

“Strategic Review of FY06 District & School-Level Resources”

*In fulfillment of a Memorandum of Understanding between:
The Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) and
The Unified Teachers of Los Angeles (UTLA)*

Acknowledgements

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LAUSD – UTLA MOU FY06
Strategic Review of District & School Level Resources
Phase II Executive Summary

I. BACKGROUND

In the fall of 2006, Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) and the Unified Teachers of Los Angeles (UTLA) signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that called for a third-party research firm to analyze resource use across the Los Angeles school system. Education Resource Strategies (ERS) was chosen to conduct this analysis. The study was organized into two phases.

- **Phase I** of the study called for a six-year historical review of spending in the district to examine how spending patterns had changed and specifically whether or not central expenses had grown while spending on teachers had declined. The findings of phase I were released publicly in November of 2006 and presented to the Board of Education of LAUSD.
- **Phase II** of the study explores spending and use of resources more deeply to identify opportunities for more strategic use based on research and comparison to other urban school districts.

This management brief series presents Phase II key findings and recommendations.

II. KEY QUESTIONS

A. *How much does LAUSD spend on each type of school and student and how are resources distributed?*

- How much does the district spend overall?
- How much does the district spend to support students with greater needs?
- Do schools with similar student populations receive the same level of resources?
- Are there additional resources that could be awarded to school sites, or made more flexible? And, if so how much?
- How do LAUSD spending and allocation practices compare to other urban districts?

B. *Does LAUSD empower strategic use of school-level resources—defined as time, people, and money—to improve student performance?*

- Do schools currently organize resources in ways likely to improve student performance?
- Are the preconditions of strategic school resource use in place?
 - Flexibility* Do schools have the degree of flexibility needed to reorganize resources to meet their school's specific needs?
 - Capacity* Are school leaders supported with the knowledge, skills, tools, templates, and models they need to organize resources strategically?
 - Accountability* Has the district established a system of reciprocal accountability that includes clear performance standards and that promotes joint problem solving with regard to resource use in schools?

C. **Does LAUSD organize district resources to support improved instruction?**

- Does spending on system-wide initiatives maximize resources available for improving instruction and align with a coherent strategy for ensuring excellence and equity?

III. RESEARCH METHODS

In order to answer these research questions, ERS conducted an in-depth analysis of the district's spending patterns and use of school-level resources. Specifically, ERS:

- Visited the district frequently over a period of eight months and conducted interviews with dozens of district and school leaders
- Gathered data from a variety of sources and departments: payroll, expenditures, human resources, budget, special education enrollment and assignment, student information system, and the student master course schedule
- Merged the payroll, expenditure, and human resources files to create a detailed master database of K-12 operating expenditures for FY 2005-06
- Recoded the resulting file (line by line) using the ERS coding scheme to study where dollars go and how they are used
- Conducted interviews to better understand the district's operations and determine appropriate methods to allocate costs
- Created reports of cost per pupil at each school and for each program, including an analysis of special education costs by disability
- Analyzed the district's course schedule data to understand the use of student time at each school and across types of schools
- Compared LAUSD to other "benchmark" large urban districts that ERS has previously studied
- Synthesized data and presented interim status reports to the LAUSD leadership team, union membership and school board

IV. Summary of Key Findings

Overall, LAUSD receives a low level of funding compared to other large urban districts in the US and allocates a high percentage of these funds to instruction.

- NCES data reports LAUSD revenue of \$9,300 per pupil compared to \$10,400 average for the twenty largest urban districts (~10% less per pupil).
- LAUSD's total K-12 operating expense amount of \$9,100 per pupil for SY05-06 was one of the lowest of the districts ERS has studied (adjusted for regional cost differences).
- English Learners (EL's) receive significantly fewer resources than EL's in other urban districts that ERS has studied.
- LAUSD invests 59% of total expenses in Instruction, which is higher than all benchmark districts except Chicago Public Schools, but slightly lower than would be expected given its size and overall low level of funding.

Funding is heavily restricted by state, federal, district, and collective bargaining requirements. This leads to proliferation of interventions and programs that can undermine instructional coherence in schools and foster an inefficient use of resources.

- Over \$2.5 billion in revenues are restricted or categorical funds. These funds support hundreds of programs.

- Funding restrictions and program requirements constrain LAUSD’s options for serving the EL population. For example:
 - State provides \$30 million for after-school or summer/intersession programs for EL students, but this money currently cannot be used for other strategies (such as providing in-classroom support in reading).
 - Reporting/compliance requirements generate higher program management costs (e.g., school-based bilingual coordinators) than other districts.
 - State mandates investment in instructional aides if teachers lack EL authorization (~3,000 LAUSD teachers still lack authorization).
- Proper use of K-3 class-size reduction funds is interpreted very narrowly to prohibit small-group literacy strategies.
- The low overall level of funding combined with so many restrictions on use limits principal ability to use resources creatively.

Though LAUSD allocates a high percentage of its resources to schools (and much of this to instruction), opportunities remain to make better use of the district’s limited resources.

Areas of higher spending that may indicate an opportunity for reallocation of resources include:

- Special-education aides (especially one-to-one instructional aides, also called Additional Adult Assistance)
- Program-management staff (school-based APEIS)
- Administrative accountability functions (such as community relations/PR, student registration and attendance tracking, research, evaluation and assessment)
- Data processing and finance
- These opportunities total \$160 million, of which \$110 million is school-based.
- Realizing some of these opportunities requires negotiating or changing court and state requirements/restrictions and would be a multi-year process.

LAUSD invests more on elementary schools (\$9.0K) than middle (\$7.0K) and high schools (\$7.6K). Within these school levels, we find resources distributed equitably weighting consistently for greater student needs.

- The state’s K-3 class-size reduction program contributes to the higher investment at the elementary level. The lower investment at the middle-school level is consistent with national benchmarks.
- LAUSD spent \$5.8 billion in schools, which is 91% of K-12 operating expenses.
- In many districts, small schools receive significantly more per pupil than larger schools. Size does not drive large spending differences among schools in LAUSD. Exceptions include elementary schools and primary centers with fewer than 300 students and the smallest middle schools.
- Schools with higher concentrations of students of color or students in poverty receive slightly higher funding on a per-pupil basis, even after accounting for other differences in the mix of students requiring special education or EL services.

Despite low overall funding level, LAUSD schools could organize more effectively to provide students with more individual attention and more effective time for learning.

- Formative assessments are used, but teams of teachers do not have scheduled weekly collaborative time to evaluate the results of these assessments, except in middle schools. Use of the assessments by individual teachers and teacher teams varies widely.
- The use of instructional coaches to help teachers interpret student performance and learn new ways of responding to needs varies widely in large part because of the lack of collaborative planning time, which is an essential component of most coaching strategies.

- Elementary schools prioritized time for literacy and math, with elementary students spending as much as 80% of the day in these two important subjects.
- In secondary schools, the district provides no additional time in the regular day for ELA/ELD or math and provides no structured secondary reading classes even though more than 70% of secondary students are at least 3-5 years below grade level.
- Most LAUSD secondary schools organize schedules so that academic teachers in all subjects have responsibility to teach 150 students or more. This makes it nearly impossible for students and teachers to know each other or to interact in meaningful ways around reading, writing, or math.

LAUSD invests significant resources in professional development. However, the district lacks a coherent professional development strategy that aligns the key components of spending in order to address district priorities and match the needs and performance of teachers, students, and schools.

- LAUSD's investment of 6.1% of the K-12 operating budget, or \$10.9K per teacher, is higher than most other urban districts ERS has studied. This number includes spending to provide teachers with time for professional development.
- Coaching and time for teacher staff development comprise 60% of LAUSD's total PD expenses of \$397 million, but the time (e.g.—staff development days) is organized so that all teachers are out of the classroom at the same time, which makes it hard for coaches to work with teacher teams or individual teachers in classrooms.
- LAUSD allocates \$4,800 per teacher for instructional coaches in elementary schools where student performance has improved significantly. Secondary schools receive significantly less per teacher with \$2,800 in middle schools, and \$2,000 in high schools.
 - The investment in instructional coaches does not appear to be targeted to schools that underperform their peers (as measured by the API Similar Schools Ranking).
- LAUSD invests an additional \$400 million in teacher-education credits, which is more than all other types of professional development spending combined. Aligning this investment with a strategic plan for retaining and rewarding top talent would require LAUSD and UTLA to reconceive the (currently flat) career path for classroom teachers.

V. SUMMARY OF KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on our Phase II analysis, ERS recommends the following top five action items to move toward a more strategic use of resources to improve student learning in Los Angeles Unified School District:

- Implement weekly **collaborative time** across the system so teachers can work together to evaluate student work and continuously adjust their instruction with feedback from expert support specialists (e.g.—coaches or the equivalent).
- Implement a **reading** strategy for the 70% of secondary-level students who are several years behind grade level. Provide additional time on reading and writing by teachers trained in reading strategies.
- Create meaningful **career and leadership opportunities for teachers** that allow them to stay **in the classroom**.
- **Liberate money** from categorical restrictions by redesigning the way money travels from the central office to the schools.
- Support **English Learners** (42% of students) in the LAUSD system. Allocate additional teachers to collaborate with regular-education classroom teachers and provide instruction to small literacy groups in the regular education classroom during literacy periods.

VI. THE STRATEGIC RESOURCE MANAGEMENT BRIEF SERIES

This executive summary accompanies three management briefs that provide more detailed answers to these key questions as well as additional recommendations and questions for further leadership discussion.

- **Brief #1 – Distribution and Use of System Resources:** Analyzes the overall funding level in LAUSD as well as the way time, people, and money flow to schools and students, focusing on questions of equity, strategy, flexibility, transparency, and efficiency, with comparisons to other urban districts.
- **Brief #2 – Time, People and Money in Schools:** Describes how LAUSD schools currently allocate their time, people, and money and compares findings with practices often found in high-performing urban schools.
- **Brief #3 – Professional Development:** Analyzes LAUSD’s overall investment in professional development and compares it to patterns and practices found elsewhere, focusing on whether the overall mix of initiatives aligns with district needs.

Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD)
Management Brief
Distribution and Use of System Resources

I. BACKGROUND

Research suggests that the strategic deployment of resources can be as important or more important than the actual level of funding a district receives.¹ As one of the largest urban school districts in the country, LAUSD faces the enormous challenge of ensuring that all of its students receive equitable access to resources. However, equitable does not necessarily mean equal. English Learners (EL's), for instance, may require additional resources to attain high standards.

Given the unique needs of students, LAUSD must ensure that the way it awards resources to schools provides for:

- *Strategy*: Dollars are allocated to all types of schools and students in accordance with a long-range strategic plan that helps the district meet its student performance objectives.
- *Transparency*: Key stakeholders can make decisions based on a sound understanding of what is happening.
- *Equity*: Funds are distributed to ensure that all students can meet high standards (including those in new, small schools and charters).
- *Efficiency*: District leadership has established a process of giving (or taking away) funds that do not foster wasteful practices or bad decisions.
- *Flexibility*: School leaders have the ability to exercise instructional leadership while being supported and held accountable for success.

II. KEY QUESTIONS

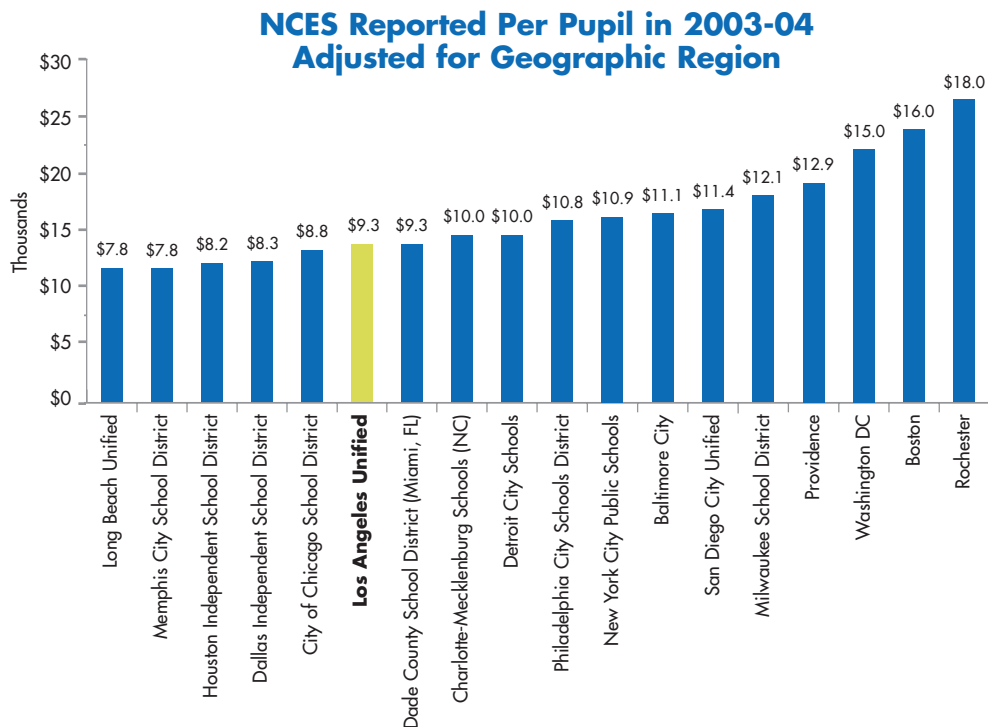
- How much does LAUSD spend to operate its schools?
- How does LAUSD spend its money? How does that spending compare to other districts?
- How much does LAUSD spend on different types of *students*? Are these resources organized to generate high performance?
- How much money ends up in schools?
- Does spending in LAUSD vary by type of school, and if so, how, and why?

¹ See Additional Readings at end of this document

III. KEY FINDINGS

Finding #1: Overall, LAUSD receives a low level of funding compared to other large urban districts in the US and allocates a high percentage of these funds to instruction.

- The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) data show that LAUSD receives and spends fewer dollars per pupil than most of the largest urban districts in the US (\$9,300 per pupil compared to \$10,400 average for the twenty largest urban districts, ~10% less per pupil).²



- In FY2005-06, LAUSD had K-12 operating expenditures³ of \$6.4 billion, or \$9,100 per student, which is less than most other districts ERS has studied (adjusted for regional cost differences).
- After adjusting for student need, LAUSD's ratio of spending on special-education and poverty students is comparable to other urban districts, but is less than benchmarks on English Learners (ELs).

² Note: Data shown in this chart is publicly available from NCES 2003-04. Data is geographically adjusted using the NCES Comparable Wage Index. It includes the largest city districts in the country, but excludes the largest county districts and Hawaii. Data also includes ERS's detailed comparison districts (Boston, Rochester, DC, Providence, and Baltimore).

³ ERS employs a precise definition of K-12 operating expenditures in order to ensure consistency across the districts studied. As such, amounts derived following the ERS methodology will not match publicly available data.

\$/Pupil Expressed as Ratio to Regular Ed Students

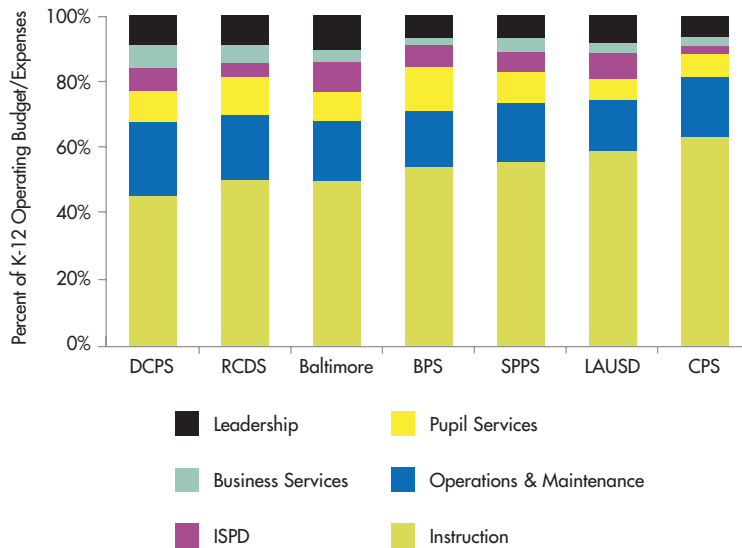
	LAUSD	St. Paul	Chicago	Baltimore	Boston	Providence	Rochester	D.C.
All Students	1.3	1.6	1.5	1.4	1.5	1.2	1.4	1.3
Regular Ed	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
EL	1.08	1.13	1.12	1.34	1.89	0.94	1.50	1.28
Poverty	1.1	1.4	1.3	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1
SWD Resource	2.1	2.1	2.6	2.4	1.9	1.4	2.0	2.3
Self-Contained	3.6	4.4	4.2	3.4	3.0	2.2	2.4	3.9

Note: Based on fully allocated \$/pupil K-12 operating expenses

- Despite having a lower overall funding level, LAUSD spends 59% of its operating budget on instruction, which is higher than all comparison urban districts except Chicago Public Schools.⁴

Even though LAUSD spends a higher percentage on instruction, low overall funding results in less spent per pupil on instruction relative to comparison districts (\$5,331 per pupil in LAUSD compared to \$6,155 in Chicago).

Use as a % of K-12 Operating Budget

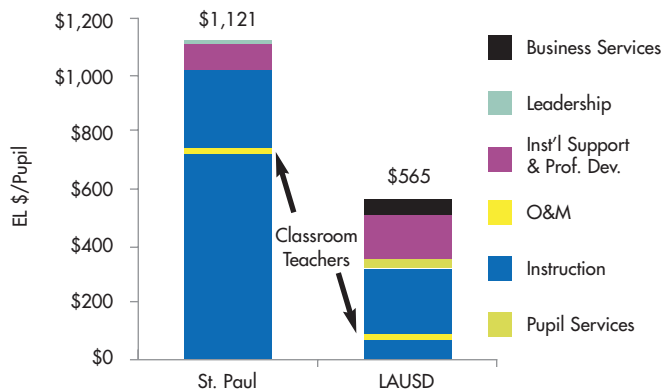


⁴ Chicago Public Schools is also a leanly funded district and has similar enrollment, percent of students in poverty and per pupil funding.

Finding #2: Funding is heavily restricted by state, federal, district, and collective bargaining requirements. This leads to proliferation of interventions and programs that can undermine instructional coherence in schools and foster an inefficient use of resources.

- Over \$2.5 billion in revenues are restricted or categorical funds. These funds support hundreds of programs.
- These funding restrictions and program requirements constrain LAUSD’s options for serving the EL population. For example:
 - The state provides \$30 million for after-school or summer/intersession programs for EL students, but this money currently cannot be used for other strategies, such as bringing an additional teacher in the classroom for small-group instruction (“push-in” service delivery model).

EL \$/Pupil Expenditures by Use (Specified ELL \$’s only)



- Reporting and compliance requirements generate higher program management costs (e.g., school-based bilingual coordinators).
- The state mandates investment in instructional aides if teachers lack EL authorization (~3,000 LAUSD teachers still lack authorization), but other aides are hired at a school’s discretion.
- In contrast to Saint Paul Public Schools, which, like LAUSD, has an enrollment that is over 40% English Learners, LAUSD devotes a very small share of its EL funds to classroom teachers.
- The low overall level of funding also constrains principals from using resources creatively and contributes to a cycle of isolation and specialization (experienced by many districts nationally) that moves resources and responsibility away from core classroom instruction.

Finding #3: Though LAUSD allocates a high percentage of its resources to schools (and much of this to instruction), opportunities remain to make better use of the district’s limited resources.

- Areas of higher spending that could serve as opportunities for reallocation of resources total \$160 million and include:
 - Special education instructional aides (Additional Adult Assistance)— \$70 million
 - LAUSD has one special-education aide per nine special-education students, compared to 12-20 students per aide in benchmark districts.
 - Almost half of the special-education aides provide additional adult assistance and are assigned through the Individualized Education Program (IEP) process to serve individual students, outside of (and above and beyond) mandated staffing requirements.
 - Scaling back usage would require changing applicable students’ IEPs and demonstrating that they could be effectively served without the additional adult assistance.
 - Special population program management – \$40 million
 - LAUSD’s special-population program management cost per student is higher than most benchmarks and is significantly higher given LAUSD’s size and its relatively small percent of students in special education.
 - A primary driver of the higher cost is the school-based APEIS position at all elementary schools. It accounts for 25% of total spending in this area and is not typical in the benchmark districts.

- The APEIS position is a mandated part of the Chanda Smith Modified Consent Decree. Scaling back or significantly altering the position's responsibilities would require negotiation with the plaintiffs.
- Data processing, finance, and administrative accountability functions (such as community relations/PR, student registration and attendance tracking, research, evaluation and assessment), —\$50 million

Item Identified Through Benchmarking	Nature of Constraints	Nature of Affected Costs	Estimate (In Millions)
Scale back use of special education aides by 25%*	LAUSD & CA State staffing ratio policies; requirements generated in annual IEP meetings – multi-year process to change;	School-based classified staff	\$70
Reduce special population program management by 20%*	State and court requirements for APEIS, Bilingual coordinator	Mostly school-based classified staff	\$40
Reduce spending in Accountability functions to CPS levels	Dependent on systems implementation – need for active management	Mostly non-school-based	\$30
Reduce Finance and IT to 1.5X CPS level.	Dependent on systems implementation – need for active management	Mostly non-school-based	\$20
Net Opportunities			\$160M*

*To the extent positions cannot be changed, it is imperative that LAUSD ensure that these investments improve instructional practices

- Higher spending in these areas, relative to benchmarks, appears to be related to the implementation of the new Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system.
- Reductions down to benchmarked levels require active management over a multi-year period.

Finding #4: LAUSD invests more on elementary schools (\$9.0K) than middle (\$7.0K) and high schools (\$7.6K). Within these school levels, we find resources distributed equitably weighting consistently for greater student needs.

- The state's K-3 class-size reduction program contributes to the higher investment at the elementary level. The lower investment at the middle-school level is consistent with national benchmarks.
- LAUSD spent \$5.8 billion in schools in FY06, which is 91% of K-12 operating expenses.
- Spending on elementary schools with fewer than 300 students was significantly higher than spending in larger schools. However, we found virtually no difference between elementary schools of 500 students and 1,000 students. Similarly, size was not a significant cost driver in secondary schools. Similarly, with the exception of the smallest middle schools, size was not a significant cost driver in secondary schools.
- Elementary schools with high concentrations of students of color or students in poverty receive additional funds on a per-pupil basis. The graph below represents schools with varying degrees of poverty and the percent they are above or below the average of \$9.2K for \$/pupil for elementary schools.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Allocate resources to schools to minimize the need for compliance monitoring, reduce program fragmentation (silos), and increase a school/district’s ability to use resources in research-based ways that will integrate with the regular-education classroom.

Suggested action steps include:

- Adopt a weighted student formula or similar funding system to consolidate funding streams and allow for more school-level instructional coherence.
- Use K-3 class-size reduction funds to introduce a teacher-supported skills-based grouping strategy for literacy and math(may require state authorization).
- Allocate additional resources to English Learners and rethink support for these students so that supplemental instruction is provided during the regular school day by “certificated teachers” in push-in or other research-supported models.
- Continue to integrate special-education services into the regular-education program with an emphasis on establishing collaboration between special instructors, regular-education instructors, and professional development providers (coaches).
- To ensure effective use of school-level resources, LAUSD needs to provide school leaders with the appropriate tools and support:
 - Conduct needed **training** for principals, assistant principals, school directors, etc. regarding how to use resources effectively.
 - Set clear **standards** regarding school-level resource use and communicate standards throughout LAUSD.
 - Hold principals and school directors **accountable** for using resources properly and meeting high standards by creating and regularly reviewing reports of effective use of resources.

V. QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- Is there a way to increase resources at the middle school level?
- Would a weighted student formula or other solution allow restricted funds to be integrated with general funds to better serve students with high needs? Can the system reduce its program-driven organization so that funds and staff can be given in ways that allow for greater school-level instructional coherence?
- How can the district support schools in implementing new models of instruction and organization that more effectively serve EL and special education students in reading and math?
- Can the system petition for a waiver to use K-3 class-size reduction money to create K-3 small literacy groups? What about other state restrictions?

ADDITIONAL READINGS

- *LAUSD Management Brief: Time, People and Money in Schools*, Education Resource Strategies, May, 2007
- *LAUSD Management Brief: Professional Development*, Education Resource Strategies, May, 2007
- *Rethinking School Resources*, Miles, K.H., & Frank, S. B. Corwin Press (forthcoming).
- *Moving toward equity in school funding within districts: Portfolio for District Redesign*, Miles, K. H. & Roza, M. (2002)
- *Putting Money Where It Matters*, Miles, K.H (2001)
- *Matching Spending with Strategy: Aligning District Spending to Support a Strategy of Comprehensive School Reform*, Miles, K.H.
- *Freeing Resources for Learning*, Miles, K.H.
- “The idea of building school budgets around individual student is getting more attention.” *Education Week*, Jan. 6, 2005
- *Leveling the Playing Field: Creating funding equity through student-based budgeting*, Miles, K. H., Roza, M., & Ware, K. (2003)
- *First Steps to a Level Playing Field: An Introduction to Student Based Budgeting*, Miles, K. H. & Roza, M. (2002)

Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD)
Management Brief
Time, People and Money in Schools

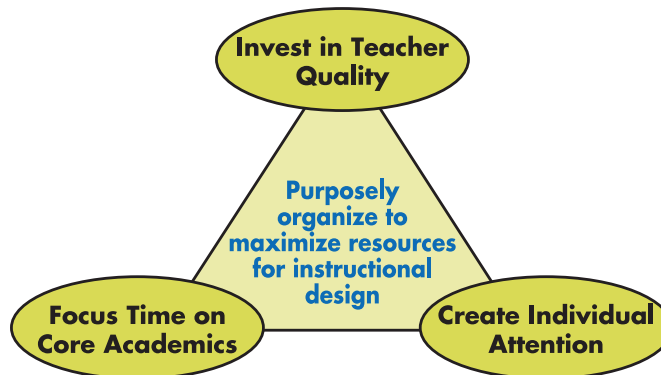
I. BACKGROUND

LAUSD exists in the context of low level, highly restricted funding, most of which comes from the state of California, which is in perennial budget crisis. Strategic use of resources requires the flexibility to use resources in coherent ways, capacity/support to know how to use resources, and accountability for results. To empower principals as instructional leaders, while allowing the Superintendent to support a coherent district reform strategy, will require a significant increase in flexibility around resource use across the system. An increase in resource flexibility is a vital part of fostering a better use of time, people, and money in LAUSD schools. To succeed, school and district leaders also need to understand how to target resources in ways that improve student performance and to foster a system of mutual accountability for excellent resource use, improved instructional practices and supports, and improved student outcomes.

II. Research

- Research suggests that high-performing schools follow four principles of strategic resource use⁵. High-performing schools studied by ERS:
 - Continuously improve teaching quality through hiring, professional development, job structure and common planning time
 - Focus time, in longer blocks, on core academics with an emphasis on literacy
 - Create individual attention and personal learning environments
 - Purposefully organize staff and other resources to leverage expertise and maximize instructional resources

Four Strategies for Using School Resources To Improve Student Performance



⁵ See Additional Readings at end of this document.

- Of these four principles, investing in **teaching quality** is the most critical. High-performing school systems nearly always have a well-defined professional development model. Effective, job-embedded PD models include four common traits:
 - Formative assessments that are tightly aligned both to the school’s curriculum and to state standards
 - Collaborative planning time: at least one 90-minute block per week
 - Expert content support in literacy and math that agrees with the school’s curriculum and instructional approach
 - Support for new teachers that focuses on the school’s specific instruction, curriculum, and assessment in relevant content areas

III. KEY QUESTIONS

- How do LAUSD schools organize to use time, people, and money?
- How does this compare to certain research-based practices?

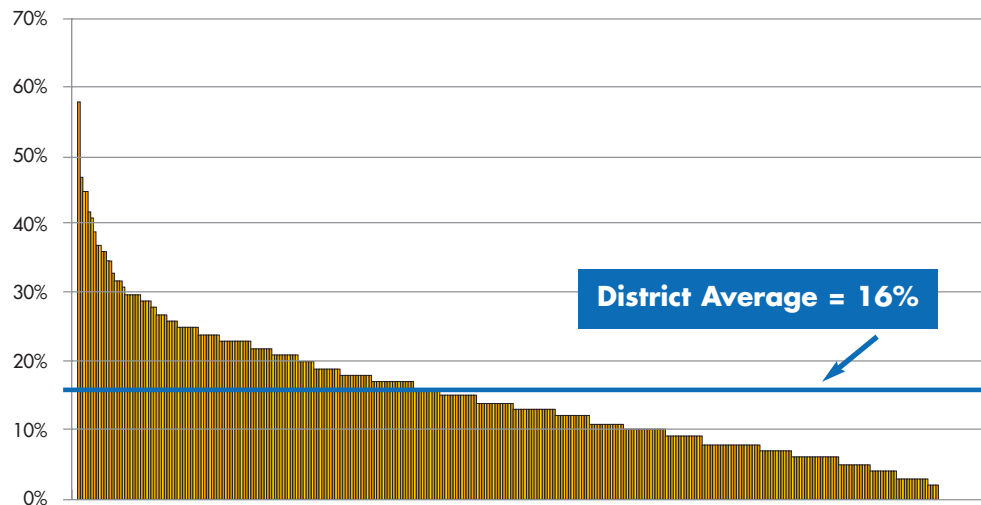
IV. KEY FINDINGS

Finding #5: Despite low overall funding level, LAUSD schools could organize more effectively to provide students with more individual attention and more effective time for learning.

Invest in Teacher Quality

- Formative assessments are used, but teams of teachers are not given time to collectively evaluate the results of these assessments. Teachers’ use of the assessments varies widely.
- While some collaborative planning time appears to be available in middle schools and selected others, most professional development time is organized as school-wide days or banked time. These structures have significant challenges as vehicles for an effective PD strategy.
- The percentage of new teachers (defined as those with less than three years teaching experience) is not spread evenly across the school system.

Percent of Teachers With 1-3 Years of Experience* by School

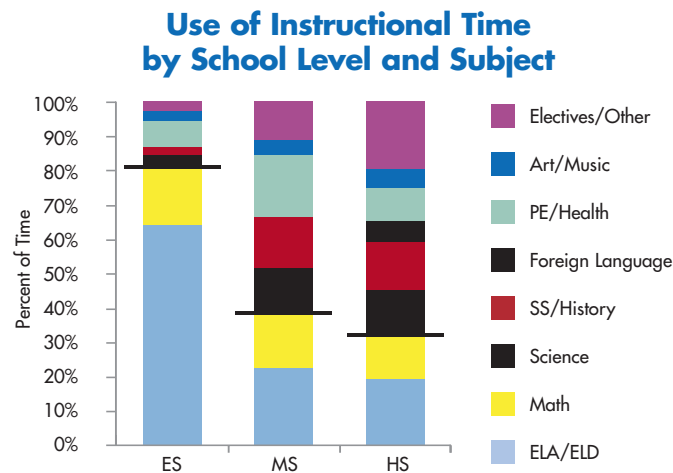


*Years of experience determined through salary step as of May 2006

- Schools with higher percentages of new teachers have disproportionately low API “similar schools” rankings and are located in Local District 7.
- Instructional coaches are mostly focused on elementary schools, and the use and quality of the coaching varies by school.
- With few exceptions (SLC Lead Teacher), LAUSD does little to support the individual growth of new teachers, and has limited leadership and career opportunities that encourage the best teachers to stay in the classroom.

Focus Time on Core Academics

- **Elementary schools** appear to use resources more strategically, and are focusing time on literacy and math (open court); some are experimenting with block schedules. The chart below illustrates the percent of time students spend in both core and non-core subjects.



- The overall use of time in **secondary schools** does not appear to be prioritized by subject, and opportunities that exist focus more time in literacy and math.
 - Students spend 36% of time in ELA/ELD and math; 33% would be no prioritization
 - After sixth grade, secondary students who do not meet standards are not required to spend significant additional time on literacy and/or math during the regular school day.
 - The strong focus on ELA (and not literacy or reading) at secondary schools may constrain the district’s ability to support the nearly 70% of students who can decode but are three to five years below grade level.
 - Extended-learning opportunities for students who are not meeting standards are program driven and not always integrated with regular instruction.

Create Individual Attention

- High student counts (150+) for secondary-school teachers limit the instructors’ ability to provide individual attention to students.
- The use of formative assessments varies across schools. LAUSD has invested \$120M (~1 FTE) in Instructional Coaches—mostly focused on elementary schools. However, the use and quality of the coaching varies by school and coaches have limited access to teacher teams on a weekly basis due to lack of collaborative time.

- The schools' ability to customize instructional strategies for specific students is limited by district, union, and state policies that specify resource use (e.g.—K-3 class-size reduction or bilingual coordinators).
- LAUSD K-3 grades have an average class size of 20 in regular-education classrooms all day, but LAUSD has an opportunity to reduce group size in literacy to eight by implementing a literacy “push-in” model.
- At the secondary level, a teacher’s “student counts” in core subject areas are high: middle schools are 22 and high schools are 151 (for regular-education students only). While some schools “loop” students or provide a transition year or advisory support, the high teacher loads and large class sizes make it difficult for faculty to form personal relationships with students to help improve learning.

Purposefully organize to maximize resources around an instructional design.

- School staffing appears to be driven by policies on staffing ratios and programmatic service requirements rather than organized around an instructional design.
- Principals are critical partners in developing and implementing a school-improvement plan. Great principals can transform schools. Yet, with notable exceptions, LAUSD principals believe they have less flexibility than the central office perceives they have, which is already low. Most principals do not feel empowered to transform their schools.

V. KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Implement 90 minutes of weekly **collaborative time** across the system so teachers can form teams and work together to evaluate student work and to adjust instruction continuously with feedback from expert support specialists (e.g.—coaches or equivalent).
- Implement a **reading strategy** for the 70% of secondary-level students who can decode but who are several years behind grade level. Include significant additional time on reading and writing provided by teachers trained in reading strategies.
 - Make extended learning opportunities mandatory for students who are multiple years behind grade level.
- Reconsider all **service models for students with special academic needs**. Foster collaboration between supplemental service providers and regular-education teachers through “push-in” models, collaborative time, and curriculum integration. Assign special-education and bilingual teachers core content classes.
- **Foster accountability** for the strategic use of school-level resources:
 - Clearly define standards for school-level instruction and resource use, including professional development.
 - Provide models of effective school organization (that specify practices such as flexible grouping and bell schedules).
 - Create regular reports that review key resource metrics, and work closely with principals, directors, and local superintendents to ensure understanding and implementation.
 - Integrate the accountability system with the school-improvement planning process and with the supervision and evaluation of principals and teachers.
- **Build principal capacity** to strategically manage time, people, and money at the school level. Pay special attention to helping site leaders align school-level professional development resources with their curriculum, instructional approach, and the needs of their faculty and students. Help them realize the changes they already can make in the existing system.
- Actively **extend best district practices** across schools to provide lessons for replication.

- Work to increase resource **flexibility** at the district and school levels, especially for low-performing schools in need of dramatic, turnaround change.

VI. QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- Could additional instructional resources be reallocated to increase high quality instruction for struggling students from all programs (including EL and special education) in literacy and math (e.g., EL instructional aides, Bilingual and Title I coordinators, Subject-Area Teachers, SWD Resource teachers and aides, and Teaching Assistants)?
- Can LAUSD also increase the amount of math offered to students significantly behind grade level during the regular school day?
- As LAUSD increases the amount of time for reading, should it give reading a privileged place in the curriculum with reading specialists leading reading sessions? Should the district cross train literacy instructors to reduce the student count (teacher load) of ELA/ELD teachers by half?
- Though LAUSD invests in a relatively high level of staff to supervise schools, no clear standards for instructional conditions, resource use and school performance exist to measure progress and guide support and intervention. What can LAUSD do immediately to leverage its investment in school supervision?
- What tradeoffs can be made with existing resources that would allow common planning time at every school? How can UTLA play a catalytic leadership role in making this happen?
- What is the role of pilots and other reform models in district reform and how can the school system embrace the challenge posed by Green Dot Public Schools and other entrepreneurial school models that tend to move more quickly than LAUSD as a whole? Are there additional innovations that UTLA and LAUSD can agree to that would lead to a faster and more student-friendly response in schools in need of immediate turnaround?

VII. ADDITIONAL READINGS

- *LAUSD Management Brief: Distribution and Use of System Resources*, Education Resource Strategies, May, 2007
- *LAUSD Management Brief: Professional Development*, Education Resource Strategies, May, 2007
- *Rethinking School Resources*, Miles, K.H., & Frank, S. B. Corwin Press (*forthcoming*).
- *What Works in Schools: Translating Research into Action*, Marzano, R. J. (2003). Alexandria, VA, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- *The Results Fieldbook: Practical Strategies from Dramatically Improved Schools*, Shmoker, M. Alexandria, VA, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD)
 Management Brief
 Professional Development

I. BACKGROUND

Research has shown that teaching quality is the single most powerful school-influenced determinant of student achievement.⁶ Although many school systems spend significant funds to improve instructional quality through professional development, these efforts are often fragmented and lack the coordination, focus, and school-level support needed to implement research-proven strategies.⁷

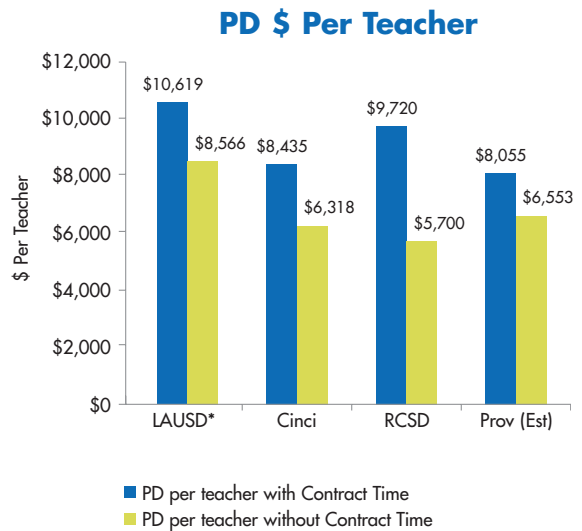
II. KEY QUESTIONS

- How does LAUSD spend its professional development resources? Do the investments work together to form a coherent strategy?

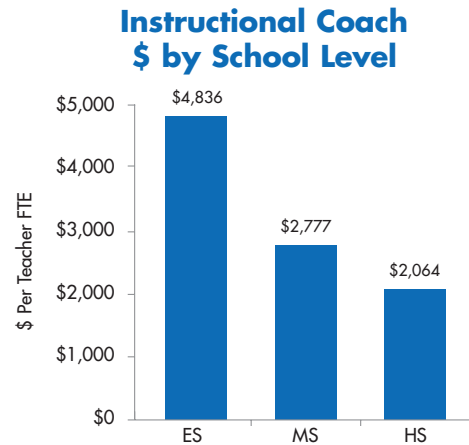
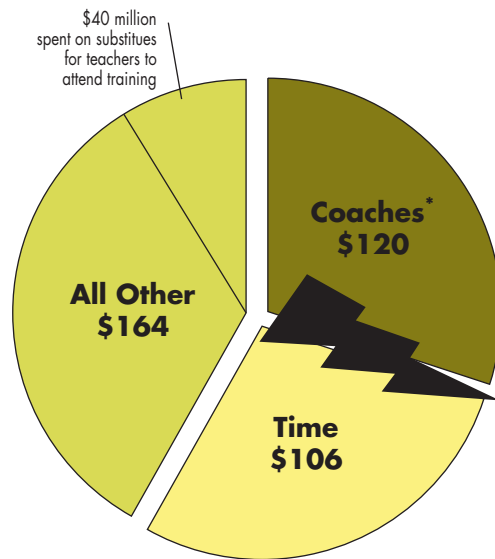
III. KEY FINDINGS

Finding #6: LAUSD invests significant resources in professional development. However, the district lacks a coherent professional development strategy that aligns the key components of spending in order to address district priorities and match the needs and performance of teachers, students, and schools.

- As a percent of total operating budget, LAUSD spends more on PD than other urban districts ERS has studied (both with and without contract time).
- Including the cost of banked-time Tuesdays, LAUSD spends ~\$10.6K per teacher on PD, which is more than comparison districts.
- Coaching and teacher time take up 60% of LAUSD’s PD strategy, but the type of time purchased may not be compatible with the “team” coaching strategy. During school-wide PD sessions, there are not enough coaches to work with all teams. A staggered schedule of weekly, job-embedded collaborative time may be more aligned with a school-based coaching investment.



⁶ See discussion in Marzano, 2003.
⁷ Miles and Frank, forthcoming, 2007.



- LAUSD invests over \$400 million in teacher-education credits, more than its investment in all other types of professional development spending combined. Aligning this investment with a strategic plan for retaining and rewarding top talent would require LAUSD and UTLA to reconceive the (currently flat) career path for classroom teachers.
- Investments in instructional coaches are targeted to elementary teachers, and spending is slightly higher in schools with the greatest percentages of new teachers. But when we look at spending by API status, there does not appear to be any strategy.

IV. KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Develop a district-wide professional-development strategy that:

- Aligns resources to address district priorities while adjusting for school-level needs and performance.
- Fosters collaboration among teams of teachers in weekly common-planning time and around teacher practice and student work (including formative assessments), with the goal of continuously adjusting instruction based on student performance.
- Reduces reliance on PD models that require teachers to find substitutes for PD offerings (\$40M FY06 expenditure) and invest less in school-wide professional-development time such as pupil-free days and banked-time Tuesdays (\$108M). Replace with weekly collaborative time. Extend school day if necessary to achieve this goal.
- Refines the role of coaches and strengthens their ability to meet the different requirements of teachers who serve students with special-academic needs.
- Consolidates the \$168M of system professional-development expenditures under a professional-development office. Conduct a thorough review of the various initiatives to see whether any of these activities can be reduced or eliminated.
- Increases the investment in recruiting new teachers and administrators to continuously improve the candidate pool of high-quality candidates.
- Reduces turnover by increasing support for new teachers and improving working conditions, focusing *not* on class-size reduction but on issues such as “student count,” the number of classes a teacher must prepare for (preps), collaboration time, and nurturing principal-teacher relationships.

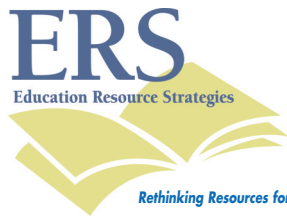
- Fosters long-term teacher retention by creating meaningful career and leadership opportunities for teachers that allow them to stay in the classroom and to earn significantly more pay than in the current “flat” career structure. Examples include: part-time coaching or mentoring; lead teacher positions, with or without extended hours; and model/demonstration classroom teachers.
- Provides training and tools for principals and their supervisors regarding instruction and the strategic use of resources that are aligned with the accountability system and its school models.

V. QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

- What is/should be the district’s role in providing professional development for teachers, principals, and instructional support personnel?
- What are the district’s strategic priorities with regard to professional development? Will these be affected by an increased investment in reading and math at the secondary level? By other strategic imperatives?
- What changes to existing practice and structure will help coaches and other instructional-support providers have deeper and more meaningful interactions with teachers in the context of their own student work and instructional practices?

VI. ADDITIONAL READINGS

- *LAUSD Management Brief: Distribution and Use of System Resources*, Education Resource Strategies, May, 2007
- *LAUSD Management Brief: Time, People and Money in Schools*, Education Resource Strategies, May, 2007
- *Rethinking School Resources*, Miles, K.H., & Frank, S. B. Thousand Oaks, Corwin Press (forthcoming).
- *Reinvesting in Teachers– Aligning District Professional Development to Support a Strategy of Comprehensive School Reform*, Miles, K. H. and Hornbeck, M.
- *Tight Loose Definitions of PD*, Miles, K. H.
- *Murphy, J. (2004). Leadership for Literacy*. Thousand Oaks, Corwin-Press.
- *Inside the Black Box*, Miles, K. H., available on ERS website.
- *What Works in Schools: Translating Research into Action*, Marzano, R. J. (2003). Alexandria, VA, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.



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