

# OROVILLE UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

## Needs Assessment Report



February 2013

 **Total School Solutions**  
**4751 Mangels Boulevard**  
**Fairfield, CA 94534**

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## **Introduction and Purpose**

At its regular meeting on November 8, 2012 the State Board of Education (SBE) assigned Oroville Union High School District (OUHSD) to Program Improvement Year 3 status, and as such OUHSD was directed to retain a Technical Assistance provider to support the District through the needs assessment and to provide technical assistance to the District. On December 19, 2012, the District engaged the services of the educational consulting firm, Total School Solutions (TSS), to provide Technical Assistance assessment and related services.

For purposes of this needs assessment report, the SBE Parameters of Study are to assess the Local Education Agency (LEA) needs in governance, academic alignment of curriculum, including services for English Learners and Students with Disabilities, data systems and achievement monitoring, parent/community engagement, professional development, human resources, and fiscal resources.

This needs assessment report is organized by category, with each section outlining the noted observations and recommendations made by the Total School Solutions (TSS) assessment team.

## **Oroville Union High School District Background Information**

The Oroville Union High School District is located in the rural north valley at the base of the Sierra Nevada foothills, about seventy miles north of Sacramento. The District encompasses 647 square miles of eastern Butte County. The District has two comprehensive high schools, one continuation school, one community day school and one adult education school. The District is led by Superintendent Dr. Corey Willenberg.

The OUHSD supports approximately 2,456 students in grades 9-12 at its five schools, plus independent study:

- 2 high schools (9-12)
- 1 continuation high school (9-12)
- 1 community day school 9-12
- Adult School
- Independent Study Program

Approximately 71 percent of the District's students are eligible for the Free or Reduced-Price Lunch program, and other student program classifications are reported as follows: 10 percent English Learners (EL), and 12 percent Students with Disabilities (SWD).

## **NCLB Program Improvement and Technical Assistance**

OUHSD has been designated as Program Improvement (PI) Year 3, under the *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) statute. In 2012, Oroville High School was in PI Year 3 status and Las Plumas High School was in PI Year 4 status; as indicated in the 2011-12 Accountability Progress Reporting (APR) from the California Department of Education.

## **Mission Statement**

Preparing students for the future today

### **Governance and Leadership Observations and Recommendations**

The Board of Trustees has adopted a set of Core Beliefs and a Vision Statement to guide District policies, practices and decisions. There are five Core Beliefs that address student learning and related expectations for members of the learning community. The Vision Statement provides a broad statement about expectations for the District and its students. It also provides six specific goals the District expects to achieve by 2017. The Core Beliefs and Vision Statement are provided below:

#### **Core Belief**

We believe:

Every student can learn and learns at their own pace.

Family involvement is key to helping students achieve.

Every student should learn the skills necessary to succeed in post secondary education or in a career path.

Every member of the learning community deserves to be part of a safe, caring and nurturing learning environment.

Every member of the learning community should be treated with respect, dignity and worth.

#### **Vision Statement**

The OUHSD will provide a variety of quality educational experiences for students of all learning styles, in a safe and nurturing environment to prepare them to be critical thinkers and consumers in the 21<sup>st</sup> century in a fiscally responsible manner. Learning communities will provide programs and experiences that promote academic achievement and personal and social growth of every student.

By 2017, we expect to:

- Increase annual graduation rates by 2 percent to achieve 100 percent;
- Reach the California state recognized achievement level of 800;
- Utilize learning communities to support development in all curricular areas;
- Align curriculum and instructional practices with the Common Core Standards;
- Increase Academic Yearly Progress (AYP) by 10 percent annually; and
- Actively pursue, encourage and welcome increased family involvement.

## Observations

- The Superintendent has served in this position since September 2011. Prior to being appointed Superintendent, Dr. Willenberg was the District's Director of Educational Services during the previous three years. His prior professional experience includes teaching and site level administrative positions in other nearby districts and in the Oroville Union High School District.
- The Superintendent and Board of Trustees believe the focus and mission of the District should be on instruction and solving problems constructively and in a way that addresses student academic performance. As issues arise, solutions are sought that will impact instruction in a positive way and that will incorporate the best thinking of staff, board and community.
- The Board of Trustees sets District policies, and entrusts the Superintendent and other staff to provide the day-to-day guidance needed to implement the District's practices and programs.
- Board Policies (BP) and Administrative Regulations (AR) are updated quarterly based on recommended changes provided by the California School Boards Association (CSBA). The recommended changes are reviewed by the Superintendent and staff; recommended for adoption by the Board of Trustees, and are then posted on-line on the District's website for staff and community members to access.
- The Superintendent/Board relationship features close, two-way communication practices. Examples of effective communication practices used include, but are not limited to: regular written communications from Superintendent to all members of the Board; recent attendance of Superintendent and four Board members at the Statewide California School Boards Association (CSBA) annual conference; Superintendent and Board members participation in workshops regarding mission statement, vision statement, Academic Performance Index (API), Program Improvement (PI) and other relevant educational issues affecting the District and its students' academic performance; ongoing communication as needed based on current District issues.
- In serving as the District's recent Director of Educational Services, the Superintendent is able to provide leadership and focus on the District's educational issues. Such leadership has helped to guide progress in key areas including, but not limited, to: instructional practices, curriculum development, assessment of learning, special programs, fiscal issues, and issues related to the culture of the District. This background provides the Superintendent with insight and knowledge for providing leadership with the Board of Trustees, county personnel and agencies, District staff, and community members to focus the District on instructional issues.

- In conjunction with the Core Belief that “every member of the learning community should be treated with respect, dignity and worth,” the Superintendent and Board emphasize the importance of establishing and maintaining positive working relationships among stakeholders, including staff and community. Key decisions are made with input from these stakeholders to provide a variety of perspectives and input valued by the District. Schools have functioning Leadership Teams composed of approximately 10 site leaders who provide key input to the site administration and the District.
- To maintain strong communication with and among the instructional staff, the Superintendent engages in the following activities on a regular basis: visits the school sites to observe and speak directly with administrative and instructional staff on campus; meets bi-weekly with the principals as a group; meets monthly with the assistant principals as a group; meets weekly with other District level administrators in the Superintendent’s Cabinet. Board meetings are held bi-weekly, and include time devoted once a month to present various District program highlights to the Board and community.
- To support an effective shared decision-making model utilized by the District, instructional staff participates in learning community activities. The District provides resources to support these activities including collaboration time, leadership opportunities and training. The focus of learning communities is to promote academic achievement and personal and social growth of every student, as indicated in the Vision Statement.
- The focus by the Board, staff and community on academic achievement includes developing a good understanding of the elements to be addressed (including Essential Program Components) in the Program Improvement (PI) process. These elements are communicated effectively among the stakeholders as strategies are developed and implemented. This includes addressing Program Improvement interventions particularly for meeting the needs of subgroups including English Learners, students with disabilities, and socio-economically disadvantaged students.
- The District seeks effective ways to implement Professional Learning Community (PLC) practices that extend beyond going to conferences or short-term workshops. Such strategies have included using staff from Solution Tree and the Butte County Office of Education to provide expertise and ongoing support and training. Each school has a PLC team that receives five trainings per year.
- The Superintendent reports positive results gained through principals working with instructional staff to notify teachers and counselors about students receiving Ds and Fs. Such students are assigned to staff for monitoring and interventions. This strategy has resulted in noticeable improvements in student performance.
- The District recognizes the importance of targeting its fiscal and human resources toward meeting the established academic performance goals. To this end, it will allocate general fund monies as well as special funds (e.g. DAIT, Title 1, Title 2, block grant) toward meeting goals based on the needs assessments and collection of other achievement data.

- In conclusion, the governance and leadership functions in the OUHSD provide an appropriate and effective framework for the District to use as it continues in a positive direction toward meeting its current challenges, particularly in the area of academic achievement for all students. Through its Core Beliefs and Vision Statement, as well as through appropriate policies and regulations, the Board of Trustees has set a positive framework for instructional practices. Through strategies and practices for building on the Board's work, including the use of an inclusive decision-making model, the Superintendent has enabled the instructional staff and provided the opportunity to improve the District's teaching and learning practices for all students.

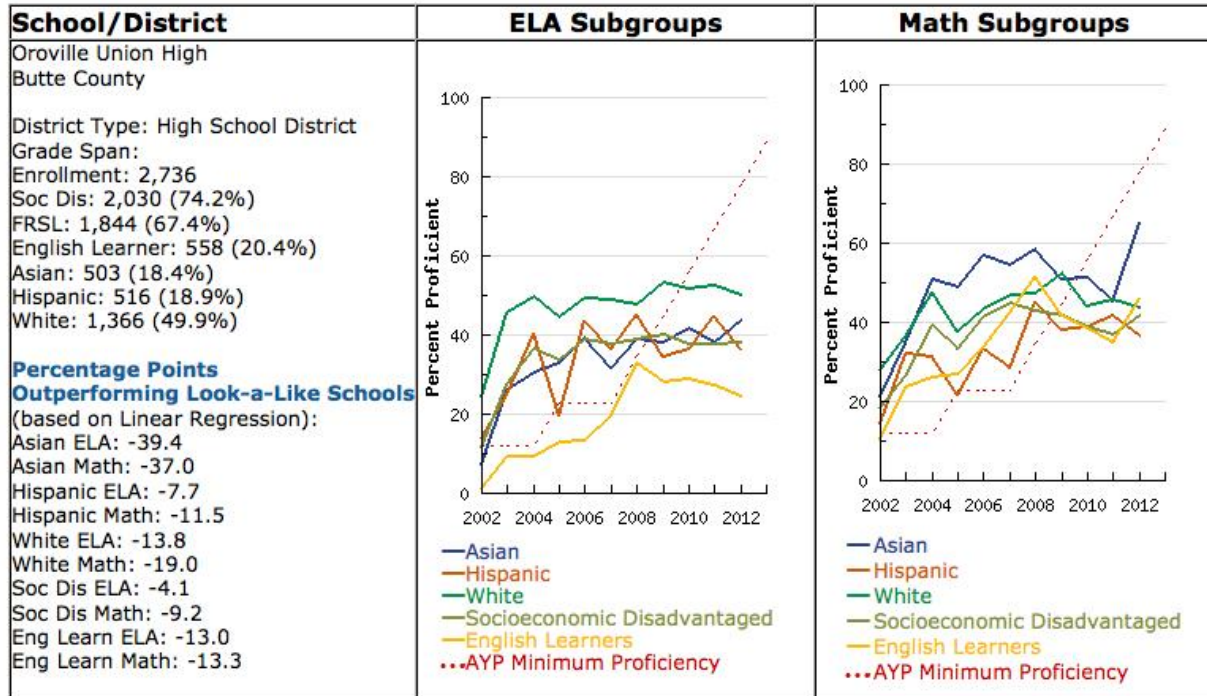
### **Recommendations**

- The administration should continue to seek and implement positive employer-employee relations with the employee groups, including through the negotiations process, to maximize opportunities for the District to improve the instructional program and student achievement results. By focusing on areas such as professional development opportunities, instructional priorities, and collaborative practices, the District with support from employee groups, can realize institutional changes that will improve student achievement results.
- The District should implement strategies to provide continuity of leadership, particularly at the District level. There are strong indications that the present leadership structure and administrative personnel are providing the District with a positive direction, with strong potential for continued improvement toward meeting the District's Vision and Goals.
- The Board of Trustees and Superintendent should continue to work with key stakeholders on the steps needed to meet the goals identified for 2017 in the Vision Statement. Those goals should be reviewed by the Board of Trustees annually and adjusted as appropriate, based on progress and on possible changing conditions, such as new State/Federal expectations and/or funding limitations or opportunities.

## Oroville Academic Alignment Observations and Recommendations

This section includes observations and recommendations related to Curriculum alignment.

### **Oroville Union High 2012 District Performance Snapshot**



### Alignment of Curriculum and Instruction with State Standards

#### Observations

- Each school has a Board-approved Single Plan for Student Achievement. Currently, all comprehensive high schools are WASC accredited.
- In both the current District LEAP and the Single Plans, the Board of Education has been supportive of programs for English Language Learners and Students with Disabilities. English Language Learners (EL) student achievement levels in English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics have been flat or declined.
- A significant achievement gap exists between the White sub-group and all others in ELA. A major concern is the low performance in ELA by English Learners. This concern is magnified by the continued decline in EL achievement levels in ELA over the past four years. This decline has led to an expanded achievement gap between White and EL student sub-groups.



- Achievement trends in Mathematics for all sub-groups are random and sporadic. Most sub-groups (White, SED, and Hispanic) have shown significant declines over the past three years. Asian students showed a significant increase over the past year to reverse a multi-year decline. In reviewing course specific data, it is very clear that student achievement levels in Algebra I are a significant cause of concern.
- There is currently no District benchmark assessment program for courses at the secondary level. Multiple shareholder groups have indicated a need for a systematic, comprehensive benchmark assessments system to provide programmatic monitoring data of sub-group performance in ELA or Mathematics. Shareholders indicated that there was a lack of predictive or formative assessment data to modify instruction to ensure greater student achievement in content specific courses.
- Staff strongly felt that the majority of teachers and administrators at all levels were eager to ensure the success of the District and its students. It was reported by staff that there is some resistance to instructional changes, and in some cases a feeling that teacher autonomy concerning instructional practices, pacing guides, benchmark/common assessments and data analysis trumped District and school initiatives aimed at raising student achievement.
- Staff noted a lack of consistent protocols or expectations in the area of research-based instructional practices; specifically informing students of what is to be learned, student engagement, rigor and relevance. Staff pointed out the need for designing and implementing consistent District-wide expectations in this area as well as clear expectations for monitoring, coaching, and staff development aimed at improving these practices.
- There is a lack of consistent and systematic use of common formative assessments to inform instruction or to improve instructional strategies. Implementation of common formative assessments is sporadic due to varying expectations and emphasis depending on school site.
- Staff reported high failure rates at the secondary level, including alternative education sites, in core courses with little or no mandatory interventions available to ensure students learning. Students who fail courses are currently sent to summer school for credit recovery after failure has occurred.
- Secondary grading practices appear to not be based on standards mastery criteria. Without the systematic use of common pacing guides, common formative assessments or common end-of-course assessments, teachers use independent criteria they deem appropriate to establish content mastery and determine a student's grade.

- There is currently a lack of tiered levels of intervention. Staff report that there is a need to continue to expand and enhance the ongoing monitoring of intervention programs, specify exit and entry criteria for each tier of intervention, and continue to build the repertoire of programs needed to meet student learning needs at all levels of the existing pyramids.
- Staff indicated repeatedly a need to deepen and enhance collaboration at all levels using the Professional Learning Community model as a basis for focusing on learning data, ensuring learning, and improving instructional technique of all staff.
- Staff expressed a growing concern regarding the transition from the current California State Standards to the Common Core. There was a general opinion from shareholders that significant staff development was needed in the area of understanding and implementing common core. Staff repeatedly expressed concerns that high order thinking strategies and integrated curricular implementation strategies were badly needed.

### **Recommendations**

- A system of benchmark assessments must be implemented and monitored at the District level for programmatic and sub-group progress for all secondary core courses throughout the academic year. This data should be reported to the Governing Board quarterly.
- District expectation for collaboration using the PLC model, including common formative assessments, sharing formative assessment results, sharing of best instructional practices, and interventions when learning has not occurred and must be clearly communicated for this upcoming year. Additionally, professional development of PLC facilitators/leads and administrators should be implemented prior to and throughout the academic year.
- Implementation of evidenced-based interventions at the secondary level must be in place to reduce the failure rate by no less than 10 percent this coming year. Failure rate data for each course and school should be reported to the Governing Board no later than two weeks after each semester grading period.
- Clearly stated expectations of researched-based instructional strategies must be set for this upcoming year. No less than four strategic areas must be addressed through professional development targeted at implementation and a systematic monitoring plan should be in place to assess implementation levels.
- Deliver a program of staff development focused on understanding and implementing common core. An emphasis on developing a program of ongoing training and coaching of the teaching staff on high order thinking strategies and integrated curricular implementation strategies should become a priority in this training.

## The District System to Support English Learner (EL) students

In the 2011-12 school year, there were over 250 English Learner (EL) students in the District, representing approximately 9 percent of the student population. Of the English Learner population in the District, there are approximately 15 percent students who speak Hmong as their first language and 7 percent native Spanish speakers. For the past four years, the District has failed to meet all AMAO targets, most specifically AMAO 3 adequate yearly progress for EL student groups at the LEA level.

The District is a recipient of Title III funds under the NCLB Act, 2001. The purpose of Title III is to *help ensure that children who are limited English Proficient...attain English proficiency, develop high levels of academic attainment in English, and meet the same challenging State academic content and student academic achievement standards as all children are expected to meet.*

### Observations

- English Learner services are overseen at the District level by the Director of Education. There is an ELD teacher coordinator who receives paid work time to work with staff at both high schools. Each site also has specific ELD teachers in addition to other EL-authorized teachers who provide instruction to English Learners throughout the day.
- The District provides ELD support classes for beginning students that begins with a double period for ELA and ELD with appropriately credentialed teachers. As students advance in language proficiency, they are later served in a single period of ELA that is taught by an authorized ELD teacher.
- At the two high schools, the teachers use different curriculum materials for ELD including Kevin Clark strategies, English 3D, Vision and Grammar in Context.
- Recent teacher professional development has been focused on the implementation of the common core state standards.
- Cross-school collaboration has been promoted as a means to build capacity in ELD and build consistency across sites. ELD teachers have received specific training on the newly purchased ELD materials such as English 3D.
- There appears to be a strong interest in the District to make the necessary changes to meet the needs of EL students. The Master Plan for English Learners is currently being revisited and there appears to be some urgency to create comprehensive and aligned programs at both high schools.
- There has been recent attention paid to the EL student reclassification process. As a result, the process is more systematic including frequent monitoring by the District office. The number of reclassified students for the 2012-13 school year appears to have doubled by the midyear point.

## Recommendations

- Teachers should be provided training opportunities on the use of effective instructional strategies in all content areas to ensure that a research-based instructional program for EL students is in place. The Common Core training and the adoption of new ELD standards in the state require that professional development opportunities transparently and specifically interconnect the new standards for all teachers, beyond those just teaching ELD.
- To effectively support teachers in the District, agreements should be made at both schools that narrows the variation of materials used allowing for a more powerful collaboration opportunities District-wide.
- The development of a new District master plan should be meaningful and useful for teachers and administrators in the District. Timing for the rewrite allows the incorporation of the new academic standards (Common Core and ELD) that will provide the team writing the plan the opportunity to plan truly integrated professional development and curriculum options for teachers.
- District level accountability measures, like those taken with the new reclassification process, should be developed for all EL services to track and monitor the quantity and quality of services to students and families. The success of the new reclassification process for students is evidence that the District level coordinator efforts have made a difference.
- The District should develop an evidence-based program evaluation model that includes common formative and benchmark assessments in both ELD and content areas that produces easy to access and valuable data for teachers to make frequent and meaningful instructional decisions for EL students.
- To ensure all high school students get access to grade level curriculum and content standards in English language arts, it is necessary to adopt a standards-aligned curriculum. Close consideration should be made to ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of EL students, and contains an assessment system that is compatible with *EduSoft*.
- The District should implement a formative assessment. The assessment may be developed from the existing adopted ELD curriculum or through Data Director *EduSoft*. Since teachers have access to student outcome data on Data Director *EduSoft* and have some expertise on data analysis, the formative assessment can be used to monitor the progress of EL students in academic achievement and English language proficiency. The formative assessment can support the redesignation efforts by identifying grade levels where students are less likely to qualify for redesignation.

The *English Language Learner Assessment (ELLA)* designed by Key Data Systems is recommended as one formative assessment for the District. The purpose of the ELLA is to help determine the progress of English learners' ability to listen, speak, read, and write in English. The assessment is modeled after the CDE CELDT released test questions.

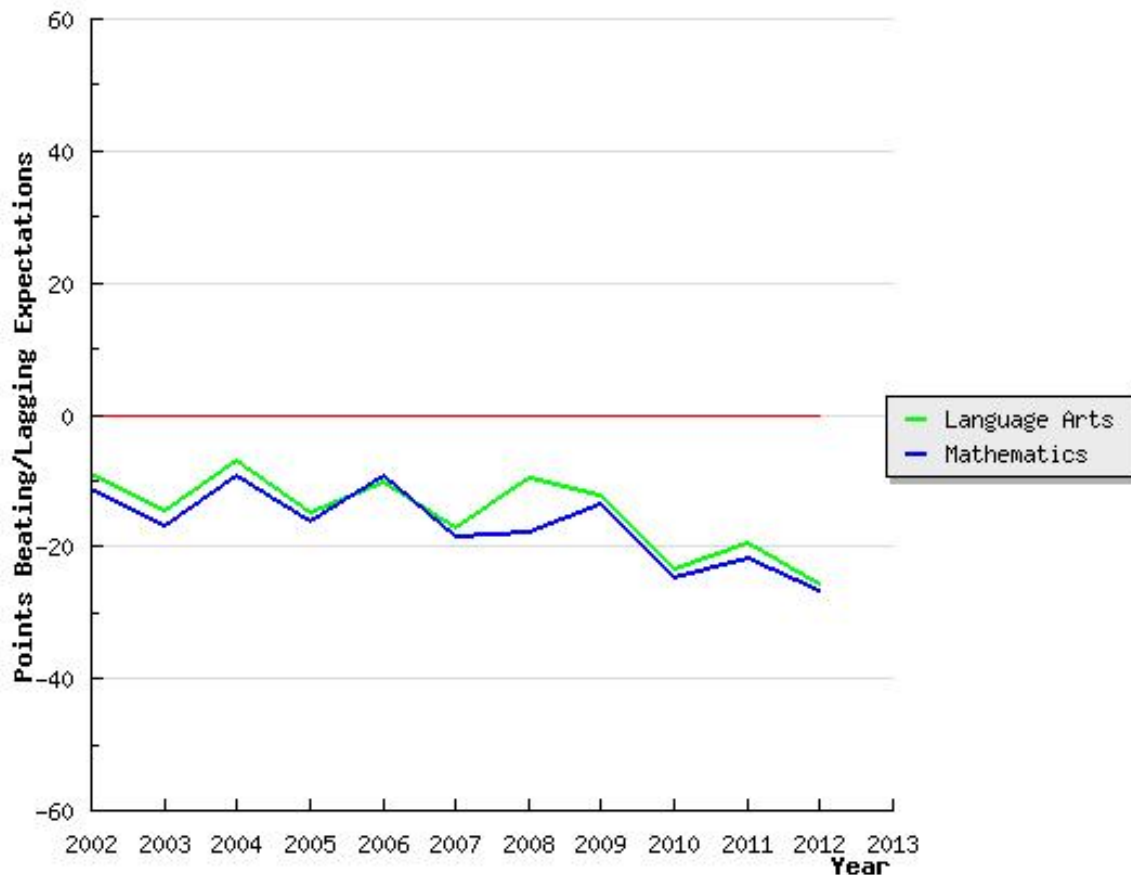
- The existing PLCs can be an effective vehicle to support the implementation of ELD and SDAIE strategies. With professional development on ELD and SDAIE strategies, teachers will have the opportunity to discuss and share their experiences with the strategies. Specific training for teachers would focus on building academic language, promoting oral language vocabulary, orienting instructional strategies to the proficiency levels of EL students, and using graphic organizers to support reading comprehension and the writing process. Also, with the development of assessment data, the PLCs can be a source for determining effective strategies and to promote the school-wide implementation of formative assessments.
- The active and meaningful participation of teachers in the PLCs is necessary. This may require an increased structure for PLCs, additional PLC training, or establishing school level goals for effective teacher participation in PLCs.
- The District currently completes an annual Title III evaluation that examines progress toward meeting AMAO targets and proficiency on the CST and CAHSEE. However, there is a need to complete an annual evaluation of the EL program to determine the effectiveness of services provided to all EL students and measure the outcome goals indicated on page 18 of the District's Master Plan for English Learners. In addition, the annual evaluation can disaggregate student data by grade level and level of English language proficiency. For example, students at different English language proficiency levels may be performing better than others. Also, data can be gathered to assess the extent EL students are participating in all District programs as suggested in the District's Master Plan for English Learners. Part of this annual evaluation should include the English Learner Subgroup Self-Assessment (ELSSA) developed by the California Department of Education.

## The District System to Support Students with Disabilities (SWD)

This section includes observations and recommendations related to Students with Disabilities.

### **Beating/Lagging Expectations Chart for Oroville Union High**

**Districtwide %**  vs **Percent Proficient and Above**



The Beating/Lagging Expectations chart maps the academic performance on the California Standards Test (CST) in English Language Arts and Mathematics of a school or district over time based upon a particular subgroup of students and whether the performance is above or below expectation (the Zero line).

The chart represents whether the District's academic performance leads or lags expectation, based on a linear regression analysis of the performance of other schools/districts in the state to adjust for the impact of a subgroup on student academic performance.

A  $+10$  on the chart indicates that the District's academic performance that year is ten percentage points above the expectation for a District with that same percentage of students in the subgroup. A  $-10$  on the chart indicates the District's academic performance is ten percentage points below the expectation for a school or District with that same percentage of students in the subgroup.

## **Observations**

- The Special Education Department (SPED) has experienced success in raising SWD test results the past two years. This success is largely due to the SPED staff using a “push-in” approach working in classrooms with students, collaborating with general education staff, and maintaining a focus on California State Standards.
- SPED student achievement still lags behind expected performance levels for similar populations in both ELA and Mathematics.
- Stakeholders reported that increases in special education performance has led to a decrease in discipline cases involving special education students. Stakeholders reported a significant improvement in acceptance of special education students in the classroom by teachers and students.
- Collaboration between SPED staff and general education staff has improved. Stakeholders believe that continued improvement and a more focused collaboration on Special Education student learning needs to continue.
- Staff reported that there is a definite need for SPED staff to continue staff development focused on best instructional practices and the use of data in determining the selection and use of research-based programs.
- Stakeholders were quick to point out the positive improvements that have occurred in the SPED program over the past two years. All voiced the need to continue and improve on this trend through greater collaboration with general education, a focus on data driven decision-making and continued improvement in instructional strategies.

## **Recommendations**

- A system of benchmark/IEP progress assessments must be implemented and monitored at the District level for programmatic performance of all SPED students. This data should be reported to the Director quarterly.
- Implement a program of staff development focused on PLC collaboration for all SPED staff.
- Set and communicate clear expectations for implementation of collaboration using the PLC model, including common formative assessments, sharing formative assessment results, sharing of best instructional practices, and interventions when learning has not occurred must be clearly communicated for this coming year.
- Ensure implementation of evidenced-based researched programs to accelerate SPED students’ academic performance to reduce the failure rate and ensure improved performance on standardized State testing.

- Set clearly stated expectations for the use of researched-based instructional strategies for this coming year for all SPED staff. There must also be a plan for implementation and systematic monitoring to assess implementation levels. Instructional coaching should be a component of this plan.
- Implement a program of staff development focused on understanding and implementing common core as it relates to SPED. An emphasis on developing a program of ongoing training and coaching of the teaching staff on high order thinking strategies and integrated curricular implementation strategies should become a priority in this training.

### **Data Systems and Achievement Monitoring Observations and Recommendations**

The appropriate use of student data analysis systems has been found to positively influence classroom instruction and increase student achievement. A data system will not be effective if it is only used to collect student data information; the system needs to allow instructional staff and administrators to analyze the data through easy access to the data and to reports of data collected and tracked over time. If effectively used, student data analysis systems allow districts to evaluate the impact of programs, classes and student support District-wide and allows school site staff to determine how best to assist students in mastering state standards.

The District uses the *Aeries* student information system and uses *Data Director* for data analysis. The District is currently reviewing data analysis systems and expects to select a new system this year. Schools have scanners and other equipment available to enter testing data. Most teachers and administrators prefer not to use *Data Director* because the program is difficult to use. The District office staff currently provides reports to the administration to assist them in the analysis of data. *Data Director* is used by administrators to monitor credit accrual and attendance. The District is aware teachers, and administrators will need significant support and training during the transition to a new data analysis program.

Comprehensive high schools have quarterly exams. The math departments have common assessments and common finals in *Data Director*. Exams are created from test bank questions or from teacher created questions which are based on release questions. Some departments are working to create common assessments. In addition to CELDT assessments, English Language Development classes currently assess English Language Learners every six weeks to determine the standards students need assistance mastering and to determine student placement in ELD classes.



School sites use various methods to determine placement of 9<sup>th</sup> grade students. Placement for math classes includes the Math Diagnostics Placement Test (MDPT). In English/Language Arts 9<sup>th</sup> grade placement is determined by 7<sup>th</sup> grade CST scores and 8<sup>th</sup> grade teacher recommendations. The District and school sites would like to have a writing sample and reading diagnostic test to use in evaluating incoming 9<sup>th</sup> grade student needs and placement; but because 8<sup>th</sup> grade students are at their respective feeder districts they are not able to administer these assessments.

After assessments are given, the critical next steps are analyzing the data and determining the best ways to provide teaching of the standards which were not mastered. Departments with common assessments are becoming skilled at analyzing the assessment data but are still working to master teaching the standards again in ways which improve student learning. Quarterly exams are given but these have limited use in determining student's mastery of standards and are not often used to determine instruction for current students. High school departments which have not begun using standardized benchmark assessments do not have the data to analyze student mastery of standards and cannot collaborate on instruction to meet the needs determined during analysis.

Pacing guides with areas to be covered by quarter are available for all courses; however the pacing guides have not been updated in each subject area and in some departments are rarely used. Departments using common assessments are more closely aligned in instruction.

The District has adequate technology hardware at school sites to allow schools to complete the current assessments. Most school sites will need additional hardware for testing in the 2014-15 school year. The District bandwidth is adequate for testing in the 2014-15 school year. The District has reviewed the technology needs and is planning for how these needs will be met.

### **Observations**

- School sites administer quarterly exams.
- Schools do not have consistent benchmark assessments across the District. The math departments at school sites have common assessments and several other school site departments are at the beginning levels of creating and using assessments.
- Training has been provided in the analysis and use of data, but additional training has been requested and is needed.
- Student information system data and assessment data systems are integrated but most administrators and staff members are not comfortable accessing the data used to measure student assessment.
- Varying levels of data is used at the school sites to determine placement in classes and intervention support. New programs are being used this year for English Language Learners and Students with Disabilities, these programs have strong assessment systems and appear to be assisting to improve student mastery of standards.

- Schools use varying amounts of available collaboration time to analyze data and determine instruction designed to address the needs revealed in the data analysis.

## **Recommendations**

### **2013-14**

- Create and administer District-wide English/Language Arts benchmark assessments in all schools.
- Schedule time immediately after each benchmark assessment for teachers and principals to analyze benchmark data and design instruction to address student mastery of standards at all schools.
- Review collaboration time at all school sites to allow teachers and administrators to continue to utilize Professional Learning Communities in the use of assessment data to determine instructional needs and in how to address student needs to master standards.
- Provide training and support for administrators, teachers and support staff in the use of summative and formative assessments to assist with identifying patterns of performance and modifying instruction to meet the needs of all students, including ELs and SWDs.
- Continue to monitor technology needs to ensure all sites meet the requirements for common core assessments

### **2014-15**

- Review District assessments to ensure the assessments align with common core standards.
- Create and administer formative assessments in each social science, math, ELA and science course.
- Provide training for teachers in the use of technology to support common core standards.

## **Parent and Community Observations and Recommendations**

Research has found that parent and community involvement increases student achievement. Parent involvement also ensures that parents are informed and are a part of the decision-making processes for both the school site and for their student.

The District provides a variety of opportunities for parents to be involved in the education of their children. The District has a District English Learner Advisory Committee (DELAC), and each school has an English Learner Advisory Committee (ELAC). The District has a District advisory council. The District is a part of the county community advisory committee CAC for parents of students with disabilities. The school sites have site councils, parent teacher student association (PTSA), and connections to community groups. The District is meeting with community groups to address community needs and problems related to physical violence. Schools communicate with parents using a variety of mediums such as; printed newsletters, automated phone call messages, and school site web pages. Newsletters and phone calls home are provided in English, Spanish and Hmong. Bilingual paraprofessionals are available to translate for parents, teachers and students. The District webpage allows users to view the webpage in various languages but does not appear to have a Hmong translation.

Parent attendance at District and school site groups and school activities including athletics has been on the decline in the past few years. Schools have had difficulty in recruiting enough parents to maintain school site councils and disbanding of a few parent groups has been discussed due to a lack of attendance. At a recent grad night meeting only two parents attended.

School site councils provide input for budget and program development at all schools. The budget discussion is related to Title I and categorical programs.

Parent would like more information on A-G requirements, 4 year high school planning information and the college application process. Parents would also like more alternative education programs.

### **Observations**

- District office communication written materials is provided in the students' home language.
- The District website and most school websites have a translation program which allows the website to be read in English and Spanish, but not in Hmong.
- Bilingual services paraprofessionals provide translation assistance at each school site. High school documents sent home by teachers are not always sent through the office so occasional documents may go home only in English.

- A parent/student portal is available to all parents of high school students. Teachers are able to post grades to the portal for viewing by parents and students. Teacher posting of assignment grades to the parent portal is not mandatory and therefore participation prior to report card summative reports is less than 100 percent, depending on the school site.
- Parent participation level is lower than in most high school districts.

## **Recommendations**

### **2013-14**

- Review parent involvement practices and discuss with community groups to determine the best ways to more actively involve parents.
- Provide District and school website translation in Hmong.
- Provide information on the District website, as well as all newsletters and other means of contact with parents regarding how parents can request translator assistance at the District office and/or their student's school site.
- Review the use of the parent/student portal to determine how best to fully utilize the portal. After review, address the portal utilization issues and improve participation and use.
- Survey parents annually regarding their desired support from school personnel, keeping in mind that parental needs evolve and change over time.

### **2014-15**

- Create parent materials explaining common core standards and providing ways for parents to support their student's mastery of these standards.

## **Professional Development Observations and Recommendations**

Effective professional development improves the learning of all students. Professional development of all staff members should include the identified needs of teachers, administrators and classified staff. The District and school sites should provide ongoing professional development based on needs found in the academic program surveys focused on the state essential program components, as well as the needs identified in this report.

The District has provided training in some areas including core curriculum materials, Professional Learning Communities and Explicit Direct Instruction.

### **Observations**

- The District seeks effective ways to implement Professional Learning Community (PLC) practices that extend beyond going to conferences or short-term workshops. Such strategies have included using staff from Solution Tree and the Butte County Office of Education to provide expertise and ongoing support and training. Each school has a PLC team that receives five trainings per year. Staff indicated repeatedly a need to deepen and enhance collaboration at all levels using the Professional Learning Community model as a basis for focusing on learning data, ensuring learning, and improving instructional technique of all staff.
- Staff noted a lack of consistent protocols or expectations in the area of research-based instructional practices; specifically informing students of what is to be learned, student engagement, rigor and relevance. Staff pointed out the need for designing and implementing consistent District-wide expectations in this area as well as clear expectations for monitoring, coaching, and staff development aimed at improving these practices.
- There is a lack of consistent and systematic use of common formative assessments to inform instruction or to improve instructional strategies.
- Staff expressed a growing concern regarding the transition from the current California State Standards to the Common Core. There was a general opinion from stakeholders that significant staff development was needed in the area of understanding and implementing common core. Staff repeatedly expressed concerns that high order thinking strategies and integrated curricular implementation strategies were widely needed.
- Recent teacher professional development for teachers of English Language Learners has been focused on the implementation of the common core state standards.
- Staff reported that there is a definite need for SPED staff to continue staff development focused on best instructional practices and the use of data in determining the selection and use of research-based programs.

## **Recommendations**

- The District should set expectations and provide professional development for collaboration using the PLC model, including common formative assessments, sharing formative assessment results, sharing of best instructional practices, and interventions when learning has not occurred must be clearly communicated for this upcoming year. Additionally, professional development of PLC facilitators/leads and administrators should be implemented prior to and throughout the academic year.
- PLC professional development should include all teachers including ELD teachers and SPED teachers.
- Clearly stated expectations of researched-based instructional strategies must be set for this upcoming year. No less than four strategic areas must be addressed through professional development targeted at implementation and a systematic monitoring plan should be put in place to assess implementation levels.
- Implement a program of staff development focused on understanding and implementing common core. An emphasis on developing a program of ongoing training and coaching of the teaching staff on high order thinking strategies and integrated curricular implementation strategies should become a priority in this training.
- Provide training and support for administrators, teachers and support staff in the use of summative and formative assessments to assist with identifying patterns of performance and modifying instruction to meet the needs of all students including ELs and SWDs.
- Provide training for teachers in the use of technology to support common core standards.

## **Human Resources Findings and Recommendations**

The Human Resources functions of a school district are complex and must be handled in an efficient, timely, and legally compliant manner. Some of the key human resources responsibilities include recruiting and retaining qualified staff; maintaining positive employer-employee relations; handling employee absences, grievances, and discipline; managing personnel files; ensuring proper credentialing and NCLB “highly qualified” compliance; overseeing employee evaluations; and working closely with other District departments to ensure that employee-related issues are coordinated properly (e.g. payroll and position control). Small school districts, in particular, may find that maintaining effective human resources practices can be challenging based not only on the complexities of the functions, but also on the resources available for such responsibilities that tend to be more limited than in larger districts.

### **Observations**

- The Superintendent assumes a prominent role in the human resources functions in OUHSD. He participates directly in collective bargaining with both employee bargaining groups, handles the evaluation of principals and other instructional leaders, oversees the evaluation of teachers and other certificated staff, and assumes the ultimate responsibility for all other human resources leadership functions in the District. Human resources support is provided by a full-time Personnel Technician, who handles many of the technical functions such as advertising vacant positions using EdJoin, verifying credentials and “highly qualified” employee compliance requirements, monitoring evaluations, and a variety of other human resources functions.
- The Superintendent possesses a strong working understanding of human resources requirements and practices, including the belief that sustaining trusting relationships between individuals and among groups is vital to District success. He values the importance of hiring qualified staff and of providing ongoing support to them. Principals are empowered for providing strong instructional leadership needed at the sites, including training and ongoing support for them to lead their learning communities. All administrators have completed the AB430 Professional Training Program, offered through the Sacramento County Office of Education.
- Most of the District’s students attend one of the two comprehensive high schools. Both schools are very similar in terms of student demographics and overall student achievement. Still, each school has its own unique culture and history, and each principal works to support the school’s unique qualities while implementing the Single Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA) for that school based on the same standards-based instructional program implemented at both schools.

- The Superintendent evaluates principals using the California Professional Standards for School Leaders. The areas addressed in the evaluation include the following: Leadership; Curriculum & Instruction; Management; Community; Professional Growth, and Strategic Planning. The Superintendent gains strong first-hand knowledge of principals' performance by visiting school sites frequently and working closely with each principal to implement the school goals included in the SPSA. Each of the elements of principals' evaluations listed above includes detailed elements included in the evaluation, with significant emphasis on improving teaching and learning.
- The District reports that all teachers have met the credential requirements for teaching English Learners. The District also is moving toward meeting nearly all No Child Left Behind (NCLB) "highly qualified" compliance assignments by placing teachers in their areas of expertise and using alternative compliance measures available to school districts, particularly for teachers assigned to special education and alternative education programs.
- The District recognizes the importance of establishing and maintaining a collaborative working relationship with the teachers' association regarding matters directly related to the negotiations process and contract maintenance. The large majority of teachers participate in collaboration and instructional leadership activities. The Superintendent also recognizes there is room for improving the working relationship between the District and Oroville Secondary Teachers Association (OSTA) leadership to implement a more collaborative approach to problem-solving that will yield mutual benefits to both the District and Association.
- The collective bargaining agreement between the OUHSD and OSTA expired in June 2011, but the parties continue to negotiate with the goal of approving a successor agreement as soon as possible.
- The negotiations process with OSTA includes a review of salaries, wages and benefits used in similar and surrounding school districts. These data provide benchmarks for the District and Association to evaluate potential compensation levels during the collective bargaining process. As in many other California school districts during recent years, the OUHSD has had to grapple with diminishing state funds and find ways to balance program needs with employee compensation issues. Despite these challenges, salary, wages and benefits to classroom personnel have remained competitive.
- To provide an ongoing support system for teachers new to the profession, the District participates in the Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) program offered through the Butte County Office of Education. The District participates on the BTSA Advisory Panel to provide input and maintain communication with the program in order to support its new teachers.



- The collective bargaining agreement includes an article for a Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) Program; however, recent state funding cutbacks for this program has reduced the viability of offering PAR as agreed to in the contract. The District has still offered support for teachers in the form of training, collaboration time and leadership opportunities so that they can effectively implement the SBE-adopted standards-based curriculum; deliver effective instruction; and monitor and support the achievement of all students.
- The District evaluates certificated staff based on the California Standards for the Teaching Profession (for teachers) and California Professional Standards for School Leaders (for administrators). The timelines, procedures and evaluation form used for teachers are included in the collective bargaining agreement. Those used for administrators are followed by the Superintendent and certificated administrators being evaluated, including the use of a common administrative evaluation form.

### **Recommendations**

- The Superintendent should continue to implement human resource practices based on emphasizing collaborative working relationships, including ongoing two-way communication, with site administrators and other District office administrators. Human Resources functions should continue to focus on supporting the goal of improving instructional programs and academic achievement for all students.
- The District should explore ways to strengthen its working relationship with OSTA leadership. Building a stronger foundation of trust between District and Association leadership can yield improvements in such processes as grievances, negotiations, and promoting conditions for improving student academic achievement while also addressing District and Association interests. One option to consider is the implementation of Interest-Based Bargaining (IBB) training for members of the bargaining teams to build levels of trust that will enhance the bargaining process and problem-solving challenges for other issues of importance in the District.
- The District should consider reviewing the Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) article in the collective bargaining agreement during the negotiations process to determine whether appropriate language changes might be useful in order to implement elements of this program to support teachers not otherwise eligible to participate in the BTSA Program. Although PAR funding by the state was eliminated years ago, the benefits of providing such coaching support for some teachers can still be helpful for improving instructional strategies and overall effectiveness.
- The District should continue to focus on providing professional development opportunities for principals, teachers and other instructional staff. Utilize the professional learning community model for assessing and providing the most appropriate professional development priorities, including the effective delivery of the California Standards for the Teaching Profession (CSTPs).

## Fiscal Resources Observations and Recommendations

### AB 1200 Status

- The District's 2012-13 First Interim General Fund budget for expenditures plus financing uses is in excess of \$22.2 million.
- The District's 2012-13 First Interim Report reflects a projected deficiency of revenue over expenditures of \$1,263,824.
- Minimum reserve levels exceed all State requirements for a District of its size.
- All current financial reports required by the State contain a positive certification for the ability of the District to meet the current year and two subsequent years' financial obligations in all funds.
- The Butte County Office of Education (BCOE) has reviewed the District's 2012-13 First Interim Report. BCOE's approval letter, dated January 14, 2013, indicates that it has found OUHSD's First Interim Budget, Multi-Year Projection (MYP), and Cash Flow Projection assumptions to be reasonable.
- The BCOE has noted that the District has been relying on restricted to unrestricted contributions from its Medi-Cal Administrative Activities (MAA) program in order to reach the District's Economic Uncertainty Reserve board policy of 17 percent. The District is currently in the process of identifying expenditure reductions to eliminate its reliance on MAA program funds, as MAA funds are not guaranteed and the District cannot continue to rely on those funds to ensure compliance with the aforementioned board policy.
- Due to Proposition 30 passing in November 2012, the District eliminated mid-year cuts from its First Interim Budget and MYP.
- The District's Cafeteria Fund continues to require an annual contribution from the General Fund. The District only contributes the amount needed to bring the Cafeteria Fund balance to zero.
- All other funds are expected to end the 2012-13 fiscal year with positive fund and cash balances.
- The development of the budget is not guided by a written set of procedures and guidelines. However, the District does utilize various formulas based on enrollment and poverty counts to allocate general and categorical funds to departments and sites. District staff also prepares written assumptions to assist the board, employees, and community groups when reviewing the budget. The District does have procedures for hiring and assignment changes, and has developed a form to assist staff with this process.

- The budget is monitored continuously over the course of the year by various staff in the business services and categorical programs departments. The Assistant Superintendent of Business approves all purchase orders and verifies budget balances at that time. All business staff have access to the District's financial system and can review account balances as needed.
- Allocations of resources are made to the school sites and departments with few restrictions regarding specific expenditures as long as expenditures follow District/site council plans and receive the approval of the categorical Director. Expenditures for salaries and benefits are controlled and monitored at the District level through the hiring and assignment form.
- According to the established hiring procedures, no additional positions, regardless of funding source, are filled without prior board approval.
- All Tier III State categorical funds are accounted for in the unrestricted portion of General Fund.
  - The District does continue to set-aside Tier III funds for:
    - Adult Education
    - School Safety and Violence Prevention
    - Pupil Retention
    - Professional Development
  - The District's Deferred Maintenance Fund currently carries a zero balance and the District is not transferring Tier III funds to Fund 14.

The District's 2012-13 budget was adopted by the governing board at a public hearing on June 20, 2012. (Pursuant to Education Code 33129 and 4127).

The 2012-13 Budget was reviewed and approved on August 7, 2012 by the Butte County Superintendent of Schools. Education Code 42127 requires that as a part of the budget process, the County Superintendent of Schools reviews and analyzes district budgets in accordance with State Board Criteria and Standards pursuant to 33127. In a letter from the County to the Superintendent, the County provided comments and recommendations regarding their evaluation of the District's budget.

### **Observations**

- The Oroville Union High School District is run in a fiscally sound manner and meets all the standards and criteria established by the State used to indicate financial strength and stability.

- The District has an experienced and knowledgeable person in the leadership position of Business Services. The Director of Education is new to OUHSD and to this position. Her past experience in public education was as a School Psychologist and Program Coordinator for special education. However, she appears to be knowledgeable, motivated and conscientious.
- Current and prior year budgets have been approved by the Butte County Office of Education. The District has never received a qualified or negative certification.
- The minimum requirements for a district of this size for reserves that are designated for economic uncertainties has been met or exceeded in the 2011-12 fiscal year and in the First Interim Report for fiscal year 2012-13.
- The District did not have an operating deficit in 2011-12, but is projected to deficit spend in 2012-13.
- The fund balance increased by \$1,013,621 at the end of the 2011-12 fiscal year, and is projected to decrease by \$1,263,824 in the 2012-13 fiscal year.
- The District has a board policy that requires the General Fund to maintain a 17 percent Economic Uncertainty reserve, which would fund the District's on-going obligations for two months.
- The District maintains the 17 percent Economic Uncertainty reserve using its MAA funds but is currently working on a plan to reduce spending and its dependency on the MAA funds.
- Due to the passage of Proposition 30 in November 2012, the District's 2012-13 three-year MYP does not include plans for mid-year revenue decreases or mid-year expenditure reductions.
- The District has not had to negotiate any furlough days for any collective bargaining unit.
- The District continues to offer four District-wide staff development days. Categorical funds also continue to support various professional development opportunities throughout the year and are in accordance with approved site plans.
- The District has not established written budget development practices and procedures.
- The District does have position control through its current financial system; however, it is separate from the payroll system. There are specific position control practices and procedures in place to control and monitor the addition of personnel.

- The enrollment of the District has been declining slightly since the 2007-08 fiscal year. The District develops its revenue limit projections using the higher prior year average daily attendance when appropriate. The District has been proactive when projecting long-term enrollment and currently has a projection through the 2020-21 school year. This projection is revised on an annual basis and is used to calculate MYP revenue limit funding and staffing needs.
- Negotiations for the 2012-13 year have not been completed. All past negotiated step and column advancements have been given to staff and are included in the 2012-13 budget.
- The District currently pays 100 percent of employee health and welfare premium costs for certificated non-management employees, as well for this group's retirees with some stipulations. For fiscal year 2012-13, the annual active employee rate is \$16,588 and the annual retiree rate is \$25,952. This cost is in the budget.
  - It is important to note that the District's 2010-11 Teacher Salaries were well below the State-wide average. This is most likely due to the health and welfare costs being quite a bit higher than the average.
- Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) are paid on an "as you go" basis. In other words, the District pays the retiree Health and Welfare benefits as they are due. It does not set-aside funds for future retirees. The District's unfunded OPEB estimate as of July 1, 2011 is \$7,385,170. This amount represents 60 percent of the District's July 1, 2011 covered payroll.
- The District pays the annual capped amount of \$10,572 for classified non-management employees, and \$10,872 for confidential and management employees. The District also pays \$11,484 annually for its board members that elect to receive these benefits through the District. The District's contributions are included in the budget.
- There are other funds established by the District, including Adult Education, Cafeteria Fund, Deferred Maintenance (inactive), two Capital Facilities funds and a County School Facility Fund, Bond Redemption Fund, and a Foundation Private Purpose Fund.
- The District does exercise the Tier 3 flexibility provisions through fiscal year 2014-15.
- The District passed a \$12 million general obligation bond in November 2008 to remodel and upgrade athletic facilities. These projects have been completed.
- The Cafeteria fund is expected to show a zero fund balance at the end of the 2012-13 fiscal year after the planned general fund contribution is made.
- School site leadership has considerable flexibility regarding the expenditure of funds allocated to individual school sites.

- Categorical funds do carry some restrictions. The expenditures of these funds must follow approved school plans and are monitored by the business and categorical departments of the District.

### **Alignment of District Budget and School District Priorities**

As of January 22, 2013, the District has three Title I schools on school-wide plans and are identified as Program Improvement Schools; Las Plumas High (grades 9-12) Oroville High (grades 9-12), and the continuation high school, Prospect Continuation. The Oroville High Community Day School is funded with unrestricted funds. All sites receive some categorical programs, which are budgeted for and identified in the school plan for all four schools. Although many discretionary programs funded with unrestricted General Funds have been eliminated or scaled back, General Fund support is provided to all schools to implement and operate specific programs.

- The District continues to maintain four District staff development days for certificated staff. Teaching staff work 184 days per year, with 180 student contact days.
- The District's 2010-11 travel and conference budget was 232 percent of the state-wide average and reflects the District's on-going commitment to training its staff beyond the four District staff development days.
- As of the 2012-13 school year, 90 percent of the District's teaching staff has been through Professional Learning Communities training, supported by District Title I, Title II, and Tier III funding.
- Both comprehensive high schools have been provided with funding for year round credit recovery. The District is currently exploring the possibility of adding sections at these high school campuses. The District has also been able to offer credit recovery through Adult Education; however, due to funding issues, this may not occur in the 2013-14 fiscal year. The District has indicated that it will then explore other options for credit recovery through the comprehensive high schools.
- The District has been able to maintain elective courses from the 2011-12 school year to the 2012-13, providing Advanced Placement, agriculture, home economics, reading, Itech Art, photography, and band classes.
- The District provides most special education services to its students, as well as servicing students from other districts. On occasion it will also provide services to other school districts' students. In this case, the OUHSD bill the students' home districts a small portion of the overall cost of running the user program.

- The District does receive some regionalized funding from the Butte County SELPA which partially reimburses OUHSD for its 40 percent speech therapist. If students from other districts use the services of this individual, the home district is billed for costs that are above and beyond the regionalized funding.
- With the support of the Oroville community and its passage of the General Obligation Bond, the District has completed the modernization of its high school athletic facilities. These new and modernized facilities will provide staff and students a sense of pride for their school, especially during athletic events.
- The District has built successful partnerships to secure funding and services for its students.
  - The District belongs to the Migrant Education Consortium with the Butte County Office of Education acting as the lead agency.
  - The District works closely with BCOE and the Butte County SELPA to provide special education services in the areas of Adaptive PE, Orthopedic Therapy, and Orientation and Mobility, Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and Severely Handicapped.
  - Each site has a dedicated group of parents, staff, and community members on its English Learner Advisory Committee (ELAC). In addition to this committee, the District has a sub-committee (DELAC) whose purpose is to advise the Oroville Union School District's Board of Trustees on programs and services for English learners. These committees have been instrumental in helping the District build a strong program for all of its English learners.
  - The District provides regular education Home-to-School Transportation to the District's elementary feeder district, Oroville City Elementary School District, and at times provides Special Education Transportation to other school districts in Butte County.

## **Recommendations**

### **2012-13**

- In light of the District's Program Improvement status, it is important that resources are made available for current and/or new programs designed to increase academic achievement and reduce the achievement gap shown for the subgroups not exhibiting adequate growth. Aligning budgets and expenditures with the goals and objectives established by the LEA Plan will reinforce the focus and determination of the District to move all students forward academically. Continued monitoring of expenditures by department managers and school site leaders will help ensure that focus on student achievement is maintained as the highest priority at all levels of the District.

- Continued support for general fund supported programs such as class-size reduction, school-to career class offerings, electives, and clean, well maintained facilities will help the District maintain or increase its enrollment.
- All school plans should be reviewed for specific focus on improvement and budgets adopted by sites that clearly reflect and are aligned with the goals and objectives.

### **2013-14 through 2014-15**

- In light of the economic situation in the state and nationally, the District should consider written budget development guidelines for the 2013-14 and future budgets. These guidelines should be approved by the board, reviewed annually prior to budget development, and communicated with all stakeholders. By utilizing these guidelines, the District will take some of the perceived ambiguity out of the budget development process, while assuring that the budget is aligned with District goals and objectives.
- The District must strive to maintain a strong financial position, especially during these current difficult budget times in the State of California. The District should continue to monitor and control its budget in order to maintain these levels of staffing and opportunities for academic progress by its students. The budget process should be utilized to focus on the stated goals and objectives of the District, while maintaining its strong financial position. As much as is allowed by law, the District should develop a long-term plan for possible expenditure reductions and continue to build and maintain its reserves to offset any unexpected revenue losses.
- Within the LEA Plan there may be new initiatives and programs that will require new or additional funding and place additional demands on the limited resources of the District. Because of these additional demands, the District should continually review the budget and expenditures to ensure that the allocation of available resources is in alignment with the District's goals and objectives as outlined in the LEA Plan.
- The District should continue to work with the Butte County SELPA to become recognized as a regionalized provider in order to receive regionalized services funding to offset special education costs associated with other District students.
- The District should continue monitoring all General Fund expenditures at the school site and department levels to verify that school sites and departments maintain the same focus on increasing student achievement as in the District plans. It is important that all available resources are focused on the academic achievement for all students. This is especially critical in the two Program Improvement schools, for both General Fund expenditures and Categorical Fund expenditures.



- The District should continue the additional General Fund support for programs that are focused on under-achieving students and sub-groups, especially at the two Program Improvement schools. Consideration of increased funding for targeted purposes aligned with District and site goals and objectives should be given if funding is considered to be a major barrier to implementing specific programs.