

# Orange County Public Schools (Orlando, FL)

**GPA: 1.52**

**Rank: 40th place out of 50**

*Document Examined: Collective bargaining agreement, 2006 – 2007\**

Data from the NCTQ database were drawn from Orange County's 2006 – 2007 bargaining agreement. The authors have confirmed that a new contract was approved in October 2007. 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
SOMEWHAT RESTRICTIVE
<b>RESTRICTIVE</b>
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. Orange 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: 1.52 (40th place out of 50)

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

Orange County receives a disappointing Restrictive rating for its 1.52 GPA, ranking fortieth among the fifty districts studied—and last among the nine Florida districts examined here. Although the district receives one B+, its report card is dominated by Cs and Fs, leaving much room for improvement.

## Compensation: C (57th 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.

Orange County's bargaining agreement gives schools the flexibility to raise starting teacher salaries based on previous experience 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 contract also allows schools

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

to reward teachers on the basis of performance, though it limits the size of such rewards. The agreement is silent on whether schools may reward teachers in high-needs schools, and bars them from rewarding teachers of shortage subjects.

### **Personnel Policies: D+ (41st percentile)**

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

Orange County's bargaining agreement is silent on whether school leaders may factor student performance, including test scores, into teacher evaluations, and whether they may retain an outstanding young teacher over one with greater seniority during layoffs. The contract receives low marks for requiring that internal job applicants be given priority over new hires for vacant positions and for requiring school leaders to select the most junior teacher in a certification area if transfers are necessary. It is silent on whether teachers may "bump" less senior teachers from their jobs. Tenure rules in Orange 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- (29th percentile)**

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

Orange County's bargaining agreement is silent on whether school leaders may subcontract school operations to nonunion workers. It receives low marks for capping the length of faculty meetings at one hour, though it is silent on whether time at such meetings must be allotted to union matters. Orange County's contract receives two Fs in this category for requiring schools to give teachers stipends for professional development activities outside the scheduled workday and to grant teachers leave to attend union activities.

### **Conclusion**

Of the eleven components on which it was graded, Orange County received only one grade higher than 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 Orange County School Board 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 in high-needs schools and teachers of shortage subjects. (The bargaining agreement is silent on the former and bars the latter.)
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 two and is silent on one.)
6. subcontract (i.e., outsource) certain school operations. (The bargaining agreement is silent on this issue.)

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

7. mandate that teachers be given stipends for professional development activities outside the scheduled workday.
8. cap the time allowed for faculty meetings. (While long meetings are not necessarily preferable, principals should have some discretion.)
9. 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.