

Madera County Superintendent of Schools
2007 Annual Report: Williams Site Visitations
Required by
Terms of the Williams's Settlement
November 2007

Background

In May 2000, the ACLU and other public interest advocates representing students across the state filed a lawsuit against the State of California, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the State Board of Education and the California Department of Education. The lawsuit claimed that the State failed to provide poor and underprivileged students with equal educational opportunities. Allegations included that the following conditions existed in schools with poor and underprivileged students:

1. Lack of sufficient educational tools e.g. textbooks, instructional materials.
2. Inadequate facilities e.g. lack of heating/air conditioning, unclean restrooms, etc.
3. Lack of credentialed teachers.

The Williams Settlement covered a broad scope of issues regarding instructional materials, facilities maintenance, teacher credentialing and assignment monitoring, enhanced public reporting in the School Accountability Report Cards (SARC), and Year Round Schools operating on the Concept 6 calendar [not a year round calendar operating in Madera County].

In August 2004, Governor Schwarzenegger settled this lawsuit. The initial result of the settlement was the enactment of five pieces of legislation to ensure monitoring of conditions at school sites with student scores in the lower third deciles or Deciles 1, 2, and 3 Schools on the 2003 Academic Performance Index (API). One outcome was a new oversight role for county superintendents for schools in deciles 1-3 on the 2003 base API.

Subsequent legislation changed the API base year from 2003 to the 2006 API deciles 1-3 schools for the purpose of school sites subject to site visitations. For Madera County this meant Madera High School, Madera High South in the Madera Unified School District; Chowchilla High in the Chowchilla Union High School District; and Fuller Elementary School in the Chowchilla School District achieved scores in decile 4 or above and were no longer subject to site visitations. However, Chawanakee Academy of the

Chawanakee Unified School District fell into decile 3 and was subject to site visitation. Due to a significant number of students coming from schools in deciles 1-3, two new schools in the Madera Unified School District, Nishimoto Elementary and Jack G. Desmond Middle schools required site visitations.

Site visitations require verification of sufficiency of textbooks and instructional materials; the adequacy, health and safety of school facilities; appropriate posting of the uniform complaint procedures [UCP]; review of School Accountability Report Cards [SARC]; and required to be noted in the 2007 Annual Report, information relative to teacher credentialing, vacancies, and assignments.

While some reporting requirements applied to all school sites and school districts in Madera County, the Madera County Superintendent of Schools requirement to conduct school site visitations is limited to those schools in deciles 1-3 on the 2006 API.

California Education Code Section 1240 requires the county superintendent to visit those schools in Madera County identified as performing in deciles 1-3 on the 2006 API. The findings of those visitations are to be reported to the governing boards of those schools and to the Madera County Board of Supervisors. This report contains the findings of visits to the school sites in the three Madera County school districts subject to site reviews. Those schools were Fairmead Elementary and Wilson Middle schools of the Chowchilla School District; Chawanakee Academy of the Chawanakee Unified School District; and Alpha, Eastin-Arcola, LaVina, Madison, Millview, Monroe, Nishimoto, Sierra Vista, and Washington schools; Martin Luther King, Jr. and Desmond Middle Schools of the Madera Unified School District.

The visits as specified in California Education Code Section 1240 were:

1. To ensure that students have access to “sufficient instructional materials in four core subject areas of English language arts, mathematics, history/social science and science;
2. To assess compliance with facilities maintenance to determine the condition of a facility that “poses an emergency or urgent threat to the health or safety of pupils or staff;” and
3. To determine if the school has provided accurate data for the annual school accountability report card related to instructional materials and facilities maintenance; and
4. To determine teacher vacancies, assignments and credentials.

The standards set forth in the law define “sufficient” instructional materials to mean every pupil, including English learners, has a textbook in the four core areas to use in class and to take home each night to complete required homework assignments. Facilities standards for each school district receiving state funding for facilities maintenance are required to establish a facilities inspection program and to ensure that each of its schools is maintained in good repair. “Good repair” is defined as maintaining schools that are clean, safe and functional.

The School Site Review Team is required to visit a minimum of 25% of core curriculum classrooms with a prescribed array of programs, e.g. review of courses for English Language Learners. Additionally, ancillary facilities such as restrooms, multipurpose rooms, computer labs, libraries, resource classrooms and special day classrooms are subject to site review.

As required by law, 25% of the visitations are to be unannounced. Four of the 14 schools visited in Madera County were unannounced visits: Sierra Vista and Washington Elementary schools of the Madera Unified School District and Fairmead Elementary and Wilson Middle schools of the Chowchilla School District received unannounced visitations. Site visitations occurred within the first 4 weeks of the applicable school year as mandated.

The teacher vacancies, assignments, and credentialing are required components of the 2007 Annual Report.

Findings

Findings in the required areas were as follows:

I. Access and Sufficiency of Instructional Materials in the Four Core Areas

Of the 14 school sites visited the following findings apply to access and sufficiency of instructional materials. Site reports contain additional information regarding findings that may have been remedied during the site visit or immediately following the site visitation.

Chawanakee Unified School District

Board of Trustees Sufficiency Hearing and Action: The Chawanakee Unified School District Board of Trustees declared its sufficiency of instructional materials with the passage of Resolution #2 -07/08 at its September 13, 2007 meeting.

Site Visitation Findings: Textbooks and Instructional Materials

Chawanakee Academy: A variety of findings are included in the site report. A MCOE Williams's Team member conducted an unannounced follow up visit to the Lighthouse school site on September 19, 2007. At that time, it was verified that students had access to and availability of grade appropriate textbooks aligned to State Standards.

Chowchilla School District

Board of Trustees Sufficiency Hearing and Action: At the October 1, 2007 regular meeting of the Board of Trustees, a public hearing on sufficiency of textbooks and instructional materials was held. Following the public hearing, the Board passed Resolution 2007-08.6 Availability of Textbooks and Instructional Materials 2007-2008 School Year in which a sufficiency of textbooks and instructional materials was declared.

Site Visitation Findings: Textbooks and Instructional Materials

Fairmead: There was a sufficiency of instructional materials for students in all classrooms visited.

Wilson: It was found (with verification that special day class seventh and eighth grade students had a sufficiency of textbooks in the four core areas) that there was a sufficiency of instructional materials for students in all classrooms visited.

Madera Unified School District

Board of Trustees Sufficiency Hearing and Action: At the September 25, 2007 regular meeting of the Board of Trustees, a public hearing on “Textbook and Instructional Materials Compliance and Certification” was held. Following the public hearing, the Board passed Resolution #9-2007/08: Textbook and Instructional Materials Compliance and Certification of Provision of Sufficient Standards-Aligned Instructional Materials for Grades K-12.

Note: District level textbook procedures were in transition to a new coordinator and a new process. When any finding was made, the coordinator immediately set out to take corrective action. Copies of Purchase Orders were produced when possible, or if an order had not been placed that was stated and orders were immediately placed. An “all call” to other schools was made and typically corrected any shortages. The cooperation of district and site staff to the importance of the Williams’ site reviews was notable. The new Science instructional materials were on back order at many school sites; however, purchase orders verified a timely request for materials. Science activity books were the last to arrive. District or site personnel provided regular updates as to availability of materials and all materials were received prior to Board of Trustees’ September 25th declaration of sufficiency of instructional materials.

Site Visitation Findings: Textbooks and Instructional Materials

Alpha, Eastin-Arcola, LaVina, Madison, Millview, Monroe, Nishimoto, Sierra Vista, and Washington Elementary Schools: It was found that there was a sufficiency of instructional materials for students in all classrooms visited or that immediate corrective action was taken as certified in individual site reports.

Desmond and Martin Luther King, Jr. Middle Schools: It was found that there was a sufficiency of instructional materials for students in all classrooms visited. ELA textbooks at Desmond arrived at the school site on September 26, 2007.

II. Required Classroom Postings for Uniform Complaint Procedures

The required and up-to-date Williams Uniform Complaint Procedures notification was properly posted throughout the 14 school sites reviewed in each of the three school districts. Any out dated postings were removed and replaced with the appropriate up-to-date postings.

III. Verification of Data on School Accountability Report Card (SARC)

Remote review SARCs for decile 1-3 schools was conducted by a Madera County Office of Education Williams’s Team member. Review of SARCs for the Chowchilla School District and Madera Unified School District schools revealed SARCs were up to date as per current State Board of Education template requirements.

Chawanakee Unified School District officials informed MCOE Williams's Coordinator that the district's SARCs are being brought up to date. The Chawanakee Unified School District Board of Trustees will consider school site SARCs for the 2005-2006 school year at its November 8, 2007 meeting. The Chawanakee Unified School District's SARCs for 2006-2007 will be heard at its December 13, 2007 meeting. The district has established a process for annual updating.

IV. Facilities' Review Based on the Facilities Inspection Tool (FIT) Developed by OPSC

A thorough review of the 14 school sites was conducted using the State of California mandated Facilities Inspection Tool developed by the Office of Public School Construction (OPSC). In the typical facilities school site review, district office level maintenance and operations representative(s) and the school site maintenance and operations staff accompanied review team member(s). This process serves to enhance the understanding of the need for corrective actions. Maintenance and operations staff members were accommodating in the process and were able to describe or delineate future deferred maintenance or modernization projects and projected schedules. District or site personnel also responded with written statements as to any immediate corrective actions taken.

Chawanakee Unified School District

School Site Visitation Findings: Facilities

Chawanakee Academy:

- Corrective actions were taken on all findings reported in the site visitation report with the exception of no documentation was submitted indicating repair of ripped vinyl wall covering in Room 24 at the Spring Valley site.
- At the Lighthouse site, reviewers have been informed that students enrolled in Chawanakee Unified School District's independent study program will not have access to the playground for any part of the school program. The Independent Study program will have no more than 24 students present in the Chawanakee Academy at any one time. The upstairs facility would not be used for instructional purposes.

Chowchilla School District

School Site Visitation Findings: Facilities

Certification was received verifying that corrective action has been/will be taken on all findings. The following represent those findings scheduled for corrective action:

Fairmead School:

- Fencing areas near rooms 28 and 29 repairs, scheduled for Summer 07 was moved to October 2007.
- Guide wires will be added to the bottom of the fence on the fence at the north and west side of the campus, scheduled fall 2007.
- A large hole under the fence at Room 27 and a hole under the fence near the Road 19 and Avenue 22 ¼ are scheduled for repair in fall 2007.
- Standing water behind the portable classrooms 18 and 20 has been identified in each Williams's site visitation. The district continuously addresses this issue to no permanent resolution.
- Playground benches, removed during renovations of the blacktop were improperly reinstalled. Contractor is scheduled to repair this fall 2007.
- *The door to the custodial room is scheduled to be replaced fall 2007.*
- *Climbing structure is scheduled to be replaced fall 2007.*
- A deep cleaning of the tile grout in the restrooms is scheduled for each to coincide with student breaks.
- Many student desks had cracked or missing molding strips. Desks are scheduled to be replaced summer 2008. The back doors to rooms 3 and 8 are scheduled to be repaired or replaced summer 2008.
- It was noted the lack of water pressure throughout the campus is due to the sharing of the well located on the school grounds with the surrounding community. The play field lawn is dying due to lack of water. It was reported that the students' toilets cannot be flushed properly when the lawn is being irrigated. This poses a health concern. District officials report that the well is maintained by the County of Madera.

Wilson School:

Cafeteria is scheduled to be cleaned during students' break. Upper half of walls are scheduled to be painted summer 2008.

- Drainage system will be installed fall 2007 to address the many areas throughout the school site with standing water. Staff has taken appropriate action to mark off potential problem areas.
- Puncture vines and goat heads are scheduled to be removed from grounds during Thanksgiving break.
- Asphalt between cafeteria and gym will be repaired summer 2008.

Madera Unified School District

School Site Visitations: Facilities

Certification was received verifying that corrective action has been/will be taken on findings. The following represent only those schools where findings are scheduled for corrective action or where corrective action has not been certified as completed at that specified school site(s):

Madison:

- While many work orders were completed as on 10/15/07 and certification due into MCOE 10/16/07, it is unclear when work will be completed.
- Boys' restroom near Room 4 had many findings and no certification was provided for the leaking sink, missing soap dispenser, holes in the tile or standing water on the floor around the sink.
- No documentation was provided regarding the girls' and boys' restrooms by Room 16 being used as storage.
- No certification that the flush handle is functional in the second stall in the girls' restroom by Room 8.
- No documentation of corrective action for Room K-B for s use of small restroom for storage or the need of deep cleaning for the walls and floor.

Nishimoto and Desmond:

- The team commends the district for its immediate attention to the need to fence the common parking lot. This design requires that students and visitors to pass through or by the office prior to being able to have access to either campus.
- The team further notes the district's immediate response to painting the curbed areas as follows: red to designate no parking in front of the fire hydrant and it is believed the curb will also be painted to designate bus loading and unloading zones.

V. Teacher Vacancy, Assignment, and Credentialing

Review of teachers assigned to each of the 14 school sites subject to site visitation revealed there were no teacher vacancies and that all teachers were appropriately assigned.

Chowchilla School District has 108 classes with 20% or more English Learners. 87% of the teachers in those classrooms have the appropriate English Learner Authorization. Madera Unified School District has 741 classes with 20% or more English Learners. 91% of the teachers in those classes hold the appropriate English Learner Authorization.

In the three school districts subject to site visitation, site and district staff members provided clarification to questions, were attentive to findings and made every effort to correct any finding that was readily remedied. Teachers and students were cooperative and appeared well informed about the purpose of the Williams's Team visit.