

# Clark County Public Schools (Las Vegas, NV)

**GPA: 2.04**

**Rank: 13th place out of 50**

*Document Examined: Collective bargaining agreement, 2005 – 2009\**

HIGHLY FLEXIBLE
FLEXIBLE
<b>SOMEWHAT FLEXIBLE</b>
SOMEWHAT RESTRICTIVE
RESTRICTIVE
HIGHLY RESTRICTIVE

## Introduction

This study of the nation's fifty largest school districts starts from a simple premise: district labor agreements should not make it difficult for schools to be nimble, smart, flexible, high-performing organizations.

In particular, the study focuses on provisions that may limit school leaders' ability to attract and retain excellent teachers, to identify and remove ineffective instructors, to use professional development as a tool of organizational improvement, and to manage school operations in a professional manner—i.e., to run the most effective school possible in terms of core instructional and educational activities, crucial areas where school leaders need enough authority to match their mounting accountability obligations and executive responsibilities in a results-based era.

## The Grades

The scale on which districts were graded reflects the approach outlined above. Grades of A or B generally indicate provisions that confer on school leaders the latitude to man-

age their schools in a professional manner. A grade of C generally means the agreement is silent regarding the provision in question—i.e., it neither affirms nor denies a school leader's right to take a specific course of action. Grades of D and F generally indicate provisions that impede or explicitly bar school leaders from exercising discretion in a given area. Clark County's overall grade, therefore, reflects the degree to which district policies constrain school leaders' ability to make decisions on important management issues. It is in no way a holistic assessment of local education policy or school leadership, much less of school effectiveness.

## Overall GPA: 2.04 (13th place out of 50)

Clark County's GPA is the average of its scores in three areas: Compensation, Personnel Policies, and Work Rules.

Clark County receives a Somewhat Flexible rating for its 2.04 GPA, ranking thirteenth among the fifty districts studied. Of the eleven indicators on which the district was graded, it received eight Cs, six of which indicate silence on the provisions in question.

<b>Compensation</b> . . . . .	<b>C +</b>
1. Credit for Previous Experience . . . . .	C +
2. Performance Pay . . . . .	C
3. Hardship Pay for High-Needs Schools . . . . .	A
4. Extra Pay for Shortage Subjects . . . . .	C
<b>Personnel Policies</b> . . . . .	<b>C</b>
5. Tenure . . . . .	N/A
6. Evaluation. . . . .	C
7. Layoffs . . . . .	C
8. Transfers . . . . .	C
<b>Work Rules</b> . . . . .	<b>D +</b>
9. Professional Development . . . . .	C
10. Subcontracting Operations† . . . . .	C
11. Faculty Meetings . . . . .	C
12. Teacher Leave . . . . .	F

## Compensation: C + (71st percentile)

The Compensation grade combines four components: Credit for Previous Experience, Performance Pay, Hardship Pay for High-Needs Schools, and Extra Pay for Shortage Subjects.

Clark County's bargaining agreement allows schools to raise starting teacher salaries based on previous experience teaching in a private school, but not at the college level, and is silent on whether they may do so based on previous experience working in a subject-related field. The agreement is also silent on whether schools may reward teachers on the basis of performance. Clark County's contract does allow schools to reward teachers who work in high-needs schools and in shortage subjects, though it is silent regarding the subjects for which this provision applies.

### Personnel Policies: C (59th percentile)

The Personnel Policies grade combines four components: Tenure, Evaluation, Layoffs, and Transfers.

Clark County's bargaining agreement is silent on whether school leaders may factor student performance, including test scores, into teacher evaluations and whether, during layoffs, school leaders may retain an outstanding young teacher over one with greater seniority. The contract is marked down for requiring that internal job applicants be given priority over new hires for vacant positions, but gets high marks for barring transferring teachers from "bumping" less senior teachers from their jobs. It is silent on whether school leaders must choose the most junior teacher in a certification area if transfers are necessary. Tenure rules in Clark County, as in most places, are set by state law, not local decision; therefore, the district did not receive a grade for that component.

### Work Rules: D+ (65th percentile)

The Work Rules grade combines four components: Professional Development, Subcontracting Operations, Faculty Meetings, and Teacher Leave.

Clark County's bargaining agreement is silent on whether schools must give teachers salary credit and/or stipends for professional development activities outside the scheduled workday; whether school leaders may subcontract operations to nonunion workers; whether the length of faculty meetings is capped; and whether time at such meetings must be allotted to union matters. The district receives one F in this category, however, for requiring schools to provide leave for teachers to attend union activities.

### Conclusion

Clark County's contract lands in the middle ground, with nine of its eleven component grades falling in the C range, most often due to its silence on the provisions in question. Still, there is plenty of room for improvement. To better equip its school leaders with the flexibility they need to manage their schools effectively, the Clark County Board of School Trustees should negotiate aggressively to make contract changes that explicitly confer on school leaders the right to:

1. raise the starting salaries of teachers with all forms of relevant prior experience. (The bargaining agreement allows this for experience teaching in a private school, bars it for experience teaching at the college level, and is silent regarding experience in a subject-related profession.)
2. reward teachers on the basis of performance. (The bargaining agreement is silent on this issue.)
3. consider student performance, including test scores, when evaluating teachers. (The bargaining agreement is silent on this issue.)
4. base decisions regarding teacher layoffs on individual merit and performance rather than seniority. (The bargaining agreement is silent on this issue.)
5. base decisions regarding teacher transfers on individual merit and performance rather than seniority. (Of the three indicators directly addressing teacher transfers, the bargaining agreement requires school leaders to consider seniority on one, grants them flexibility on one, and is silent on one.)

### In addition, the board should amend provisions that:

6. allow classroom teachers to miss instructional time in order to attend union activities.

\* The data examined in this report come from the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) database, "Teacher Roles, Rules and Rights." All data were culled from the NCTQ database in November 2007. In states that permit collective bargaining, NCTQ examined collective bargaining agreements, with the exception of Jordan School District in Utah, which does not have a bargaining agreement. In states where collective bargaining is either illegal or otherwise not practiced, NCTQ examined school board policies. Where a provision in state law precludes the possibility of a collective bargaining agreement or school board policy addressing a certain component in our study, we excluded it from our analysis, marking the component "N/A." Find a more detailed explanation of this report's methodology starting on page 14.

† This indicator refers to the right of school leaders to outsource school operations to nonunion workers. NCTQ uses the term "subcontracting" in its database, which we retain here in the interest of consistency.