

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ACSA-CCMAC CURRICULUM MANAGEMENT AUDIT TEAM FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE PASADENA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Based on the three streams of data derived from interviews, documents, and site visits, the ACSA-CCMAC Curriculum Management Audit Team has developed a set of recommendations to address its findings shown under each of the standards of the audit.

In the case of the findings, they have been triangulated, i.e., corroborated with one another. In the case of the recommendations, those put forth in this section are representative of the auditors' best professional judgments regarding how to address the problems that surfaced in the audit.

The recommendations are presented in the order of their criticality for initiating system-wide improvements. The recommendations also recognize and differentiate between the policy and monitoring responsibilities of the board of education, and the operational and administrative duties of the superintendent of schools.

Where the ACSA-CCMAC audit team views a problem as wholly or partly a policy and monitoring matter, the recommendations are formulated for the Board of Education. Where the problem is distinctly an operational or administrative matter, the recommendations are directed to the superintendent of schools as the chief executive officer of the school system. In many cases, the AACSA-CCMAC audit team directs recommendations to both the Board and the superintendent, because it is clear that policy and operations are related, and both entities are involved in a proposed change. In some cases, there are no recommendations to the superintendent when only policy is involved or none to the board when the recommendations deal only with administration.

Audit recommendations are presented as follows: The overarching goals for the Board and/or the Superintendent, followed by the specific objectives to carry out the overarching goals. The latter are designated "Governance Functions" and "Administrative Functions."

Recommendation 1: Develop and Implement Comprehensive Board Policies to Guide and Direct the Design and Delivery of the Curriculum and to Provide for Curricular Quality Control.

Providing quality control in curriculum design and delivery will require the Board to develop a set of policies that clearly communicate the need for effective curriculum design and management. Without definitive and operational policies, the Board cannot adequately perform its role in ensuring program focus, effectiveness, and consistency.

An effective school system has a clear set of policies that establish an operational framework for management that promotes accountability. Sound policies will enable the Board to:

- Establish a clear direction and focus for the organization;
- Ensure consistency of action;
- Create an expectation for curriculum management functions;
- Define the roles and responsibilities of the stake holders;
- Provide parameters and expectations for program and staff evaluations;
- Require continuous professional development of all staff that is focused on the mission of the district; and
- Ensure the existence of a collaborative decision-making process.

The Pasadena Unified School District relies heavily on the California Boards Association for policy updates and revisions. The auditors were informed that these revisions usually occur three or four times per year, yet the auditors found that the several current policies are outdated because the internal policy revision process sometimes takes up to ten months to bring an updated policy to the

Board for approval. The auditors found that the policy revision process is dependent upon the responses of a single district administrator (see [Finding 1.1](#)).

Governance Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Pasadena Unified School District Board of Education:

G.1.1: Establish a policy that provides a clear vision for the curriculum management of the system. The policy should be clear about the roles and responsibilities of the Board, superintendent, and staff in the curriculum management process.

G.1.2: Establish and adopt a policy that explicitly requires alignment of the written, taught, and assessed curriculum.

G.1.3: Create and adopt a policy that requires both horizontal and vertical alignment and articulation of the curriculum throughout the district.

G.1.4: Adopt a policy that provides for a framework for governing the curriculum design and delivery that requires periodic review of the process and an evaluation of its products by the Board.

G.1.5: Hold the superintendent accountable for the dissemination and implementation of board policies by including that process as part of the superintendent's job description and evaluation.

G.1.6: Revise the district's policies relating to decision-making to ensure that decisions are data-driven.

Administrative Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Pasadena Unified School District Superintendent:

A.1.1: Assist the Board in preparation of the recommended policy changes and additions.

A.1.2: Establish a timely process for staff review of policy changes and additions prior to recommendations being made to the Board.

A.1.3: Establish and implement a plan for the timely dissemination of approved policies to the staff and other stakeholders.

A.1.4: Hold each administrator accountable for implementing policies and following administrative regulations by including such as part of the administrator's job description.

Recommendation 2: Design and Implement a Long-range Planning Process that Will Support District-led Initiatives and Will Define the Roles and Responsibilities of the Stakeholders with Respect to Decision-making.

Comprehensive planning is essential for districts to address changes as they occur in a proactive manner. Comprehensive planning enables the Board and administrators to see all of the needs of the district, the individual organizations of the district in relationship to each other. This enables the district prioritize and schedule necessary elements to accomplish the plans in a logical manner. The district will be able to coordinate staff development efforts, renovations, hiring, financing in a manner to receive the greatest benefits in terms of time, money, and resources.

The auditors determined that the Pasadena Unified School District did not have adequate planning (see [Finding 1.2](#)) to provide systemic change. The district policies were inadequate to provide quality direction to develop plans to provide for the evolving needs of students (see [Exhibit 1.2.1](#)). The planning documents presented to the auditors by the district were found to be inadequate (see [Exhibit 1.2.4](#)) when assessed using the audit criteria (see [Exhibit 1.2.3](#)).

Therefore, the following actions are recommended to strengthen the planning function of the district.

Governance Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Pasadena Unified School District Board of Education:

G.2.1: Create and adopt policy that requires the administration to implement a comprehensive planning process that is focused on the design and delivery of curriculum.

G.2.2: Authorize the development of a standard planning format that incorporates the principles of the Curriculum Management Audit.

G.2.3: Provide the resources, time, people, and monies to support comprehensive planning.

G.2.4: Authorize the development of a strategic plan.

G.2.5: Require an annual review, evaluation, monitoring process for district plans.

Administrative Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Pasadena Unified School District Superintendent:

A.2.1: Assist the Board in the development of appropriate planning policy and develop procedures to implement the policy.

A.2.2: Develop a standard plan format.

A.2.3: Develop a strategic and long-range plan.

A.2.3: Revise the district planning documents to address the recommendations of the Curriculum Management Audit.

A.2.4: Require an annual review, evaluation, and monitoring process for district plans.

A.2.5: Provide staff development for system planning.

Once the planning process and strategic plan is in place the district needs to maintain its focus and strive to implement the plan and only those initiatives that are directly related and support that plan. It is vital to be vigilant in following sound planning practices.

Recommendation 3: Restructure the Table of Organization to Reflect Principles of Sound Organizational Management and Revise the District's Job Descriptions to Accurately Reflect the Roles and Responsibilities of Each Position.

Effective organizations are based on sound organizational management. A key component of sound organizational management is having a Table of Organization that clearly delineates the positions within a district's decision-making hierarchy. Quality control and productivity of a system depend on a well-organized and articulated arrangement of the decision-makers. An efficient administrative organization is characterized by clarity of purpose, a manageable scope of responsibility, and sufficient personnel to perform the necessary functions. A Table of Organization includes all positions in the organization that are accountable for decision-making within the organization. The line of authority is clearly communicated and the positions are arranged according to their relative responsibilities within the organization.

The auditors found that the current Table of Organization does not accurately reflect the positions within the administrative structure (see [Finding 1.3](#)). There are key individuals within the organization that are not indicated on the current chart, and there are positions listed for which there are no current job descriptions. The organizational chart presented to the auditors violates several principles of sound organizational management.

Suggested revisions to the current organizational chart are included in [Appendix C](#) to this report.

Governance Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Pasadena Unified School District Board of Education:

G.3.1: Hold the superintendent accountable for redesigning the table of organization to address the needs of the district and comply with the standards of sound organizational management as represented by the audit standards.

G.3.2: Maintain the Board's focus on governance, not administration, and support the use of chain of command regarding issues in the organization.

G.3.3: Provide the resources necessary to support the reorganization of the district's administrative functions.

G.3.4: Hold the superintendent accountable for developing accurate job descriptions for all personnel involved in the district's decision-making process.

Administrative Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Pasadena Unified School District Superintendent:

A.3.1: Redesign the Table of Organization to reflect the sound principles of organizational management as detailed in Finding 1.3. In addition to meeting those standards, the redesigned table of organization should address the following:

- Include all positions in the organization that are involved in the district's decision-making process,
- Eliminate ambiguity with respect to position titles and responsibilities,
- Remove positions from the chart that are no longer necessary for the district's operation, and
- Recognize the essential role that curriculum plays in an educational organization by representing a position that is at least equated with the administrative and operational positions within the organization.

A.3.2: Develop accurate job descriptions for all personnel involved in the district's decision-making process.

A.3.3: Review existing job descriptions and modify, if necessary, to include detailed job expectations regarding the individual's role and responsibilities for curriculum design and delivery.

A.3.4: Revise those job descriptions that the auditors determined were not strong according to audit standards.

Recommendation 4: Design and Implement A Comprehensive Curriculum Design and Management System to Ensure Quality Control in the Design and Delivery of Curriculum.

It is essential that the Pasadena Unified School District design and implement a comprehensive system for curriculum management that is guided by board policy and includes procedures to direct the design and delivery of curriculum (see Finding 2.2). A comprehensive curriculum management system is necessary to achieve and maintain quality aligned curriculum that provides consistency and continuity of learning, vertical articulation and horizontal co-ordination from pre-K through to grade 12. It needs to incorporate an effective process for designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating curriculum. The management system needs to be followed for several years to provide for institutionalisation of process and products.

While the scope of the written curriculum was adequate for the elementary grades, it was inadequate to direct teaching in the middle and high schools (see Finding 2.3). The quality of the curriculum guides reviewed were inadequate to provide direction for teaching (see Finding 2.4). In the absence of Board-developed and adopted curriculum documents, the district is using commercial program materials, teacher selected supplemental resources, textbooks, and other curriculum materials to provide programs and instruction (see Finding 2.5). At the time of the audit auditors did not find a curriculum and management system in existence.

Governance Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Pasadena United School District Board of Education:

G.4.1: Establish a policy that provides a mission, vision, and philosophical framework for the curriculum.

G.4.2: Create and adopt a policy which directs the design and development of a comprehensive curriculum design and management system.

G.4.3: Create and adopt a policy that establishes the expectation for alignment of written, taught, and tested curriculum, and that directs curriculum articulation between all levels within the district.

G.4.4: Include in the comprehensive curriculum development and management policy provisions for periodic evaluation and review of all areas of the curriculum and for identifying, adopting, deleting, implementing, and evaluating program interventions.

G.4.5: Establish clear roles and responsibilities for the Board, central office administrator, campus administrators, and teachers regarding curriculum.

G.4.6: Commit adequate resources to support the curriculum development and the review cycle.

G.4.7: Direct the Superintendent to develop a communication plan which clearly disseminates information regarding the design and implementation of the comprehensive design and management system to all staff in the district.

Administrative Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Pasadena Unified School District Superintendent:

A.4.1: Assist the Board in the creation and adoption of the recommended curriculum development and management policies.

A.4.2: Develop a comprehensive curriculum design and management system and place it in the administrative regulations. Ensure that vertical articulation and horizontal co-ordination of pre-K to grade 12 curriculum are emphasized in the philosophy of the design and delivery of the curriculum design and management system.

The curriculum management system needs to include the following:

- Assessment of the current status.
- Selection of a uniform, district-wide format for curriculum guides that is functional, user-friendly, and focused on the critical components as specified in the Curriculum Management Audit criteria (see [Exhibit 2.1.1](#)).
- Identification of a periodic cycle of curriculum review and evaluation in all subject areas and at all levels.
- Establishment of student learning objectives.
- Definition of student expectations to provide an overall curriculum direction. Utilization of a variety of sources to develop the desired level of skills, knowledge, and attitudes.
- Development of appropriate assessment that are matched to student objectives. Assurance that there is a match between state tests and other assessments and the curriculum for complete alignment.
- Selection of high quality resources that are match to the objectives for teachers to use in the delivery of the curriculum.
- Development of specific instructional strategies that teach the objectives and engage students in learning through the use of multiple learning channels.
- Clarification of objectives ensuring that each one is specific for clear communication from one user to another. Articulation of learning needs to be clearly referenced and consistently assessed.
- Provision of intensive staff development for teachers, principals, department heads, team leaders, and any others who work directly with design and delivery of curriculum. Ensure that all are aware of the philosophy, design, and strategies for delivery.

A.4.3: Utilize the data in the Curriculum Management Audit and continue with a comprehensive assessment of the design and delivery of the curriculum within the district. It is critical that the elementary schools have a common curriculum written at higher levels of cognition. Campuses need to practice connectivity and articulation between grade levels to provide each student with opportunities for high levels of productivity. Students need equitable opportunities to prepare to enter the secondary schools.

A.4.4: Utilize the data in the Curriculum Management Audit with an assessment of the design and delivery of curriculum at the secondary level. Continue with a quality written curriculum for

articulation from course to course through the graduate level. Objectives need to be written a high level of cognition and applied during instruction. Students need equitable opportunities to prepare to enter the work place and/or continue their education and be successful.

A.4.5: Ensure that staff development planning includes strategies for delivering, challenging relevant curriculum, as well as, strategies for monitoring the level of challenge and the level of learning. Responsibility for monitoring the teaching of appropriate curriculum is that of the site administrator.

A.4.6: Develop a description of decision responsibilities by central administration and other staff relative to curriculum and instruction.

A.4.7: Develop a district-wide curriculum monitoring system with delineation of responsibilities for appropriate personnel.

A.4.8: Develop a communication plan to assist staff to understand the curriculum design and management process and to evaluate the process toward comprehensive curriculum development and delivery.

It is recommended that the design and implementation of a comprehensive curriculum design and management system be in place within a year of the audit. Once the curriculum development and management plan is in place, the Board and administration should consistently monitor each function of the plan.

Recommendation 5: Design and Implement a Comprehensive Student and Program Assessment System to Provide Meaningful Data for Decision-making.

It is critical that Pasadena Unified School District design a comprehensive assessment system to provide reliable data that can be used effectively to improve student achievement. A district-wide assessment system provides information for the Board, parents, and the community about the effectiveness of their local schools. A quality assessment system provides students, teachers, parents, and administrators information with diagnostic information to determine needs and to set goals for higher levels of productivity. A comprehensive student assessment system needs to assess student progress in the district's entire curriculum. In the analysis of Pasadena's scope of assessment, only 30 percent of the curriculum is being assessed (see [Finding 4.1](#)). The assessment must be aligned with the curriculum in order for curriculum alignment to be effective.

In the analysis of student data, the secondary students scored lower than the elementary students, and the disadvantaged students were consistently below the rest of the student population; however, there was not a system-wide plan to that addressed the problem (see [Finding 4.2](#)). Multiple programs have been implemented with the evaluation process ranging from data-driven to no evaluation at all (see [Finding 4.3](#)). A plan for managing the evaluation process and for utilizing the data are critical for an organization to determine if it is being productive.

Governance Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Pasadena Unified School District Board of Education:

G.5.1: Establish a policy that requires a comprehensive assessment plan that provides direction for assessment of student achievement as well as program evaluations for all programs. Include roles and responsibilities that establish an accountability system for assessment, reporting of results, and use of data by decision-makers.

G.5.2: Include in the assessment policy, the requirement that testing be conducted of all courses in all subject areas at all levels.

G.5.3: Require that student and program assessment data be used whenever budget and programmatic decisions are being made.

G.5.4: Allocate funds to make operational the development of a full range of valid and reliable assessment strategies to support a comprehensive system for student assessment and program evaluation.

Administrative Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Pasadena Unified School District Superintendent:

A.5.1: Assist the Board in revising policies to require a comprehensive assessment plan that addresses roles and responsibilities that determines accountability for student assessment, as well as, program evaluation.

A.5.2: Identify a staff member to be in charge student assessment data and program evaluation and to manage data so that decision-makers will have accurate and complete data in a timely manner.

A.5.3: Write corresponding administrative regulations to the board policies that provide clear direction for making decisions about the curriculum, the budget, and assessment.

A.5.4: Develop a comprehensive assessment plan that includes the following components:

- A timetable for formal testing and program evaluation;
- District criterion-referenced tests for district selected objectives across all grades and subject areas;
- A pre- and post-criterion-referenced assessment system that provides for documenting, recording, and reporting student performance;
- A system to link assessment results with curriculum revision on a continual cycle;
- A process to monitor student progress and mastery for each specific objective;
- A process to monitor reduction of the gap between the disadvantaged, ethnic groups, and gender;
- The state student assessment program and compliance evaluations;
- A variety of assessment tools such as portfolios, performance assessments, and qualitative assessments;
- Roles and responsibilities for accountability;
- A management system that collects data on a timeline, prepares data in a format that is easy to understand and interpret, distribute data to decision-makers, and prepare reports for appropriate stake holders;
- A program evaluation process that includes costs in relation to student achievement; and
- A component to evaluate the assessment plan itself annually to determine the level of effectiveness.

A.5.5: Establish a monitoring process to ensure that the district is data-driven and informed decision-making occurs at all levels.

An effective data-driven assessment program provides board members, administrators, and teachers with the information needed to continue, modify, or eliminate programs and practices. It also provides the patrons and community with data that are valid and reliable, establishing confidence in the process and the school system.

Recommendation 6: Design and Implement a Comprehensive Program of Curriculum Monitoring.

It is important that the district implement a consistent and workable program for monitoring the curriculum. Have a program in place whereby the district is able to determine the effectiveness of its curriculum implementation will provide needed data to study changes needed in curriculum and teaching.

As noted in Finding 3.3, the current monitoring of curriculum in the district is inconsistent and ineffective. What monitoring there is exists at a superficial level and is almost solely the responsibility of building principals. In order to ensure that the written curriculum is the taught curriculum, there needs to be a program in place which involves those responsible for curriculum and instruction system-wide in the monitoring process. Only in that way will the district be able to gather data to inform its decisions regarding instruction and curriculum revision.

The following recommendation is proposed to strengthen the curriculum monitoring function:

Governance Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Pasadena Unified School District Board of Education.

G.6.1: Review and revise district instructional policies to ensure that they detail a comprehensive program of curriculum monitoring – including roles and responsibilities for various instructional personnel.

G.6.2: Hold administration accountable for implementation of the policy.

G.6.3: Provide needed resources, both in time and money, to ensure the successful implementation of the policy.

G.6.4: Require periodic reports from administration on the activities and results of curriculum monitoring.

Administrative Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Pasadena Unified School District Superintendent.

A.6.1: Recommend policy revisions and assist the Board of Education in the redesign and adoption of a policy establishing the requirements for comprehensive curriculum monitoring.

A.6.2: Create and implement a comprehensive program of curriculum monitoring that includes (but is not limited to) the following:

- Training opportunities for those responsible for curriculum monitoring to increase awareness and skills. Training should, at a minimum, include walk-through training, curriculum management training, training in deep curriculum alignment, and training focused on best practice pedagogy.
- A system of monitoring that includes central office instructional personnel working in concert with site-based personnel.
- A reporting system that will provide objective data regarding curriculum implementation to be used for evaluation and revision.
- A monitoring evaluation system focused on improved student achievement as the ultimate success of curriculum monitoring.

Recommendation 7: Adopt a Long-range Plan to Ameliorate the District’s Inequalities Based on Race, Gender, and Socio-economic Status.

A serious problem facing the Pasadena Unified School District is the inequalities that exist in the district based on socio-economic status, race, ethnicity, and gender. Of most importance is to eliminate the gap in achievement rates between groups of students because of the factors cited above. Because race and socio-economic status are interrelated, it is a matter of eliminating practices that lead to an achievement gap between students. The problem of student achievement is exacerbated by the unequal placement of students in special programs (i.e., Advanced Placement, special education, etc.) and suspension data (see [Finding 3.2](#)).

The schools remain the best hope to deal with unequal patterns of student achievement and placement. It is recommended that the achievement gap which currently exists based on socio-economic factors and the unequal placement of students in special programs be addressed and eliminated.

Auditors found inequalities in the Pasadena Unified School District in student placement, student suspensions, and enrollment in general education, achievement scores, and enrollment in academically rigorous classes. These inequalities primarily were based on race.

Governance Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Pasadena Unified School District Board of Education.

G.7.1: Develop a policy that will annually:

- Review and access inequalities in student suspensions, enrollment in Special Education and academically rigorous classes, and students in district and state required assessments.
- Require the superintendent to report on district inequalities to the Board annually.
- Require the superintendent to develop short- and long-range plans for rectifying district inequalities.

G.7.2: Establish high expectations for all students to achieve and authorize by policy the administration to take whatever steps are necessary to change any practice that inhibits the system's response to the elimination of inequalities.

G.7.3: Require annual reports from each school as to the progress made in closing achievement gaps.

Administrative Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Pasadena Unified School Districts Superintendent.

A.7.1: Collect, organize, and analyze data about district inequalities.

A.7.2: Prepare an annual report on the status of district inequalities based on race, gender, and economically disadvantaged.

A.7.2: Locate the achievement gaps by school and grade levels. Identify inequalities that may exist in addition to those cited in this audit document. Use data to establish the basis for inequalities and work with staff to design strategies to eliminate any gaps or inequalities at each school.

A.7.3: Change the budgeting process to focus district resources on areas of greatest need.

A.7.4: Design and implement focused staff development designed to create practices and procedures that eliminate inequalities and close the achievement gap.

A.7.5: Create and staff a monitoring system that will provide principals, program administrators, and the Board of Education with accurate, complete, and timely reports on progress.

Recommendation 8: Design and Implement a Management System for Program Interventions that Ensures Quality Control and Increase Student Learning.

The Pasadena Unified School District has in place numerous program interventions designed for students to improve academic performance (see [Exhibit 5.4.1](#)). The auditors found many of the program interventions to be uncoordinated, overlapping, and lacking the necessary components to assure intended results and improved productivity (see [Finding 5.4](#)). The current budgeting process in the school district does not link program needs and priorities to expenditures (see [Finding 5.1](#)). No board policy specifically directs the initiation or elimination of programs (see [Findings 1.1](#) and [5.4](#)). The program evaluation process in the Pasadena Unified School District is not in place to allow for adequate evaluation of programs or other educational efforts within the district (see [Findings 4.4](#) and [4.5](#)).

Program interventions delivered by the district at each campus, at a specific campus for a select groups of students, or as a district-wide intervention strategy, need to be linked to district curriculum goals, administered so that all students are adequately receiving services, and coordinated so services do not overlap existing programs. It is critical that all programs and interventions be selected through a defined decision-making process, which is data-driven and correlated with students' academic strengths and weaknesses. Adoption criteria procedures should be written to ensure that there is academic connectivity throughout the district. Overall, program interventions can be an effective strategy to improve student achievement if adequately designed and effectively delivered.

The following recommendations are presented to address conditions which auditors identified (see [Finding 5.4](#)) and enable the district to provide productive interventions for students.

Governance Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Pasadena Unified School District Board of Education:

G.8.1: Develop a board policy that defines the purpose of program interventions for student learning and performance. Require that each program intervention is designed to address a specific academic need, that a program is research-based, has a sound pedagogical approach, and is regularly evaluated to determine if the program is achieving expected goals and needs. The policy must require adequate staff development for those staff members to effectively implement and institutionalize the specific program interventions.

G.8.2: Establish in policy that programs/interventions be evaluated annually and include a cost analysis and program effectiveness based on student achievement.

G.8.3: Allocate sufficient funds for personnel, resources, staff development, and facilities to effectively provide program interventions for student learning that are productive over time. District-wide program are to be funded at the district level and campus-based programs provided in campus budgets.

G.8.4: Require all program interventions to show a link between district and campus missions, goals, and objectives.

G.8.5: Require reports on the evaluation of programs and interventions, including the cost and the effectiveness (student gains) on an annual basis.

G.8.6: Direct the superintendent to establish administrative guidelines for program interventions and regularly receive evaluation data on each program.

Administrative Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Pasadena Unified School District Superintendent:

A.8.1: Assist the Board in establishing policies for program/intervention implementation and adoption.

A.8.2: Design administrative procedures for planning, adopting, and implementing programs and interventions and an accountability procedure for monitoring, evaluating, and reporting progress.

A.8.3: Ensure for each program intervention that is proposed or currently being offered, initiate the following 11-step process:

- Step 1: Assess the current situation;
- Step 2: Diagnose data collected;
- Step 3: Identify the problem;
- Step 4: Propose and examine alternatives;
- Step 5: Select an alternative that best addresses the problem;
- Step 6: Develop a formal plan (with goals and measurable objectives) to address the problem;
- Step 7: Provide fiscal and human resources as needed through the redistribution of the resources;
- Step 8: Implement, with well-defined mechanisms for monitoring progress;
- Step 9: Evaluate the activity;
- Step 10: Adjust activity as needed, based on data gathered; and
- Step 11: Implement, based on adjustments needed.

A.8.4: Conduct an evaluation of all program interventions currently being practiced in the district to determine if programs are effective and duplicative in services. Use the audit criteria for implementing interventions or new programs outlined in the 11-step process in [Action A.8.3](#).

A.8.5: Designate one central office professional staff member to coordinate all intervention programs and have on file in the district all program interventions being offered in the district, including professional staff member responsible for programs, and goals of the programs, specific academic need being addressed, the student population being served, what campuses the program is being delivered, and how the program is being funded. This designee will be responsible for appropriate staff development related to program interventions.

A.8.6: Design an evaluation and reporting format around cost analysis and program interventions effectiveness. Present a report to the Board on an annual basis.

A.8.7: Allocate appropriate funding that reflects the commitment of the Board to support each program intervention over time.

Recommendation 9: Establish and Implement a Comprehensive Curriculum-driven Budgeting Process to Focus on Program Needs and Priorities.

The Pasadena Unified School District needs a budget that links fiscal support to diagnosed needs and priorities throughout the system (see [Finding 5.1](#)). A well planned, well-implemented, curriculum-driven budget process specifically designed for the Pasadena community can offer an efficient and effective way for the campus-based leadership, central office administration, and other stakeholders to allocate district resources.

Linkage between the district budget and predetermined priorities, goals, and strategies for improving student achievement is critical to success. Intended results are lost or delayed when there is no conscious process to ensure that the financial plan represents the district's student learning priorities. To simply replicate the allocation of resources year after year on a formula basis ignores the annual opportunity to strategically modify priorities and aggressively pursue intended results with new direction.

A curriculum-driven budgeting process establishes tangible links among curriculum goals, student achievement, and costs. With these linkages in place, the public will have a better idea of what is funded and why and the school leadership will have a more creditable rationale for allocating to specific program and eliminating others based on data. Transition to a curriculum-driven budget should not be undertaken hastily, but implemented over a period of years.

At the present time, the Pasadena Unified School District budget development process does not incorporate prioritizing strategies (see [Finding 5.1](#)). The present budget process does not communicate a relationship between the financial plan and the educational initiatives it funds (see [Findings 2.2, 3.1, 3.5, 4.1, 5.4, and 5.5](#)). There is no provision in policy or in practice to ensure the equitable distribution of resources to areas of highest need (see [Finding 3.2](#)). In addition, the auditor found no indication of systematic long-range financial planning as part of the district budgeting practices (see [Findings 1.2 and 5.1](#)).

Overall, the purpose of this recommendation is to provide a structure for managing and implementing a budgetary process that links district goals, needs, and priorities to the allocation of resources in all programs implemented by the district. Well-planned and implemented performance-driven budget process can offer a practical way for the Board and the superintendent to allocate all district resources based on a cost to benefit analysis. Once this is in place, all programs and activities of the organization can be evaluated and funded on the basis of performance and cost effectiveness.

Governance Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Pasadena Unified School District Board of Education:

G.9.1: Design, adopt, implement, and monitor adequate policies that establish the district's budgeting philosophy and require performance-based, curriculum-driven budgeting, delineating the minimum components and procedures comprising the process outlined in [Exhibit 5.1.1](#) and those components of the fifth category (productivity) of policy characteristics (see [Finding 1.1](#)).

The policies need to require that costs be linked to program results and that financial planning is based on the district's vision and goals.

G.9.2: Require the development of a transition plan (see [Finding 1.2](#)), which will serve as a roadmap for the move to performance-based, curriculum-driven budgeting. The plan should describe where we are as well as where we want the curriculum-driven budgeting process to be at full implementation.

The transition plan should state how many years the transition should take and what changes will take place in each of those years. It should also assign responsibilities for the various tasks involved and include an evaluation component to periodically assess whether the transition is on track.

The transition plan should be linked to other key plans developed by the district (see [Finding 4.1](#)). Appropriate staff development (see [Finding 3.2](#)) should also be a part of the transition plan.

G.9.3: Revise the long-range planning process (see [Finding 1.2](#)) whereby district goals are set in advance of the budgeting process.

G.9.4: Establish a point in time before budget development at which to identify the goals and priorities that the school board expects all budget managers to consider in their preparation of budget proposals.

G.9.5: Direct the superintendent to establish procedures that communicate the goals and priorities throughout the system and require budget and staffing proposals to reflect connection with these criteria.

G.9.6: Require budget presentations from the administration and any review committees to communicate how the proposed budget addresses the goals and priorities and responds to annual student and program evaluation data (see [Finding 4.1](#)).

G.9.7: Direct the superintendent and budget officer to present a detailed plan that will ensure a fully operational programmatic budgeting process within four years. Include the requirement for multiple-year planning so that the Board and others can see possible resource implications and directions over two to three years when they are undertaking a detailed analysis of the next year's budget for adoption. Indicate what data will be used to modify, delete, or continue programs.

G.9.8: Support the administration's current efforts to improve budget processes and consider mechanisms to attract more administrators and public members to meetings where the Board hears the budget presentations and makes decisions.

Administrative Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Pasadena Unified School District Superintendent:

A.9.1: Work with the Board in the development of revised policies that establish the district's budgeting philosophy and require performance-based, curriculum-driven budgeting.

A.9.2: Involve stakeholders in the budget process (e.g., board members, administrators, teachers, support staff, community members, and parents) in order to garner a broad-based support for the budget.

A.9.3: Integrate the budget planning process into the comprehensive planning process (see [Finding 1.2](#)) of the district in order to support the achievement of district goals and to assure that the budget is not treated as an independent, disconnected activity.

A.9.4: Build the capital outlay and improvement budget from a zero (or modified zero) base each year with multi-year planning for improvements, including life-cycle replacement and preventative maintenance. Prioritize decisions based on health and safety factors, impact on the learning environment, and protection of investment. Identify and communicate documented parameters for decisions on needs that are not considered health and safety matters. Capital needs change annually and do not reoccur once met and paid for, such as durable goods and construction costs. The budget planning process should reflect these changes while projecting life-cycle replacement costs of buildings and systems over five to fifteen years.

A.9.5: Ensure that budget allocations are based on curricular priorities and program objectives (see [Finding 5.1](#)).

A.9.6: Create clear connections between the student performance information and the basic instructional and support areas of the budget. Undertake steps similar to the following in changing to

a more program-based, performance or curriculum-driven budget to increase the connection of programs and priorities with budgeting decisions:

- a) Identify various educational activities or programs and group them into broad areas of need or purpose served. Examples include elementary instruction, secondary instruction, special education, gifted education, district governance, superintendent's office, financial services, warehousing, personnel services, staff development, etc. Divide the organization into the most logical subgroups possible based on the existing operating structure. Many of the areas currently in the line item budget could be used for groupings.
- b) Build incremental budget "packages" within each of the groupings by defining priorities into units that provide programs and services at: (1) 90 percent of past year's budget, (2) 100 percent of past year's budget, and (3) 110 percent of past year's budget. Eventually, in future budget years, these percentages will tend to show more variation as the system become more sophisticated and data-driven.
- c) Prepare guidelines and recommendations and give them to those who will develop the program budgets (program budget managers).
- d) Direct the budget managers of each program to prepare concise and meaningful budget packages for their areas with each package representing a level of activity or service that stands alone but builds or reduces sequentially on the previous year's package. Budget packages should describe the following:
 - Describe program activities and services provided within the budget package.
 - Describe how the activities requested in the package will differ from the previous year's operation.
 - Describe how the package, if funded, will relate to or support the established vision and goals of the district.
 - Describe the methods/means for assessment of the ends or accomplishments of program package (e.g., surveys, standardized tests).
 - Describe what organizational results or outcomes will be affected if this package is not funded.
 - Describe past cost information, especially expenditure percentages of budget, with performance data and recommendations to guide preliminary budget building estimates. Describe program services at: (1) 90 percent of past year's budget, (2) 100 percent of past year's budget, and (3) 110 percent of past year's budget.
- e) Appoint a budget planning team of administrators that will eventually bring the draft budget documents from all program areas to the superintendent's executive cabinet. Use this team with any budget review committees before budget presentations to the school board. This team studies the goals, priorities, and parameters inherent in the decisions to be made and receives technical support from the directors and managers who develop the program budgets. A discussion of cost-benefits information is critical at this stage.
- f) Establish a financial task force composed of representative stakeholders in the district including the superintendent's team as a planning group. The task force should include representatives from all district constituencies. Task force members need to remain in contact with their constituencies so their input can influence decision-making.
- g) Submit program budgets to the superintendent's executive cabinet to evaluate and rank the budget program packages. Budget requests need to compete with each other for funding based upon data derived from evaluation of the priorities of need and level of program effectiveness. Ranking will be done across all packages; using a maximum five-point scale, suggested guidelines might include:
 - **5:** Packages crucial to the Mission of the district.

- **4:** Packages supportive of expansion of the mission as well as provide for minimum health, safety, legal, and educational support requirements.
 - **3:** Packages necessary to meet educational levels prescribed by state standards and other accrediting organizations and include services necessary for efficient and effective operations.
 - **2:** Packages that provide some enhancement or increased efficiency or effectiveness of educational, instructional, and support services.
 - **1:** Packages which allow the district to provide for student differences, interests, and abilities, and provides resources to improve the quality of teaching, support services, capital equipment, and facilities.
 - **0:** Packages, which may be desirable, but are not necessary for the efficient and effective operation of the system.
- h) Compile results of the evaluation and ranking and publish them in a tentative budget with programs listed in priority order. At this time, the executive cabinet will evaluate the rankings and permit two-minute statements by each program manager regarding the ranking by the cabinet.
 - i) After comments are heard from the program managers, the executive cabinet will then again rank order the packages and receive input from the citizen's task force on the rankings.
 - j) Submit task force and executive cabinet budget team recommendations to the superintendent for review and the development of recommendations to the Board of Trustees.
 - k) The school board will call a special study session to evaluate the rankings and make any necessary re-rankings of proposals.
 - l) Finalize budget allocations based on revenues available, the appropriation levels to be authorized, and program funding priorities and rankings. Prepare the recommended budget to be taken to the public hearings before the Board.
 - m) Use the public hearing process to communicate broadly the financial planning link with student needs, program priorities, and the results sought through the actions taken. Allow time for authentic comment and questions before the budget adoption meeting. Prepare the final document after considering public and Board comments and seek adoption.
 - n) Establish final program and services to be funded at the level approved by the school board and begin to implement the budget.

A.9.7: Provide training and consultations as needed with administrators during the transition to a more programmatic budgeting process and format. The leaders who are communicating information regarding results need to be able to communicate those data in the budget development context and to present them when decisions are being made.

By implementing these recommended steps, the Board of Trustees, district leadership, and program and school administrators will be able to deliberate on the school district's mission, goals, program results, and resource allocations in a more focused way. Decisions will be based more explicitly on questions such as "What is being accomplished?" and "How well are we accomplishing it?" rather than simply, "How much did we spend on this program last year?" By creating ways for the program levels of service to compete in a prioritization process, the decision-makers will have a rational framework for establishing the financial plan. Such actions will contribute significantly toward long-term productivity and continued improvement toward meeting district goals.

V. SUMMARY

A curriculum management audit is basically an “exception” report. That is, it does not give a summative, overall view of the suitability of a system. Rather, it holds the system up to scrutiny against the predetermined standards of quality, notes relevant findings about the system, and cites discrepancies from audit standards. Recommendations are then provided accordingly to help the district improve its quality in the areas of noted deficiency.

This audit is unusual, in that the Pasadena Unified School District is operating under the leadership of an interim superintendent while conducting a formal search process to hire a new superintendent. The Board and interim leadership demonstrate high commitment to improving quality in the district by use of the audit and other strategies to improve educational services to students. The district is at a crossroad in its history. A proud community with outstanding traditions, reputation, and expectations faces the task of providing quality learning programs for all students regardless of race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, or gender. To maintain the expectations and history of excellence significant changes will be required.

District leadership must focus resources on the design and delivery of curriculum that will meet the educational needs of all students at high levels of learning. The teaching and learning processes must be based on deeply aligned curriculum that includes articulation and coordination at all levels of the organization. The curricular fragmentation of the past will only lead to poor results on state and other accountability assessments. Most importantly, the neglected issue of improving student achievement for low-income students and those with learning disabilities and other special needs must be directly addressed and resolved before the district can claim success. In addition, the district needs to reorganize its administrative functions to more closely align with instructional priorities.

The leadership of the district must be bold and focused to meet the expectations of the community and the state. Nothing short of systemic change will alter the district to the extent that it will enjoy widespread political support from community patrons. The consequences of failure are too great to only half-heartedly go through the motions of change. The crossroads is clear – continue down the path of socio-economic determinism or reestablish a school system designed to meet the needs of all students.