8,062	772.5	10.4	110	824	9.7	103	70.5	114	1201	34.6	233	2447
Baltimore City Publ Sch	82,824	16%	12,866	1,121	12	74	620	21	134	92	140	901	NA	NA	NA
Baltimore County P Sch	107,033	11.4%	12,127	1025.4	11.8	104	2305*	5.26	46	187.5	65	571	85.3	142	1254
Boston Public Schools	54,966	21%	11,534	1200	10	47	800	14	70	147	78	383	48	240	1173
Bellevue, WA SD	18,883	10.3%	1,947	82.7	23.5	228	118.6	16.4	159	17.4	112	1085	17.3	112.5	1092
Bridgeport, CT	20,300	14.3%	2,618	204	13	100	254	10	80	25	105	812	33	79	615
Buffalo Public Schools	46,583	16.6%	7744	753	10.3	61.9	439	17.6	106	109	71	427	62	125	751
Cambridge Publ Schools	6,000	20%	1,200	176	7	35	103	12	59	20	60	300	22	55	273
Carpentersville, IL	19,844	15.8%	3,139	227	13.8	87	380	8.3	52	43	73	461	28	112	708
Chicago Public Schools	397,092	13.7%	54,376	4,649	11.7	85.4	4,228	12.9	94	390	139	1018	261	208	1521
Cincinnati Pub Schools	51,431	17.4%	8,928	457	19.5	112.5	801	11.1	64	62	144	830	57.7	155	891
Clark Cty School Dist	309,476	10%	32,167	2,247	15	138	1,346	24	230	299	108	1036	180	179	1720
Cleve Hts-UnivHtsCty	6,000	18%	1,100	83	14	73	58	19	104	7	158	858	8	NA	NA
Compton CA Unified SD	26,703	11.2%	2981	126	28	256	118	25	226	5	596	5341	14	213	1907
DeKalb 428, IL	6,249	14.1%	879	58	15.2	108	205	4.3	30	9	98	694	7.5	117	833
DesMoines Public Schls	31,654	15.3%	4,854	493*	9.8	64	358.5**	13.5	88	37.3	130	849	11.5	422	2753
D.C. Public Schools	48,991	18%	8,603	669	13	74	653	14	76	90	96	545	78	111	629
Davenport Comm Sch	15,302	12%	1,857	188	10	82	287	7	54	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Deer Valley Unified SD	36,086	9%	3,289	190	18	190	229	15	158	49	68	737	108	31	335
Denver Public Schools	78,352	12%	9,142	592	16	133	528	18	149	94	98	834	98	94	800
ESD 112	13,764	14%	1,987	55	37	251	158	13	88	20	100	689	12	166	1147
Elgin U-46, IL	40,525	13.1%	5,304	252.8	21	160	288.5	18	140	71.9	74	564	20	265	2026
Everett Pub Schools, WA	6,100	17%	1,049	74	15	83	51	21	178	4	263	1525	5	210	1220
Fort Worth	79,885	8%	6,144	520	12	154	450	14	178	73	85	1095	31	199	2577
Greenville County, SC	70,282	14%	9,894	463	21	152	376	26	187	93	106	756	25	396	2111
Houston Indepen SD	200,568	9%	17,489	1,625	11	124	1,145	16	176	158	111	1270	NA	NA	NA
Kalamazoo Pub Schools	12,100	14%	1,667	70	24	173	79	22	154	15	112	807	NA	NA	NA
Kent, WA Pub Schools	27,196	11.3%	3,069	148.7	20.6	183	318	9.7	85.5	32.3	95	842	25	123	1088
Lake Washington, WA	26,864	11.7%	3,145	155.1	20.3	111.2	241.5	13.0	111.2	32.6	96.5	824	24.7	127.3	1087.6
Kyrene School District	17,910	9%	1,544	141	11	128	124	13	145	27	58	664	14	111	1280
Lakota Local	18,500	10%	1,800	126	15	147	120	15	155	39	47	475	18	100	1021
LAUSD	632,881	13%	82,326	4,470	19	142	8,470	10	75	379	218	1670	599	138	1057
Lincoln	1,060	12%	128	21	7	51	21	7	51	5	26	212	2	64	530
Madison, WI Pub Schls	27,185	14.0%	3,808	347	10.9	78	448	8.5	61	86	44	316	49	77.7	555
Marlborough Pub Sch	4,835	25%	1,198	141	9	35	115	11	43	7	172	691	4	300	1209
Memphis City	110,863	15%	16,637	912	19	122	655	26	170	53	314	2092	58	287	1912
Miami-Dade	376,264	11%	40,012	2,500	17	151	1,226	33	307	209	192	1801	206	195	1827
Milwaukee	78,533	20.9%	16,406	1281	13	61	988	16.6	79	169	80	465	136	121	577
Montgomery Cty Sch	146,812	12%	17,226	1,588	11	93	1,398	13	106	293	59	502	97	178	1514
Naperville IL 203	8131	11%	1978	150	13	120	237	8	76	33	59	549	22	90	824
Nashville	82,260	12.3%	10,141	680.5	14.9	121	594	17.1	138	109	93	755	65.5	155	1256
New Bedford	12,692	21%	2,655	204	14	63	205	13	62	26	103	489	9	295	1411
Oak Park Sch Dist 97	5,400	16%	875	78	12	70	90	10	60	14	63	386	8	110	675
N. Chicago, IL (in Dist.)	3803	16%	614	39	15.7	92	27	22.7	141	8	76.8	475.4	5	122.8	760.6
Oakland Unified SD	33312	15.4%	5401	404	13.4	82.5	175	31	190	47	115	709	43.5	125	766
Pittsburgh Pub Schools	23,276	18.1%	4,210	308	13.7	76	263	16	89	31	136	751	16	263	1455
Portland Public Schools	46,596	14%	6,513	355	19	132	535	13	88	92	71	507	56	117	833
Providence, RI	23,695	18.8%	4460	340	13	70	339	13	70	40	111	592	28	159	846
Renton, WA	14,343	14.7%	2,108	129	16.3	111	294	7	48	20	105	717	15	140	956

Improving Special Education Services in the Sacramento Unified School District

	Total Enrollment	Incidence		Sp Educator			Paraeducator			Speech/Lang			Psychologist		
		% SpEd	SpEd Enr	Number	Ratio To:		Number	Ratio To:		Number	Ratio To:		Number	Ratio To:	
					Sp Ed	All		Sp Ed	All		Sp Ed	All		Sp Ed	All
Rockford IL Pub S	28,973	14%	4,065	336	12	86	334	12	87	49	83	591	24	169	1207
Round Rock	43,000	8%	3,313	369	9	117	171	20	252	41	81	1049	29	115	1483
Sacramento	46,843	13.9%	6,519	288.1	22.6	162	246.2	26.5	190	50.8	128.3	922	29.7	219.5	1419
San Diego Unified SD	132,500	12%	16,300	1,100	15	121	1,300	13	102	196	84	677	129	126	1027
Saugus, MA	3,012	15%	462	28	17	108	29	16	104	6	77	502	NA	NA	NA
Sch Dist of Philadelphia	168,181	20%	33,686	1,535	22	110	610	56	276	99	341	1699	100	337	1682
Scottsdale, AZ	26,544	10.9%	2,891	246	11.8	108	230	12.6	115	39.4	73	674	28.4	102	935
Shelby County (Memphis)	114,760	12.7%	14,556	852	17.1	135	768	19.0	149	55	265	2087	60	243	1913
St. Paul, MN	38,086	18.8%	7,152	523	13.7	73	536	13.3	71	97	74	392	19	376	2004
Sun Prairie Area S Dist	6,656	10%	697	62	12	108	93	8	72	14	50	476	7	100	951
Tacoma Pub Schl WA	32,412	12%	3,894	172.5	23	188	223	17	145	33.6	116	965	27	144	1200
Tucson Unified SD	56,000	14%	8,092	409	20	137	419	20	134	61	133	919	54	150	1038
Washoe County Dist, NV	63,310	14%	8,551	472	19	135	325	27	195	77	112	823	37	232	1712
Williamson Cty Schl	31,292	9%	2,824	213	13	147	400	7	78	34	121	911	23	178	1346
West Aurora, IL SD	12,725	13%	1,688	120	14	106	101	17	126	21	80	606	13	130	979
Worcester, MA	24,825	21%	5,172	254	21	98	366	15	68	38	137	654	NA	NA	NA
Averages		13.1%			14.5	111		15.3	116		119	903		173	1317

Improving Special Education Services in the Sacramento Unified School District

Ratios for Social Workers, Nurses, OTs & PTs	Total Student Enrollment	Total Special Ed	Social Worker			Nursing (School/RN, etc.)			Occupational Therapy		Physical Therapy	
			Number	Ratio To:		Number	Ratio To:		Number	Ratio	Number	Ratio
				SpEd	All		SpEd	All				
			SpEd	All	SpEd	All	SpEd	All	SpEd	All		
Agawam Pub Schools	4,347	656	NA	NA	NA	8	82	544	3	219	3	219
Anchorage School Dist.	48,154	6,779	NA	NA	NA	112.8	60	426	21.9	309	7.8	869
Atlanta Public Schools	43,443	4,950	30	165	1448	58	85	511	12	413	3	1650
Arlington Pub Schools	21231	2952	15	197	1415	*30	98	708	20	147	6	492
Austin Pub S D	84,676	8,062	21	384	4032	68	119	1245	19	424	13	620
Baltimore City Public	82,824	12,866	193	67	430	78	165	1062	20	644	5	2574
Baltimore County Pub Sc	107,033	12,127	48.7	249	1701	179.8	67	595	65.2	186	27	449
Bellevue, WA SD	18,883	1,947	4	487	4721	13.2	148	1431	5.3	367	5.3	367
Boston Public Schools	54,966	11534	NA	NA	NA	100	115	563	67	172	17	680
Bridgeport, CT	20,300	2618	38	69	534	28	94	82	7	374	2	1309
Buffalo Public Schools	46,583	7744	48.5	160	960	NA	NA	NA	75	103	29	267
Cambridge Pub School	6,000	1,200	16	75	375	0	NA	NA	16	75	7	172
Carpentersville	19,844	3,139	36.5	86	544	27.5	114	722	22	142	6	523
Chicago Pub Schools	404,151	50,566	355.7	142	1136	334	151	1210	115	440	35	1445
Cincinnati Pub Sch	51,431	8,928	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	19	470	5	1786
Clark Cty School Dist	309,476	32,167	NA	NA	NA	173	186	1789	68	474	29	1100
Cleve Hts-UnivHtsCty	6,000	1,100	7	158	858	5	220	1200	2	550	1	1100
Compton CA Unified SD	26,703	2981	1	2981	NA	1	2981	NA	1.5	1987	.5	5962
DeKalb 428, IL	6,249	879	8	110	781	7	126	893	3.4	256	1.3	204
DesMoines Public Schls	31,654	4,854	25.8	188	1227	58.4	83	542	7	693	4.8	1011
D.C. Public Schools	48,991	8,603	90	96	545	127	68	386	48	180	16	538
Davenport CommSch	15,302	1,857	NA	NA	NA	7	266	2186	NA	NA	NA	NA
Deer Valley Unified SD	36,086	3,289	NA	NA	NA	37	89	976	19	174	4	823
Denver Public Schools	78,352	9,142	74	124	1059	77	119	1018	25	366	12	762
Elgin U-46, IL	40,525	5,304	56	95	724	59.5	89	681	25.2	210	4	1326
ESD 112	13,764	1,987	NA	NA	NA	5	398	2753	6	332	3	663
Everett Public Schools	6,100	1,049	2	525	3050	11	96	555	2	525	3	350
Fort Worth	79,885	6,144	NA	NA	NA	106	58	754	16	384	10	615
Greenville County, SC	70,282	9,894	20	495	3514	132	75	532	14	707	4	2574
Houston Indepen SD	200,568	17,489	26	673	7715	25	700	8020	17	1029	8	2187
Kalamazoo Pub	12,100	1,667	5	334	2420	2	834	6050	4	417	3	556
Kent, WA Pub Schools	27,196	3069	2.2	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	12.8	240	4.8	639
Kyrene School District	17,910	1,544	NA	NA	NA	4	386	4478	2	772	2	772
Lake Washington SD	26864	3145	NA	NA	NA	23.6	133	1138	19.3	163	3.3	953
Lakota Local	18,500	1,800	6	300	3084	14	129	1322	8	225	2	900
LAUSD	632,881	82,326	275	300	2302	575	144	1101	159	518	28	2941
Lincoln	1,060	128	5	26	212	2	64	530	2	64	1	128
Madison, WI Public Schls	27,185	3,808	68	56	399	38	100	715	34	112	13	293
Marlborough Public	4,835	1,198	9	134	538	10	120	484	4	300	2	599
Memphis City	110,863	16,637	55	303	2016	68	245	1641	11	1513	9	1849
Miami-Dade	376,264	40,012	NA	NA	NA	206	195	1827	65	616	23	1740
Montgomery CtySch	146,812	17,226	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	112	154	61	283
Milwaukee	78533	16,406	140	117	560	101	162	778	30	547	13	1262
Naperville, IL 203	81,131	1978	27	73	671	29	68	625	4	494	3	659
Nashville	82,260	10,141	NA	NA	NA	57	178	1443	29.5	344	6	1690
New Bedford	12,692	2,655	67	40	190	30	89	424	11	242	3	885
North Chicago, IL	3,803	614	10	61.4	380.3	NA	NA	NA	3.6	170.5	1.6	383.8
Oak Park Sch Dist 97	5,400	875	12	73	450	8	110	675	7	1125	1	875
Pittsburgh Pub Sch	23,276	4,210	40	105	582	40.6	104	573	7	601	8	526
Oakland Unified SD	33312	5315	19	284	1753	30.8	175	1082	12	450	2	2701
Portland Pub Schools	46,596	6,513	10	652	4660	NA	NA	NA	20	326	9	724
Providence	23,695	4460	35	127	677	NA	NA	NA	11.5	388	4.5	991
Renton, WA	14,343	2,108	0	NA	NA	17	124	844	15	141	3	703
Rockford IL Pub S	28,973	4,065	26	135	1114	32	127	905	12.5	325	4.5	903
Round Rock	43,000	3,313	NA	NA	NA	1	NA	NA	10	332	3	1105
Sacramento	46,843	6,519	8	NA	NA	5*	NA	NA	2	NA	0	NA
San Diego Unified SD	132,500	16,300	NA	NA	NA	129	127	1028	40	408	10	1630
Saugus, MA	3,012	462	4	116	753	5	93	603	2	231	1	462
Schl Dist of Philadelphia	168,181	33,686	NA	NA	NA	280	121	601	20	1685	20	1685
Scottsdale	26,544	2,891	NA	NA	NA	31	93	856	13.8	210	3.8	761
Shelby County (Memphis)	114760	14556	66	221	1739	79	184	1453	29.22	498	12.84	1134

Improving Special Education Services in the Sacramento Unified School District

Ratios for Social Workers, Nurses, OTs & PTs	Total Student Enrollment	Total Special Ed	Social Worker			Nursing (School/RN, etc.)			Occupational Therapy		Physical Therapy	
			Number	Ratio To:		Number	Ratio To:		Number	Ratio	Number	Ratio
				SpEd	All		SpEd	All				
St. Paul Pub Schools	38,086	7,152	92	78	414	33	217	1154	36	199	12	596
Sun Prairie Area S Dist	6,656	697	8	88	832	1	NA	NA	5	140	2	349
Tacoma Pub Sch (WA)	32,412	3,894	NA	NA	NA	1.2	NA	NA	19	205	11	354
Tucson Unified SD	56,000	8,092	26	312	2154	53	153	1057	10	810	4	2023
Washoe Cty Sc Dist	63,310	8,551	NA	NA	NA	35	248	1836	12	713	7	1222
West Aurora SD, IL	12,725	1688	19	89	670	7	241	1818	11	154	7	241
Williamson Cty Schl	30,942	4,093	NA	NA	NA	37	111	837	22	187	5	819
Worcester	24,825	5,172	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	12	431	5	1035
Averages				271	2079		153	1172		371		1001

Improving Special Education Services in the Sacramento Unified School District

Percent Students with IEPs of Total Enrollment & Students with IEPs to Staff Ratio in Ascending Order

Rank	% IEPs	Special Educators	Paraeducators	Speech/Lang Pathologists	Psychologists	Social Workers	Nurses	Occupational Therapists	Physical Therapists
1	8%	7	4.3	26	31	26	58	64	128
2	8%	7	5.26	44	55	40	60	75	172
3	9%	8.6	7	44	64	56	62	103	219
4	9%	9	7	47	77.7	61	64	112	241
5	9%	9	7	50	79	67	67	140	283
6	9%	9.5	7	58	90	69	68	141	293
7	10%	9.8	7	59	94	73	75	142	349
8	10%	10	8	59	100	73	82	147	350
9	10%	10	8	60	100	75	83	154	354
10	10%	10	8.3	63	102	78	85	154	367
11	10.3%	10.3	8.5	65	110	86	89	163	384
12	11%	10.9	8.6	68	110	88	89	171	449
13	11%	11	9.7	71	111	89	89	172	462
14	11%	11	9.7	71	111	95	93	174	492
15	11%	11	10	73	112	96	93	180	523
16	11.2%	11	10	73	113	105	94	186	526
17	11.3%	11.4	10	74	115	116	96	187	538
18	11.4%	11.7	11	74	117	124	98	199	556
19	12%	12	11	76	121	126	100	205	596
20	12%	12	11.1	77	123	127	104	210	599
21	12%	12	12	78	124	134	110	211	615
22	12%	12	12	79	125	135	111	219	620
23	12%	12	12.6	80	127	140	114	225	639
24	12%	12	12.9	80	128	142	115	231	659
25	12%	13	13	80	130	153	119	240	663
26	12.3%	13	13	81	134	158	119	242	676
27	12.7%	13	13	83	138	160	120	285	680
28	13%	13	13	84	140	165	121	300	703
29	13%	13	13	85	142	188	124	309	724
30	13.1%	13	13	93	144	197	126	325	761
31	13.7%	13.4	13	95	150	221	127	326	762
32	13.9%	13.7	13	96	151	249	127	332	772
33	14%	14	13	96.5	154	284	129	332	819
34	14%	14	13.5	98	155	300	133	344	823
35	14%	14	14	100	155	300	144	366	869
36	14%	14	14	103	159	303	148	367	875
37	14%	14	14	104	166	312	153	374	885
38	14%	14	15	105	169	334	155	384	900
39	14%	14	15	105	178	384	162	388	903
40	14%	14.9	15	106	178	487	163	408	953
41	14%	15	15	108	179	495	165	413	991
42	14%	15	16	111	195	525	175	417	1011
43	14.1%	15	16	111	199	652	178	424	1079
44	14.1%	15	16	112	208	673	184	431	1035
45	14.7%	15.2	16.4	112	210		186	450	1100
46	15%	15.7	16.6	112	213		195	470	1100
47	15%	16.0	17	114	219		217	473	1105
48	15%	16.3	17	115	219.5		220	474	1134
49	15.3%	17	17.1	116	223		241	477	1222
50	15.4%	17	17.6	117	225		245	494	1262
51	16%	17	18	121	232		248	498	1309
52	16%	17.1	18	127	233		266	518	1326
53	16%	18	18.4	128.3	240		386	525	1532
54	16.2%	19	19	130	243		398	547	1553
55	17%	19	19	133	263		700	550	1630
56	17.4%	19	20	135	265		834	601	1650
57	17.7%	19	20	136	287			616	1685
58	18%	19.5	20	137	295			644	1690
59	18%	20	21	139	300			693	1740
60	18%	20.3	21	140	319			702	1786
61	18%	20.6	22	144	337			713	1849
62	18.1%	21	22	158	376			772	2023

Improving Special Education Services in the Sacramento Unified School District

Rank	% IEPs	Special Educators	Paraeducators	Speech/Lang Pathologists	Psychologists	Social Workers	Nurses	Occupational Therapists	Physical Therapists
63	19%	21	24	172	396			810	2187
64	19%	21	25	192				1029	2574
65	19.3%	22	26	218				1125	2574
66	20%	22.6	26	263				1513	2701
67	20%	23	26.5	265				1685	2941
68	20.9%	23.5	27	314					
69	21%	24	31	341					
70	21%	24	33	596					
71	21%	37	56						
Avg.	13.1%	14.5	15	118	173	271	153	371	1001

Appendix B. Proposed Organization for Special Education & Student Supports

Executive Director of Special Education and Student Support Services		
Specially Designed Instruction Director	SELPA/Special Education Operations Director	Student Support Director
Specially Designed Instruction Director		
Area Support Supervisor	Districtwide Services Supervisor	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program Specialists* (Align with area assistant superintendents) • Behavior Intervention Specialists* (Coordinate with Student Support Services personnel) • Inclusive Practices Coaches • Designated Instructional Professionals** Align staff to schools associated with each AAS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speech/language Pathology/Hearing Interpreters* • Preschool** (5 preschool teachers, 8 instructional aides) • Home/Hospital Instruction • Assistive Technology* • Occupational Therapists/Assistants* • Postsecondary Transition* • Adapted PE* 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on number of personnel in each area, have administrative heads provide leadership and support the director. ** Employ DIPs at the school site (with principal supervision) when supporting specific students pursuant to IEPs. Maintain a relatively small number of DIPs by area to deploy for crisis intervention. Also, employ preschool personnel at the school site. Maintain support for preschool coordination. Move to human resources paperwork for teachers with students over the contract limit. 		
<i>Additional Functions for Each Supervisory Area</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Placement for new students with IEPs • SDC coordination • Behavior review and pre-expulsion hearings for students with IEPs (with student hearing/placement director) • Field trips 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deaf Task Force • Coordination of staff development • Residential placement • Special Arts program • County Office of Education programs • Alternate standards curriculum • Extended school year coordination 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personnel support re: posting and interviewing for vacant special education positions • Job fairs • Administrative support team • ERMHS support in collaboration with Student Support Services • Special education induction (with induction coordinator) and new teachers not in induction program with coordination support provided by human resource 		
SELPA/Operations Director		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SELPA Support Staff: Coordination of policy and compliance requirements, special education procedural manual, management of due process, complaint management, alternate dispute resolution, coordination of monitoring, coordination of surrogate parents, coordination/monitoring of compensatory education and tutoring. • Budget Technician 		

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Student Support Services Director		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Social Workers• Psychologists• Social/Emotional Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Behavior/Reentry• Nurses/Health Aides	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Youth Development• Family & Community Partnerships
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Based on number of personnel in each area, have administrative heads provide leadership and support the director.• Collaborate with Behavior Intervention Specialists, and with ERMHS		

Allocate office technicians to each division based on need; and have appropriate personnel attend CAO meetings.

Appendix C. Data and Documents Reviewed

- Self-Contained Programs
- Written feedback from Speech Language Pathology
- 2015-2016 SPED 3000s, 6000s (Fiscal- Account Summary)
- Single Plan for Student Achievement
- 2015-16 California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress Data Review 10/6/16
- Non-Public Schools Data 2013-2017
- Graduation Data 2010-15
- Drop-out Data 2010-15
- SCUSD Enrolled Data
- SCUSD Disability Data
- SCUSD Enrolled Students by Race/Ethnicity
- SCUSD IEPs by Race/Ethnicity and Disability
- SCUSD Enrolled ELs
- SCUSD ELs with Disabilities
- SCUSD Referrals for Initial Special Education Evaluation
- SCUSD Educational Settings by Disability, Race, Ethnicity, Non- Public Schools Etc.
- SCUSD Out of School Suspensions 2014-15
- SCUSD Personnel Data
- Copy of Superintendent's Audit Revised
- District Procedures Fall 2016 / Determination of Eligibility and Related Services
- SCUSD Organization Charts for the Cabinet and All Central Offices
- Narrative Items from CGCS Audit Request
- SCUSD Budget Summary Balance
- Plan for Title 1 Supplemental Educational Services for Alternative Supports Program
- Revised Special Education Organization Chart
- Special Ed Personnel and Job Descriptions
- CGCS Scope of Work for SCUSD
- SCTA and SCUSD Agreement for 2014-15 and 2015-16
- SCTA Contract
- Special Education Procedural Handbook
- California Department of Education Assessment and Evaluation
- Special Education Division Data
- Title 1 Supplemental Educational Services Plan

Appendix D. Working Agenda¹²⁸

Draft Agenda

Tuesday, November 15:

6:30-8:00 p.m. Dinner with Superintendent (Location and District Participants TBD)

Wednesday, November 16:

8:00-9:00 a.m. Becky Bryant, Director III, Special Education/SELPA Director
9:00-9:45 a.m. Iris Taylor, Ed.D. Chief Academic Officer – Lisa Allen, Deputy Superintendent
9:45-10:45 a.m. CAC Executive Committee (for the SELPA)
10:45-11:45 a.m. Related Department Office Management Staff – List of Participants Attached Under This Notation
11:45-12:30 p.m. Gerardo Castillo, CFO, Michael Smith, Director III, Budget Services, Ronald Hill, Transportation Director
12:30-1:00 p.m. Lunch
1:00-2:00 p.m. Area Assistant Superintendents, including Equity
2:00-2:45 p.m. Special Education Supervisors: Kathryn Brown, Michael Kast, Lynne Ruvalcaba
2:45-3:45 p.m. Special Education Program Specialists (
3:45-4:00 p.m. Break
4:00-5:00 p.m. Special Education Teachers
5:00-6:00 p.m. Site Principals
6:00-6:30 p.m. Chief Human Resources Officer – Cancy McArn
7:00-8:30 p.m. Dinner for Council of Great City Schools Staff with Select Board Members

Thursday, November 17 (Day Two):

8:00-8:30 a.m. California Department of Education Consultant – Aaron Christenson
8:30-9:15 a.m. Special Education Staff #1 – List of Invitees Attached Under This Notation
9:15-10:30 a.m. Related Services Providers – List of Invitees Attached Under This Notation
10:30-11:45 a.m. Special Education Staff #2 – List of Invitees Attached Under This Notation
11:45-12:45 p.m. Academic Office – List of Participants Attached Under This Notation
12:45-1:15 p.m. Lunch
1:15-2:00 p.m. Paraeducators – List of Invitees Attached Under This Notation
2:00-2:45 p.m. Legal Compliance: Sarah Garcia, Partner, Lozano Smith (by phone), Raoul Bozio, Legal Services Manager, and Becky Bryant, Director, Special Education
2:45-3:30 p.m. Bargaining Units Representatives: SCTA, SEIU
3:30-4:15 p.m. Al Rogers Ed.D., Chief Strategy Officer

¹²⁸ This is the agenda prepared for the team prior to its arrival. It was modified as the team conducted its work.

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4:15-4:30 p.m. Break
4:30-5:30 p.m. General Education Teachers
6:15 Dinner Council Great City Schools Staff

Friday, November 18 (Day 3)

8:00-12:00 p.m. Prepare for meeting with Superintendent
1:00-2:30 p.m. Debrief with Superintendent

Appendix E. Focus Group Participants Interviewees with Team

- Jose Banda
- Iris Taylor
- Becky Bryant

CAC Executive Committee (for the SELPA)

- Angie Sutherland, Chair
- Benita Ayala, Vice Chair
- Angel Garcia, Secretary
- Renee Webster –Hawkins, Member
- Grace Trujillo, Treasury
- Nathaniel Browning
- Darlene Anderson

Related Department Office Management Staff

- Stephan Brown, Director, Student, Hearing and Placement
- Stan Echols, Coordinator, Behavior and ReEntry
- Victoria Flores, Director, Student Support and Health Services
- Jacqueline Rodriguez, Coordinator, Student Support Services
- Teresa Fox, School Nurse
- Sean Alexander, Supervisor, School, Family and Community Partnerships
- Lynne Ruvalcaba, Special Education Supervisor

Budget and Transportation

- Cathy Allen, COO
- Michael Smith, Director III, Budget Services
- Ronald Hill, Interim Director III, Transportation

Area Assistant Superintendent, Including Equity

- Tu Moua, Area Assistant Superintendent
- Chad Sweitzer, Area Assistant Superintendent
- Olga Sims, Area Assistant Superintendent

Special Education Supervisors

- Kathryn Brown
- Michael Kast
- Lynn Ruvalcaba

Special Education Program Specialists

- Jeri Chase-DuCray
- Jeffie Vogt
- Narda Beckman
- Johnnetta Bell Webb
- Lisa Friend
- Kris Peixoto

- Holly Rogers
- Allyson Bailey
- Andrew Smith
- Brittany Tom
- Scott Speights
- Tracy Pena

Special Education Teachers

- Shannon Teves, RSP, Parkway Elementary
- Crystal Au, Special Education Support Teacher, Sutterville Elementary
- Karla Packwood, SDC – Autism, Bret Harte Elementary
- Ying Lacy, RSP, William Land/Phoebe Hearst Elementary
- Greg Van Koersel, RSP, Ethel Phillips Elementary
- Suzanne Odekirk, SDC – CD, Caroline Wenzel Elementary
- Jessica Abercombie, SDC – Preschool, Ethel Phillips Elementary
- David Young, Special Education Support Teacher, CK McClatchy High School
- Joseph Salonga, SDC- Adult Transition, Luther Burbank High School
- Joselyn Stewart, RSP – JF Kennedy High School
- Robin Kafouros, SDC-LD – Hiram Johnson High School
- Laurie Polster, RSP, Isador Cohen Elementary
- Maria Lomboy, SDC- ED, Matsuyama Elementary
- Miriam Goff, Special Education Support Teacher, Cal Middle

Site Principals

- Daniel Rolleri, Oak Ridge Elementary
- Lori Aoun, Sutterville Elementary
- Eric Chapman, Leataata Floyd Elementary
- Mechelle Horning, Alice Birney Waldorf Inspired K-8
- Andrea Egan, Cal Middle
- Rick Flores, Sam Brannan Middle
- Liz Vigil, Rosemont High School
- David Van Natten, JF Kennedy High School
- Devon Davis, LDV K-8

Human Resources Chief

- Cancy McArn

California Department of Education

- Aaron Christenson

Special Education Staff, Group 1

- Susan McKellar, Workability, Work Experience
- Angelic Williams, Transition Partnership Program Employment Coach
- Bernadette Carmona, AT Specialist
- Ted Wattenberg, AT Specialist
- Kelly Dunkley, Coordinator, Induction

- Michael Kast, Special Education Supervisor
- Robin Pierson, Assistant Superintendent, Special Education, SCOE
- Melissa Ferrante, Inclusive Practices Coach
- Linda Mangum, Inclusive Practices Coach
- Courtney Coffin, Inclusive Practices Coach
- Andrea Lemos, Director Special Programs

Related Services Providers

- Karen Oakley, Language, Speech and Hearing Specialist
- Shelly Takaha, Language, Speech and Hearing Specialist
- Martin Young, School Psychologist
- Linda Lee, School Psychologist
- Monica Underwood, Social Worker
- Selecia Fletcher, Behavior Intervention Specialist
- Christine Anjo , Occupational Therapist
- Leslie Ingram, VI Specialist
- George Zinner, Adaptive Physical Education
- Michelle Coon, Home/Hospital
- Leilani Armstrong, Behavior Intervention Specialist

Special Education Staff, Group 2

- John Brown, Budget Technician
- Janice Lovato, Legal Technician
- Carol Martyn, Application Specialist
- Norma Hardy, Program Records Technician
- Cathy Bennett, Medi-Cal Program Specialist
- Maria Colmenares, Office Technician II, Compliance Review
- Christy Lindfeldt, Program Records Technician
- Laura Chavez, Office Technician II

Academic Office

- Matt Turkie, Assistant Superintendent, Curriculum and Instruction
- Vanessa Girard, Director III, Multilingual Literacy
- Rachel Cooper, Instructional Technology
- Denise Leograndis, Coordinator, ELA
- Lisa Hayes, Director I, State and Federal Programs
- Joseph Stymeist, Director, College and Career

Paraeducators

- Danielle McKay
- Marene Mask
- Carla Williams
- Michelle Hull
- Jordan Hicks

- Darell Jones
- Adreena Smithe
- Pakettu Cobian
- Kristina Gorbenko
- Eva Rios
- Anissa Pulido
- Nellie Arias
- Summer Clore
- Elena Cortez
- Courtney Cowling
- Donald Uhl

Legal Compliance

- Sarah Garcia
- Raoul Bozio
- Becky Bryant

Bargaining Units

- John Borsos, SCTA
- Nikki Milevsky, SCTA
- Ian Arnold, SEIU
- Karla Faucett, SEIU
- David Fishes, SCTA
- Hasan McWhorter, SCTA
- Mike Breverly, SEIU
- Nafeesab Youns, SCTA School Psychologist
- Jamar Sullivan, SCTA
- Mary Rodriquez, SCTA Resource
- Monica Harvey, SCTA Language, Speech, Hearing Specialists

Chief Strategy Officer

- Al Roger, Ed. D.

General Education Teachers

- Roseanne Cherry, Caleb Greenwood Elementary
- Nicole Bridgham, Camella Elementary
- Dave Decker, Peter Burnett Elementary
- Senna Vasquez, New Technology High School
- Michelle Apperson, Sutterville Elementary
- Deana Mafua, Caleb Greenwood Elementary
- Debbie Bonilla, Ethel I Baker
- Athena Lee, Parkway Elementary
- Rebecca Raul , Caleb Greenwood

Appendix E. Strategic Support Team

The following were members of the Council's Strategic Support Team on special education who conducted this project for the Sacramento Unified School District.

Judy Elliott, Ph.D.

Judy Elliott is the former Chief Academic Officer of the Los Angeles Unified School District where she was responsible for curriculum and instruction from early childhood through adult, professional development, innovation, accountability, assessment, afterschool programs, state and federal programs, health and human services, magnet programs language acquisition for both English and Standard English learners, parent outreach, and intervention programs for all students. Before that she was the Chief of Teaching and Learning in the Portland Oregon Public Schools and prior to that an Assistant Superintendent of Student Support Services in the Long Beach Unified School District in CA. Dr. Elliott also worked as a Senior Researcher at the National Center on Educational Outcomes at the University of Minnesota. In 2012, she was appointed by NYS Commissioner John King as "Distinguished Educator" to help support and oversee the Buffalo City School District Priority Schools.

Dr. Elliott assists districts, cooperatives, schools, national organizations, state and federal departments of education in their efforts to update and realign systems and infrastructure around curriculum, instruction, assessment, data use, leadership and accountability that includes all students and renders a return on investment. She has trained thousands of staff, teachers, and administrators in the U.S. and abroad in areas of integrated service delivery systems, multi-tiered system of supports, effective use of data, linking assessment to District and classroom instruction, intervention, strategies and tactics for effective instruction, curriculum adaptation, collaborative teaching and behavior management. Dr. Elliott has published over 51 articles, book chapters, technical/research reports and books. She is nationally known for her work in Multi-Tiered System of Supports/Response to Instruction and Intervention.

Sue Gamm, Esq.

Sue Gamm, Esq., is a special educator and attorney who has spent more than 40 years specializing in the study and understanding of evidence-based practices, policies, and procedures that support a systemic and effective education of students with disabilities and those with academic and social/emotional challenges. Ms. Gamm has blended her unique legal and special education programmatic expertise with her experiences as the chief specialized services officer for the Chicago Public Schools, attorney and division director for the Office for Civil Rights (US Department of Education) and special educator to become a highly regarded national expert as an author, consultant, presenter, and evaluator. Since her retirement from the Chicago Public Schools in 2003, has been engaged in 30 states and the District of Columbia with more than 50 school districts and five state educational agencies working to improve the instruction and support provided to students with disabilities. Twenty-one of these reviews were conducted through the auspices of the Council of the Great City Schools. Ms. Gamm has written standard operating procedure manuals for special education practices and multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) for more than 10 school districts, and has shared her knowledge of the IDEA, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act and related issues at more than 70 national, state and local conferences.

Ms. Gamm has authored/co-authored numerous periodicals and publications, including those focused on MTSS, disproportionality in special education, responding to OCR investigations, and assessment. She also testified before Congressional and Illinois legislative committees. Ms. Gamm has served as a consulting attorney on several of the Council's *amicus* briefs focusing on special education that were submitted to the U.S. Supreme Court. Further, she consults with the Public Consulting Group and numerous school districts and state educational agencies and provides training at national, state, and local conferences on special education matters, particularly in the area of special education disproportionality. Ms. Gamm has also been recognized for her legal expertise in the area of special education through her engagement as an expert witness or consultant involving nine special education federal class action or systemic cases. She is admitted to practice before the Illinois Bar, the Federal Bar, and the U.S. Supreme Court Bar.

Neil Guthrie

Neil Guthrie has worked in the area of special education and district administration for over 30 years. He is currently the assistant superintendent of student support services for the Wichita Public Schools. Mr. Guthrie began his career as a school psychologist before moving into educational administration. He has filled various roles, including day school principal and assistant director and division director of student support services. He earned his bachelor's, master's, and EdS degrees from Wichita State University, where he currently teaches special education administration. Mr. Guthrie worked in rural and suburban areas for 18 years with Sedgwick County Special Education Coop and has been with Wichita Public Schools for 13 years. He is committed to a system of reform efforts that support all students under one unified system. He has been instrumental in providing leadership and implementation for the Wichita Multi-Tiered System of Support.

Julie Wright Halbert, Esq.

Julie Halbert has been legislative counsel for the Council of the Great City Schools for over 22 years. In that capacity, she has served as a national education legal and policy specialist, with emphasis on special education. She worked extensively on the reauthorizations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 1997 and 2004. Ms. Halbert is responsible for drafting numerous technical provisions to the IDEA and providing technical assistance to Congress and the U. S. Department of Education. In 1997 and again in 2005, she testified before the U.S. Department of Education on its proposed regulations on IDEA 2004. Ms. Halbert has directed each of the Council's special education strategic review teams, including special education reviews in the Anchorage, Austin, Boston, Chicago, Charleston, Cincinnati, Des Moines, District of Columbia, Guilford County (NC), Memphis, New York City, Richmond, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Providence and St. Louis. Working with national experts Sue Gamm and Judy Elliott, she has published a Council national white paper on the implementation and development of MTSS, Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports for our nation's urban school districts.

Ms. Halbert most recently, January 2017, took the lead working with our cities in the development of the Council's *amicus* brief to the Supreme Court of the United States in *Endrews v. Douglas County School District*, on determining the educational benefit standard due by our districts to students with disabilities when implementing their IEPs. This case is certain to be one of the most important cases since *Rowley* decided over thirty years ago. She was also the counsel

of record for the Council of the Great City Schools' *amicus* briefs in the Supreme Court of the United States in (a) *Board of Education of the City School District of the City of New York v. Tom F., On Behalf of Gilbert F., A Minor Child* (2007); (b) *Jacob Winkelman, a Minor By and Through His Parents and Legal Guardians, Jeff and Sander Winkelman, et al., v. Parma City School District* (2007); (c) *Brian Schaffer v. Jerry Weast, Superintendent of Montgomery County Public Schools, et al.*, (2005); (d) *Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District*, and *Meredith v. Jefferson County Board of Education* (2007) and *Forest Grove School District v. T.A.*, (2009). Ms. Halbert graduated with honors from the University of Maryland and the University of Miami School of Law. She is admitted to practice in the Federal Bar, the U.S. Supreme Court Bar, and the Florida and Pennsylvania Bars.

Additionally, for the past year, together with Husch Blackwell partner John Borkowski, Ms. Halbert is assisting to develop and implement national legal webinars for urban district's counsel and key staff on emerging legal issues for the Council's districts. They include, Civil Rights Priorities at the End of One Administration and Beginning of Another, Hate Speech, Micro-aggressions and Student First Amendment Rights,

Sowmya Kumar

Sowmya Kumar was the assistant superintendent for special education in the Houston Independent School District from July 2010 to March 2017. Through comprehensive, and systemic planning based on data, Ms. Kumar focused on the district's efforts on balancing compliance with improving outcomes for students with disabilities. She was an education specialist at Region 4 Education Service Center in Houston for 13 years before her tenure in Houston ISD. Prior to moving to Houston, she served as director of special services in New Jersey. Ms. Kumar has over 36 years of experience in special education. She has a BA in chemistry from Queens College, NY, and an MA in special education/supervision and administration from Columbia University, NY.

Appendix F. About the Council and History of Strategic Support Teams

The Council of the Great City Schools is a coalition of 68 of the nation's largest urban public school systems.¹²⁹ The organization's Board of Directors is composed of the superintendent, CEO, or chancellor of schools and one school board member from each member city. An executive committee of 24 individuals, equally divided in number between superintendents and school board members, provides regular oversight of the 501(c)(3) organization. The composition of the organization makes it the only independent national group representing the governing and administrative leadership of urban education and the only association whose sole purpose revolves around urban schooling.

The mission of the Council is to advocate for urban public education and to assist its members in to improve and reform. The Council provides services to its members in the areas of legislation, research, communications, curriculum and instruction, and management. The group also convenes two major conferences each year; conducts studies of urban school conditions and trends; and operates ongoing networks of senior school district managers with responsibilities for areas such as federal programs, operations, finance, personnel, communications, instruction, research, and technology. Finally, the organization informs the nation's policymakers, the media, and the public of the successes and challenges of schools in the nation's Great Cities. Urban school leaders from across the country use the organization as a source of information and an umbrella for their joint activities and concerns.

The Council was founded in 1956 and incorporated in 1961 and has its headquarters in Washington, DC. Since the organization's founding, geographic, ethnic, language, and cultural diversity has typified the Council's membership and staff.

¹²⁹ Albuquerque, Anchorage, Atlanta, Austin, Baltimore, Birmingham, Boston, Broward County (Ft. Lauderdale), Buffalo, Caddo Parish (Shreveport), Charleston County, Charlotte-Mecklenburg, Chicago, Buffalo, Clark County (Las Vegas), Cleveland, Columbus, Dallas, Dayton, Denver, Des Moines, Detroit, Duval County (Jacksonville), East Baton Rouge, Fort Worth, Fresno, Guilford County (Greensboro, N.C.), Hillsborough County (Tampa), Houston, Indianapolis, Jackson, Jefferson County (Louisville), Kansas City, Little Rock School District, Long Beach, Los Angeles, Memphis, Miami-Dade County, Milwaukee, Minneapolis, Nashville, Newark, New Orleans, New York City, Norfolk, Sacramento, Oklahoma City, Omaha, Orange County (Orlando), Palm Beach County, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Portland, Providence, Richmond, Rochester, Sacramento, Salt Lake City, San Diego, San Francisco, Seattle, St. Louis, St. Paul, Toledo, Washington, D.C., and Wichita

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History of Strategic Support Teams of the Council of the Great City Schools

The following is a history of the Strategic Support Teams provided by the Council of the Great City Schools to its member urban school districts over the last 18 years.

City	Area	Year
Albuquerque		
	Facilities and Roofing	2003
	Human Resources	2003
	Information Technology	2003
	Special Education	2005
	Legal Services	2005
	Safety and Security	2007
	Research	2013
	Human Resources	2016
Anchorage		
	Finance	2004
	Communications	2008
	Math Instruction	2010
	Food Services	2011
	Organizational Structure	2012
	Facilities Operations	2015
	Special Education	2015
	Human Resources	2016
Atlanta		
	Facilities	2009
	Transportation	2010
Austin		
	Special Education	2010
Baltimore		
	Information Technology	2011
Birmingham		
	Organizational Structure	2007
	Operations	2008
	Facilities	2010
	Human Resources	2014
	Financial Operations	2015
Boston		
	Special Education	2009
	Curriculum & Instruction	2014
	Food Service	2014
	Facilities	2016
Bridgeport		
	Transportation	2012
Broward County (FL)		
	Information Technology	2000
	Food Services	2009
	Transportation	2009
	Information Technology	2012

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Buffalo		
	Superintendent Support	2000
	Organizational Structure	2000
	Curriculum and Instruction	2000
	Personnel	2000
	Facilities and Operations	2000
	Communications	2000
	Finance	2000
	Finance II	2003
	Bilingual Education	2009
	Special Education	2014
Caddo Parish (LA)		
	Facilities	2004
Charleston		
	Special Education	2005
	Transportation	2014
Charlotte- Mecklenburg		
	Human Resources	2007
	Organizational Structure	2012
	Transportation	2013
Cincinnati		
	Curriculum and Instruction	2004
	Curriculum and Instruction	2009
	Special Education	2013
Chicago		
	Warehouse Operations	2010
	Special Education I	2011
	Special Education II	2012
	Bilingual Education	2014
Christina (DE)		
	Curriculum and Instruction	2007
Cleveland		
	Student Assignments	1999, 2000
	Transportation	2000
	Safety and Security	2000
	Facilities Financing	2000
	Facilities Operations	2000
	Transportation	2004
	Curriculum and Instruction	2005
	Safety and Security	2007
	Safety and Security	2008
	Theme Schools	2009
Columbus		
	Superintendent Support	2001
	Human Resources	2001
	Facilities Financing	2002
	Finance and Treasury	2003
	Budget	2003

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	Curriculum and Instruction	2005
	Information Technology	2007
	Food Services	2007
	Transportation	2009
Dallas		
	Procurement	2007
	Staffing Levels	2009
Dayton		
	Superintendent Support	2001
	Curriculum and Instruction	2001
	Finance	2001
	Communications	2002
	Curriculum and Instruction	2005
	Budget	2005
	Curriculum and Instruction	2008
Denver		
	Superintendent Support	2001
	Personnel	2001
	Curriculum and Instruction	2005
	Bilingual Education	2006
	Curriculum and Instruction	2008
	Common Core Implementation	2014
Des Moines		
	Budget and Finance	2003
	Staffing Levels	2012
	Human Resources	2012
	Special Education	2015
	Bilingual Education	2015
Detroit		
	Curriculum and Instruction	2002
	Assessment	2002
	Communications	2002
	Curriculum and Assessment	2003
	Communications	2003
	Textbook Procurement	2004
	Food Services	2007
	Curriculum and Instruction	2008
	Facilities	2008
	Finance and Budget	2008
	Information Technology	2008
	Stimulus planning	2009
	Human Resources	2009
Fresno		
	Curriculum and Instruction	2012
Guilford County		
	Bilingual Education	2002
	Information Technology	2003
	Special Education	2003

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	Facilities	2004
	Human Resources	2007
Hillsborough County		
	Transportation	2005
	Procurement	2005
	Special Education	2012
	Transportation	2015
Houston		
	Facilities Operations	2010
	Capitol Program	2010
	Information Technology	2011
	Procurement	2011
Indianapolis		
	Transportation	2007
	Information Technology	2010
	Finance and Budget	2013
Jackson (MS)		
	Bond Referendum	2006
	Communications	2009
Jacksonville		
	Organization and Management	2002
	Operations	2002
	Human Resources	2002
	Finance	2002
	Information Technology	2002
	Finance	2006
	Facilities operations	2015
	Budget and finance	2015
Kansas City		
	Human Resources	2005
	Information Technology	2005
	Finance	2005
	Operations	2005
	Purchasing	2006
	Curriculum and Instruction	2006
	Program Implementation	2007
	Stimulus Planning	2009
Little Rock		
	Curriculum and Instruction	2010
Los Angeles		
	Budget and Finance	2002
	Organizational Structure	2005
	Finance	2005
	Information Technology	2005
	Human Resources	2005
	Business Services	2005
Louisville		
	Management Information	2005

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	Staffing study	2009
Memphis		
	Information Technology	2007
	Special Education	2015
Miami-Dade County		
	Construction Management	2003
	Food Services	2009
	Transportation	2009
	Maintenance & Operations	2009
	Capital Projects	2009
	Information Technology	2013
Milwaukee		
	Research and Testing	1999
	Safety and Security	2000
	School Board Support	1999
	Curriculum and Instruction	2006
	Alternative Education	2007
	Human Resources	2009
	Human Resources	2013
	Information Technology	2013
Minneapolis		
	Curriculum and Instruction	2004
	Finance	2004
	Federal Programs	2004
Nashville		
	Food Service	2010
	Bilingual Education	2014
Newark		
	Curriculum and Instruction	2007
	Food Service	2008
New Orleans		
	Personnel	2001
	Transportation	2002
	Information Technology	2003
	Hurricane Damage Assessment	2005
	Curriculum and Instruction	2006
New York City		
	Special Education	2008
Norfolk		
	Testing and Assessment	2003
	Curriculum and Instruction	2012
Orange County		
	Information Technology	2010
Palm Beach County		
	Transportation	2015
Philadelphia		
	Curriculum and Instruction	2003
	Federal Programs	2003

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	Food Service	2003
	Facilities	2003
	Transportation	2003
	Human Resources	2004
	Budget	2008
	Human Resource	2009
	Special Education	2009
	Transportation	2014
Pittsburgh		
	Curriculum and Instruction	2005
	Technology	2006
	Finance	2006
	Special Education	2009
Portland		
	Finance and Budget	2010
	Procurement	2010
	Operations	2010
Prince George's County		
	Transportation	2012
Providence		
	Business Operations	2001
	MIS and Technology	2001
	Personnel	2001
	Human Resources	2007
	Special Education	2011
	Bilingual Education	2011
Reno		
	Facilities Management	2013
	Food Services	2013
	Purchasing	2013
	School Police	2013
	Transportation	2013
	Information Technology	2013
Richmond		
	Transportation	2003
	Curriculum and Instruction	2003
	Federal Programs	2003
	Special Education	2003
	Human Resources	2014
Rochester		
	Finance and Technology	2003
	Transportation	2004
	Food Services	2004
	Special Education	2008
San Diego		
	Finance	2006
	Food Service	2006
	Transportation	2007

Improving Special Education Services in the Sacramento Unified School District

	Procurement	2007
San Francisco		
	Technology	2001
St. Louis		
	Special Education	2003
	Curriculum and Instruction	2004
	Federal Programs	2004
	Textbook Procurement	2004
	Human Resources	2005
St. Paul		
	Special Education	2011
	Transportation	2011
Seattle		
	Human Resources	2008
	Budget and Finance	2008
	Information Technology	2008
	Bilingual Education	2008
	Transportation	2008
	Capital Projects	2008
	Maintenance and Operations	2008
	Procurement	2008
	Food Services	2008
	Capital Projects	2013
Toledo		
	Curriculum and Instruction	2005
Washington, D.C.		
	Finance and Procurement	1998
	Personnel	1998
	Communications	1998
	Transportation	1998
	Facilities Management	1998
	Special Education	1998
	Legal and General Counsel	1998
	MIS and Technology	1998
	Curriculum and Instruction	2003
	Budget and Finance	2005
	Transportation	2005
	Curriculum and Instruction	2007
	Common Core Implementation	2011
Wichita		
	Transportation	2009

EXHIBIT D

CONTRACTOR CERTIFICATION of COMPLIANCE

Fingerprinting: Education Code section 45125.1 provides that any contractor providing school site administrative or similar services to a school district must certify that employees who may come into contact with pupils have not been convicted of a serious or violent felony as defined by law. Those employees must be fingerprinted and the Department of Justice (DOJ) must report to the Contractor if they have been convicted of such felonies. No person convicted may be assigned to work under the contract. Depending on the totality of circumstances including (1) the length of time the employees will be on school grounds, (2) whether pupils will be in proximity of the site where the employees will be working and (3) whether the contractors will be working alone or with others, the District may determine that the employees will have only limited contact with pupils and neither fingerprinting nor certification is required.

The District has determined that section 45125.1 is applicable to this Agreement, and that the employees assigned to work at a school site under this Agreement will have only limited contact with pupils, provided the following conditions are met at all times:

1. Employees shall not come into contact with pupils or work in the proximity of pupils at any time except under the direct supervision of school district employees, if the pupil is accompanied by a parent or guardian, or pursuant to the Scope of Work, e.g. classroom observation.
2. Employees shall use only restroom facilities reserved for District employees and shall not use student restrooms at any time.
3. Contractor will inform all employees who perform work at any school or District site of these conditions and require its employees, as a condition of employment, to adhere to them.
4. Contractor will immediately report to District any apparent violation of these conditions.
5. Contractor shall assume responsibility for enforcement of these conditions at all times during the term of this Agreement.

If, for any reason, the Contractor cannot adhere to the conditions stated above, the Contractor shall immediately so inform the District and shall assign only employees who have been fingerprinted and cleared for employment by the Department of Justice. In that case, the Contractor shall provide to the District the names of all employees assigned to perform work under this Agreement. Compliance with these conditions, or with the fingerprinting requirements, is a condition of this Agreement, and the District reserves the right to suspend or terminate the Agreement at any time for noncompliance.



Authorized Signature of Contractor

September 20, 2023

Date

Gregory Peters, Executive Director
Printed Name/Title