

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 208 489

EA 013 971

TITLE Assistance Guide for Forming a Consortium to Improve School Programs. Revised Edition.

INSTITUTION California State Dept. of Education, Sacramento.

PUB DATE 81

NOTE 25p.

AVAILABLE FROM California State Department of Education, P.O. Box 271, Sacramento, CA 95802 (free).

EDRS PRICE MF01 plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.

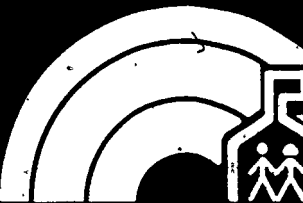
DESCRIPTORS *Consortia; Cooperative Programs; Elementary Secondary Education; Program Improvement; *School Districts

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this guide is to assist school districts that might wish to form a consortium in understanding how to do so, how to decide which activities to undertake, and how to ensure success for the consortium. The ideas and suggestions contained in the guide come primarily from the 17 program improvement consortia in operation during the 1978-79 school year and from the state department of education and county office staff members who worked with them. The program improvement consortia are clusters of school districts working together to provide leadership and support for the schools in their districts that are involved in the process of improving programs for their students. A listing of the consortia operating during the 1980-81 school year is presented in an appendix. (Author/IRT)

 * Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
 * from the original document. *

Ass



a Com to

**Assistance
Guide
for For
nsortium
Improve
School
Programs**

U S DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

- This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it
- Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality

Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy

forming

n

e

i

s

on

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

CA St. Dpt. of Ed.

THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

This publication was developed by the State Department of Education's Consortia Support Services Unit in cooperation with representatives of school improvement consortia. The document, which was edited and prepared for photo-offset production by the Bureau of Publications, California State Department of Education, was published by the Department, 721 Capitol Mall, Sacramento, CA 95814, and distributed under the provisions of the Library Distribution Act, 1981

2

3

Contents

	<i>Page</i>
Preface	v
Program Improvement Consortia Task Group Members	vi
Introduction	1
What Is a Consortium to Improve School Programs?	1
Why Form a Consortium?	1
Considering Membership in a Consortium	3
Forming a Consortium	4
Factors to Be Considered in Forming a Consortium	4
Steps in Forming a Consortium	5
Starting Consortium Activities	7
Determining the Scope of Consortium Activities	7
Deciding How the Districts in the Consortium Will Work Together	7
Developing the Consortium Agreement	8
Supporting the Consortia	10
Role of Offices of County Superintendents of Schools	10
Role of State Department of Education	10
Appendixes	12
A. School Improvement Consortia—1980-81	12
B. Sample Time Line for Forming a School Improvement Consortium	17
C. California Administrative Code, Title 5, Sections 4070 and 4071	18

Other Publications Available from the Department of Education

Assistance Guide for Forming a Consortium to Improve School Programs is one of approximately 450 publications that are available from the California State Department of Education. Some of the more recent publications or those most widely used are the following:

Accounting Procedures for Student Organizations (1979)	\$ 1.50
An Assessment of the Writing Performance of California High School Seniors (1977)	2.75
Bicycle Rules of the Road in California (1977)	1.50
California Guide to Parent Participation in Driver Education (1978)	3.15
California Private School Directory (1980)	5.00
California Public School Directory (1981)	11.00
California Public Schools Selected Statistics, 1978-79 (1980)	1.00
California School Accounting Manual (1981)	2.50
California School Energy Concepts (1978)	.85
California School Lighting Design and Evaluation (1978)	.85
California Schools Beyond Serrano (1979)	.85
California's Demonstration Programs in Reading and Mathematics (1980)	2.00
Child Care and Development Services: Report of the Commission to Formulate a State Plan (1978)	2.50
Computers for Learning (1977)	1.25
Discussion Guide for the California School-Improvement Program (1978)	1.50*†
District Master Plan for School Improvement (1979)	1.50*
English Language Framework for California Public Schools (1976)	1.50
Establishing School Site Councils: The California School Improvement Program (1977)	1.50*†
Genetic Conditions: A Resource Book and Instructional Guide (1977)	1.30
Guidance Services in Adult Education (1979)	2.25
Guide for Multicultural Education: Content and Context (1977)	1.25-
Guide for Ongoing Planning (1977)	1.10
Handbook for Instruction on Aging (1978)	1.75
Handbook for Planning an Effective Reading Program (1979)	1.50*
Handbook for Reporting and Using Test Results (1976)	8.50
A Handbook Regarding the Privacy and Disclosure of Pupil Records (1978)	.85
Health Instruction Framework for California Public Schools (1978)	1.35
History—Social Science Framework for California Public Schools (1981)	2.25
Improving the Human Environment of Schools (1979)	2.50
Liability Insurance in California Public Schools (1978)	2.00
A New Era in Special Education: California's Master Plan in Action (1980)	2.00
Parents Can Be Partners (1978)	1.35†
Pedestrian Rules of the Road in California (1979)	1.50
Pedestrian Rules of the Road in California—Primary Edition (1980)	1.50
Physical Education for Children, Ages Four Through Nine (1978)	2.50
Planning for Multicultural Education as a Part of School Improvement (1979)	1.25*
Planning Handbook (1978)	1.50*
Publicizing Adult Education Programs (1978)	2.00
Reading Framework for California Public Schools (1980)	1.75
Putting It Together with Parents (1979)	.85†
Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Integrated Educational Programs (1978)	2.60
School Program Development Manual for Schools Funded Through the Consolidated Application (1981)	1.50*
Science Framework for California Public Schools (1978)	1.65
Site Management (1977)	1.50
State Guidelines for School Athletic Programs (1978)	2.20
Student Achievement in California Schools (1980)	1.25
Students' Rights and Responsibilities Handbook (1980)	1.50†
Teaching About Sexually Transmitted Diseases (1980)	1.65
A Unified Approach to Occupational Education: Report of the Commission on Vocational Education (1979)	2.00

Orders should be directed to:

California State Department of Education
P.O. Box 271
Sacramento, CA 95802

Remittance or purchase order must accompany order. Purchase orders without checks are accepted only from government agencies in California. Sales tax should be added to all orders from California purchasers.

A complete list of publications available from the Department may be obtained by writing to the address listed above.

†Also available in Spanish, at the price indicated.

*Developed for implementation of AB 65.

Preface

This *Assistance-Guide for Forming a Consortium to Improve School Programs* was designed to be used by school districts that are exploring ways to improve and/or extend the services currently being provided their schools, by districts that are thinking about becoming a member of a program improvement consortium, and also by the members of established program improvement consortia.

The guide describes what a program improvement consortium is, how it is formed, how it might determine and carry out consortium activities, and how other agencies work to assist and support consortia. The description of the consortium builds on the experiences and knowledge of those district representatives that were members of program improvement consortia during the 1978-79 school year as well as Department of Education personnel and staff members of offices of county superintendents of schools that worked with consortia; however, the description does not reflect adequately the enthusiasm of member districts for program improvement consortia nor for the benefits from consortium activities that they see or experience at the school site level. Therefore, it is recommended that any reader of this guide who is interested in learning more about program improvement consortia talk to a member of one or more of the consortia listed in Appendix A.

If there are any questions about this guide or program improvement consortia in general, please call a member of the Consortia Support Unit at (916) 323-6151: Karen Olsen, Manager; Vivian Ford, Consultant; June Rice, Consultant; Barbara Sandman, Consultant; and Vivian Silver, Consultant.

WALTER DENHAM
Chief, Office of School Support Services,
Consolidated Programs Division

DAVIS W. CAMPBELL
Deputy Superintendent for Programs

REX C. FORTUNE, JR.
Associate Superintendent of Public Instruction,
Consolidated Programs Division

Program Improvement Consortia Task Group Members

Field Representatives

Shirley Black, Long Beach Unified School District, Freeway Consortium
Barbara Darpinian, Hughson Union Elementary School District, Big Valley Consortium
Marian Gill, Montebello Unified School District, Freeway Consortium
Richard Gordon, Morgan Hill Unified School District, South Santa Clara Consortium
Alyce Hamilton, Azusa Unified School District, Azusa Consortium
Lee Hilton, Novato Unified School District, Wine Country Consortium
Sue Holtcamp, Solano Beach Elementary School District, San Diego Coastal Consortium
Judy James, Santee Elementary School District, San Diego Central Consortium
Vera Jashni, Culver City Unified School District, Los Angeles Mountain, Ocean Desert Consortium
Marcia Johnson, Oceanside City Unified School District, North San Diego Consortium
Ron Johnson, Chula Vista City Elementary School District, San Diego Central Consortium
Mary Kay Kremer, Azusa Unified School District, Azusa Consortium
Perry Lindsay, Long Beach Unified School District, Freeway Consortium
Mary Ann Overton, Office of the Stanislaus County Superintendent of Schools, Big Valley Consortium
Harley Roth, Office of the Santa Clara County Superintendent of Schools
Louise Simpson, Ocean View Elementary School District, Orange County Consortium
Phil Ward, Saratoga Union Elementary School District, West Valley Consortium
Bob Wells, Napa Unified School District, Wine Country Consortium
Joe Weiss, Cupertino Union Elementary School District, Santa Clara Tri-District Consortium
Heloise Wright, Office of the Monterey County Superintendent of Schools, Monterey Consortium

State Department of Education Representatives

Diane Brooks, District Support Services
Judy Cotter, School Support Services
Walter Denham, Development and Training, Consortia, and Secondary Support Services
Marion Joseph, Executive Office
Karen Olsen, Consortia Support Services
Barbara Sandman, Consortia Support Services
Vivian Silver, Consortia Support Services

Introduction

What Is a Consortium to Improve School Programs?

Program improvement consortia are clusters of school districts working together to provide leadership and support for the schools in their districts, from prekindergarten through the twelfth grade, that are involved in the process of improving programs for their students.

Through working together, districts in consortia are establishing school-to-school and district-to-district communication networks for identifying the needs of schools and for sharing experiences, ideas, and resources to assist schools in resolving those needs. The activities of a consortium are those which the consortium deems most effective in supporting each school in each phase of its program improvement cycle. The activities to support the schools typically include assistance in school-level planning, reviewing school plans, sharing the results of the plan review with the school, helping the school translate its plan into action, providing staff and help in curriculum development in priority areas, helping identify and providing resources for program assistance designed to meet the needs identified in the school plan during program review, and so forth. Districts in a consortium also provide mutual support in the development of district master plans.

Since the member districts comprising each consortium for improving school programs have unique needs, strengths, interests, and styles of operating, the way consortium activities are conducted varies from consortium to consortium. But the purpose of program improvement consortia is common among all consortia; that is, to support and assist each school as it strives to develop and maintain a high quality program for each student, and in so doing, to maximize the resources available to the schools from the districts, individually and collectively.

When assistance at each of the steps in the program improvement cycle is provided locally, schools within consortia benefit in a number of ways. Especially important is continuity in planning and carrying out support services. When such assistance is designed by people who are close to and knowledgeable about the school, the assistance can be precise in meeting the priority needs of each school and in preparing the school for carrying out and following up on each step in the program improvement process.

While the focus of consortium activities is on schools using the consolidated application, all schools within

consortia can benefit from participation in the program improvement activities of the consortia.

Why Form a Consortium?

In the fall of 1979, representatives from the 17 program improvement consortia that were functioning during the 1978-79 school year met with State Department of Education staff members to discuss their experiences as consortia members. They discussed why they formed a consortium, what benefits their districts and schools received from consortium activities, how they formed their consortia, and how they managed the work of the consortium.

When asked, "Why did you become interested in a consortium?" they responded:

- We were looking for some mutual support in our program improvement efforts.
- We wanted some new, fresh ideas based on what works at other schools.
- We started sharing information among schools in our district, grew to doing mock reviews, then suddenly found that we were ready to do program reviews with other districts and to give each other program support; we were becoming a program improvement consortium.
- We felt that our staffs would benefit through extensive involvement in program review and plan review training.
- We didn't want to be out there all by ourselves.
- We're a small district and we wanted some new resources.

Once the districts became members of consortia, they found that the benefits to their schools were more extensive than they had anticipated. In discussing the benefits of participation in consortia, the members of the group listed the following:

- The consortium is a support group for dealing with program improvement activities at both district and school levels.
- The involvement of greater numbers of teachers, aides, administrators, board members, parents, and secondary students in program planning, implementation, and evaluation increased local ownership of programs.
- Because more people are trained to review plans and programs, program development assistance can be provided to more schools.

- More resources in greater variety are available to schools for follow-up implementation of program and plan review recommendations.
- There can be greater flexibility in carrying out the steps of the improvement process.
- The people who review the school plans and programs are more knowledgeable about the districts and their schools and can make recommendations for improvement that are more helpful to the schools.
- All schools in a district reap the benefits of greater district involvement in and understanding of planning, implementation, and evaluation

procedures, and of having a resource bank of local people trained in these improvement processes.

The purpose of this *Assistance Guide for Forming a Consortium to Improve School Programs* is to assist school districts that might wish to form a consortium in understanding how to do so, how to decide which activities to undertake, and how to ensure success for the consortium. The ideas and suggestions contained within this guide came primarily from the experiences of the 17 program improvement consortia in operation during the 1978-79 school year and of the State Department of Education and county office staff members who worked with them.

Considering Membership in a Consortium

Early in the process of considering whether or not to participate with other districts as a consortium member, a school district should review past and current program improvement efforts and activities, assess how effective they have been, and identify those factors which have contributed to the present state of the school programs. School site council, school advisory council, and/or bilingual education committee members should be involved in this review as well as district office personnel, board members, school staff members, other parents and community members, and students in secondary schools.

In reviewing past and present improvement efforts, the district should attempt to find answers to questions like the following:

- What are the expectations of our community for our schools?
- How well do we understand what the program at each school is planned to accomplish?
- What kinds of support have we been giving schools in planning and implementing effective programs, including those funded by school improvement, ESEA Title I, state compensatory education, and providing those services to limited- and non-English-speaking students?
- What resources within the district are available to help us plan, implement, and evaluate programs, and how well have we used them?
- What kinds of self-evaluation processes have we used, and how have we used the results of these processes?
- How well have our schools used program review and other kinds of evaluation findings as a basis for making changes in their school plans and programs?
- How effectively have we at the district level used program review, plan review, and other evaluation findings to determine what assistance should be provided to the schools?
- How effective and complete is communication between the district office and our schools?
- How much sharing of information and resources is there among our schools?
- What special needs have we identified in our school programs? What specific strengths?

After the district has reviewed the effectiveness of its program improvement activities, the needs and strengths of the school programs, and the availability of necessary resources, the next step is to consider

how participation in a consortium could help make current program improvement efforts more effective at the school sites. In other words, what benefits would the district and the schools within the district derive from participation in a program improvement consortium?

The final and most important step for a district to take in considering whether or not to become a member of a program improvement consortium is to determine whether it is ready to accept the additional degree of responsibility for the success of its program improvement efforts that accompanies increased local ownership of those processes and the ways in which they are practiced.

Once the district has decided that membership in a consortium would be advantageous and that it is ready to take on the greater responsibility for the effectiveness of program improvement activities, it is time to identify other districts that might be interested in forming a consortium.

In reaching out to identify other districts that might be interested in forming a program improvement consortium, districts should consider building upon existing interdistrict connections. For example, many districts have been meeting together to share information and/or to plan ways to provide for the needs of special groups of students, such as special education students or bilingual education students. Similarly, many elementary schools have developed proficiency standards by working with the high schools that their students will attend. In other instances districts have become linked together by the services of a teacher center or by regular meetings with their county office staff members. In each of these instances, the schools and districts might consider expanding their current activities to include the program improvement activities of planning assistance, plan review, program development assistance, and program review.

While a district is identifying other districts interested in forming a program improvement consortium and discussing with them the benefits of working together to assist their schools as they work to improve their school programs, consortium development moves into its second phase—that of considering together such factors as the potential size of the consortium, the distances between districts, the particular mix of districts, and the resources available to them and the potential costs and benefits of becoming a consortium.

Forming a Consortium

Prior to making a commitment to form a consortium, districts interested in becoming consortium members will need to consider together the following factors which can either facilitate or inhibit the successful functioning of the consortium: size, distance, mix of districts, and potential costs.

Factors to Be Considered in Forming a Consortium

Size. The districts will need to think about the number of districts which could work closely and effectively together within a consortium. Currently operating consortia vary in size from three to 17 districts. A rule of thumb to use in considering the size of a consortium is that it should be:

- Large enough to encompass a sufficient diversity of schools and resources so that varying educational philosophies and practices of the schools can provide stimulation to the program improvement efforts of each district; and
- Small enough to ensure the capability of interaction with each school to provide needed assistance and to involve a large number of people at both the school and district levels in consortium activities.

Distance. The geographical arrangement of the districts in a consortium should make distances between them short enough to permit regular interaction among people from member districts. Schools will be unable to implement successfully the program improvement processes of planning, program development assistance, and program review if geographical distances restrict support or assistance activities to a "one-shot" endeavor.

Mix of districts. Other important considerations for potential consortium members are understanding the educational philosophy and practices of the other districts and the reservoir of resources that could be made available to the consortium as a whole. Districts should consider the compatibility of the educational philosophies and practices of potential member districts while at the same time recognizing the advantages of combining a diversity of ideas and practices. Districts should ask themselves and each other questions such as:

- Would there be sufficient divergence among school programs and educational practices to enable school and district people to expand their

thinking and enrich the process of program improvement?

- Would the districts have schools with similar programs or needs?
- Would there be a meaningful ethnic and racial balance to meet program staff and student needs?
- Would there be a sufficient number of secondary and elementary schools to permit articulation from preschool through grade twelve, as well as articulation and mutual assistance and support across grade levels?

In considering becoming consortium members, districts should compare known resources or resource needs with those of other districts. If each district has carefully reviewed past and current program improvement efforts and activities, the resources in its own district that could be shared with other districts as well as the resources needed by the schools within each district should be evident. It is important to note that the term resources includes schools that have been particularly successful in developing quality programs, or program elements, teachers or groups of teachers with particular talents or skills, the talents and skills of parents or parent groups, as well as institutional and personnel resources of each district office, county offices, local colleges and universities, and other agencies within the local area of the districts. For example, a district with an increasing number of limited- and non-English-speaking students could benefit from knowing how a neighboring district developed and implemented its program designed to meet the needs of its LEP youngsters.

Potential costs. In determining the potential costs of the planned activities of the consortium, member districts should consider first the extent to which the responsibilities for carrying out those activities overlap or are consistent with responsibilities already carried by the district or school personnel within each district in which consortium activities may be a means for achieving the goals of existing activities. A critical step for consortium members is to recognize that the planned services to schools can come as the result of a redefinition of some responsibilities or reconceptualization of what needs to be done, rather than as additional tasks.

The number of person days expected to be needed to carry out the work of the consortium will vary with the range of activities the consortium plans to under-

take. Districts should estimate the number of person days needed to carry out the possible consortium activities by relating that need to the need of services to the schools within their own district. Some consortia have allotted people time to consortium activities based on the enrollment within their district; others have used the number of consolidated application schools within the district or the number of school plans and/or programs to be reviewed as the basis for determining how many person days to allocate to the consortium pool.

When estimating the cost of consortium activities, districts should balance that cost against the benefits from increasing the effectiveness of the school programs.

The State Department of Education provides fiscal support to consortia to help them carry out their planned activities. During the 1979-80 school year, this fiscal support amounts to the equivalent of \$50 for each school receiving School Improvement, ESEA Title I, and/or State Compensatory Education funding, plus \$400 for each secondary school scheduled to receive a program review. These funds may be used by the consortia in any way necessary for successful implementation of the activities described in the consortium agreement.

Some of the costs of consortium activities may be supported by centralized services funds or funds that have been allocated by schools for staff development. For example, the involvement of district staff in the routine functioning and selected activities of the consortium should be considered as a part of their job of providing the stimulation and resources for continuing program improvement efforts in the schools within the district. The involvement of school-level people in the activities of the consortium should be recognized as professional development for those people, which in turn will be of benefit to the total school staff.

Steps in Forming a Consortium

Once districts have decided that consortium membership would be beneficial for their schools and that they are ready to take on consortium responsibilities, and once they have identified other districts equally interested in forming a consortium, what happens next? This section describes the basic steps in forming a consortium, which are:

1. Develop an understanding of and commitment to the concept and the activities of consortia throughout each district. The development of an understanding and commitment to the consortium concept is of greatest importance, for without the understanding and commitment of the governing board and superintendent of each district,

the consortium will not be successful in stimulating continued program improvement at each of the schools within the consortium and in supporting the activities of the consortium. The following suggestions may be helpful to districts ready to form a consortium:

- a. Understanding school improvement consortia and how they function:
 - (1) Meet with people from existing consortia to find out what they are doing and how it works for them. (See Appendix A for a list of consortia.)
 - (2) Meet with county office personnel to discuss the role the county office will play in supporting the consortium as well as the availability of resources in the county.
 - (3) Contact the Consortia Support Services Unit of the Department of Education to set up a meeting between the staff members and representatives from the districts that are thinking about forming a consortium.
- b. Develop commitment to the concept of consortia:
 - (1) Invite board members to visit schools to see the programs in action and to understand better what the program improvement process can be.
 - (2) Give governing board members current information on how the processes of planning, implementation, and evaluation are occurring in their schools. This knowledge can become a springboard from which they can make a decision concerning the benefits of joining a consortium.
 - (3) Invite persons from other consortia to share information with the superintendent and board members about how their consortia have functioned and the benefits their districts and schools have derived from the consortia.
 - (4) Explain to school principals, staff members, and school site councils/school advisory councils/bilingual education committees of the districts the purposes, goals, and activities of the consortium through written documents and/or in-service training meetings.
2. Contact the Consortium Support Services Unit to set up a meeting with the district superintendents and their staff representatives and members of the Executive Office of the Department of Education. The purpose of this meeting would be to clarify any questions or concerns the superintendents and their staff members may have

about program improvement consortia, how they function, the relationship of the consortia to the Department, and so forth. It also will enable a shared understanding among the superintendents of the districts involved of the purpose of *their* consortium.

3. Send a letter of intent to form a consortium to the Department of Education, Consortium Support Services Unit. The letter of intent is a signal to the Department that the districts named in the letter are ready to form a consortium. Upon receipt of the letter, a member of the Consortium Support Services Unit will be assigned to

the group to assist the districts in determining consortium activities, to help in the development of the consortium agreement, and, in general, to act as a resource person for the group.

4. Develop the consortium agreement. Please see pages 8 and 9 of this guide for a discussion of this step.
5. Obtain approval of the agreement by the governing board of each school district of the consortium.
6. Submit the agreement, signed by each district representative, to the Department of Education for approval.

Starting Consortium Activities

Determining the Scope of Consortium Activities

The activities selected by a program improvement consortium will vary and should be planned to meet the needs of the schools and students within the consortium. Wherever a consortium decides to begin its activities, it should be kept in mind that the activities implemented should be part of the schools' program improvement process of planning, implementing, and evaluating. Planning, implementation, and evaluation are a cycle of activities that support each other, build on each other, and occur on an ongoing basis. Undertaking only one activity in isolation of others will, in the long run, inhibit overall program improvement. On the other hand districts should recognize the developmental nature of consortia and begin with those activities they can implement successfully in the first year and plan for phasing in additional activities as they are ready to take on additional responsibilities.

Consortium activities include:

1. Planning

- a. Assisting SSC, SAC, or BEC and other school planners understand basic planning procedures and how to organize for planning
- b. Assisting in the development and/or modification of the school's planned program and school plan
- c. Reviewing school plans and providing feedback to school planners

2. Implementation

- a. Assistance in translating plans into action through sharing of resources and the provision of joint staff development or curriculum development based on the needs of the schools
- b. Providing follow-up assistance based on the needs identified in plan and program review
- c. Sharing district master plan ideas and strategies

3. Evaluation

- a. Assisting schools in making self-assessments of how well their programs are working
- b. Conducting program reviews
- c. Sharing successful ongoing planning and evaluation procedures

Where a consortium begins in the program improvement cycle depends upon what member districts have determined to be their needs and the needs of their schools, their resources and the resources of their

schools, and their readiness to accept responsibility for one or more school improvement activities.

In deciding what activities to undertake:

- Ideas can be generated from the needs assessment conducted by each district prior to the formation of the consortium. Discussion of the needs assessment should involve administrators, program directors, curriculum specialists, and evaluators at the district level, school site council members, school district advisory councils, and bilingual education committee members, school staffs and students at the school level.
- The district master plans of each participating district should be reviewed to determine what strategies designed for district support to school programs could be carried out through the consortium activities.
- Ideas can come from joint analyses of school plan reviews, school self-assessments, program review reports, program evaluations (including student achievement data), staff development needs assessments and evaluations, and district and school advisory committee and/or school site council minutes.
- Ideas could be generated from joint discussions among leaders at the schools and districts of available resources and the use of those resources.

In determining their activities, members of consortia should begin with those activities with which they are most comfortable, taking care to undertake those which can be successfully implemented while planning when and how other program improvement activities will be added. It should be the intent of all those involved in program improvement to implement over a period of time each of the activities cited above.

After deciding where to enter the program improvement cycle—that is, what activities to undertake first—the consortium's next major decision is how to carry out those activities in relation to the needs of the schools in the consortium. A steering committee, as described in the following section, can play a major role in making that decision.

Deciding How the Districts in the Consortium Will Work Together

Since consortia vary in size, composition, and location of districts as well as in the goals and activities

selected, the ways in which consortia function also vary. Generally, each district assigns on an annual basis one or two people, such as the assistant superintendent for instructional services or the director of curriculum and/or the consolidated programs director, as the district representatives to the consortium. These people form the steering committee of the consortium. From the membership of the steering committee, one person is designated as contact person with the State Department of Education.

Each steering committee establishes its own way of working, such as times and frequency of meetings, methods of communication among member districts, and roles and responsibilities of individual members. The definition of roles and assignment of responsibilities is dependent on the goals of the consortium and the kinds of activities it undertakes.

The primary tasks of the steering committee are:

- To plan for and direct the implementation of consortium program improvement activities
- To communicate consortium plans, implementation status of improvement activities, and the success or lack of success of the activities to other district personnel, to school staffs of each member district, and to the State Department of Education
- To evaluate consortium activities while those activities are proceeding as well as at the end of the year
- To modify activities, as necessary, based on evaluation findings

The degree of planning engaged in by consortia ranges from informal discussion-type planning to the development of very specific written plans as to how the consortium is to function. In either case it is essential that everyone knows what is to be done and how, who is responsible, and so forth. How a consortium goes about planning, how formal the process is, and the scope or completeness of the plans are matters of choice by the consortium.

Knowledge of the success or effectiveness of consortium activities is important for both the member districts of the consortium and for the State Department of Education. Evaluation procedures should be designed to permit mid-course changes, as necessary, as well as to determine the effectiveness of the activities as a whole. Such evaluation procedures should be identified at the same time as the steering committee members are planning consortium activities. Evaluative feedback from school staffs and district personnel is essential.

Probably the greatest potential impediment to successful consortia functioning is lack of communication about consortium activities between the district office staff and their schools and between the district's

representative to the steering committee and other members of the district office staff. While determining how the consortium will function, steering committee members should give particular thought to how they will keep the school and other district personnel involved in determining the goals and activities of the consortia and how the committee will receive input from the schools and districts about those goals and activities. Time spent in establishing and using communication channels that permit free-flowing communication within and among the districts at all levels will pay off in greater understanding of and commitment to consortia activities; hence, increasing the effectiveness of those activities and their benefits to schools.

Developing the Consortium Agreement

The consortium agreement reflects the decisions made by the districts in the consortium concerning the activities of the consortium and how they will be carried out. It serves as a vehicle for communication of those decisions within and between the member districts as well as the framework for implementing the decisions.

The consortium agreement is also the legal contractual document between the State Department of Education and the districts of the consortium. The agreement is developed by the representatives from each district who serve as the steering committee, with input from each district and assistance as-needed from the Department of Education, county office personnel, and/or established consortia. While there is no required format, the agreement must include, at a minimum:

- The name of the consortium
- The names of participating districts and, if appropriate, offices of county superintendents of schools
- A description of planned consortium activities¹
- Signatures of a representative of the school district governing board of each participating district or office of the county superintendent of schools
- Date of signing

Should the consortium decide to undertake additional activities after the agreement has been completed, an addendum to the agreement can be submitted to the Department of Education.

It is best to keep the initial agreement simple enough to be able to cover or act as an umbrella for the entire scope of activities a consortium plans to

¹If the consortium plans to conduct program reviews, the agreement must meet the requirements of California Administrative Code, Title 5, sections 4070 and 4071. See Appendix B.

undertake. A consortium may wish to contact other consortia listed at the end of this document if samples of existing agreements are needed.

Please note that agreements must be renewed annually.

In developing the consortium agreement, a specific time line is an important factor in timely completion of the agreement. A suggested time line² is:

- Schedule meetings among consortia representatives to draft the agreement.

²A more detailed time line may be found in Appendix C.

- Provide time for discussing within each district the preparation of the first draft of the agreement.
- Revise the first draft by using feedback from each district review.
- Allow time for a review by each district of the final draft; modify as necessary.
- Schedule time for each governing board to approve the final agreement.
- Allow time for submission of the final agreement to the Department of Education.

Consortium Support Services Unit members are available to assist consortia in the development of the consortium agreement.

Supporting the Consortia

Support for program improvement consortia is available from many sources. General support can be found in local, state, or federally supported teacher centers; in local universities or colleges; in local, state, or federally sponsored service agencies within the consortium area. It is helpful to the schools within a consortium for the steering committee not only to list for its schools the potential support agencies in its area but also to establish contact with the agencies, to explain the purpose of the consortium, and to explore with the agencies how its services can best be used by the schools.

The roles of other educational agencies in supporting consortia—the offices of county superintendents of schools and the State Department of Education—are described below.

Role of Offices of County Superintendents

Although the consortium is based on an agreement among school districts, the office of the county superintendent of schools can play an extremely important role in consortium formation and successive activities. The role of the county superintendent's office is, in large part, dependent on the size of the population within the county and the number of the consortia within the county. If the county is populous and there are several consortia within it, county office staff may act most effectively as continuing resource and support people to the individual consortia as they carry out their activities. In addition, county office staff may provide an effective communication link among the consortia in the county, sharing what has worked well for the various consortia and what has been less successful and putting consortia in direct communication with each other.

When the county has a small population and has only one or two consortia, the county may serve as a direct participant in the consortium or consortia. In these instances the resources of the county are as readily available to the consortium as the resources of any member district.

In other counties, the county office may take part in the planned activities of some consortia but not in others within the county, because the decision of whom to involve is primarily that of the districts forming a consortium. But in all instances, the county office can be a support agency for consortia either directly, as described above, or indirectly by being part of the resources for the consortium.

Role of the State Department of Education

The State Department of Education plays several roles in relation to consortia: the roles of assisting, approving, supporting, and validating consortia activities.

Assisting. The Department of Education is committed to the concept of consortia for improving school programs and the promise it holds for every school seeking to improve the quality of the educational experiences of its students. The extent of this commitment is evidenced in part by the establishment of the Consortia Support Services Unit within the Department.

Members of the Consortia Support Services Unit are available to assist potential consortia members in forming a consortium, in developing an agreement, and in formalizing the procedures for conducting the activities of the consortium by:

- Providing information about how other groups of districts have established themselves as a consortium and how they have implemented their activities
- Putting districts in contact with established consortia
- Assisting in the development of the consortium agreement
- Providing technical assistance to consortia as they carry out their activities—such as information specific to planning and plan review, the criteria to be used in selecting schools for program reviews, assistance in scheduling program reviews, and so forth
- Arranging for training for consortia members in the program improvement activities of plan and program development and review

Approving. The Department has the responsibility of approving annually all newly formed and continuing program improvement consortia. It also has the responsibility for ensuring that such clustering of districts will be effective in fostering continuing program improvement in the schools of those districts. If the Department believes that a particular grouping of districts will not be able to stimulate continuing program improvement of the schools within those districts, it may withhold approval of the proposed consortium. Such a decision would be made only if it were clearly

evident to the Department that the degree of readiness of the districts involved to accept the responsibilities that accompany a program improvement consortium poses a serious risk to successful implementation of consortium activities.

Supporting. The supporting role played by Department staff members on behalf of the consortia includes:

- Keeping consortia abreast of departmental, State Board of Education, and legislative decisions that can affect how they or their schools function
- Acting as a resource person for the consortia within the Department—that is, identifying departmental resources that may be helpful to consortia
- Identifying the potential resources of people and places in the regions of the consortia

Validating. A key responsibility of the State Department of Education is to ensure statewide consistency in the execution of program improvement activities. One method used by the Department is the development of the forms and procedures to be used statewide in plan and program reviews. Another is to provide training in their use. In order to ensure that the program improvement activities within consortia are consistent with those in other districts and areas of the state, a process of validating consortia activities has been established. This process includes on-site validations of consortium activities during program review in which Department staff members join consortia review teams for the purpose of validating the review procedures as well as review findings. Validation of plan review procedures and findings is also a part of the validation process.

While the major purpose of these validation procedures is to ensure statewide consistency, another purpose is to determine the adequacy of the training of the consortium people performing the activity and to provide retraining as necessary. If the Department should find during the validation process that the findings of a plan or program review conducted by a consortium are incomplete or inaccurate, the Department may take corrective action, such as providing retraining for reviewers, providing direct assistance in future reviews, and/or reconducting the review.

Evaluation of the degree of success of consortium activities is essential to each consortium as well as to the Department of Education. For the purpose of reporting to its governing agencies (the State Board of Education and the California Legislature), it is necessary that the Department receive from each consortium an annual evaluation report describing the results of its activities. It would be helpful if these consortium evaluation reports were received in the Department before the first of September of each year.

Once each program improvement consortium has established contact with the various support agencies within its geographical area as well as its county office and the Consortia Support Services Unit within the Department of Education, it becomes the responsibility of the consortium to identify and utilize the assistance and supportive resources within those agencies that will enable the consortium to fulfill its purpose—that is, to support and assist each school within the consortium as it strives to develop and maintain a high quality program for each student.

Appendix A

School Improvement Consortia, 1980-81

Consortia, by County

Member districts

Butte, Glenn, and Tehama Counties

ISHI Consortium
c/o Diane Wilkinson
Office of the Butte County Superintendent of Schools
1857 Bird St.
Oroville, CA 95965
(916) 534-4469

Butte County:

Chico Unified
Gridley Union Elementary
Oroville Union High
Paradise Unified

Butte County Coöperative:

Bangor Union Elementary
Biggs Unified
Durham Unified
Feather Falls Union Elementary
Golden Feather Union Elementary
Gridley Union High
Manzanita Elementary
Palermo Union Elementary
Pioneer Union Elementary
Thermalito Union Elementary

Glenn County:

Orland Cooperative
Orland Joint Union Elementary
Orland Joint Union High
Willows Unified

Glenn County Cooperative:

Capay Joint Union Elementary
Hamilton Union Elementary
Hamilton Union High
Lake Elementary
Plaza Elementary
Princeton Joint Unified
Stony Creek Joint Unified

Tehama County:

Red Bluff Union Elementary

Corning Cooperative:

Corning Union Elementary
Corning Union High

Tehama County Cooperative:

Antelope Elementary
Bend Elementary
Elkins Elementary
Evergreen Union Elementary
Flournoy Union Elementary
Gerber Union Elementary
Kirkwood Elementary
Lassen View Union Elementary
Los Molinos Unified
Manton Joint Union Elementary
Mineral Elementary
Plum Valley Elementary
Red Bluff Union High
Reeds Creek Elementary
Richfield Elementary

Humboldt County

Humboldt Consortium
c/o Ron Flenner
Office of the Humboldt County
Superintendent of Schools
901 Myrtle Ave.
Eureka, CA 95501
(707) 445-5411

Arcata Elementary
Bridgeville Elementary
Cuddeback Union Elementary
Cutten Elementary
Fieldbrook Elementary
Fortuna Union Elementary
Jacoby Creek Elementary
McKinleyville Union Elementary
Pacific Union Elementary
Rio Dell Elementary
Southern Humboldt Joint Unified

Los Angeles County

Antelope Valley Consortium
c/o George Turner
Lancaster Elementary School District
P.O. Box 1750
Lancaster, CA 93534
(805) 948-4661

Antelope Valley Union High
Eastside Union Elementary
Keppel Union Elementary
Lancaster Elementary
Palmdale Elementary
Soledad-Agua Dulce Union Elementary

Westside Cooperative:
Hughes-Elizabeth Lakes Union Elementary
Westside Union Elementary
Wilsona Elementary

Azusa Consortium
c/o Frank Lopes
Azusa Unified School District
P.O. Box 500
Azusa, CA 91702
(213) 967-6211

Azusa Unified
Baldwin Park Unified
Bassett Unified
Bonita Unified
Charter Oak Unified
Claremont Unified
Covina Valley Unified
Walnut Valley Unified
West Covina Unified

Beachfront Consortium
c/o Virginia Gembica
El Segundo Unified School District
641 Sheldon St.
El Segundo, CA 90245
(213) 322-4500

El Segundo Unified
Hermosa Beach City Elementary
Manhattan Beach City Elementary
Redondo Beach City Elementary
South Bay Union High
Torrance Unified
Wiseburn Elementary

BL-ST Consortium
c/o Tom Brierly
South Pasadena Unified School District
P.O. Box B
South Pasadena, CA 91030
(213) 799-1104

Beverly Hills Unified
La Canada Unified
South Pasadena Unified
Temple City Unified

Freeway Consortium
c/o Keith Shattuck
Norwalk-La Mirada Unified School District
12820 S. Pioneer Blvd.
Norwalk, CA 90650
(213) 868-0431

ABC Unified
Downey Unified
Hacienda-La Puente Unified
Montebello Unified
Norwalk-La Mirada Unified

Consortia, by county

LA-MOD County Consortium
c/o Vera Jashni
Culver City Unified School District
4034 Irving Place
Culver City, CA 90230
(213) 839-4361

San Gabriel Consortium
c/o James DiPeso
Mt. View Elementary School District
2850 N. Mt. View Rd.
El Monte, CA 91732
(213) 575-2151

Whittier Consortium
c/o Sheila Wells
Little Lake City Elementary School District
10515 S. Pioneer Blvd.
Santa Fe Springs, CA 90670
(213) 868-8241

Marin, Napa, and Sonoma Counties

Wine Country Consortium
c/o Bob Wehs
Napa Valley Unified School District
2425 Jefferson St.
Napa, CA 94558
(707) 252-5514

Monterey County

Monterey County Consortium
c/o Heloise Wright
Office of the Monterey County Superintendent of Schools
P.O. Box 80851
Salinas, CA 93912
(408) 424-0654

Member districts

Castaic Union Elementary
Culver City Unified
Glendale Unified
Las Virgenes Unified
Oak Park Unified (Ventura County)
Newhall Elementary
Santa Monica Unified
Saugus Union Elementary
Sulphur Springs Union Elementary
William S. Hart Union High

El Monte Elementary
Mountain View Elementary
Valle Lindo Elementary

East Whittier City Elementary
El Rancho Unified
Little Lake City Elementary
Los Nietos Elementary
South Whittier Elementary
Whittier City Elementary
Whittier Union High
Los Angeles County Office

Napa Valley Unified
Novato Unified
Santa Rosa Elementary
Santa Rosa High

Alisal Union Elementary
Carmel Unified
King City Joint Union High
Monterey Peninsula Unified
North Monterey County Unified
Pacific Grove Unified
Salinas Union High
Santa Rita Union Elementary
Washington Union Elementary

Monterey County Office Cooperative:
Bradley Union Elementary
Ghualar Union Elementary
Gonzales Union Elementary
Gonzales Union High
King City Union Elementary
Mission Union Elementary
San Antonio Union Elementary
San Ardo Union Elementary
San Lucas Union Elementary
Soledad Union Elementary

Consortia, by county

Member districts

Orange County

North Orange County Consortium
c/o Louise Glenning
Ocean View Elementary School District
16940 B St.
Huntington Beach, CA 92647
(714) 847-2551

Orange Coast Consortium
c/o Mary King
Orange Unified School District
370 N. Glassell St.
Orange, CA 92666
(714) 997-6380

Riverside County

Riverside County Consortium
c/o Yolanda Benitez
Office of the Riverside County
Superintendent of Schools
P.O. Box 868
Riverside, CA 92502
(714) 787-2901

San Bernardino County

COPE Consortium
c/o Gail Houghton
Chaffey Joint Union High School District
211 W. 5th St.
Ontario, CA 91762
(714) 988-8511

San Diego County

Central Consortium
c/o Judy James
Santee Elementary School District
P.O. Box 220
Santee, CA 92071
(714) 448-2510

Heartland Hills Consortium
c/o Judy Kuhlman
Jamul-Las Flores Union Elementary School District
14581 Lyons Valley Rd.
Jamul, CA 92035
(714) 460-3770

North San Diego County Consortium
c/o Peggy Slocum
Vista Unified School District
1234 Arcadia Ave.
Vista, CA 92083
(714) 726-2170

Los Alamitos Elementary
Ocean View Elementary
Placentia Unified

Capistrano Unified
Irvine Unified
Laguna Beach Unified
Orange Unified
Saddleback Valley Unified

Beaumont Unified
Elsinore Union Elementary
Elsinore Union High
Romoland Elementary
San Jacinto Unified
Riverside County Schools Office

Alta Loma Elementary
Bear Valley Unified
Chaffey Joint Union High
Cucamonga Elementary
Redlands Unified
San Bernardino County Schools Office

Cajon Valley Union Elementary
Ghula Vista City Elementary
Escondido Union Elementary
La Mesa-Spring Valley Elementary
Santee Elementary

Alpine Union Elementary
Jamul-Las Flores Union Elementary
Lakeside Union Elementary
Lemon Grove Elementary
Ramona Unified

Oceanside City Unified
Poway Unified
Vista Unified

Consortia, by county

Member districts

San Diego Coastal Consortium
c/o Barbara Berrier
Encinitas Union Elementary School District
189 Union St.
Encinitas, CA 92024
(714) 753-1152

Santa Barbara County

Santa Barbara Consortium
c/o Ray Dutchover
Office of the Santa Barbara County
Superintendent of Schools
P.O. Box 6307
Santa Barbara, CA 93111
(805) 964-4711

Santa Clara County

Silicon Valley Consortium
c/o Ruth Malen
Sunnyvale Elementary School District
P.O. Box 217
Sunnyvale, CA 94086
(408) 736-4981

South Santa Clara County Consortium
c/o Chuck Loyd
Oak Grove Elementary School District
6578 Santa Teresa Blvd.
San Jose, CA 95119
(408) 227-8300

West Valley Consortium
c/o Mike Demko
Union Elementary School District
5175 Union Ave.
San Jose, CA 95124
(408) 377-8010

Sonoma County

Redwood Country Consortium
c/o Jack Gyves
Petaluma City Schools
11 Fifth Street
Petaluma, CA 94952
(707) 762-6601

Alameda County

South Alameda County Consortium
c/o Dorothy Lucas
New Haven Unified
34200 Alvarado-Niles Road
Union City, CA 94587
(415) 471-1100

Cardiff Elementary
Coronado Unified
Encinitas Union Elementary
Solana Beach Elementary

Golita Union Elementary
Guadalupe Union
Lompoc Unified
Orcutt Union
Santa Barbara Elementary
Santa Barbara High
Santa Maria Elementary
Santa Maria Joint Union High
Santa Barbara County Schools Office

Cupertino Union Elementary
Fremont Union High
Loma Prieta Elementary
Santa Clara Unified
Sunnyvale Elementary

Berryessa Elementary
Evergreen Elementary
Morgan Hill Unified
Oak Grove Elementary

Cambrian Elementary
Campbell Union Elementary
Moreland Elementary
Saratoga Union Elementary
Union Elementary

Cotati-Rohnert Park Unified
Healdsburg Union Elementary
Healdsburg Union High
Petaluma City Elementary
Petaluma Joint Union High

Castro Valley Unified
New Haven Unified
Newark Unified
San Leandro Unified
San Lorenzo Unified

Appendix B

Sample Time Line for Forming a School Improvement Consortium

Model Process for 1980-81 and Subsequent Years

Once a district determines that it wishes to participate in a program improvement consortium, certain steps should be taken. A suggested model process for the development of a consortium during 1980-81 and subsequent years follows.

Proposed time line

Proposed activities

1-2 months

1. Interested district personnel should communicate within their district a desire to participate in a consortium with one or more districts or offices of county superintendents of schools.

1-2 months

2. The district personnel should gather data and information from within the district for determining the benefits of participation in a program improvement consortium. This process should involve school site personnel, school site councils, school advisory councils, bilingual education committees, parents, and secondary students.

2-3 months

3. Upon agreement by the local administration, the district should contact another district, districts, or county offices for joint participation.

1-2 months

4. The potential consortium should inform by letter the Consortium Support Unit of the State Department of Education of its intent to form a consortium. The letter of intent should include (1) the names of the districts and county offices, as appropriate, that intend to participate in the consortium; and (2) the name, address, telephone number, and signature of a district or county office contact person.

1 month

5. The Consortium Support Unit manager will assign a consultant as a resource person to the districts in the development of the consortium agreement.

2-3 months

6. An agreement must be developed that describes the activities to be undertaken and whether a program review is to be one of the consortium activities that meets the requirements of Section 4070 of the California Administrative Code, Title 5.

2-3 months

7. The proposed agreement must be approved by the governing board of each participating district.

1-2 months

8. A copy of the agreement must be submitted to the Consortium Support Unit for transmittal to the Deputy Superintendent for Programs and the State Board of Education.

1- month

9. The response of the State Board of Education will be communicated to the consortium.

10. A consortium agreement must be submitted annually.

Appendix C

California Administrative Code, Title 5, Sections 4070 and 4071

Section 4070 of Title 5, California Administrative Code, as amended, reads as follows:

4070. PROGRAM REVIEWS CONDUCTED BY CONSORTIA. (a) To be eligible for annual State Board of Education approval, a proposal for program reviews to be conducted through a consortium, pursuant to Education Code Section 52035(g), shall provide that:

(1) At a minimum all schools in those categories that are systematically reviewed by the State Department of Education will be reviewed by the cooperating districts;

(2) Instrumentation and procedures used will be the same as those used by the State Department of Education;

(3) A majority of program review team members will be from educational agencies other than the district in which the review is being conducted;

(4) The districts involved have established an agreement approved by each governing board that, at a minimum, specifies the procedures for: conducting program reviews; monitoring and evaluating the review process; and

(5) Shall describe how the costs associated with the review process will be covered.

Section 4071 of Title 5, California Administrative Code, as amended, reads as follows:

4071. MONITORING OF CONSORTIA ACTIVITIES AND TRAINING OF REVIEW TEAM MEMBERS.

The Department of Education shall provide for ongoing review of the program reviews conducted by consortia and shall provide necessary training for all program review team members.