

# San Diego Unified School District (CA)

**GPA: 1.11**

**Rank: 48th place out of 50**

*Document Examined: Collective bargaining agreement, July 1, 2003 – June 30, 2006\**

Data from the NCTQ database were drawn from San Diego's July 1, 2003 – June 30, 2006 bargaining agreement. The authors have confirmed that a new contract has been approved. 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
RESTRICTIVE
<b>HIGHLY RESTRICTIVE</b>

## 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. San Diego'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: 1.11 (48th place out of 50)

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

San Diego receives a Highly Restrictive rating, the lowest possible, for its 1.11 GPA, ranking third to last among the fifty districts studied—and third among the four California districts examined here. Of the ten components for which it received a grade, the district garnered five Fs, no As, and only one B. San Diego's collective bargaining agreement is especially restrictive when it comes to Work Rules, a category in which it ranked second to last.

## Compensation: C- (th 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.

San Diego scored higher in this category than in any other, which indicates just how restrictive its bargaining agreement

<b>Compensation</b> . . . . .	<b>C-</b>
1. Credit for Previous Experience . . . . .	B
2. Performance Pay . . . . .	C
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 . . . . .	N/A
8. Transfers . . . . .	F
<b>Work Rules</b> . . . . .	<b>F</b>
9. Professional Development . . . . .	F
10. Subcontracting Operations† . . . . .	F
11. Faculty Meetings . . . . .	D
12. Teacher Leave . . . . .	F

is. The district allows school leaders to raise starting teacher salaries based on previous experience teaching in a private school, but is silent on whether they may do so for experience teaching college or working in subject-related field. The contract is silent on whether schools may reward teachers on the basis of performance or for working in a high-needs school, but receives an F for barring schools from rewarding teachers of shortage subjects.

### **Personnel Policies: D+ (35th percentile)**

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

California state law preempts district bargaining agreements on several of the indicators measured in this category. Tenure and layoff rules are both governed by California state law, and consequently do not receive grades. 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 those two indicators from calculation for the Transfers component. San Diego’s bargaining agreement does address one indicator dealing with transfers, requiring that internal job applicants be given priority over new hires for vacant positions. The contract also addresses the issue of evaluations, permitting school leaders to consider student performance, in general, when evaluating teachers, but barring them from considering student test scores in particular.

### **Work Rules: F (12th percentile)**

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

San Diego receives Fs on three of the four components in this category. The district requires schools to give teachers salary credit and/or stipends for professional development activities outside the scheduled workday; bars school leaders from subcontracting school operations to nonunion workers; requires time at faculty meetings to be allotted to union matters; and mandates that teachers be given leave to attend union activities. It avoids straight Fs only by remaining silent on whether limits must be placed on the length of faculty meetings. Only Miami-Dade County ranks lower than San Diego in this category.

### **Conclusion**

San Diego is one of the least principal-friendly environments in this study, giving school leaders little flexibility to assemble and lead strong teams. Even in its strongest category, Compensation, it ranks below the majority of districts in this study. To better equip its school leaders with the authority they need to manage their schools effectively, the San Diego 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 types of relevant previous experience. (The bargaining agreement allows this for some forms but is silent on others.)
2. reward teachers on the basis of performance and for teaching in high-needs schools. (The bargaining agreement is silent on these issues.)
3. reward teachers of shortage subjects. (The bargaining agreement bars this practice.)
4. consider student test scores when evaluating teachers. (The bargaining agreement bars this practice.)
5. 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.)
6. subcontract school operations. (The bargaining agreement bars this practice.)

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

7. mandate that teachers be given salary credit and/or stipends for professional development activities outside the scheduled workday.
8. require that time at faculty meetings be allotted to union matters.
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.