

# Long Beach Unified School District (CA)

**GPA: 1.93**

**Rank: 16th place out of 50**  
(tied with Palm Beach and Pinellas Counties)

*Document Examined: Collective bargaining agreement, effective through August 31, 2005\**

Data from the NCTQ database were drawn from Long Beach's previous bargaining agreement. In the interest of maintaining a clear, consistent, and reliable standard for the data analyzed in this report, however, we have adhered to NCTQ's coding. Find a more detailed explanation of this approach on page 14.

HIGHLY FLEXIBLE
FLEXIBLE
SOMEWHAT FLEXIBLE
<b>SOMEWHAT RESTRICTIVE</b>
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 manage 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. Long Beach'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: 1.93 (16th place out of 50—tied with Palm Beach and Pinellas Counties)

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

Long Beach receives a disappointing Somewhat Restrictive rating for its 1.93 GPA, ranking sixteenth among the fifty districts studied—although first among the four California districts examined here. While the district scores better than average in the Compensation category, its weaker grades for Personnel Policies and Work Rules bring its overall score down substantially.

## Compensation: B- (81st 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.

Long Beach's bargaining agreement allows school leaders to raise the starting salaries of teachers based on previous expe-

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

rience teaching in a private school or working in a subject-related profession, but is silent on whether they may do so for college-teaching experience. The agreement is also silent on whether schools may reward teachers on the basis of performance. Long Beach's bargaining agreement does allow schools to reward teachers in high-needs schools and in shortage subjects, though it is silent regarding the relevant subjects.

### **Personnel Policies: D+ (47th percentile)**

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

Long Beach's bargaining agreement is silent on whether school leaders may factor student performance, in general, into teacher evaluations, but it bars them from considering student test scores in particular. Tenure and layoff rules are both governed by California state law, and consequently receive N/As. The state also requires schools to select the most junior teacher in a certification area when transfers are necessary, and allows transferring teachers to "bump" their less senior colleagues, removing from consideration two of the three indicators that make up the Transfers component. The agreement is silent on whether internal applicants must be given priority over new hires for vacant positions.

### **Work Rules: D (53rd percentile)**

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

Long Beach's contract 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; and whether time at faculty meetings must be allotted to union matters, although it does cap such meetings at one hour. The district receives one F in this category for requiring schools to provide leave for teachers to attend union activities.

### **Conclusion**

Of the ten components on which it was graded, Long Beach received only two grades higher than a C, suggesting that school leaders enjoy few real guarantees of flexibility. To better equip its school leaders with the flexibility they need to manage their schools effectively, the Long Beach Board of Education 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 some forms but is silent on others.)
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 whether school leaders may consider student performance in general, and bars them from considering student test scores.)
4. base decisions regarding teacher transfers on individual merit and performance rather than seniority. (The bargaining agreement requires school leaders to give internal applicants priority over new hires. State law governs the other two indicators for this component.)
5. subcontract (i.e., outsource) school operations. (The bargaining agreement is silent on this issue.)

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

6. cap the time allowed for faculty meetings. (While long meetings are not necessarily preferable, principals should have some discretion.)
7. 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.