

# **Community Relations**

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# COMMUNITY RELATIONS/GOVERNANCE

## Summary of Principal Findings and Recommendations

For purposes of this study, the community relations/governance standards have been organized into six topical areas:

- Communications
- Parent/Community Relations
- Community Collaboratives/District Advisory Councils/School Advisory Councils
- Policy
- Board Roles/Boardsmanship
- Board Meetings

Ratings for all community relations/governance standards were updated during this review. Twenty-five priority standards were selected, in consultation with the state administrator and senior district staff, for more in-depth reporting of the district's progress. These standards were selected because of their perceived ability to have the greatest impact on district effectiveness and are presented in detail in this report. Prior ratings on all the standards were also considered; standards that received very high ratings in 2000 were excluded from the current study since they require only maintenance of effort.

The majority of findings and ratings in this report look back at the Governing Board's and district's performance prior to the beginning of state administration in July 2003, at which time the board became an advisory board. Some standards do incorporate significant findings related to activities or efforts subsequent to state administration, as relevant.

The following summarizes the district's progress since the January 2000 recovery plan toward meeting community relations/governance standards in six topical areas: Communications; Parent/Community Relations; Community Collaboratives/District Advisory Councils/School Site Councils; Policy; Board Roles/Boardsmanship; and Board Meetings.

### **Communications**

The district has made modest progress in its external and internal communications since the Oakland Unified School District Assessment and Recovery Plan was issued in January 2000, but improvement is still needed, primarily in the areas of adopting and implementing the comprehensive communications plan, adhering to district protocols regarding spokespersons, and facilitating two-way internal communications.

In January 2000, the district was in the early stages of implementing an adopted comprehensive communications plan for 1998-2000. Since then, the district updated its communications plan for use in 2000-2003, but the plan was never approved by the Superintendent and the Governing Board. Nevertheless, the public information office continues to be guided by the plan, and the document could serve as a good starting point for an updated plan. To be a guiding force in the district, the plan should be formally approved by the State Administrator and Governing Board and should be widely distributed throughout the district.

Individual communications activities have improved in quality. Both parents and teachers surveyed expressed general satisfaction with the clarity of materials and information received from the district and/or schools. However, coordination of communications activities appears to be lacking. Districtwide support and implementation of the comprehensive communications plan could help provide the needed coordination.

Another issue that should be addressed in the communications plan is the district's protocol regarding people who have the authority to speak on behalf of the district and the handling of media inquiries. As was the case in 2000, some board members appear to lack an understanding of the value of communicating a consistent district message. Furthermore, while the district's Public Information Officer appears to be successful in handling most calls from the media, other district staff members have not been as consistently helpful. Thus, providing continuing education specifically designed to enhance communications or media relations skills could be useful for both the board and district administrators.

Internal communication among the staff shows some gains, although significant concerns remain, perhaps complicated by the large size of the district. Central office staff members more consistently receive communications regarding district activities and issues from the public information office, but the flow of information among some departments in the district office continue to be problematic at times. A substantial amount of information is also provided to school sites, much of it through e-mails, although some interviewees still said they get most of their information "through the grapevine." Principals' access to information seems to vary depending on the effectiveness of the executive directors and group principal meetings. Teachers and the classified staff rely on their principals to receive information about both district and site activities.

Opportunities for staff input into school and district operations are available at about the same level as in 2000. The district did involve staff in the development of the district's strategic plan and in the revision of the district's policy manual. The senior district staff has opportunities to provide input through executive cabinet meetings. Principals have regular meetings with their executive director, but some principals report that their cluster meetings are used only for one-way communications. Teachers and the classified staff generally feel welcome to provide input to their principal, but do not feel as welcome to provide input to district administration. The strategic communications plan used by the public information office does not address opportunities for staff at all levels to communicate their opinions, suggestions and concerns to the district. As the plan is updated, such opportunities should be included and expanded.

### **Parent/Community Relations**

Overall, the extent and effectiveness of parent outreach and community involvement have remained generally positive since 2000. Board members and the former Superintendent seemed to make community engagement a priority. Collaborative efforts with community organizations, local agencies and businesses have been maintained and enhanced, as described in the section on community collaboratives. The district continues to provide required parental notifications and has improved its ability to issue annual school accountability report cards.

Another area of improvement has been in the district's responsiveness to complaints by parents and community members. The district has revised its complaint procedures, recently adopting changes to district policy and procedures to address components identified during the latest state Coordinated Compliance Review as missing. In addition, the district has made progress in implementing the procedures. It continues to offer a hotline for complaints, as well as a compliance officer and ombudsperson on staff that have independent authority to investigate complaints. Instead of referring parents to a board member when they have a complaint, the district's parent handbook now directs complaints to the teacher or principal, then to an executive director, the superintendent's office or the district's uniform complaint procedures. When board members receive complaints, they usually refer these complaints to the Superintendent or to the Ombudsperson, although some board members still attempt to directly resolve complaints themselves on occasion. Parents continue to have access to complaint procedures through the parent handbook; however, as was the case in 2000, many parents are still not aware that a formal complaint process exists. While the staff interviewed appeared knowledgeable about complaint procedures, there is a perceived need for additional staff development on how to handle complaints.

Efforts to involve parents in the schools were fairly strong in 2000, and remain so. Most parents surveyed for this review felt that they were encouraged to become actively involved at their child's school. The district actively recruits, trains and places volunteers to assist in a variety of ways including serving as classroom helpers, literacy tutors, guest speakers and technology assistants as well as supporting the school office, library, and garden projects. Also, school site councils and citizen advisory committees offer opportunities for parent input into school and district operations. However, the level of involvement by parents and community members in various activities continues to vary from school to school and at the district level depending in part on socioeconomic factors, employment and language barriers. Current district and school-site efforts to involve parents and community members should be maintained, and additional strategies developed to reach underrepresented and disenfranchised groups of parents and community members.

Parents remain generally satisfied with the frequency and type of information they receive from the schools, although a more systematic approach for providing consistent and reliable methods of communication with parents could help increase parent involvement. Some sites continue to have community liaisons to help with translations and to support parent advisory committees.

### **Community Collaboratives/District Advisory Councils/School Site Councils**

Since the 2000 recovery plan, the district has expanded its collaborative efforts with community agencies and organizations to provide services to students and their families. As one example, the district reorganized and expanded its Student, Family and Community Services Department, which oversees health services, translation services, mentor programs for foster youth, and many other programs serving students and families. Many of these programs are operated in collaboration with community organizations and local government agencies. Relations between the board and mayor's office have been strained, but some significant partnership programs exist between the district and city. The district also maintains partnerships with a number of local businesses. These efforts should be maintained, linked to a coordinated district strategy, and evaluated to ensure their effectiveness.

In the operation of district and school site advisory councils, no significant improvement was noted. Many councils continue to lack diversity and appropriate representation among their members. Some interviewees report that there is little turnover in membership on the district councils, and there is a perception that they are not open to parents of all ethnic backgrounds. The district and school sites must increase efforts to recruit council and committee members who represent the diversity of the student population and the community. Also, although the district provides training for advisory councils, school site councils and collaboratives, the level of training has decreased in the past few years. The District Advisory Council offers its own trainings, and some principals provide their own training for school site councils.

### **Policy**

The district has been working in the past few years to update its entire policy manual. It has completed nearly all drafts but relatively few of the revised policies have been adopted to date. Thus, the current policy manual is largely unchanged since 2000. It continues to be outdated and does not reflect current law in many instances, including many policies that are mandated by law. Also, since the district began its revision process, additional changes in the law need to be incorporated into the draft manual. Nevertheless, the draft policy manual represents a tremendous amount of work by district staff, and there appears to be a real commitment to completing the project.

Improvement has occurred in the district's policy review and development process, which has involved both the staff and the public. As the district's policy manual has been updated in the past three years, the executive cabinet and department staff have been involved, and site-level staff have been involved on key issues as appropriate. Members of the public have had opportunities to address policy issues during board meetings and on some citizen advisory committees. The district is working to delineate its policy review and development process in its board bylaws and administrative bulletins. As the district works to maintain its policy manual in the future, consistent implementation of established processes will ensure that both the staff and the public have adequate opportunities for input.

Avenues for making policies available to the staff and public do not appear to have changed significantly. Policy manuals continue to be located at the district office and each school; a few key policies appear on the district's Web site, and policy changes are e-mailed to principals. However, there are plans to make the entire policy manual available via the Internet once the updated policies have been adopted. Also, the revised manual will use an improved organization system that will facilitate access to policies.

### **Board Roles/Boardmanship**

Over the past three years, the district has experienced dramatic turnover among the board and administration. Only three board members who served during the time of the FCMAT recovery plan in January 2000 remain on the board. Four new members have since been elected. As a result of a local ballot initiative, three new positions were created and appointed by the mayor, making this the largest board (10 members) in the state. Since the initial recovery plan, the district also employed a new Superintendent, whose tenure ended when the district began to be administered by a state administrator in the summer of 2003.

The significant change in board composition resulted in divided votes between elected and appointed members, as well as split votes among perceived proponents and critics of the former Superintendent, and legitimate differences in perspectives about the best course for the district to take on behalf of students. These dynamics, coupled with fairly common urban school district pressures and political and policy circumstances unique to the Oakland community, provided difficult challenges for the board and administration. In general, while individual board members demonstrated an impressive level of knowledge and dedication, the board as a whole was fragmented and unable to provide a consistent, unified direction.

Many compelling but sometimes competing interests challenged this board's ability to be unified in representing all students, including the need of elected members to effectively represent their trustee area constituents, individual board members' desires to represent racial and ethnic constituencies, and ongoing equity concerns between representatives of schools in the hill areas and those in the flatlands.

Generally, it is perceived that the board's past tendencies to become involved in administrative or operational details diminished during the tenure of the most recent Superintendent, especially in the area of personnel. The majority of individual members understand that authority resides only with the board as a whole. However, there is a perception that a few individual members occasionally attempted to exert influence or to advocate on behalf of certain administrative decisions. Furthermore, while all members of the board appear to understand the legal requirements of maintaining confidentiality, breaches of confidentiality by some individual members were reported.

The board and administration made modest progress toward encouraging more participation by all segments of the Oakland community. A strategic plan was developed that involved stakeholder meetings and public forums. However, it does not appear that needs assessments are a regular, formal activity of the district.

### **Board Meetings**

The 2000 recovery plan identified several standards related to board meetings that the district had fully implemented. Since that time, the district has maintained the full implementation of these standards; however, progress on a few other standards was not demonstrated.

The district continues to adopt and publish a calendar of regular meetings, make agendas available per state law, conduct open and closed sessions according to the Brown Act, and provide members of the public with opportunities to place items on board agendas and to make comments at public meetings. Board meetings continued to be televised on local cable to further facilitate awareness of district issues among the public.

Some concerns were expressed that not all individual board members prepared adequately for all meetings by familiarizing themselves with the printed agendas and support materials. Additionally, meetings often did not proceed in a businesslike manner. The smooth functioning of meetings is often as dependent on the style of the individual board president as it is on a set of agreed-upon rules or protocols. Interviewees frequently cited a general lack of decorum at meetings, both among members of the board and members of the public who provided testimony. Procedures for the public testimony portion of meetings, such as time limits for speakers, were

not consistently enforced. The structure of agendas and the flow of meetings also resulted in important policy and student achievement issues being discussed late in the evening. The size of the Governing Board and the importance placed on soliciting public input on all agenda items also resulted in less time being available for a full discussion of agenda items by the board at meetings.

While not specifically addressed in any of the priority standards detailed in this progress report, two other significant findings are offered. First, in contrast to the January 2000 assessment, neither the board nor administration generally believes that the board's committee process worked effectively. It is perceived that it required too much staff time to prepare for the additional weekly committee meetings and, especially with the 10-member board, issues previously discussed in committee needed to be discussed again by the board as a whole to ensure all members sufficiently understood. Second, many interviewees emphasized that the board must have access to and consider the fiscal implications and analyses of all policy recommendations and decisions as part of the normal course of deliberations.

## **1.1 Communications**

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### **Professional Standard**

Information is communicated to staff at all levels in an effective and timely manner.

### **Progress on Implementing the Recommendations of the Recovery Plan**

1. The flow of information among some departments in the district office, and from the central office to school sites, continues to be problematic at times, perhaps complicated by the large size of the district. At the district level, some departments describe little communication with other departments, and the executive directors and Public Information Officer have only recently been included in executive cabinet meetings.

Communications challenges also exist between the district office and school sites. A substantial amount of information is provided through weekly e-mail updates by the Public Information Officer, e-mails of press releases as they are distributed to the media, and other information released by the district, yet some interviewees said that they get most of their information “through the grapevine” rather than through official means of communication. The site-level staff has varying degrees of access to or proficiency with e-mail and delivery of mail to the sites from the central office is being eliminated. Principals’ access to information seems to vary depending on the effectiveness of the executive directors and group principal meetings. Despite the fact that each executive director is responsible for many schools (e.g., 15 middle schools or 23-26 elementary schools), principals interviewed generally reported that they feel supported by the executive directors and that the presence of executive directors on campus is sufficient. There is also an informal network of principals who talk and exchange ideas and concerns.

Access to information by teachers and the classified staff appears to rely heavily on the principal receiving and printing e-mail messages from the public information office or other departments. Half the teachers surveyed strongly agree or somewhat agree that they always feel they have been given full and complete information when asking questions of the principal or district officials. This is a significant increase from the 2000 study when 18.5 percent strongly or somewhat agreed. The shift is largely due to a change in perception of those who were previously neutral. There is still a significant percentage of teachers surveyed (42 percent in 2003) who strongly or somewhat disagree. Furthermore, most teachers surveyed said the materials and information they receive from the district are very clear and understandable (68 percent strongly or somewhat agree, 28.5 percent strongly or somewhat disagree). However, the teachers surveyed are evenly divided in their opinions as to whether the district administration communicates a clear mission and strategic plan to teachers (44.5 percent strongly or somewhat agree, 45.5 percent strongly or somewhat disagree) and whether they receive regular communication from the district about changes in school policy (47 percent strongly or somewhat agree, 42 percent strongly or somewhat disagree). The majority (60 percent) strongly or somewhat disagree that the district seems to make a big effort to let them know what’s going on (35.5 percent strongly or somewhat agree that the district does make a big effort).

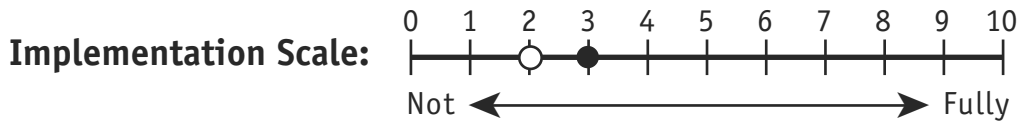
The strategic communications plan developed and used by the public information office (see Standard 1.3) includes an action step regarding transmitting information (including press releases, bulletins and calendar updates) directly to administrative staff and school sites via e-mail and fax.

### Recommendations to Be Addressed

1. As the district adopts and implements the communications plan, place a high priority on identifying and following through with effective internal communications strategies.

### Standard Implemented: Partially

January 2000 Rating: 2  
September 2003 Rating: 3



## 1.2 Communications

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### Professional Standard

Staff input into school and district operations is encouraged.

### Progress on Implementing the Recommendations of the Recovery Plan

1. At the district level, senior staff on the executive cabinet has opportunities for input at regular meetings. The executive directors and Public Information Officer have only recently been included in executive cabinet meetings.

Principals meet regularly in clusters with their executive director; some principals interviewed find these meetings productive while others report that the meetings are used for one-way communications only, with little opportunity for principals to provide input or discuss issues of concern to them.

Input from teachers and classified staff is generally communicated through their principal or employee organization, not directly to the district administration. Thus, it is not surprising that teachers surveyed for this project felt that their principal encourages their input more than the district administration. More than three-fourths (78.5 percent) strongly agreed or somewhat agreed that their principal encourages teacher input into decision-making at their school. On the other hand, they are more likely to disagree than agree that the district administration encourages teacher input into decision-making (26 percent strongly or somewhat agree, 64 percent strongly or somewhat disagree).

However, there are notable examples of staff input being invited at the district level, such as during the development of the district's strategic plan (see Standard 5.14) and the revision of the district's policy manual (see Standard 4.5).

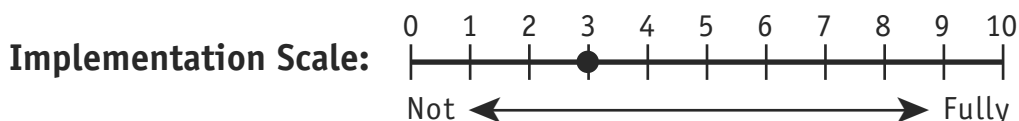
The strategic communications plan developed and used by the public information office (see Standard 1.3) addresses only one-way communications from the district to the staff.

### Recommendations to Be Addressed

1. As the district updates and implements the communications plan, expand opportunities for the staff at all levels to communicate their opinions, suggestions and concerns, particularly on districtwide operations and issues.

### Standard Implemented: Partially

January 2000 Rating: 3  
September 2003 Rating: 3



## **1.3 Communications**

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### **Professional Standard**

The district has developed and implemented a comprehensive plan for internal and external communications, including media relations.

### **Progress on Implementing the Recommendations of the Recovery Plan**

1. The district updated its strategic communications plan for 2000-2003, but the plan was never approved by the Superintendent and the Governing Board. Nevertheless, the Public Information Officer continues to be guided by the plan. The plan is comprehensive and includes several strategies and action steps pertaining to both internal and external communications activities. These include expanding community outreach and involvement, expanding outreach to key stakeholder organizations, and enhancing communications with internal audiences.

The district is involved with numerous internal and external communications activities, many of which are included in the strategic communications plan. The quality of communications activities is generally very good, but coordination of communications activities appears to be lacking. For example, on more than one occasion, an entire public relations project has been developed and completed without the involvement of the public information office, and people frequently speak with the media without notifying the Public Information Officer.

Parent surveys and parent focus groups indicate general satisfaction with the quantity and quality of information they receive from the district, but there is a need for a continued flow of information to parents from the district. Among parents surveyed, the majority (56.6 percent) strongly agree or somewhat agree that the district makes a big effort to let them know what is occurring in the schools (41.4 percent strongly or somewhat disagree). An even higher percentage (66.7 percent) strongly or somewhat agree that they receive regular communication from the district about changes in school policy that affect their child, and 83.9 percent strongly or somewhat agree that the materials and information they receive from the school are very clear and understandable and in a language they can understand. When parents register their child for school, they receive a parent guide, required notices, a notification of parent advisory groups, and a success guide for students at the high school level. Many of the school sites produce a newsletter and parent information and resources are available on the district's Web site. District-level documents are almost always translated into all languages, and some, but not all site documents may be translated. District translators have indicated they are willing to go to school sites more often if requests are made.

2. In the past few years, board members and other district spokespersons have not received any continuing education specifically designed to enhance their communications skills. Many of the spokespersons are knowledgeable regarding communications, but there is a lack of understanding about the value of communicating a consistent district message.

- The district has established relations with local media, and regularly distributes news releases and other information. A local television station has agreed to produce and air public service announcements from the district. Board meetings continue to be televised on cable television. The district's Public Information Officer appears to be successful with the handling of a majority of calls from the media, showing an understanding of the needs of the media (e.g., deadlines) and making an effort to provide information in a timely manner. However, the other district staff members have not been consistently efficient or as knowledgeable in responding to media inquiries. The district has an administrative bulletin on working with the media (1999).

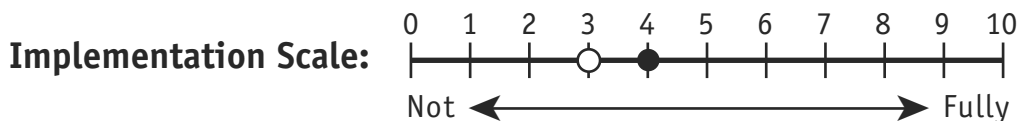
Between 2000 and 2003, there has been a significant shift in the percentage of teachers surveyed who strongly disagree or somewhat disagree that the media paint a fair picture of the situation in the district, increasing from 27.8 percent to 59.5 percent. However, parents surveyed are fairly evenly divided in their opinions as to whether the media paint a fair picture of the district (37.5 percent strongly or somewhat agree, 35.6 percent strongly or somewhat disagree, with a high percentage uncertain).

### Recommendations to Be Addressed

- Assign the Public Information Officer to review and update the communications plan as needed for the next few years with input from the board, key staff and other district stakeholders. The plan should be formally approved by the state administrator and board. Coordination of communications efforts should be a key component of the plan. To be a guiding force for the district's communications efforts, the plan must be widely communicated throughout the district.
- Conduct a coordinated effort to enhance the skills of board members and administrators in working with the news media, the public and community groups. Conducting a media/public relations workshop for board members and appropriate district staff could provide an opportunity to familiarize them with the strategic communications plan, how to handle reporter inquiries, protocols regarding media requests, the role of the Public Information Officer and other communications issues.
- Promote greater awareness by district staff of the role of the Public Information Officer and the district's policies or expectations regarding media inquiries. This will help enhance relationships with the media and provide a consistent district message.

### Standard Implemented: Partially

January 2000 Rating: 3  
 September 2003 Rating: 4



## **2.4 Parent/Community Relations**

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### **Professional Standard**

Parents' and community members' complaints are addressed in a fair and timely manner.

### **Progress on Implementing the Recommendations of the Recovery Plan**

1. It appears that the district provides sufficient formal and informal procedures for handling complaints. Procedures for handling complaints are addressed in Board Policy 2075 and Administrative Bulletin 2014, which provide that uniform complaint procedures will be used to address complaints regarding employees. The 2002-03 Coordinated Compliance Review conducted by the California Department of Education and the 2003-04 CCR District Self-Review found that the district's policy excluded several components of the law. The district has since revised the administrative bulletin to reflect all components of the law. The procedures have recently been adopted by the state administrator and board, and have been approved by the Office of Civil Rights and the Complaint Management Unit of the California Department of Education.

A hotline is still available for complaints, as well as a compliance officer and ombudsperson on staff that have independent authority to investigate complaints. The district is also investigating the feasibility of using a computerized system to log complaints.

Whenever possible, complaints are addressed at the school site level by the teacher or principal, and most principals interviewed feel that they are successful in addressing parents' concerns. If matters cannot be resolved at the site level, then complainants are advised to go to the executive director for their school, contact the district hotline, or utilize the district's uniform complaint procedures.

2. When board members hear complaints directly, they usually refer these complaints to the Superintendent or to the Ombudsperson office, although a couple of board members indicated that they became directly involved in trying to resolve the complaints. The parent handbook has been revised so that it no longer advises parents to take their complaints directly to a board member. However, because some parents and community members go directly to a board member, board members need to be aware of district protocols for referring complaints to the appropriate staff.
3. Distribution of complaint procedures occurs through several means. Parents continue to have access to complaint procedures through the parent handbook, and there are plans to add the procedures to the district's Web site. However, as was the case in 2000, many parents are still not aware that a formal process exists for addressing complaints. Still, among parents surveyed for this project, there was a tendency to agree that district staff works closely with parents to resolve requests or concerns (49.3 percent strongly or somewhat agree vs. 21.5 percent strongly or somewhat disagree, although a significant percentage — 26.8 percent — are uncertain).

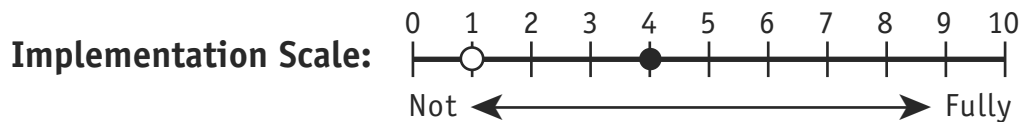
The staff has access to complaint procedures, but a number of interviewees felt there was a need for staff development on how to handle complaints. Two years ago the Ombudsperson and his staff conducted training for all principals; however, it was not well attended. The Ombudsperson has recently been asked to arrange a similar in-service for all the staff.

### Recommendations to Be Addressed

1. Periodically review the complaint procedures, with input from complainants and the staff, to ensure that the procedures continue to meet the district's needs and reflect any changes in law.
2. Ensure board members consistently adhere to the board's policies for referring complaints to appropriate staff.
3. Continue to make complaint procedures available in languages that parents, students and community members can understand. Accept responsibility for ensuring that all school sites make the procedures available in multiple languages as needed. Staff development should also be implemented as planned to enable staff to resolve conflict effectively at the site level as much as possible.

### Standard Implemented: Partially

January 2000 Rating: 1  
September 2003 Rating: 4



## **2.7 Parent/Community Relations**

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### **Professional Standard**

Parents and community members are encouraged to be involved in school activities and their children's education.

### **Progress on Implementing the Recommendations of the Recovery Plan**

1. The district and school sites continue to conduct a significant amount of parent outreach to encourage parent and community involvement. Translation services are available for site activities. The department of Student, Family and Community Services runs many programs in collaboration with community organizations (also see Standard 3.1). All the principals interviewed indicated their schools have school site councils that include parent members. Some schools also have site-based decision-making teams consisting of parents, teachers, classified staff members and community members. Some school sites have active parent-teacher associations, and most schools are successful in obtaining high levels of parent participation for school events. The district has also received a 21st Century Grant to provide parent education modules at the site level teaching parents how to become more engaged in their children's schooling.

Involvement of parents and community members continues to vary across schools. Socioeconomic factors, employment and language issues are among the reasons sometimes cited for low parent participation. Some parents in focus groups meetings shared perceptions that the school staff in specific schools is not welcoming and is sometimes condescending.

An overwhelming majority of parents surveyed agree that parents and community members are encouraged to become actively involved at their child's school (79.5 percent strongly or somewhat agree, 14.6 percent strongly or somewhat disagree). Both parents and teachers surveyed view parents as being generally very supportive of the district and its activities (among parents, 65.7 percent strongly or somewhat agree, 20.5 percent strongly or somewhat disagree; among teachers, 45 percent strongly or somewhat agree, 39 percent strongly or somewhat disagree). Parents give their principal an average rating of 3.0 (on a scale of 0-4) in encouraging parent participation; teachers give their principal a similar average rating of 2.9.

Parents are generally satisfied with the information they receive from the schools (see Standard 1.3), but some methods of communication with parents are not consistently successful. Some schools send home with students information that may or may not reach the parents. Lack of funds is often cited as a reason for not mailing the information. Some schools have PTAs that help with the funding. One Principal interviewed reported that telephoning parents has worked well when communicating with parents who do not read in either English or their native language.

The existence of community liaisons at school sites still depends on individual schools dedicating resources to this function. Where they exist, community liaisons help with translations, support parent advisory committees and perform other similar duties.

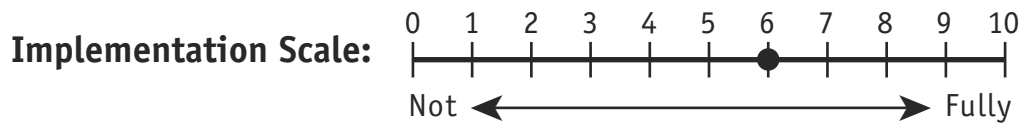
2. Volunteers continue to provide valuable services to the schools. One example is Helpers Engaged in Reaching Oakland's Excelling Schools (HEROES), which recruits, trains and places volunteers in a variety of opportunities within the district. Volunteers serve as classroom helpers, literacy tutors, guest speakers and technology assistants; support the school office, library, garden or other campus enrichment; and assist with Read Aloud Day. Some interviewees and focus groups report that language issues are an impediment to volunteerism.

### Recommendations to Be Addressed

1. Maintain current district and school-site efforts to involve parents and community, and develop additional strategies to reach underrepresented and disenfranchised groups of parents and community members.

### Standard Implemented: Partially

January 2000 Rating: 6  
September 2003 Rating: 6



### **3.1 Collaboratives/District Advisory Councils/School Site Councils**

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#### **Professional Standard**

The board and superintendent support partnerships and collaborations with community groups, local agencies and businesses.

#### **Progress on Implementing the Recommendations of the Recovery Plan**

1. The district appears to have expanded its collaborative efforts with community agencies and organizations to provide services to students. The district has reorganized and enhanced its Student, Family and Community Services Department, which oversees health services, translation services, mentor programs for foster youth, and many other programs serving students and families. Among their duties, department staff members work with Healthy Start projects and the Oakland Service Providers Network and map resources. Many of these programs are operated in collaboration with community organizations and local government agencies, and are dependent on grant or categorical funding. The Student, Family and Community Services Department has created a central clearinghouse and strategic plan for student services in an attempt to evaluate and improve the programs the district provides with its collaborative partners.

The district has also created a number of partnerships with local businesses and public agencies. These partnerships have ranged from organizing communitywide events and developing lesson plans on entrepreneurship to utilizing corporate newsletters to communicate with parents. The district's community outreach coordinator conducts fundraising and works to build relationships with corporations, nonprofit organizations, foundations, government agencies and churches.

Although relationships between the board and the mayor's office have been strained, the district maintains good relations with other city agencies. For example, the city parks and recreation department has provided space and resources, and bus passes have been facilitated for district students. City and school officials have also worked together on a campaign to increase student attendance. There is an Education Partnership subcommittee, half consisting of school board members and half of city council members, but the group is described as not very active.

In 2000, the district developed a strategic communications plan that identifies key strategies to expand and strengthen the district's outreach efforts with parent organizations, constituencies, governmental agencies and opinion leaders in the community (see Standard 1.3). This plan has not been formally adopted by the board, nor is it widely distributed within the district.

2. Board members and district administration provide community leadership by actively seeking opportunities to speak to civic groups and community organizations. For example, both the former Superintendent and the current State Administrator have met periodically with members of the faith-based community, and board members meet with neighborhood groups. However, it is unclear whether these types of community outreach activities are part of a coordinated, districtwide strategy.

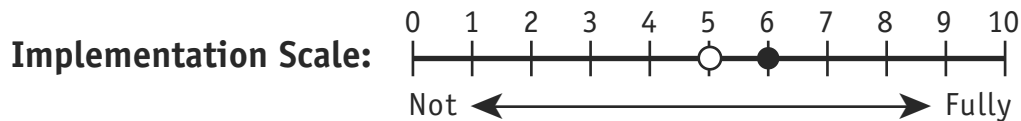
3. It could not be determined whether the district and its partners have conducted any evaluations of the effectiveness of their collaborative efforts, particularly with respect to their impact on student achievement and/or conditions of children.

### Recommendations to Be Addressed

1. Maintain district efforts to collaborate with local agencies and community organizations providing services to children and families.
2. Link the efforts of individual board members and staff to build community partnerships to a coordinated district strategy.
3. Work with community partners to evaluate the effectiveness of community collaboratives.

### Standard Implemented Partially

January 2000 Rating: 5  
September 2003 Rating: 6



## **3.2 Collaboratives/District Advisory Councils/School Site Councils**

### **Professional Standard**

Community collaboratives and district and school advisory councils all have identified specific outcome goals that are understood by all members.

### **Progress on Implementing the Recommendations of the Recovery Plan**

1. It appears that the District Advisory Council (DAC) and the District Language Advisory Council (DLAC) were made aware of the goals that are identified by law for their respective councils. In addition, the 1997 DAC handbook includes the council's bylaws, which outline its roles and responsibilities.

The clarity of goals for school site councils varies across schools. The district has drafted a policy and administrative bulletin that, when adopted, will address the role of school site councils in developing school plans.

In 1999, the district developed a plan to provide school site councils with the resources to implement site-based management principles. Since that time, the district has changed directions and developed a new model for site-based decision-making (the New Small Autonomous School) in a handful of pilot schools. Still in the early stages of implementation, it appears that the responsibilities of the school teams in those schools are not described in detail in writing, but are discussed with members during district trainings.

2. The extent of communications about the purpose and goals of school site councils is unclear, although some schools post the outcome goals. District support for training school site council members has been decreasing (see Standard 3.4), with the result that goals may not be clearly or consistently communicated to all members.

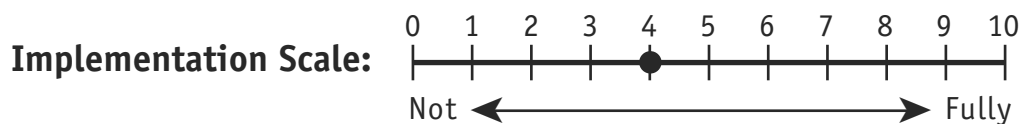
### **Recommendations to Be Addressed**

1. Clarify the responsibilities of district and school site advisory groups and decision-making bodies.
2. Determine how to communicate these duties to all members more effectively so that members are able to accurately describe their major functions. District policies and publications may need to be updated to reflect current law and district practice and/or additional training of council members may be necessary.

### **Standard Implemented: Partially**

January 2000 Rating: 4

September 2003 Rating: 4



### **3.3 Collaboratives/District Advisory Councils/School Site Councils**

#### **Professional Standard**

The membership of community collaboratives and district and school advisory councils reflects the full cultural, ethnic, gender and socioeconomic diversity of the student population.

#### **Progress on Implementing the Recommendations of the Recovery Plan**

1. The district's advisory councils do not appear to fully reflect the diversity of the student population any more than they did in 2000. For instance, the District Advisory Council (DAC) has primarily African-American members, and the membership of the District Language Advisory Council (DLAC) mainly consists of Latino parents. Some interviewees report that there is little turnover in membership on the district councils, and there is a perception that they are not open and welcoming to parents of all ethnic backgrounds.

Similarly, many school site councils don't reflect the demographics of the overall school population, despite continuing efforts by principals to recruit parents who represent the diversity of the population. Many principals interviewed reported that parents' attendance at meetings is low. However, the district staff reports that recruitment of parents for the design teams of the New Small Autonomous Schools has been a positive experience and that the teams do represent the diversity of their neighborhoods.

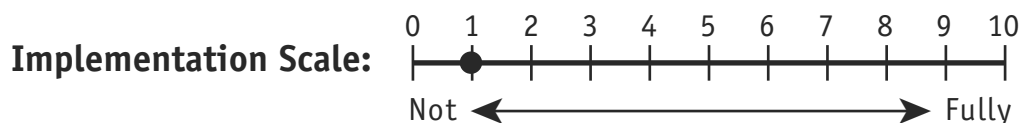
Schools have English Language Advisory Councils (ELACs) which are active; however, these same parents tend not to be included in the decision-making bodies of the schools. Some non-English-speaking parents express that they continue to feel intimidated and unwelcome by certain school staff and teachers.

#### **Recommendations to Be Addressed**

1. Increase efforts to recruit council and committee members who represent the diversity of the student population and the community, perhaps working with parents, the staff and the community members to identify and address barriers to participation.

#### **Standard Implemented: Partially**

January 2000 Rating: 1  
September 2003 Rating: 1



### 3.4 Collaboratives/District Advisory Councils/School Site Councils

#### **Professional Standard**

The district encourages and provides the necessary training for collaborative and advisory council members to understand the basic administrative structure, program processes and goals of all district partners.

#### **Progress on Implementing the Recommendations of the Recovery Plan**

1. The district provides some training for parents who are part of advisory councils, school site councils and collaboratives. However, the district staff reports that the amount of training provided by the district has decreased in the past few years. The District Advisory Council (DAC) offers its own training sessions in the district. However, it is reported that parent participation in these trainings is low. Some principals provide their own training of school site councils.

In 1997, the district created a District Advisory Council Handbook that includes some training advice for school advisory councils and sample documents, such as sample rosters, bylaws, roles and responsibilities of officers, and minutes. Many of the legal references in this document are outdated, but it could be used as a good template for a future handbook.

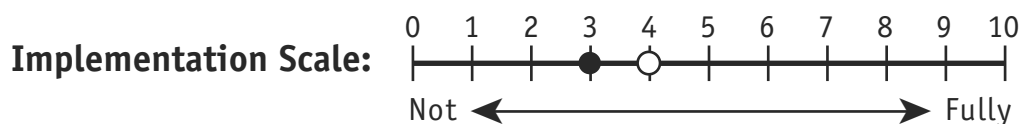
In the most recent *Comité* follow-up review, the California Department of Education remarked that the “district has created an English Learner Advisory Committee (ELAC) Tool Box that contains recommended time lines and documents for each school site to fulfill the legal requirements for their ELAC.” In addition, “the legally required topics have been explained to members at meetings ... and training of the committee members’ roles and responsibilities has been an ongoing item addressed at both the district and site meetings.”

#### **Recommendations to Be Addressed**

1. Ensure that members of all district and school site councils have access to training and current information to assist them in the fulfillment of their responsibilities.

#### **Standard Implemented: Partially**

January 2000 Rating: 4  
September 2003 Rating: 3



### **3.7 Collaboratives/District Advisory Councils/School Site Councils**

#### **Legal Standard:**

Policies exist for the establishment of school site councils for schools that participate in School-Based Program Coordination. (Education Code 52852.5)

#### **Progress on Implementing the Recommendations of the Recovery Plan**

1. As the district is reviewing and revising its policy manual (see Standard 4.2), it has drafted a policy and administrative bulletin on school plans/site councils. These materials provide guidance with respect to council composition, but do not reflect changes in law from the past three years. The materials have not yet been adopted by the district.

Previously, the establishment of school site councils was addressed in the district's School Site Decision-Making Team (SDMT) handbook, but this handbook is not known or used districtwide and is likely to be outdated.

The 2002-03 Coordinated Compliance Review had no negative findings regarding the establishment of school site councils.

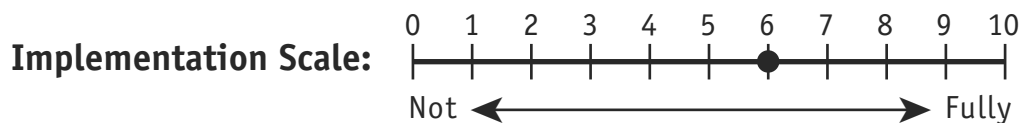
#### **Recommendations to Be Addressed**

1. Adopt policy on the establishment of school site councils, ensuring that the policy and regulation reflect current law.

#### **Standard Implemented: Partially**

January 2000 Rating: 6

September 2003 Rating: 6



## 4.1 Policy

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### Professional Standard

Policies are written, organized and readily available to all members of the staff and to the public.

### Progress on Implementing the Recommendations of the Recovery Plan

1. The district has been preparing draft revisions of its board policies and administrative regulations in the past three years (see Standard 4.2), and is working to improve its coding system to provide easier access to district materials. The draft policy manual uses the indexing system developed by the California School Boards Association and used by the majority of districts throughout the state. This system will provide a clearer organization than is currently being used. In addition, the system provides consistency in the numbering of board policies and corresponding administrative regulations.
2. Procedures for distributing policies are being reviewed and a bylaw on the distribution procedure has been drafted. A few key policies currently appear on the district's Web site, and principals receive information about policy changes by e-mail through the executive directors. Policy manuals continue to be located at the district office and each school site. The district staff describes a plan to make the policy manual available via the Internet and in hard-copy form once the updated policies have been adopted.

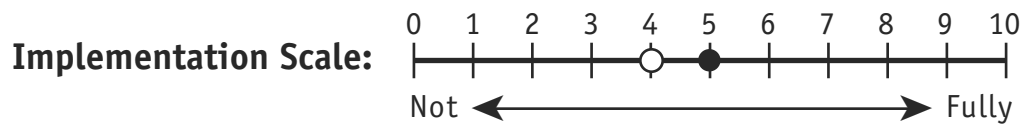
Teachers surveyed for this project are fairly evenly split as to whether they receive regular communication from the district about changes in school policy (47 percent strongly agree or somewhat agree, 42 percent strongly disagree or somewhat disagree). Parents have a more positive perception regarding district communications on policy issues: 65.4 percent strongly agree or somewhat agree that they are always informed in writing of district policies regarding attendance, grades, health or other matters affecting their child's education (30.3 percent strongly disagree or somewhat disagree). Furthermore, 66.7 percent of parents surveyed strongly agree or somewhat agree that they receive regular communications from the district about changes in policy that affect their child (30.4 percent strongly disagree or somewhat disagree).

### Recommendations to Be Addressed

1. Adopt the revised policy manual with the updated coding system. Subsequently, the district will need to review the organization of the manual only periodically to ensure that it meets the district's and public's needs.
2. As revised policies are adopted, consistently implement the district distribution process to ensure that all stakeholders have sufficient notice, access and understanding of policies that affect them.

## Standard Implemented: Partially

January 2000 Rating: 4  
September 2003 Rating: 5



## 4.2 Policy

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### Professional Standard

Policies and administrative regulations are up to date and reflect current law and local needs.

### Progress on Implementing the Recommendations of the Recovery Plan

1. The policies and procedures that were in place in January 2000 are still in place today. However, in 2000, the district began revising its policies and administrative regulations. Most of the policies and regulations that have been developed, modified and/or incorporated have not as yet been adopted by the district, but the commitment to complete the project is evident. The schedule and process for completing the project are being developed by the executive cabinet now, but it is anticipated that the full policy manual will be distributed by spring or summer 2004.

Since the district undertook its policy revision project, there have been numerous changes to law that will now need to be added to the draft manual.

2. The development and review process used to create the draft policy manual (see Standard 4.5 and Standard 4.6) provides an adequate process for the district's efforts to keep the policies updated in the future.

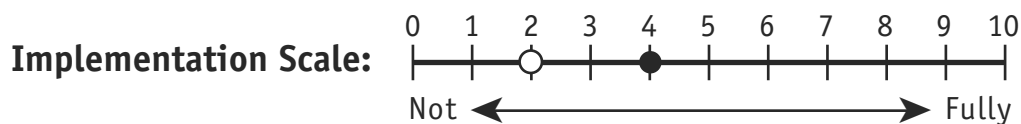
### Recommendations to Be Addressed

1. Complete and adopt revisions to the policy manual, updating the drafts to reflect changes in law and other recommended language from the past three years.
2. To ensure that district policies remain up to date, the district should implement a process for continual review and updating of the policy manual. Such a process might hold staff accountable for recommending new or revised policies and procedures related to their area of operation, utilize available resources to assist with policy development, and include regularly scheduled policy discussions at board meetings.

### Standard Implemented: Partially

January 2000 Rating: 2

September 2003 Rating: 4



## 4.3 Policy

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### Professional Standard

The board has adopted all policies mandated by state and federal law.

### Progress on Implementing the Recommendations of the Recovery Plan

1. The district's policy manual continues to be out of compliance with some legal mandates to adopt specified policy language. In January 2000, the California School Boards Association identified 51 policies and/or regulations required by state and federal law. The district had 36 (70 percent) of the mandated policies, but was missing 15. Furthermore, 26 of the mandated policies in the district's manual did not accurately reflect the law at that time. As of 2003, the number of identified mandated policies and/or regulations has increased to 53, and additional changes in law require further updating of the mandated policies.

The district has begun to address this standard. It has drafted but has not yet adopted a revised policy manual that would address many of the policy mandates. However, changes in law during the past three years have not yet been incorporated into the district's draft policy manual. As currently drafted, the revised policy manual is missing one mandated policy and does not reflect current law in 32 of the mandated policies.

2. The district continues to subscribe to a policy service that provides a list of mandated policies. District legal counsel and other staff members also are available to provide information about changes in law that affect policies.

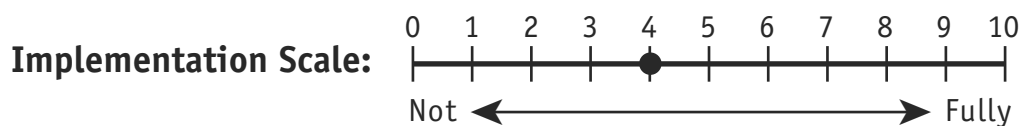
### Recommendations to Be Addressed

1. Complete and adopt new and revised policies mandated by law, updating the drafts to reflect changes in law over the past three years.
2. Ensure the district's policy development and review process contains procedures for monitoring new policy mandates. This will help ensure that the district continues to adopt mandated policies in accordance with law in the future.

### Standard Implemented: Partially

January 2000 Rating: 4

September 2003 Rating: 4



## 4.5 Policy

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### Professional Standard

Existing board policies are reviewed regularly with the involvement of the staff.

### Progress on Implementing the Recommendations of the Recovery Plan

1. The process used in the past three years to revise the district's policy manual has relied heavily on the specific expertise of numerous staff members. The district staff developed draft policies and regulations to meet the district's needs. All the high school principals were involved this year in reviewing and revising the district's policy on graduation requirements. Although the process for completing the policy revisions has not been finalized, it is anticipated that the executive cabinet and department staff will be involved, and that site-level staff will be involved as appropriate on key issues.

To formalize a review process, the district has drafted, but not yet adopted, a board by-law and administrative bulletin delineating the policy review process. As drafted, the materials would direct the Superintendent or designee to review sample policies, seek legal counsel and provide drafts to the board.

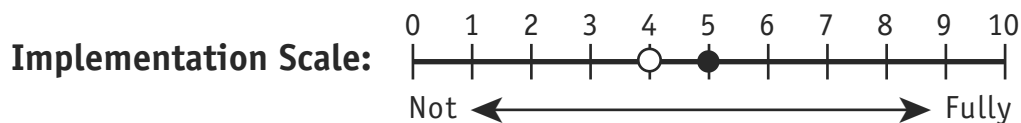
### Recommendations to Be Addressed

1. Adopt the proposed district process for policy development and review, which includes opportunities for staff input. As the district continues to review and revise policies in the future, it should consistently implement these procedures.

### Standard Implemented: Partially

January 2000 Rating: 4

September 2003 Rating: 5



## 4.6 Policy

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### Professional Standard

The district has established a system of securing citizen input in policy development and district operations.

### Progress on Implementing the Recommendations of the Recovery Plan

1. The board continued to provide opportunities for the public to address the board on all matters during board meetings. In addition, improvements appear to have been made in inviting public input into the policy development process through the use of citizen advisory committees. As one example, the district created the Nutrition Advisory Board, which included members of the public, to research and gather public input on nutrition issues in general and the district's soda sales in particular. After more than a year of public discussion, meeting and research by the Nutrition Advisory Board, the school board adopted a comprehensive nutrition policy.

Parents surveyed for this project gave average "grades" to both the district administration and the board (2.1 and 2.2, respectively, on a scale of 0-4) on their effectiveness in encouraging parent/public participation in district policy making. Teachers surveyed gave somewhat lower grades to the district administration (1.6) and the board (1.7) in encouraging parent or public participation in district policy making.

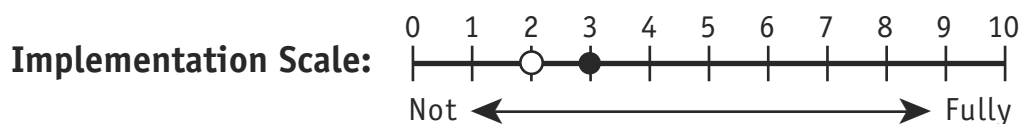
The district has drafted a board bylaw and administrative bulletin which, when approved, will formalize a process for policy development and review. Through these materials, the board encourages members of the community to contribute information and opinions for the board's consideration and to propose revisions to policy.

### Recommendations to Be Addressed

1. Adopt its proposed process for policy development and review, which includes opportunities for public input. Then, as the district implements the process in the future, it should ensure that opportunities are routinely made available for input from parents and community members on issues that most concern them.

### Standard Implemented: Partially

January 2000 Rating: 2  
September 2003 Rating: 3



## 5.4 Board Roles/Boardsmanship

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### Professional Standard

Functional working relations are maintained among board members.

### Progress on Implementing the Recommendations of the Recovery Plan

1. The district still has not developed a culture where highly functional relations among board members exist. The board generally views itself and is viewed by others as fragmented and unable to forge a consensus for effective leadership in the district, despite the knowledge and dedication of individual members.

The dynamic of having three new mayor-appointed members added to the seven elected members — as well as four newly elected members and a new Superintendent since 2000, and fairly standard, mega-urban district political pressures — proved to be overwhelming challenges to developing functional relations. Perceived divisions between elected and appointed members, and between proponents and critics of the most recent Superintendent, were cited by interviewees as main causes of strained relations. The board does appear to have demonstrated a greater unity of purpose in the last few months leading up to the beginning of state administration.

Both parents and teachers surveyed said they felt the board's overall ability to govern the district diminished slightly between 2000 and 2003. Additionally, teachers surveyed substantially agreed that there seems to be a substantial amount of conflict among board members about the goals of the district. In 2003, 31.5 percent of teachers strongly agreed with that statement as opposed to the 6.3 percent who strongly agreed in the previous study. Additionally, teachers tend to agree that conflict among the board members has increased greatly within the past four years, although a sizable percentage was uncertain (42.5 percent strongly or somewhat agree, 19.5 percent strongly or somewhat disagree, 35 percent are uncertain).

In the past three years, modest attempts were made by the board to improve its relations through annual board retreats, dialogue and/or training, although these do not seem to have had an impact. As part of its strategic plan development process, the board did agree on some protocols for effective dialogue. The board also worked with an outside foundation to hold a team-building retreat in which most, but not all, board members participated. There was little or no follow-up to this session.

2. The effectiveness of the board president in modeling desirable behaviors and keeping the board on task varies depending on the individual in the position. It appears that the president does not routinely receive specific training or coaching on running effective meetings (see Standard 6.4) or resolving conflicts.

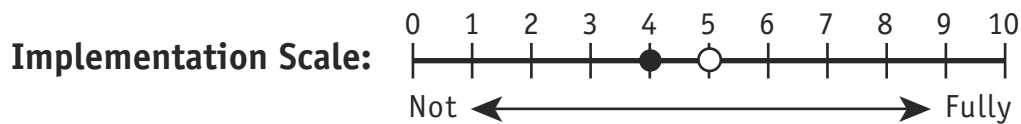
## Recommendations to Be Addressed

1. Ensure board members maintain a respectful relationship with each other and focus on their common interest in serving students.
2. Encourage board members to participate in comprehensive and ongoing training on effective governance skills to assist members in understanding the impact of board behaviors on the board's credibility and effectiveness.
3. Regularly assess progress in this area. The board and state administrator should undertake this assessment.

## Standard Implemented: Partially

January 2000 Rating: 5

September 2003 Rating: 4



## **5.6 Board Roles/Boardsmanship**

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### **Professional Standard**

Functional working relations are maintained between the board and administrative team.

### **Progress on Implementing the Recommendations of the Recovery Plan**

1. Since the time this standard was assessed in the 2000 recovery plan, a new Superintendent was employed and then left when the state assumed administration of the district in June 2003. During that time, the district also employed a number of different individuals in other senior management positions and, as referenced in Standard 5.4, the board itself experienced dramatic turnover since January 2000, including the addition of three new appointed members to make the Oakland Unified Board a 10-member board.

Both the board and administrators believe that they generally exhibited mutual respect and cooperation. However, the inability of board members to work together made it difficult to provide a unified direction for the administration and staff. The superintendent's office did not significantly contribute to bridging the gap among board members and helping to establish a more unified board-administrative team. During the tenure of the most recent Superintendent, the board was often perceived as divided, and this division affected the regard in which some board members held the administrative team and vice versa.

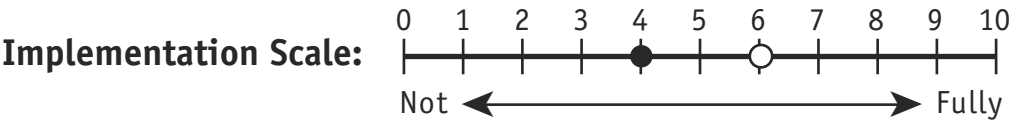
One area of common disagreement was the scope and detail of information provided by the administration to the board. Several members of the board expressed a desire for additional and more detailed information and analysis. At the same time, members of the board and district staff acknowledged that individual board members sometimes made an excessive number of requests of staff for time-consuming data or information, requests which may also have been contradictory.

### **Recommendations to Be Addressed**

1. Develop agreements and/or protocols regarding appropriate board-administration relations and communications.
2. Encourage the board and chief administrator to participate in comprehensive and ongoing effective governance training.
3. Promote positive relations between the Governing Board and State Administrator in order to move the district forward and ultimately resume governance. The State Administrator should continue to hold regular meetings with the board and engage the board as appropriate in providing substantive input and making recommendations.

**Standard Implemented: Partially**

January 2000 Rating: 6  
September 2003 Rating: 4



## 5.8 Board Roles/Boardsmanship

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### Professional Standard

The board demonstrates respect for public input at meetings and public hearings.

### Progress on Implementing the Recommendations of the Recovery Plan

1. The board as a whole seems to have been dedicated to inviting public input, and members demonstrated an interest in the concerns of the community. Some interviewees noted a few exceptions when individual members reportedly reacted disrespectfully to the public or employee organization leaders. At the same time, many interviewees acknowledged that the public is frequently disrespectful toward the board at meetings. The board has not received specific training on communicating with the public or dealing with confrontation. Since meetings are televised, individual members have the opportunity to review tapes of the meetings and observe their public demeanor.

The district has made some progress in demonstrating respect for the public at meetings and further facilitating public participation by making translation services available for non-English-speaking attendees.

A survey of parents showed some improvement between 2000 and 2003 in that more parents feel the board actively welcomes them to provide their opinions during board meetings: 66.9 percent of parents strongly agree or somewhat agree that the board welcomes parents (compared to 57.4 percent in 2000), while 21 percent disagree and 9.3 percent are uncertain.

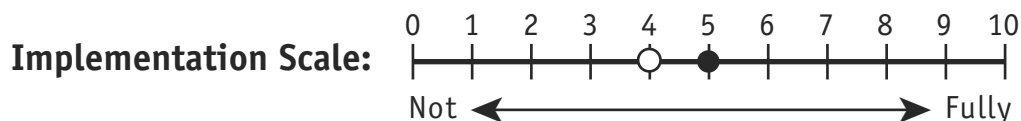
### Recommendations to Be Addressed

1. Ensure the board pays careful attention to its verbal and nonverbal reactions to public input during board meetings in order to create a welcoming environment, even when public input is confrontational.

### Standard Implemented: Partially

January 2000 Rating: 4

September 2003 Rating: 5



## 5.9 Board Roles/Boardsmanship

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### Professional Standard

Board members respect confidentiality of information.

### Progress on Implementing the Recommendations of the Recovery Plan

1. Board members are aware that they are subject to the Brown Act, which prohibits the disclosure of closed session information unless specifically authorized. However, it appears that some individuals do not fully understand the consequences of breaches in confidentiality. Interviews with the board and administrative staff suggest at least occasional breaches by a minority of individual members, typically with regard to district contract negotiations.

The board has legal counsel available at closed and open board sessions, and at other times, to answer questions.

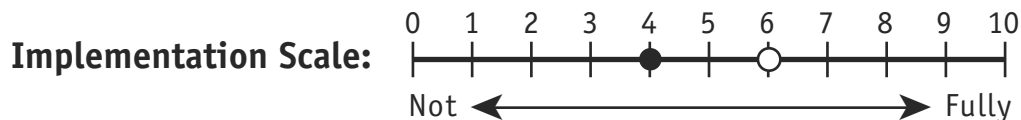
### Recommendations to Be Addressed

1. Encourage individual board members to be more diligent about demonstrating personal integrity in the handling of confidential matters, and to refrain from discussing such issues in public meetings, with friends or colleagues, or with the media.
2. Provide new and veteran board members with annual training and/or information specifically related to confidentiality. This training and information might be integrated as a component in building greater understanding about the board's role.
3. Encourage the board to consult legal counsel as needed with questions regarding the appropriate disclosure of information.

### Standard Implemented:

January 2000 Rating: 6

September 2003 Rating: 4



## 5.10 Board Roles/Boardsmanship

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### Professional Standard

The board does not involve itself in operational issues that are the responsibility of the superintendent and staff.

### Progress on Implementing the Recommendations of the Recovery Plan

1. The board as a whole appears to have focused on appropriate board roles rather than operational matters that are the responsibility of the Superintendent and staff. Some interviewees noted that the implementation of policies was appropriately a staff determination. However, sometimes the perceived involvement of individual board members in operational or administrative matters (see Standard 5.11) reflects upon the board as a whole.

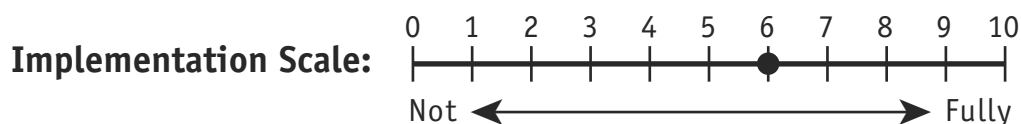
A large percentage of teachers surveyed strongly agree or somewhat agree that the board is *not* involved directly in the day-to-day operations of the schools (79 percent with 52.5 percent strongly agreeing; 11.5 percent strongly or somewhat disagree). Based on comparisons from the 2000 study, the board has improved in this regard (69.5 percent felt the board was not involved in day-to-day operations). When asked whether district administrators are almost always allowed to make plans and establish priorities without excessive interference from the board, there is a high level of uncertainty (54.5 percent), but a slight shift from a negative to a positive response compared to the 2000 study (22 percent agree vs. 19.5 percent disagree in 2003; 15.2 percent agree and 20.5 percent disagree in 2000).

### Recommendations to Be Addressed

1. Encourage the board to focus on broad policy issues and its accountability role rather than on administrative operations.

### Standard Implemented: Partially

January 2000 Rating: 6  
September 2003 Rating: 6



## 5.11 Board Roles/Boardsmanship

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### Professional Standard

No individual board member attempts to exercise any administrative responsibility.

### Progress on Implementing the Recommendations of the Recovery Plan

1. Interviews with the board and staff suggest that, while the majority of individual members did not attempt to exercise administrative responsibilities, a minority of individuals may have attempted at times to exert personal influence or to advocate regarding certain administrative decisions, especially in the areas of facilities and district contracts. Legal counsel did discuss with one of the board's working committees how trustees of a public agency should appropriately handle solicitations from outside vendors.

Specifically in the area of personnel, both the staff and board members reported a decrease in the past three years in incidents of individual board members interfering with administrative responsibilities. This was largely attributed to language in the superintendent's contract stipulating his authority over specified personnel matters.

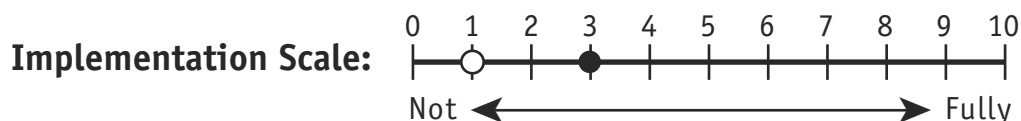
Board members also seem to have become better at adhering to the communications chain of command among the district staff and addressing their concerns or questions through the Superintendent. Board members reportedly were advised to go through the Superintendent with questions or information requests for district staff. Some individual members did, however, occasionally go directly to district staff with questions and/or requests for data or information. Board members often indicated that if a parent came to them with a complaint, they would refer the complaint to the superintendent's office. However, some board members indicated that they do become involved in resolving complaints by directly calling the site or district staff person involved (see Standard 2.4).

### Recommendations to Be Addressed

1. Ensure all board members clearly understand and respect that authority rests with the board as a whole and not with individual board members. The board and chief administrator should agree on and adhere to board protocols for handling solicitations from vendors, as well as protocols for requesting information from the district staff and reporting concerns.

### Standard Implemented: Partially

January 2000 Rating: 1  
September 2003 Rating: 3



## **5.13 Board Roles/Boardsmanship**

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### **Professional Standard**

The board acts for the community and in the interests of all students in the district.

### **Progress on Implementing the Recommendations of the Recovery Plan**

1. In general, the current composition of the board reflects the cultural and ethnic diversity of the district. Members bring a breadth of individual experience and expertise, including some members who previously worked in the district, some who currently are employed by other local agencies, and some who are involved with community organizations.

Overall, it appears that in the past three years board members made some progress toward increasing the district's focus on meeting the needs of all students, and considering the viewpoints of the entire community before making decisions. For example, the board and Superintendent developed a strategic plan that specifically identifies as objectives closing the achievement gap and encouraging English fluency for English-language learners. In addition, the district ensures that most parent materials are translated into the five major district languages, and offers simultaneous translation at board meetings and other districtwide meetings. These efforts help encourage more involvement by all groups.

Several interviewees perceive that some individual board members are too easily influenced by certain vocal community-interest groups, or that some individual board members are driven primarily by parochial or political interests rather than the interests of all students in the district. Most board members are active in their own particular trustee areas or within their own ethnic groups, but do not participate in many activities beyond that traditional scope.

Many compelling but sometimes competing interests challenge this board's ability to be unified in representing all students, including the need of elected members to effectively represent their trustee area constituents, individual board members' desires to represent racial and ethnic constituencies, and ongoing equity concerns between representatives of "hill" schools and "flats" schools. These complex challenges were further complicated by the division between elected and appointed board members.

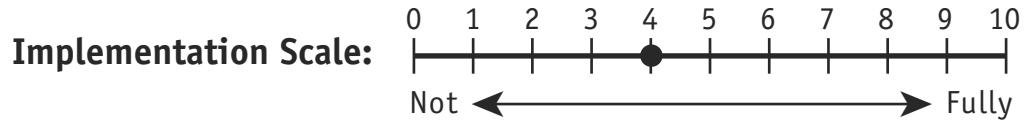
### **Recommendations to Be Addressed**

1. Encourage all individual board members to continue demonstrating that they act in the interests of all students in the district. Board members must make a concerted effort to eliminate the perception that they represent narrow interests.
2. Maintain the focus of the district's strategic plan and goals on enhancing the achievement of all students in the district.

3. Identify resource inequities across school sites and develop a plan and a budget to correct the deficiencies.

**Standard Implemented: Partially**

January 2000 Rating: 4  
September 2003 Rating: 4



## 5.14 Board Roles/Boardsmanship

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### Professional Standard

The district has identified the needs of the students, staff and educational community through a needs assessment process.

### Progress on Implementing the Recommendations of the Recovery Plan

1. The district does not have a system for periodically and routinely conducting surveys, focus groups or public hearings to determine the needs of students, the staff and the educational community. Additionally, the district seems to have only marginally consulted the results from previous needs assessments such as the one issued by FCMAT in January 2000.

Some identification of student needs occurs in the development of school site plans and through district advisory councils. Also, in 2002 the district did solicit and analyze input from various stakeholders as part of a strategic planning process, conducted with the assistance of an outside consultant. In developing the plan, public forums were also held.

Despite these recent efforts, the majority of teachers surveyed (63 percent) strongly or somewhat disagree that the board has done a good job in identifying the needs of students, teachers, and the educational community (24 percent strongly or somewhat agree). Parents surveyed were more likely to think that the board has done a good job identifying needs (44.8 percent strongly or somewhat agree, 33.2 percent strongly or somewhat disagree, 19.5 percent uncertain).

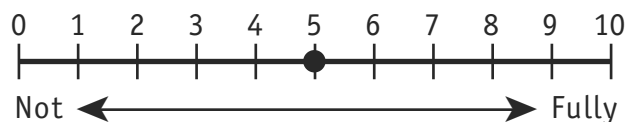
### Recommendations to Be Addressed

1. Make needs assessments a regular, formal activity of the district.
2. Use findings from needs assessments as an important tool for reviewing and updating the district's vision statements and for planning programs. The district should build on the foundation of work done to develop the strategic plan, as appropriate.

### Standard Implemented: Partially

January 2000 Rating: 5  
September 2003 Rating: 5

### Implementation Scale:



## 6.4 Board Meetings

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### Professional Standard

Board meetings are conducted in a businesslike manner while allowing opportunity for full discussion.

### Progress on Implementing the Recommendations of the Recovery Plan

1. Professional Standard 6.4 has been broadened since the 2000 study to assess the general conduct of meetings, including but not limited to conducting meetings in accordance with board bylaws. Board bylaws regarding meeting conduct have recently been reviewed and revised along with the entire policy manual (see Standard 4.2), but have not yet been adopted.
2. With almost no exceptions, board members, the district staff and the school site staff interviewed for the current study expressed that board meetings do not always proceed in a productive manner. Meetings often lasted late into the night, and they were often not viewed by participants or the public as conducive to full and constructive discussion by the board. The addition of three new board members, making this a 10-member board, added to the challenges by requiring more time for full discussion of topics by all members.

Discussions among individual board members and among the board and the public were often referred to as “contentious” and a lack of public decorum was cited (also see Standard 5.4 and Standard 5.8). Members of the public were viewed as contributing to the unproductive meeting atmosphere by directing comments to the board and administration that were perceived as “antagonistic” or “abusive.” Time limits for speakers were also not applied consistently.

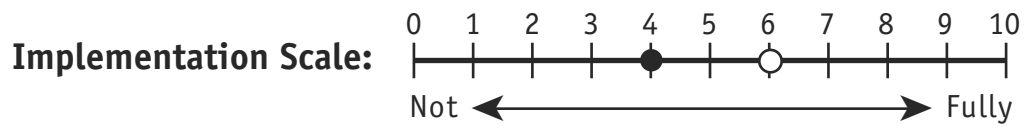
3. Meetings are chaired by the board president. The effective functioning of meetings, therefore, depends on the leadership of the president in a given year. While the presidents appear to be knowledgeable and well-meaning, they also appear to receive no specific training or coaching in terms of running effective meetings. Their personal styles may influence the manner in which meetings are run as much as any agreed-upon rules.

### Recommendations to Be Addressed

1. Adopt updated rules/bylaws regarding board meeting operations to ensure that they reflect current law and desired district practice.
2. Apply rules for meeting conduct consistently to ensure meeting efficiency and fairness to all board members, the staff, and public speakers.
3. Provide the board president and vice president with both initial training and ongoing education in running effective board meetings.

## Standard Implemented: Partially

January 2000 Rating: 6  
September 2003 Rating: 4



## 6.8 Board Meetings

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### Professional Standard

Board meetings focus on matters related to student achievement.

### Progress on Implementing the Recommendations of the Recovery Plan

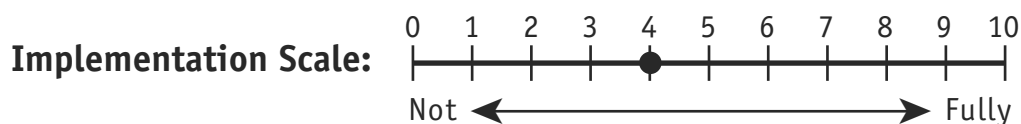
1. This standard was not addressed in the 2000 recovery plan; therefore, this represents an initial assessment rather than a progress report.
2. Interviews of board members, the district staff and the school site staff generally revealed frustration that the structure of board meetings did not allow for a maximum focus on matters related to student achievement.
3. The board did receive periodic reports related to student achievement issues, including a regular report by the Superintendent, but these often occurred late in meetings, and they were often not related to policy discussions or the district's strategic plan or goals. Often at meetings, a large portion of the board's time was devoted to receiving public input and discussing topics that may have diverted the board's attention from its main role. In the past year, considerable time was also devoted, understandably, to the district's fiscal crisis.

### Recommendations to Be Addressed

1. Review board meeting operations, including agenda-setting and agenda-management processes, to ensure that meeting topics are aligned with priorities set forward in the district's vision and goals, and that topics related to student achievement matters are emphasized.

### Standard Implemented: Partially

January 2000 Rating: Not Assessed  
September 2003 Rating: 4



# ASSESSMENT PROCESS

## Assessments

The progress of the district was determined through a variety of assessments, including interviews, surveys, focus groups and reviews of district documents.

### 1. Interviews

Forty-three people were interviewed on the basis of their position in the district, including:

- Nine board members
- One state administrator
- Twenty-two current and/or former district office administrators, staff and consultants
- Nine principals
- One media representative
- One employee organization representative

Note that an additional board member and media representative were invited to participate in the study, but declined to be interviewed. Also, the number of interviews was limited due to the unavailability of many site-level staff members during the summer months and the short time frame for completing the project. Still, an effort was made to interview people in key positions.

### 2. Staff and Parent Surveys

Telephone surveys were conducted with randomly selected samples of 200 teachers in the district and 205 parents/guardians of students enrolled in the district.

The teacher survey contained 35 items and the parent survey 30 items. Some items asked teachers and parents to grade, from A to F, the school's or district's performance on various tasks. Other responses were recorded on a five-point scale ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree."

Among the teachers surveyed, 94.5 percent hold a full or permanent teaching credential. The sample included teachers at all grade levels, with the majority at elementary grades: 38.6 percent at grades K-3, 30 percent at grades 4-6, 10 percent at grades 7-8, 21.4 percent at grades 9-12.

Parents surveyed have lived in Oakland an average of 24 years. The sample included parents with children at all grade levels, with the majority in elementary grades.

Demographics for the survey samples are as follows:

	<b>Teachers</b>	<b>Parents</b>
<b><u>Gender</u></b>		
Male	31.7%	22.4%
Female	68.3	77.6
<b><u>Ethnicity</u></b>		
African American	23.0%	43.4%
Asian/Pacific Islander	8.0	9.3
Native American	1.5	1.5
Caucasian	49.5	13.2
Latino/Hispanic	7.0	17.6
Other	5.0	3.9
Uncertain	6.0	11.2

### 3. Parent and Staff Focus Groups

Two parent focus groups were conducted. The first contained approximately 15 parents, some of whom were members of the District Advisory Council and District Language Advisory Council. The second contained approximately 30 Asian, Latino and African-American parents.

In addition, a focus group was conducted with five district staff members who provide translation services and have frequent contact with parents and community members.

The project staff facilitated the meetings.

### 4. Reviews of District Documents

The project staff reviewed a variety of district documents, including district policies and administrative regulations, sample district communications, news articles, board agendas and minutes, videotapes of past board meetings, coordinated compliance reviews, the parent handbook, the district strategic plan, and other materials related to the district.

## **Improvement Plan**

Based on the analysis of the district's current implementation of selected standards, the FCMAT study team determined the extent to which the district implemented the recommendations in the 2000 study, whether the original recommendations are still appropriate, and whether new recommendations are needed to help the district fully and substantially implement each standard and then sustain that level of performance. Implementation of some standards may require additional ongoing review and modifications to account for the board's current status as advisory and time lines for restoring local governance authority. While some recommendations require an allocation of financial resources, an effort was made to develop recommendations that require little or no additional resources. Many do require the time and commitment of individuals in the district, and it is hoped that a reprioritization of current responsibilities may be sufficient to enable their implementation.



## TEACHER SURVEY RESULTS

1. How many years have you taught in the Oakland USD?  
Data not reported

2. What grade do you currently teach? (Check all appropriate)

Grade Level	Frequency	Percent Responses	Percent Cases*
K-3	81	38.6	41.8
4-6	61	30.0	32.5
7-8	43	10.0	10.8
9-12	<u>25</u>	<u>21.4</u>	<u>23.2</u>
Total	200	100.0%	108.5%

\*Multiple responses – teachers taught in multiple grade ranges

3. Do you hold a full or permanent teaching credential?

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Yes	189	94.5
No	<u>11</u>	<u>5.5</u>
Total	200	100%

4. I receive regular communication from the school district about changes in school policy.

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Strongly Agree	36	18.0
Agree Somewhat	58	29.0
Neither Agree/Disagree	13	6.5
Disagree Somewhat	50	25.0
Strongly Disagree	34	17.0
Not Certain	<u>9</u>	<u>4.5</u>
Total	200	100%

5. The materials and information I receive from the district are very clear and understandable and in a language that I can understand.

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Strongly Agree	47	23.5
Agree Somewhat	89	44.5
Neither Agree/Disagree	6	3.0
Disagree Somewhat	39	19.5
Strongly Disagree	18	9.0
Not Certain	<u>1</u>	<u>0.5</u>
Total	200	100%

6. The district seems to make a big effort to let me know what's going on.

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Strongly Agree	17	8.5
Agree Somewhat	54	27.0
Neither Agree/Disagree	7	3.5
Disagree Somewhat	55	27.5
Strongly Disagree	65	32.5
Not Certain	<u>2</u>	<u>1.0</u>
Total	200	100%

7. I am always informed in writing of changes in board or district policies.

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Strongly Agree	25	12.5
Agree Somewhat	42	21.0
Neither Agree/Disagree	9	4.5
Disagree Somewhat	51	25.5
Strongly Disagree	64	32.0
Not Certain	<u>9</u>	<u>4.5</u>
Total	200	100%

8. I always feel I have been given full and complete information when asking questions of my principal or district officials.

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Strongly Agree	39	19.5
Agree Somewhat	61	30.5
Neither Agree/Disagree	11	5.5
Disagree Somewhat	39	19.5
Strongly Disagree	45	22.5
Not Certain	<u>5</u>	<u>2.5</u>
Total	200	100%

9. Any charges or complaints against school employees are handled in a timely and professional manner by the district office.

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Strongly Agree	14	7.0
Agree Somewhat	19	9.5
Neither Agree/Disagree	9	4.5
Disagree Somewhat	23	11.5
Strongly Disagree	52	26.0
Not Certain	<u>83</u>	<u>41.5</u>
Total	200	100%

10. District staff works closely with teachers to resolve requests or concerns.

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Strongly Agree	21	10.5
Agree Somewhat	45	22.5
Neither Agree/Disagree	5	2.5
Disagree Somewhat	49	24.5
Strongly Disagree	55	27.5
Not Certain	<u>25</u>	<u>12.5</u>
Total	200	100%

11. The school board actively welcomes teachers like me to come and give their opinions during board meetings.

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Strongly Agree	25	12.5
Agree Somewhat	46	23.0
Neither Agree/Disagree	5	2.5
Disagree Somewhat	37	18.5
Strongly Disagree	53	26.5
Not Certain	<u>34</u>	<u>17.0</u>
Total	200	100%

12. District administration encourages teacher input into decision making.

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Strongly Agree	13	6.5
Agree Somewhat	39	19.5
Neither Agree/Disagree	9	4.5
Disagree Somewhat	54	27.0
Strongly Disagree	74	37.0
Not Certain	<u>11</u>	<u>5.5</u>
Total	200	100%

13. My principal encourages teacher input into decision making at my school.

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Strongly Agree	113	56.5
Agree Somewhat	44	22.0
Neither Agree/Disagree	4	2.0
Disagree Somewhat	13	6.5
Strongly Disagree	20	10.0
Not Certain	<u>6</u>	<u>3.0</u>
Total	200	100%

14. Our school staff consults the school plan when making decisions about programs or budgets.

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Strongly Agree	90	45.0
Agree Somewhat	53	26.5
Neither Agree/Disagree	6	3.0
Disagree Somewhat	18	9.0
Strongly Disagree	17	8.5
Not Certain	<u>16</u>	<u>8.0</u>
Total	200	100%

15. In my school, teachers, principals and the district administration are in close agreement on school policy.

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Strongly Agree	31	15.5
Agree Somewhat	50	25.0
Neither Agree/Disagree	5	2.5
Disagree Somewhat	64	32.0
Strongly Disagree	39	19.5
Not Certain	<u>11</u>	<u>5.5</u>
Total	200	100%

16. As far as I can tell, the administration within this district is very clear about the mission and strategic plan for the school and communicates that view well to teachers.

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Strongly Agree	27	13.5
Agree Somewhat	62	31.0
Neither Agree/Disagree	8	4.0
Disagree Somewhat	38	19.0
Strongly Disagree	53	26.5
Not Certain	<u>12</u>	<u>6.0</u>
Total	200	100%

17. There seems to be a lot of conflict among board members about the goals of this district.

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Strongly Agree	63	31.5
Agree Somewhat	52	26.0
Neither Agree/Disagree	7	3.5
Disagree Somewhat	13	6.5
Strongly Disagree	12	6.0
Not Certain	<u>53</u>	<u>26.5</u>
Total	200	100%

18. Conflict among board members about goals has increased greatly within the past four years.

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Strongly Agree	47	23.5
Agree Somewhat	38	19.0
Neither Agree/Disagree	6	3.0
Disagree Somewhat	22	11.0
Strongly Disagree	17	8.5
Not Certain	<u>70</u>	<u>35.0</u>
Total	200	100%

19. Grade: Effectiveness of your principal in encouraging parent participation at your school

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	
A	77	38.5	
B	51	25.5	
C	37	18.5	
D	15	7.5	Average
F	11	5.5	2.9
Not Certain	<u>9</u>	<u>4.5</u>	
Total	200	100%	

20. Grade: Effectiveness of district administration in encouraging parent or public participation in district policy making

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	
A	4	2.0	
B	29	14.5	
C	58	29.0	
D	57	28.5	Average
F	23	11.5	1.6
Not Certain	<u>29</u>	<u>14.5</u>	
Total	200	100%	

21. Grade: Effectiveness of the board in encouraging parent or public participation district policy making

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	
A	6	3.0	
B	25	12.5	
C	53	26.5	
D	43	21.5	Average
F	23	11.5	1.7
Not Certain	<u>50</u>	<u>25.0</u>	
Total	200	100%	

22. School site councils are not very visible or active in this district or at my school.

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Strongly Agree	53	26.5
Agree Somewhat	33	16.5
Neither Agree/Disagree	3	1.5
Disagree Somewhat	57	28.5
Strongly Disagree	46	23.0
Not Certain	<u>8</u>	<u>4.0</u>
Total	200	100%

23. Generally, the school board does not involve itself directly in day-to-day operations of our school.

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Strongly Agree	105	52.5
Agree Somewhat	53	26.5
Neither Agree/Disagree	1	0.5
Disagree Somewhat	14	7.0
Strongly Disagree	9	4.5
Not Certain	<u>18</u>	<u>9.0</u>
Total	200	100%

24. District administrators are almost always allowed to make plans and set priorities without excessive interference from the board.

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Strongly Agree	16	8.0
Agree Somewhat	28	14.0
Neither Agree/Disagree	8	4.0
Disagree Somewhat	24	12.0
Strongly Disagree	15	7.5
Not Certain	<u>109</u>	<u>54.5</u>
Total	200	100%

25. The media paint a fair picture of the situation in this district.

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Strongly Agree	14	7.0
Agree Somewhat	48	24.0
Neither Agree/Disagree	5	2.5
Disagree Somewhat	45	22.5
Strongly Disagree	74	37.0
Not Certain	<u>14</u>	<u>7.0</u>
Total	200	100%

26. The board has done good job identifying the needs of students, teachers and the educational community.

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Strongly Agree	13	6.5
Agree Somewhat	35	17.5
Neither Agree/Disagree	6	3.0
Disagree Somewhat	48	24.0
Strongly Disagree	78	39.0
Not Certain	<u>20</u>	<u>10.0</u>
Total	200	100%

27. The community is less involved now in the district than it was four years ago.

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Strongly Agree	22	11.0
Agree Somewhat	37	18.5
Neither Agree/Disagree	8	4.0
Disagree Somewhat	47	23.5
Strongly Disagree	30	15.0
Not Certain	<u>56</u>	<u>28.0</u>
Total	200	100%

28. Over the past year or two the school board's efforts have been generally helpful in terms of improving Oakland's educational programs.

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Strongly Agree	26	13.0
Agree Somewhat	52	26.0
Neither Agree/Disagree	10	5.0
Disagree Somewhat	34	17.0
Strongly Disagree	48	24.0
Not Certain	<u>30</u>	<u>15.0</u>
Total	200	100%

29. Parents in Oakland have a large say in decisions made by the board.

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Strongly Agree	7	3.5
Agree Somewhat	38	19.0
Neither Agree/Disagree	7	3.5
Disagree Somewhat	66	33.0
Strongly Disagree	50	25.0
Not Certain	<u>32</u>	<u>16.0</u>
Total	200	100%

30. In my opinion, parents are generally very supportive of our district and its activities.

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Strongly Agree	35	17.5
Agree Somewhat	55	27.5
Neither Agree/Disagree	12	6.0
Disagree Somewhat	53	26.5
Strongly Disagree	25	12.5
Not Certain	<u>20</u>	<u>10.0</u>
Total	200	100%

31. The amount of parental support has increased during the past couple years.

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Strongly Agree	32	16.0
Agree Somewhat	52	26.0
Neither Agree/Disagree	10	5.0
Disagree Somewhat	48	24.0
Strongly Disagree	22	11.0
Not Certain	<u>36</u>	<u>18.0</u>
Total	200	100%

32. Grade most teachers would assign in terms of their satisfaction with teaching at your school

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	
A	33	16.5	
B	90	45.0	
C	48	24.0	
D	18	9.0	Average
F	1	0.5	2.7
Not Certain	<u>10</u>	<u>5.0</u>	
Total	200	100%	

33. Grade most teachers would assign in terms of overall satisfaction with teaching in the Oakland Unified School District

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	
A	1	0.5	
B	20	10.0	
C	63	31.5	
D	80	40.0	Average
F	24	12.0	1.4
Not Certain	<u>12</u>	<u>6.0</u>	
Total	200	100%	

34. Grade: Board on maintaining good community relations

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	
A	3	1.5	
B	18	9.0	
C	76	38.0	
D	53	26.5	Average
F	25	12.5	1.5
Not Certain	<u>25</u>	<u>12.5</u>	
Total	200	100%	

35. Grade: Board for changes made to improve district's programs

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	
A	3	1.5	
B	38	19.0	
C	67	33.5	
D	44	22.0	Average
F	23	11.5	1.7
Not Certain	<u>25</u>	<u>12.5</u>	
Total	200	100%	

36. Grade: Board in promoting student achievement

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	
A	11	5.5	
B	53	26.5	
C	63	31.5	
D	36	18.0	Average
F	20	10.0	2.0
Not Certain	<u>17</u>	<u>8.5</u>	
Total	200	100%	

37. Grade: Board for way the district was governed

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	
A	2	1.0	
B	17	8.5	
C	37	18.5	
D	56	28.0	Average
F	61	30.5	1.1
Not Certain	<u>27</u>	<u>13.5</u>	
Total	200	100%	

38. Grade: Performance of the Oakland school district as a whole (how would you grade its performance?)

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	
A	0	0.0	
B	19	9.5	
C	80	40.0	
D	71	35.5	Average
F	24	12.0	1.5
Not Certain	<u>6</u>	<u>3.0</u>	
Total	200	100%	

39. What is your year of birth?  
Data not available

40. Gender

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Male	63	31.7
Female	<u>136</u>	<u>68.3</u>
Total	199	100%

41. Which best describes your ethnicity?

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
African American	46	23.0
Asian/Pacific Islander	16	8.0
Native American	3	1.5
White	99	49.5
Latino/Hispanic	14	7.0
Other	10	5.0
Not Certain	<u>12</u>	<u>6.0</u>
Total	200	100%

## PARENT SURVEY RESULTS

1. How many school-aged children do you have?

Number of Children	Frequency	Percent
1	58	28.3
2	80	39.0
3	37	18.0
4	15	7.3
5	7	3.4
6	6	2.9
7	<u>2</u>	<u>1.0</u>
Total	205	100%

2. How many attend an Oakland district school?

Number of Children	Frequency	Percent
0	1	0.5
1	68	33.2
2	77	37.6
3	31	15.1
4	11	5.4
5	8	3.9
6	<u>6</u>	<u>2.9</u>
Total	204	99.5%

3. What grade levels do your children attend? (Multiple responses)

Grade Level	Frequency	Percent Responses	Percent Cases
K-3	127	33.2	62.0
4-6	108	28.2	52.7
7-8	63	16.4	30.7
9-12	<u>85</u>	<u>22.2</u>	<u>41.5</u>
Total	383	100.0%	186.8

4. I receive regular communication from the school district about changes in school policy that affect my child.

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Strongly Agree	64	31.4
Agree Somewhat	72	35.3
Neither Agree/Disagree	3	1.5
Disagree Somewhat	31	15.2
Strongly Disagree	31	15.2
Not Certain	<u>3</u>	<u>1.5</u>
Total	204	100%

5. The materials and information I receive from the school are very clear and understandable and in a language that I can understand.

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Strongly Agree	104	50.7
Agree Somewhat	68	33.2
Neither Agree/Disagree	0	0.0
Disagree Somewhat	19	9.3
Strongly Disagree	13	6.3
Not Certain	<u>1</u>	<u>0.5</u>
Total	205	100%

6. The district seems to make a big effort to let me know what's going on in the schools.

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Strongly Agree	42	20.5
Agree Somewhat	74	36.1
Neither Agree/Disagree	0	0.0
Disagree Somewhat	55	26.8
Strongly Disagree	30	14.6
Not Certain	<u>4</u>	<u>2.0</u>
Total	205	100%

7. I am always informed in writing of district policies regarding attendance, grades, health or other matters affecting my child's education.

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Strongly Agree	68	33.2
Agree Somewhat	66	32.2
Neither Agree/Disagree	3	1.5
Disagree Somewhat	36	17.6
Strongly Disagree	26	12.7
Not Certain	<u>6</u>	<u>2.9</u>
Total	205	100%

8. I always feel I have been given full and complete information when asking questions of teachers or school officials.

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Strongly Agree	78	52.5
Agree Somewhat	60	26.5
Neither Agree/Disagree	4	0.5
Disagree Somewhat	29	7.0
Strongly Disagree	30	4.5
Not Certain	<u>4</u>	<u>9.0</u>
Total	205	100%

9. Any charges or complaints against school employees are handled in a timely and professional manner by the district office.

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Strongly Agree	28	13.7
Agree Somewhat	27	13.2
Neither Agree/Disagree	6	2.9
Disagree Somewhat	18	8.8
Strongly Disagree	33	16.1
Not Certain	<u>93</u>	<u>45.4</u>
Total	205	100%

10. District staff work closely with parents to resolve requests or concerns.

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Strongly Agree	52	25.4
Agree Somewhat	49	23.9
Neither Agree/Disagree	5	2.4
Disagree Somewhat	24	11.7
Strongly Disagree	20	9.8
Not Certain	<u>55</u>	<u>26.8</u>
Total	205	100%

11. The school board actively welcomes parents like me to come and give their opinions during board meetings.

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Strongly Agree	76	37.1
Agree Somewhat	61	29.8
Neither Agree/Disagree	6	2.9
Disagree Somewhat	19	9.3
Strongly Disagree	24	11.7
Not Certain	<u>19</u>	<u>9.3</u>
Total	205	100%

12. Parents and community members are encouraged to become actively involved at my child's school.

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Strongly Agree	120	58.5
Agree Somewhat	43	21.0
Neither Agree/Disagree	4	2.0
Disagree Somewhat	14	6.8
Strongly Disagree	16	7.8
Not Certain	<u>8</u>	<u>3.9</u>
Total	205	100%

13. In my opinion, parents are generally very supportive of our district and its activities.

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Strongly Agree	53	26.0
Agree Somewhat	81	39.7
Neither Agree/Disagree	11	5.4
Disagree Somewhat	26	12.7
Strongly Disagree	16	7.8
Not Certain	<u>17</u>	<u>8.3</u>
Total	204	100%

14. Parents in Oakland have a large say in decisions made by the board.

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Strongly Agree	30	14.6
Agree Somewhat	40	19.5
Neither Agree/Disagree	5	2.4
Disagree Somewhat	32	15.6
Strongly Disagree	57	27.8
Not Certain	<u>41</u>	<u>20.0</u>
Total	205	100%

15. The amount of parental support has increased during the past couple years.

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Strongly Agree	58	28.3
Agree Somewhat	57	27.8
Neither Agree/Disagree	4	2.0
Disagree Somewhat	26	12.7
Strongly Disagree	16	7.8
Not Certain	<u>44</u>	<u>21.5</u>
Total	205	100%

16. Grade: effectiveness of the principal of your child's school in encouraging parent participation at your school

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	
A	95	46.3	
B	48	23.4	
C	28	13.7	
D	19	9.3	Average
F	10	4.9	3.0
Not Certain	<u>5</u>	<u>2.4</u>	
Total	205	100%	

17. Grade: effectiveness of district administration in encouraging parent or public participation in district policy making

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	
A	23	11.2	
B	33	16.1	
C	63	30.7	
D	28	13.7	Average
F	20	9.8	2.1
Not Certain	<u>38</u>	<u>18.5</u>	
Total	205	100%	

18. Grade: effectiveness of the board in encouraging parent or public participation district policy making

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	
A	37	18.0	
B	36	17.6	
C	48	23.4	
D	23	11.2	Average
F	23	11.2	2.2
Not Certain	<u>38</u>	<u>18.5</u>	
Total	205	100%	

19. School site councils are not very visible or active in this district or at my school.

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Strongly Agree	69	33.7
Agree Somewhat	46	22.4
Neither Agree/Disagree	3	1.5
Disagree Somewhat	28	13.7
Strongly Disagree	26	12.7
Not Certain	<u>33</u>	<u>16.1</u>
Total	205	100%

20. In my child's school, teachers, principals and the district administration are in close agreement on school policy.

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Strongly Agree	55	26.8
Agree Somewhat	60	29.3
Neither Agree/Disagree	6	2.9
Disagree Somewhat	18	8.8
Strongly Disagree	19	9.3
Not Certain	<u>47</u>	<u>22.9</u>
Total	205	100%

21. As far as I can tell, the administration within this district is very clear about the mission and strategic plan for the school and communicates that view well to teachers.

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Strongly Agree	42	20.5
Agree Somewhat	59	28.8
Neither Agree/Disagree	2	1.0
Disagree Somewhat	21	10.2
Strongly Disagree	30	14.6
Not Certain	<u>51</u>	<u>24.9</u>
Total	205	100%

22. The media paint a fair picture of the situation in this district.

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Strongly Agree	29	14.1
Agree Somewhat	48	23.4
Neither Agree/ Disagree	11	5.4
Disagree Somewhat	37	18.0
Strongly Disagree	36	17.6
Not Certain	<u>44</u>	<u>21.5</u>
Total	205	100%

23. The community is less involved now in the district than it was four years ago.

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Strongly Agree	43	21.0
Agree Somewhat	42	20.5
Neither Agree/Disagree	9	4.4
Disagree Somewhat	43	21.0
Strongly Disagree	22	10.7
Not Certain	<u>46</u>	<u>22.4</u>
Total	205	100%

24. The board has done a good job identifying needs of students and the educational community.

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Strongly Agree	37	18.0
Agree Somewhat	55	26.8
Neither Agree/Disagree	5	2.4
Disagree Somewhat	32	15.6
Strongly Disagree	36	17.6
Not Certain	<u>40</u>	<u>19.5</u>
Total	205	100%

25. There seems to be a lot of conflict among board members about the goals of this district.

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Strongly Agree	49	23.9
Agree Somewhat	42	20.5
Neither Agree/Disagree	4	2.0
Disagree Somewhat	15	7.3
Strongly Disagree	13	6.3
Not Certain	<u>82</u>	<u>40.0</u>
Total	205	100%

26. Conflict among board members about goals increased greatly within the past four years.

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Strongly Agree	43	21.1
Agree Somewhat	35	17.2
Neither Agree/Disagree	5	2.5
Disagree Somewhat	20	9.8
Strongly Disagree	11	5.4
Not Certain	<u>90</u>	<u>44.1</u>
Total	204	100%

27. Over the past year or two the school board's efforts have been generally helpful in terms of improving Oakland's educational programs.

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Strongly Agree	35	17.2
Agree Somewhat	56	27.5
Neither Agree/Disagree	6	2.9
Disagree Somewhat	30	14.7
Strongly Disagree	30	14.7
Not Certain	<u>47</u>	<u>23.0</u>
Total	204	100%

28. Grade: Board on maintaining good community relations

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
A	28	13.7
B	49	23.9
C	61	29.8
D	27	13.2
F	16	7.8
Not Certain	<u>24</u>	<u>11.7</u>
Total	205	100%

Average  
2.3

29. Grade: Board for changes made to improve district's programs

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	
A	27	13.2	
B	43	21.0	
C	53	25.9	
D	24	11.7	Average
F	20	9.8	2.2
Not Certain	<u>38</u>	<u>18.5</u>	
Total	205	100%	

30. Grade: Board in promoting student achievement

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	
A	35	17.1	
B	46	22.4	
C	49	23.9	
D	20	9.8	Average
F	17	8.3	2.4
Not Certain	<u>38</u>	<u>18.5</u>	
Total	205	100%	

31. Grade: Board for way the district is governed

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	
A	12	5.9	
B	31	15.1	
C	49	23.9	
D	28	13.7	Average
F	33	16.1	1.7
Not Certain	<u>52</u>	<u>25.4</u>	
Total	205	100%	

32. Grade: As a whole, what grade would you give your child's school?

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	
A	59	28.8	
B	62	30.2	
C	47	22.9	
D	14	6.8	Average
F	14	6.8	2.7
Not Certain	<u>9</u>	<u>4.4</u>	
Total	205	100%	

33. Grade: For the Oakland school district as a whole (how would you grade its performance?)

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	
A	21	10.2	
B	28	13.7	
C	70	34.1	
D	40	19.5	Average
F	28	13.7	1.9
Not Certain	<u>18</u>	<u>8.8</u>	
Total	205	100%	

34. How long have you lived in Oakland?

Average 24 years

35. What is your year of birth? 19\_\_\_\_\_

Data not available

36. Gender

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Male	46	22.7
Female	<u>159</u>	<u>77.6</u>
Total	205	100%

37. Are you currently registered to vote?

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Yes	147	71.7
No	51	24.9
Refused	<u>7</u>	<u>3.4</u>
Total	205	100%

38. Which best describes your ethnicity?

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
African American	89	43.4
Asian/Pacific Islander	19	9.3
Native American	3	1.5
White	27	13.2
Latino/Hispanic	36	17.6
Other	8	3.9
Not Certain	<u>23</u>	<u>11.2</u>
Total	205	100%



## **Table of Standards for Community Relations/Governance**

The ratings of all of the standards initially reviewed and presented in the Oakland Unified School District Assessment and Recovery Plan, January 31, 2000 were reviewed and updated as appropriate to indicate the district's current progress in addressing the recommendations in the initial assessment and recovery plan. Additional standards have been added to the list of standards to reflect changes in legislation and/or regulation since the assessment and recovery plan was first published, and some standards have been reworded for clarity.

In-depth FCMAT reviews were conducted for the standards that appear in bold print in this table of standards. A narrative is provided in this report for each of the standards that appears in bold print, describing the progress made by the district since January 31, 2000, and outlining the recommendations that still need to be addressed to meet these standards.

A sub-set of 26 standards has been identified in this operational area that will be the focus of review in each six-month review period. These 26 standards are identified under the column titled "March 2004 Focus."



<b>Standard to be addressed</b>		Jan. 2000 rating	Sept. 2003 rating	March 2004 focus
1.1	<b>Information is communicated to staff at all levels in an effective and timely manner. (Reworded since the 2000 report)</b>	2	3	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.2	<b>Staff input into school and district operations is encouraged.</b>	3	3	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.3	<b>The district has developed and implemented a comprehensive plan for internal and external communications, including media relations. (Reworded since the 2000 report)</b>	3	4	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.4	News releases are prepared and made available simultaneously to all appropriate news media.	5	7	
1.5	The district has established and adheres to procedures for communications with the media, including identification of district contacts and spokespersons. <b>(Reworded since the 2000 report)</b>	0	0	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.6	Board spokespersons are skilled at public speaking and communication and are knowledgeable about district programs and issues.	2	2	
2.1	Annual parental notice of rights and responsibilities is provided at the beginning of the school year. This notice is provided in English and in languages other than English when 15 percent or more speak another language. (EC 48980)	9	9	
2.2	A school accountability report card is issued annually for each school site. (EC 35256)	5	7	
2.3	The district has developed and annually disseminated uniform complaint procedures. (California Code of Regulations, Title 5, Section 4621) <b>(Reworded since the 2000 report)</b>	9	9	
2.4	<b>Parents' and community members' complaints are addressed in a fair and timely manner.</b>	1	4	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.5	Board members refer informal public concerns to the appropriate staff for attention and response.	4	4	
2.6	(Renumbered as Standard 5.14)			
2.7	<b>Parents and community members are encouraged to be involved in school activities and their children's education. (Reworded since the 2000 report)</b>	6	6	<input type="checkbox"/>

Standards in bold print were reviewed for the September 2003 report and narratives are provided in this report.  
 Indicates standards targeted for in-depth review for the March 2004 report.

Standard to be addressed		Jan. 2000 rating	Sept. 2003 rating	March 2004 focus
2.8	The district has established procedures for visitor registration and posts registration requirements at each school entrance. (PC 627.2, 627.6) <b>(Reworded since the 2000 report)</b>	4	4*	
2.9	Board members are actively involved in building community relations.	4	5	
3.1	<b>The board and Superintendent support partnerships and collaborations with community groups, local agencies and businesses.</b> <b>(Reworded since the 2000 report)</b>	5	6	
3.2	<b>Community collaboratives and district and school advisory councils all have identified specific outcome goals that are understood by all members.</b>	4	4	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.3	<b>The membership of community collaboratives and district and school advisory councils reflects the full cultural, ethnic, gender and socioeconomic diversity of the student population.</b>	1	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.4	<b>The district encourages and provides the necessary training for collaborative and advisory council members to understand the basic administrative structure, program processes and goals of all district partners.</b>	4	3	
3.5	Collaborative and advisory council processes are structured in such a way that there is a clear, meaningful role for all participants with appropriate input from parents, members of the community and agency policymakers.	6	6*	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.6	Community collaboratives and district and school advisory councils effectively fulfill their responsibilities (e.g., research issues, develop recommendations, etc.). <b>(Reworded since the 2000 report)</b>	4	4*	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.7	<b>Policies exist for the establishment of school site councils for schools that participate in School-Based Program Coordination. (EC 52852.5) (Reworded since the 2000 report)</b>	6	6*	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.8	The school site council develops a Single Plan for Student Achievement at each school applying for categorical programs through the consolidated application. (EC 64001) <b>(Reworded since the 2000 report)</b>	9	9*	

\* These standards could not be fully assessed in the summer of 2003 due to the unavailability of district information, staff or materials. Findings from the 2000 recovery plan were used to assign this rating for 2003. These ratings should be regarded as interim ratings until further analysis can be completed.

Standards in bold print were reviewed for the September 2003 report and narratives are provided in this report.  
 Indicates standards targeted for in-depth review for the March 2004 report.

<b>Standard to be addressed</b>		Jan. 2000 rating	Sept. 2003 rating	March 2004 focus
3.9	School plans are comprehensive and have sufficient content to meet the statutory requirements. (EC 64001)	9	9*	
3.10	The school site council annually reviews the school plan and the board annually approves or disapproves all site councils' plans. (EC 64001)	4	4*	
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Policies are written, organized and readily available to all members of the staff and to the public.</b>	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Policies and administrative regulations are up to date and reflect current law and local needs.</b>	2	4	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>4.3</b>	<b>The board has adopted all policies mandated by state and federal law.</b>	4	4	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.4	The board annually reviews its policies on intradistrict open enrollment and extracurricular and cocurricular activities. (EC 35160.5)	0	3	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>4.5</b>	<b>Existing board policies are reviewed regularly with the involvement of the staff.</b>	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>4.6</b>	<b>The district has established a system of securing citizen input in policy development and district operation.</b>	2	3	
4.7	The board supports and follows its own policies once they are adopted.	1	3	
5.1	Each board member meets the eligibility requirements of being a board member. (EC 35107)	10	10*	
5.2	Board members participate in orientation sessions, workshops, conventions and special meetings sponsored by board associations.	4	4	
5.3	Pertinent literature, statutes, legal counsel and recognized authorities are available to and utilized by the board to understand duties, functions, authority and responsibilities of members.	6	6	
<b>5.4</b>	<b>Functional working relations are maintained among board members.</b>	5	4	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.5	Individual board members respect the decisions of the board majority and do not undermine the board's actions in public. <b>(Reworded since the 2000 report)</b>	4	4	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>5.6</b>	<b>Functional working relations are maintained between the board and administrative team.</b>	6	4	<input type="checkbox"/>

\* These standards could not be fully assessed in the summer of 2003 due to the unavailability of district information, staff or materials. Findings from the 2000 recovery plan were used to assign this rating for 2003. These ratings should be regarded as interim ratings until further analysis can be completed.

Standards in bold print were reviewed for the September 2003 report and narratives are provided in this report.  
 Indicates standards targeted for in-depth review for the March 2004 report.

<b>Standard to be addressed</b>		Jan. 2000 rating	Sept. 2003 rating	March 2004 focus
5.7	The board publicly demonstrates respect for and support for district and school site staff.	4	4	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>5.8</b>	<b>The board demonstrates respect for public input at meetings and public hearings.</b>	4	5	
<b>5.9</b>	<b>Board members respect confidentiality of information. (Reworded since the 2000 report)</b>	6	4	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>5.10</b>	<b>The board does not involve itself in operational issues that are the responsibility of the superintendent and staff. (Reworded since the 2000 report)</b>	6	6	
<b>5.11</b>	<b>No individual board member attempts to exercise any administrative responsibility.</b>	1	3	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.12	The board evaluates the performance of the superintendent regularly on criteria which will encourage student achievement.	8	8	
<b>5.13</b>	<b>The board acts for the community and in the interests of all students in the district.</b>	4	4	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>5.14</b>	<b>The district has identified the needs of the students, staff and educational community through a needs assessment process. (Previously numbered 2.6)</b>	5	5	
6.1	An adopted calendar of regular meetings exists and is published specifying the time, place and date of each meeting. (EC 35140)	10	10	
6.2	The board agenda is made available to the public in the manner and under the timelines prescribed by law. (EC 54954.1, 54954.2) <b>(Reworded since the 2000 report)</b>	9	10	
6.3	Board members are prepared for board meetings by becoming familiar with the agenda and support materials prior to the meeting.	7	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>6.4</b>	<b>Board meetings are conducted in a business-like manner while allowing opportunity for full discussion. (Reworded since the 2000 report)</b>	6	4	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.5	Open and closed sessions are conducted according to the Ralph M. Brown Act. (GC 54950 et seq.)	9	9	
6.6	The board has adopted bylaws for the placement of items on the board agenda by members of the public.	10	10	

Standards in bold print were reviewed for the September 2003 report and narratives are provided in this report.  
 Indicates standards targeted for in-depth review for the March 2004 report.

<b>Standard to be addressed</b>		Jan. 2000 rating	Sept. 2003 rating	March 2004 focus
6.7	Members of the public have an opportunity to address the board before or during the board's consideration of each item of business to be discussed at regular or special meetings, and to bring before the board matters that are not on the agenda. (EC 35145.5)	9	10	
6.8	<b>Board meetings focus on matters related to student achievement.</b> <b>(Added since the 2000 report)</b>	New	4	<input type="checkbox"/>

Standards in bold print were reviewed for the September 2003 report and narratives are provided in this report.  
 Indicates standards targeted for in-depth review for the March 2004 report.