

Sacramento City Unified School District
Superintendent's Response to Central Office Review
for Results and Equity (CORRE) Report
June 16, 2005

Meeting the needs of each student by name so he or she can master the skills needed for success in the 21st Century is a challenging and necessary goal, particularly for large urban districts. Achieving this goal requires a methodical and thoughtful self-analysis of what processes and procedures in the delivery of services and instruction are working well and identification of what isn't. This process, though sometimes painful, is critical to improvement. It is also exciting, because it brings together a diversity of voices advocating for students and learning. Our District is working to practice the three essential functions of a "smart district"—providing schools, students and teachers with timely interventions, ensuring that schools have the power and resources to make good decisions, and creating an accountability system using indicators of school and district performance.

Approximately 400 individuals—parents, teachers, students, staff and community members—participated in the process to help us improve our practice. This heartening and encouraging response to our call for input, reflects the support Sacramento City Unified School District can draw upon as we work to create a system that supports student success.

The recommendations advanced by the Annenberg team mirror and validate the work begun by Superintendent M. Magdalena Carrillo Mejia, Ph.D., the Board of Education and senior leadership. As the District crafts its annual and three-year strategic plans, the Annenberg recommendations will be included as objectives to create a central office system that offers support to students and school sites equitably and effectively. Rollout of the strategic plan to stakeholders will begin in July 2005.

We have used the CORRE process over this past year for critical research and data gathering, as we simultaneously began updating the district's strategic plan, "High Standards, Great Results." We are taking necessary time to reflect upon the findings and incorporate the recommendations into the strategic plan. The Superintendent and senior staff are eager to integrate and implement the five key areas of recommendations offered by the Annenberg team in the District strategic plan.

- **Define, mobilize and communicate clearly a laser-like focus on increasing quality instruction for all students as a key district priority.** This action area coincides with District Policy Priorities 3 and 8 that deal with developing a standards-aligned system for teaching and learning and creating a mission-driven empowering infrastructure. A partial list of the strategic objectives under these policy priorities include ensuring that all schools meet or exceed the student achievement improvement targets as defined by state or federal accountability guidelines for the lowest performing student populations (African American, Latino, Hmong and Mien students); ensuring that all program improvement schools achieve adequate yearly progress targets, and support of our high school reform initiative, "e21."

- **Address and ensure equity related to the distribution of power and resources.** This action area coincides with Policy Priority 8—creating a mission-driven empowering infrastructure. A partial list of the strategic objectives in this area include: developing a performance management system to monitor and issue periodic progress reports to stakeholders; creating a sustainable process for developing and managing a balanced budget that supports the district’s educational plan, and implementing the Process Management System (ISO 9000) to ensure continuous improvement of district operations to support the educational plan.
- **Define and develop central office accountability to schools for inclusive, transparent, and timely decision-making.** This action area coincides with several policy priorities. The related policy priority areas are Policy Priority areas 5, 6, 7, and 8. Policy Priority 5 is investing in employees; Policy Priority 6 is parent/family engagement; Policy Priority 7 is strong relationships with partners, and Policy Priority 8 is mission driven infrastructure. A partial list of the strategic objectives in these areas include: timely completion of staffing plans at school sites; developing a parent engagement plan; expanding the process management review team to include other central office departments; continuing the work of the district wide budget advisory committee.
- **Develop and communicate a central office service orientation.** This action area coincides with Policy Priority 8, a mission-driven, empowering infrastructure. A partial list of strategic objectives in this area include developing a master plan to address clean facilities and efficient transportation to support the district’s master plan and building on existing systems to continuously improve and monitor customer service and central office procedures—the Process Management System (ISO 9000).
- **Re-energize, activate, and sustain deeper involvement of the larger Sacramento City community in the vision and work of the district.** This recommendation coincides with Policy Priority 6, parent family engagement and Policy Priority 7, strong relationships with our partners. A partial list of strategic objectives in this area include creating a parent task force to ensure stronger parent engagement in school and district decision-making; expanding use of the Connect-ED communications system to improve student attendance, communicate emergencies, inform parents of school and district events; building stronger communication and relationships with employee bargaining units; informing stakeholders of progress on the strategic plan, and increasing engagement strategies to more effectively use available community resources (human, fiscal and intellectual).

We want to thank Pia Durkin and Frank Barnes of the Annenberg Institute for School Reform and the Carnegie Corporation of New York for their support and funding of this critical effort to build a system that serves students well and is focused on continuous improvement and ongoing learning. We also wish to thank members of the CORRE team for their time and work over the past year. Without their active support this study would not have been successfully completed.