

**Update Memo:
Standards-Based Middle School Reform
Long Beach Unified School District**

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At the request of the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, for the 1999 grant proposal to the Program for Student Achievement, each district was asked to identify specific goals or targets along with indicators that the evaluation team could use to guide their investigation and assessment of the district's progress toward their goals. In the proposal to the Foundation, Long Beach Unified School District identified four initiatives that were priorities in their work to raise student achievement within a standards-based system. Subsequently, the Foundation has requested that Education Matters, Inc. focus the February 2001 update report on evidence collected on the progress toward the identified goals, using the indicators and measures suggested by the district. Therefore, during our December visit to the district, we focused our observations and interviews on collecting data on four initiatives: 1) Essential Elements of a Standards-based Classroom; 2) Reading Development for Targeted Students; 3) Measuring Student Attainment of Standards; and 4) a Revised Middle School Course of Study.¹ The purpose of this report is to share what we have learned about the district's progress in each of these areas.

Essential Elements of a Standards-based Classroom

Two targets were identified that define the goals of this initiative. According to the district's plan, an important first step was that *“all teachers and administrators know what a standards-based classroom looks like.”*

There has been some confusion over the last two years as to how teachers and administrators were supposed to learn what a standards-based classroom looks like. The Curriculum Office has developed a slide show to explain how all the pieces of the “standards-based puzzle” fit together at the system level. In terms of the classroom level, our understanding is that efforts toward this goal have taken two different paths. In the 1999 proposal the district indicated that they had drafted “Characteristics of a Standards-based Classroom” (p. 32). The Education Matters' evaluation team has requested copies of this document several times, but we have been told that it is still in draft form and was not ready for distribution. Recently, we received a copy of a model of a standards-based classroom that was developed by a group of standards coaches, however, we were told that the district had not adopted it, nor had it been disseminated.

While there is no agreed upon description of a standards-based classroom, there has been significant progress on the second path, which was to develop professional teaching standards. These standards do, to some extent, refer to the implementation of content and

¹ The data collection process and data sources for this report are described in Appendix A.

performance standards, but they also incorporate a number of other practices, which provide a general description of quality teaching. The district's teaching standards have been adapted from the California State Standards for the Teaching Profession, and have become the basis for the New Teacher Coach's formative assessment form that BTSA (Beginning Teacher Support & Assessment) coaches use to provide feedback to the new teachers. We were told that the teaching standards document has been used in the new teacher training, and that principals and BTSA and PAR (Peer Assistance Review) coaches should be familiar with the standards, but that it had yet to be distributed to other teachers.

The first indicator that LBUSD suggested would demonstrate progress toward this target is that a "*Standards Document is Disseminated.*" Due to confusion over which "Standards Document" the district's indicator referred to, our data are incomplete regarding the extent to which this document has been disseminated, understood, and used by teachers and principals. We were unable to find any new teachers or BTSA coaches who were familiar with the teaching standards. BTSA coaches do use a feedback form based on these standards to report their observations of new teachers, and a packet containing a draft of these standards was disseminated during the BTSA coach training and New Teacher Institute. However, neither group of teachers demonstrated any familiarity with the standards, suggesting that they are not yet part of teachers' working repertoire. To date, most teachers' understanding of what a standards-based classroom looks like is to post the standard and objective each day and then to teach to that objective. Most teachers we interviewed told us that content standards provided the framework for what they taught, and their agendas were usually posted indicating the standard that was the focus of their lesson that day. When asked about the role of standards in their teaching, we did find some teachers identified the SAT-9 as the "standard" that focused their teaching. We found both some new and some experienced teachers who held this view.

The second and third indicator for this target were that an "*Essential Elements of Effective Instruction (EEEI) Institute is established*" and "*that a trainer cadre is trained.*" These were put in place during spring and summer (2000). We did find that most teachers (in both focus and non-focus schools) had participated in some version of EEEI training, whether it was through the New Teacher Institute, the six-day training, or a refresher course, designed for experienced teachers who had had previous training. We also found that a few "new" teachers attended only the one-day refresher, even though they had no previous exposure, because of tight schedules. Overwhelmingly, teachers reported that EEEI was effective training, especially in helping them deal with classroom management issues. Our observations (and feedback from coaches) indicate that EEEI has made a significant difference in classroom practice, particularly in regards to teachers' clarity about teaching to an objective, and strategies to promote active participation. Moreover, principals report that their review of EEEI and training on how to work with teachers on implementing the elements was a powerful professional learning experience that has helped them to focus in on what is happening in classrooms and to be more effective in their work with teachers to improve instruction.

The second target for the first initiative is that the “***Quality of instruction improves in middle school classrooms.***” Three different indicators were listed that could be used to assess the progress toward this target. The first was that “*teachers deliver high quality lessons.*” The second was that “*teachers have increased academic learning time,*” and the third is that “*teachers collaborate on lesson design and student work evaluation.*” It is difficult to use these indicators to assess progress toward the target for a number of reasons. First of all, we found that the use of EEEI strategies was fairly widespread, and the delivery of the lessons was more focused. However, unless the strategies were used to teach meaningful content, it does not always result in significant learning. Furthermore, because of our focus on Reading Development classes, the majority of teachers we observed were reading teachers who have a limited background in reading, and little training in the curriculum they have been assigned to teach. Moreover, there are a number of new teachers in our sample who are still struggling with management issues, as are some of the experienced teachers.

A more serious problem is that the scripted nature of the curriculum adopted, in Breaking the Code and Soar to Success, does not allow for the highest levels of teaching according to the LBSD’s professional teaching standards. For example, in the highly teacher-directed curriculum of Breaking the Code, the course content focuses predominately on phonemic awareness and decoding skills, neither of which are part of the Middle School Reading Standards – this is essentially a remedial course. The repetitive drill requires substantial active participation on the part of students, but there are not opportunities for students to take initiative or to make choices in directing their own learning. The course is not structured to utilize assessment information to individualize instruction to address student needs. If this were the case, teachers would utilize pre-tests to tailor student learning to just the letter sounds that they do not know, rather than teaching, lock step through the pacing chart, all 70 letter sounds, whether students already know them or not. When students spend a significant amount of time being taught skills they already know, they do not maximize their academic learning time. In addition, this course provides few opportunities for students to make connections across the curriculum. Even within the curriculum, teachers report that there is little connection between learning letter sounds, penmanship, and the reading assignments students are asked to do. Furthermore, because teachers are directed to teach the curriculum “exactly as it is written,” they do not do any lesson design, so there is little need or opportunity for teachers to collaborate on lesson design as called for as an indicator of quality instruction.

In contrast, teachers report that Soar to Success/Comprehension Focused does address most of the reading standards. Teachers felt that the reading material is high interest (although some students disagree), and that the strategies taught are helping students’ comprehension, although teachers struggle with how to organize the class, and keep all of the students engaged while they work with a small group. Although there are noted exceptions (READ 180 teachers and a few experienced reading teachers, and the more comprehensive reading classes we observed at Washington) the majority of the reading classes we observed failed to engage students in learning. (This issue is discussed in greater detail under the ***Reading Development for Targeted Students*** section.)

We observed a smaller sample of math classes (seven), but we did note some significant improvements in instruction in these classes. Lessons were more focused, utilized several active participation strategies, and we also found some teachers using real world applications in their mathematics instruction that students found engaging, such as balancing a checkbook or learning how a civil engineer calculates the number of cars a road can safely handle. In addition, three of the schools in our sample are part of the Techno-Learning grant. The combination of EEEI training and weekly coaching support from the technology coaches and standards coaches (at two schools) appeared to be a significant factor in improving the quality of teachers' lessons as well as teachers' renewed enthusiasm for teaching math.

We did not observe language arts, history, or science classes during this visit.

Reading Development for Targeted Students

The first target for this initiative is that the *Reading Development course is revised and in place at all schools*. The revised Reading Development program is actually a series of courses. Reading classes are in place at all of the middle schools in our sample, although not all schools are offering the same courses. The middle school reading development classes are viewed as a continuum of courses that are designed to target specific reading problems experienced by individual students. Language Intensive Phonemic Systems (LIPS) is designed to address phonemic awareness problems. Breaking the Code (BTC) addresses phonemic awareness and decoding problems. Two courses focus on comprehension problems: Soar to Success/Comprehension Focused, and READ 180. In each of our sample schools, students who scored below the 25th percentile on the reading portion of the SAT-9 are assigned to one of the reading courses.

Washington Intensive Learning Center has adopted a different approach to reading. Although Washington offers LIPS and Soar to Success for intensive reading instruction, there is a school-wide focus on reading, and all students have a reading class. The reading program at Washington is a comprehensive literature-based program that includes instruction on vocabulary, spelling, and comprehension with a strong focus on developing a love of reading by engaging students with high-interest literature. The entire Washington staff has participated in ongoing professional development with Janet Allen, a noted national expert in reading development in adolescents. In addition, Washington teachers meet weekly in villages with an instructional coach or an administrator. They develop lesson plans as a grade level team so that all teachers are teaching the same novel, with the same lesson plan. Teachers at Washington find the strategies and support with curriculum planning that they get to be very effective. They report that Janet Allen and the principal's approach have changed students' attitudes about reading. Not only does Janet Allen provide "masterful modeling," but she also knows middle school kids and provides the "hook" to motivate reluctant readers.

At all of the schools in our sample, we found that the reading department heads were quite experienced and knowledgeable about reading and served as an important resource to other teachers in their department. They lead sessions in analyzing student work, and

develop action plans for what teachers need to address based on what they learned from the student work samples. One reading department has organized a study group around Janet Allen's new book, *Yellow Brick Roads*, to learn more about effective instructional strategies.

The district suggested that the first indicator that the Reading Development program is being implemented is that the *Reading Development Course of Study is adopted by the Board*, and all courses currently offered have been approved. In addition, significant work has been done to develop placement and exit criteria for these courses, but the committee reviewing the Middle School Course of Study is still exploring the possible need for an extended reading block for struggling readers, and perhaps further differentiation in the reading course offerings to address the wide range of student needs.

The second indicator identified was that *Middle School reading assessments are used to make diagnostic instructional decisions*. The Reading department did develop a battery of assessments to determine placement in the appropriate reading course. A combination of SAT-9 scores, the Jerry Johns Informal Reading Assessment, and teacher recommendations were used to assign students to courses. Of these, only the running record portion of the Jerry Johns is potentially a diagnostic tool. These assessments were administered shortly after the start of the school year by teams from the middle school office with assistance from available staff at the school sites. It was a labor-intensive process that took several weeks, so that some students were not "placed" until a month or two into the school year. Teachers who participated in this process observed that the administration of these assessments varied considerably depending on who was administering the assessment.

Running Records can be a powerful diagnostic tool, but it requires considerable training, both in how to administer the test, and how to interpret the results to recommend an appropriate instructional treatment.² Very few reading teachers have sufficient training at this point to effectively use these assessments to inform their instruction. In addition, the Jerry Johns running records are an abbreviated version that focus on the number errors a student makes and the number of comprehension questions a student answers correctly. The Jerry Johns form does not take note of the cueing systems students are using when they make certain errors, which is a critical piece in analyzing the records and providing information to inform instruction. The way the Jerry Johns is used for placement provides teachers with the grade level at which students are reading. It does not provide the detailed diagnostic information that is most important to accelerate student learning. Moreover, even trained teachers find it extremely difficult to do one-on-one assessments in classes of 35 students. Even if teachers knew how to use diagnostic assessments to inform their instruction, the scripted curriculum of BTC as currently implemented does not allow for individualized instruction.

² Running Records were developed by the Reading Recovery program, which provides an average of one week of training just to learn to administer the assessment. Additionally, ongoing collaborative support and analysis sessions continue for an entire year, to learn to effectively analyze the record and determine the appropriate instructional interventions needed.

A new fluency assessment was introduced in December, the CBM (Curriculum-Based Measure), but this measure is a summative assessment, not a diagnostic tool. READ 180, is a notable exception, where a number of assessments are embedded in the program, providing the teacher with quite detailed information about individual students' strengths and weaknesses.

Although students were more appropriately placed this year, there were still significant problems with misplaced students. Too often, placement decisions were made based on space and scheduling, rather than the instructional needs of the student. Several students who were reading at grade level were placed in Reading Development classes; one student, in particular, was assigned to the course because he was a discipline problem and the class size was lower in this class. We discovered that several students were in BTC for the second time, even though it was clear from their classroom performance that this course was not addressing their needs. Even with the most enthusiastic teacher, the curriculum is dry and repetitive and does not engage students. One teacher told us that:

This is not something anybody really wants to sit and do for two hours – teachers or students.

We observed students “mouth” all the sounds without much thought, while their eyes and attention wandered around the room. Consequently, in most (but not all) BTC classes, disruptive behavior was a significant problem. This was true in some experienced teacher's classes as well as in those of new, inexperienced teachers.

The third indicator that this initiative is being implemented was, “*all middle schools have Reading Development courses with the same materials and goals and offering a variety of strategies to match the needs of struggling readers.*” The district suggested that an appropriate measure of this indicator would be that all Reading Development courses in all middle schools have trained teachers, curriculum, instructional materials, and assessments. With the exception of department heads and a few experienced teachers, several teachers admitted that they were not prepared to teach reading. The training they received in BTC and Soar to Success/Comprehension Focused was described as weak and not very helpful. Most teachers did not have the teacher manuals available during the training. A few referred to it as a “drive-by” overview, while another characterized it as “buckshot.”

Reaction to Soar to Success training was somewhat more mixed. Although it was very brief, some felt it was sufficient, because one really can “follow the script.” One teacher even hands the manual to students and lets them be teacher for the day, reading the scripted questions to their peers. One especially thoughtful new teacher found the overview of what good teachers do to be particularly helpful. She was able to use the information to reflect on her own reading strategies when reading for different purposes. She has incorporated her observations into her teaching by modeling and reflecting “out loud” with her students during read-alouds. Those who have had previous training in Reciprocal Teaching find the curriculum easy to implement, but most struggle with how to orchestrate instruction using a curriculum designed for a class size of seven students,

when they have 35 students in their class. Several, but not all, teachers are attempting to organize the class into centers with various activities for students to work on while teachers work with a small group of students. Teachers received little training in how to construct and manage centers. Nor did they receive any training in any other strategies that are “suggested” to improve reading comprehension, such as read-alouds, shared reading, guided reading, or literature circles.

Moreover, few classrooms have sufficient materials to support a balanced reading program. Very few reading classes have computers, or sufficient classroom libraries with books of various levels, interests, and genres to allow students’ choice. Very few classrooms (except READ 180 and reading classes at Washington) have books-on-tape available for students. Moreover, although teachers have made requests, they have not been shown effective models for the comprehension-focused course. The district has established three collaborative meetings during the year to provide teachers with opportunities to share experiences with teaching reading development courses, and to gather some tips from approaches that other teachers have used successfully. Most teachers report that these have been helpful, but they still want to be able to “see for themselves” what this looks like in an “optimal” implementation.

One of the areas in which teachers of BTC and Soar to Success/Comprehension Focused have struggled is the home reading requirement of 100 minutes per week. Depending on the teacher and the course, many teachers do not provide time for students to read in class. As a result the reading development class does little to get students “hooked” on reading, or teach them how to select high-interest books that are at their appropriate reading level. Several reading development teachers feel that home reading is the least successful part of their course, as they have no way to monitor what happens at home, other than through reading logs.

Finally, only seven of the 24 reading teachers we interviewed (mainly department heads and experienced reading teachers), have had any training in administering reading assessments. Experienced reading teachers report that the curriculum assessments are not very informative so they tend to rely on more individualized assessments such as running records or looking at student work. In contrast, READ 180 teachers benefit from almost daily assessment data on vocabulary, spelling, comprehension, and fluency, which are built into the program and generated by the computer program.

The second target for the Reading Development Initiative is that ***“All students who are struggling readers receive supplemental reading instruction and show gains in reading assessment scores.”*** One of the indicators identified for this target was that *“Students struggling in reading (as defined by the selected assessments) attend summer school reading development.”* We cannot adequately speak to this indicator as we have little data on this issue. We have very little knowledge as to who attended summer school, nor the impact of their attendance, other than there was a significant turnout. We learned that the district received more applications than there was space for, and yet they still had difficulty getting some the students with the greatest need to enroll. We also learned that the Soar to Success curriculum was piloted during summer school.

We did hear some very positive feedback from teachers who taught in the ELD (Elinglish Language Development) summer school reading program. Not only did teachers report that it was a valuable professional learning experience for them, but they also felt that it was a positive experience for students as well.

Measuring Student Attainment of Standards

The overall target for this initiative is that, ***“By June 2001, 75% of all students (excepting cognitively impaired special education students) will meet grade level standards in reading, language arts, mathematics, science, and history/social-science.”***

Two indicators were identified to monitor progress toward this target. First was that *“teachers use performance standards to determine students’ grades.”*

The district has invested a significant amount of effort into the development of performance assessments over the last five years through districtwide performance assessments in writing, math, and history, as well as multiple classroom embedded assessments to be used throughout the school year. The math and history departments have developed assessment portfolios, and End of Course exams that map backwards from the soon to be implemented High School Exit Exam. However, they are still struggling to change teachers’ attitudes about grading practices. In mathematics where an assessment portfolio has been in place for more than a year, even though teachers must certify students’ attainment of each standard in the portfolio, they told us they do not use these standards consistently as the basis for their grades. It is important to note that our sample of teachers were for the most part teaching either reading development or math development courses, which are graded pass/no credit, and consequently may not represent the majority of teachers’ grading practices across the district.

The second indicator the district has identified to measure the implementation of the this initiative was the *“Percentage of students receiving passing grades on district standards-based report card.”*

The department heads in mathematics, and history/social science departments have struggled with the development of a standards-based report card. Teachers are reluctant to adopt strict standards-based guidelines in grading. They continue to have passionate discussions about including homework and effort in calculating course grades. Consequently, they are still working on reaching agreement on common grading criteria, which continues to be controversial among teachers. Until they reach consensus on common grading criteria (performance expectations), a standards-based report will not equalize grading practices across the district, and “passing grades” will not have any consistent meaning. They are wise to move slowly, working to change attitudes before implementing a new policy that does not have the commitment of teachers.

The district has established benchmarks and exit criteria for reading development courses, but since some of these courses don’t address middle school standards, and these

courses are graded pass/no credit, standards are not used in grading. The district has, however, established common “grading” criteria for BTC, which includes 20% for homework, 20% for participation, and 60% on students’ performance on the assessment of letter sounds.

Revised Middle School Course of Study

The final initiative identified in the district’s proposal is to revise the Middle School Course of Study toward the goal that, “*All middle school students are enrolled in a rigorous and equitable program all day long.*”

The first indicator identified toward this end is that the “*Review Committee submits recommendations to the Board of Education.*” The development of a new Middle School Course of Study has been delayed for a number of reasons. Recent developments at the state level required the district to focus on realigning district standards to the revised state curriculum frameworks. The state also issued the California High School Exit Exam Blueprint, that will become a graduation requirement in 2004. Consequently, the district has been mapping backwards from the high school graduation requirements, to revise course content at the middle level. A committee has recently been formed to begin drafting a Revised Middle School Course of Study.

The second indicator suggesting that the “*Middle school course offerings are standard across the district,*” will require substantial work to achieve this goal. Due to significant differences in both the student and teacher populations at each school, there is currently substantial disparity in the variety and rigor of classes offered at district middle schools. Even with a consistent course of study at each school, the unequal distribution of experienced teachers results in significant differences in students’ opportunities to benefit from rigorous curriculum and instruction. Nonetheless, establishing a standard course of study that incorporates challenging instruction in the core disciplines as well as access to technology and electives such as art, music, and foreign language is an important step toward this goal.

Conclusions

In keeping with the history of standards reform, new initiatives always seem to take longer than anticipated. This is to be expected as the work of systemic change is extremely difficult and many of the challenges are uncharted. We are less troubled by the delays than we are by some of the inherent inconsistencies in the districts’ targets, and the indicators suggested as evidence to document their progress toward their goals. There are also some troubling contradictions between their goals and some of the programs and the strategies they have adopted to achieve those goals. Some of these points have been touched on in this report. We conclude by discussing three of these issues.

First is the issue of teacher training. LBUSD faces a daunting task of hiring 500-600 new teachers each year. They have developed a substantial strategic plan to provide ongoing support to these teachers for three years. This support includes training in the district’s

policies, standards, and professional development requirements. The requirements include training in EEEI, which provides urgently needed help in lesson planning and classroom management. It also incorporates subject matter training in the teacher's content areas, as well as training in reading strategies across all content areas. Supporting new teachers poses a significant challenge, as many of the teachers we interviewed were still completing their credentials and taking college courses at night, often resulting in conflicts and exhaustion, and making it difficult to participate in all the training that is offered.

The impact of large numbers of new teachers in one school deserves special consideration. This is a major issue at both Hamilton and Washington, which have 21 and 22 new teachers respectively. Even with the extensive schoolwide professional development in literacy at Washington, instructional improvements are slow to develop because inexperienced teachers are working on so many fronts at once. Fortunately, both of these schools have additional support from standards coaches. The strong BTSA program provides important support, as well. Despite these supports, schools with such significant numbers of new teachers need substantially more help. This is especially critical in a school like Hamilton that is on a multi-track schedule, where the entire department is never on duty at the same time.

Training in the curriculum that teachers were assigned to teach was especially problematic for Reading Development courses. Not only have several new courses been introduced in the last two years, but also many of the teachers assigned to teach these courses have no background in reading. The district's threshold for training was that at least 90% of Reading Development teachers would be trained to use the approved course materials. Almost all of the teachers we interviewed indicated that they had participated in the training for their course, which for Soar to Success/Comprehension Focused amounted to a two-hour overview of the curriculum. This raises the question of what it means to have "trained" teachers. These same teachers who were "trained" complain about the lack of training in strategies to organize the class, as well as the specific reading strategies (read-alouds, shared reading, independent reading, guided reading, literature circles) that are recommended for use in this course. Rather than counting numbers, a far more important and meaningful indicator for getting the district towards its goal of improving reading ability would be that teachers demonstrate that they have acquired sufficient knowledge and skill to teach reading effectively. Unless this happens, it is unrealistic to expect that students will significantly improve their reading skills.

There are some important lessons to be learned from the significant improvement in the quality of instruction observed among many of the participants in the Techno-Learning grant. In the beginning of the grant, the technology standards coaches focused on teaching the teachers to use the technology, both software and hardware. The coaches held teachers' hands as they struggled to learn a new medium. Now in their second year, they are coaching teachers on the development of high-powered lesson designs to help students understand the concepts they need to learn. One of the coaches noted in reflecting on the growth she has observed:

I think the coaching was really the key – the component that made this happen for these teachers. If they didn't have somebody come in every single week, well they certainly wouldn't have gotten as far as they did.

Second, is the issue of assessments that teachers are supposed to use to guide their instruction and the training needed to learn how to do that. As discussed earlier, while the district wants reading teachers to use assessments to make diagnostic instructional decisions, the assessments they are using are not diagnostic in nature. The one exception is the running records portion of the Jerry Johns, which is potentially a powerful diagnostic tool. However, most teachers teaching the reading development courses do not have sufficient training in either how to administer or how to interpret these tests. The majority of teachers that we interviewed have had no training in the use of assessments. Moreover, many of the teachers who were recruited to help out with the assessments in the beginning of the year in order to place students in reading classes, were not adequately trained to administer the assessments consistently. As a result, there were still a number of students who were assigned to courses that did not address their reading needs.

Finally, we are concerned about the inconsistency between the definitions or expectations for quality teaching and curriculum choices that do not utilize the desired teaching practices. The Long Beach teaching standards were developed to provide a framework for what all teachers should know and be able to do to effectively teach the content standards to all students. Although these standards have not been widely distributed or understood by teachers to date, this is an important step toward developing a standards-based system. Maintaining high standards of practice is critical to providing the supports students need to achieve at higher levels. The focus on EEEI training to develop strong instructional delivery of the content is also an important step in this direction. These developments make the choice of a scripted curriculum like Breaking the Code difficult to understand. Breaking the Code is a remedial course based on repetitive drill that does not foster the kinds of teaching called for in the teaching standards. It is not a course that allows for one-on-one assessments on a regular basis, or uses assessment data to target instruction to address individual student needs. It is not a curriculum that calls for teachers to exercise their professional judgment in designing lessons to reflect students' backgrounds, interests, or developmental levels. Instructional activities are "one size fits all," rather than differentiated to meet individual needs. The curriculum does not address middle school standards, and it does not develop enthusiasm for reading.

The targets identified by Long Beach Unified are important and ambitious goals. It is questionable whether the indicators and measures they have identified get at the core of those goals. It is vital that "all teachers and administrators know what a standards-based classroom looks like," but training in EEEI only addresses a very small part of that objective. Similarly, the goal that the quality of instruction improves in middle school classrooms is also essential, but EEEI training will only address a small part of this objective as well. Teaching to high standards requires substantial learning on the part of teachers in how to actively involve students in making meaning, rather than just accumulating information. Learning how to orchestrate new classroom roles and

relationships involves more than simply sharpening teaching skills. Teaching for understanding requires teachers to have comprehensive, in-depth knowledge of subject matter. These are the teaching practices the district teaching standards strive to achieve. Unfortunately, the indicators identified in the 1999 proposal (that are the focus of this report) do not adequately focus on what it will take to achieve the district's goals. The target goals are extremely important goals, but the indicators, while they may represent necessary steps, they are not sufficient, and are probably not the best measures for assessing the districts' progress toward reaching those goals.

Appendix A

Education Matters, Inc conducted its site visit to Long Beach Unified during the week of December 4-11, 2000. During that visit we spent one day at each of our five sample schools: Bancroft, Hamilton, Hill, Rogers, and Washington Intensive Learning Center. At each school we observed and interviewed Reading Development teachers, and at Hill, Rogers and Washington, we also met with math teachers. The data source for this report included observations of classrooms as well as interviews with a total of 34 teachers, 26 reading development teachers (including five reading department heads), and eight math teachers (including three department heads), as well as six standards coaches. We also interviewed principals and eleven central office staff.

As always, we appreciate the generosity of teachers and administrations who graciously made time in their all too busy schedules to talk with us.