



San Francisco Unified School District

Overview of the District

Rank Among U.S. School Districts (by size):	69
Number of Schools:	118
Number of Students:	57,805
Number of Teachers:	3,032
Annual Budget:	\$422.7 million

Superintendent: Dr. Arlene Ackerman was appointed in 2000. She served as superintendent of Washington, D.C. schools before being appointed as the superintendent for San Francisco.

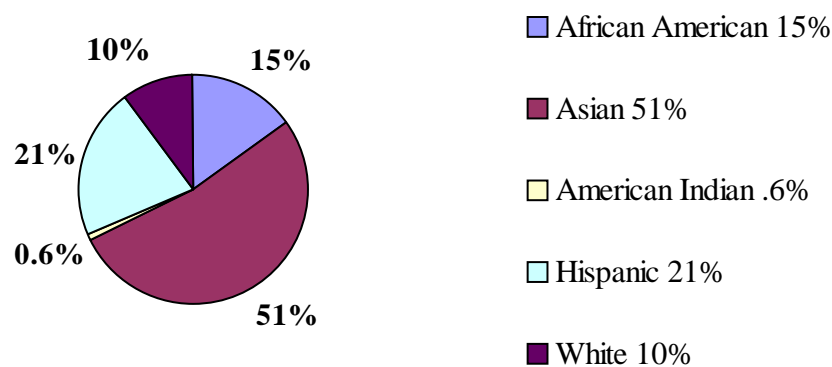
Governance: Elected Board. Seven members elected for four-year terms

Teacher Union: United Educators of San Francisco, NEA and AFT

Student Characteristics

Percent of Students Eligible for Free/Reduced School Lunch:	62%
Percent of Students Designated as English Language Learners:	28%

Student Demographics



STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Meeting Federal No Child Left Behind Requirements

- ✓ In 2004, 67% of San Francisco's schools met their Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) targets as identified by the federal No Child Left Behind legislation, which requires that schools meet performance targets for students in all significant subgroups (e.g. ethnicity, income, language, and disability).

Consistent High Performance in Math and Reading while Reducing Achievement Gaps across Income Groups

- ✓ San Francisco is a consistent high performer (2001-2004) among demographically similar districts in California. Using The Broad Prize methodology, San Francisco outperformed similar districts in California in six of six areas (elementary, middle and high schools; reading and math). This is San Francisco's first year as a Broad Prize finalist.
- ✓ San Francisco has income achievement gaps that are significantly smaller than the California state average, and the gaps are closing faster than the state in both reading and math.
- ✓ Reading: The percentage of elementary students who reached proficiency in reading increased by five percentage points in the past four years, while middle school reading improved by seven percentage points.
- ✓ Mathematics: The percentage of elementary students who reached proficiency in math increased by eleven percentage points in the past four years, while middle school math improved by seven percentage points.

RESEARCH-BASED BEST PRACTICES

Curriculum and Academic Goals

- ✓ The district aligns its academic standards, professional development, and instructional programs to the state standards. The state facilitates this process by providing some aligned professional development opportunities and aligned materials for adoption.
- ✓ The state standards are the basis of the district's core curriculum development. Teacher teams, in cooperation with central office staff, take the base standards and map them to an instructional guide. The guide shows teachers when each standard will be taught and to what depth. This process intends to highlight the necessary skills to prepare students for grade level transitions.
- ✓ The district has recently begun implementing benchmark assessments in language arts for grades K-5, as well as initiating math assessments in grades 1 through 9 and science assessments in grades 4 and 5. At the school level, teachers use benchmarks and quarterly assessments developed by the district, and common assessments developed by the teachers to monitor student proficiency throughout the year.

Staff Selection and Capacity Building

- ✓ With dwindling recruiting budgets, shortages of principal applicants, and large numbers of retiring principals, San Francisco is focusing on building principal candidates from within the system. One source for principal candidates is the LEAD Program, which began as an initial class of 15 administrative interns working with principal mentors and retired principal coaches, as they transitioned into principal positions.
- ✓ First year principals participate in a year-long orientation that trains principals to be both instructional leaders and operational managers for their campuses. They are also assigned coaches to help them reflect on their practices and set goals for improvement. Support is maintained through weekly meetings and continued professional development throughout their career.
- ✓ The district has created two grow-your-own programs to develop teachers in high-need areas including math, science, special education, and bilingual education. These programs target paraprofessionals looking to become teachers and non-educators looking to transition into the field of education.
- ✓ New teachers are supported through the two-year state funded Beginning Teacher Support Assessment (BTSA) program. This program pairs new teachers with an experienced teacher who is trained to coach them in how to implement the curriculum. In addition to BTSA, the Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) process provides assistance to new and struggling teachers.

Instructional Programs, Practices, and Arrangements

- ✓ While the use of some instructional programs and materials is mandated, there is a concerted effort to involve teachers in the selection process. The district assembles a group of teachers from across the city to develop a list of nearly a dozen criteria they want to see in a specific teaching program. Based on these criteria, they then choose their top picks of instructional programs to pilot. Teachers field-test lessons from the new materials and forward rankings of the programs and feedback to the central office to decide which ones to adopt district-wide.
- ✓ With a diverse student population, San Francisco has developed programs to address different student needs. The district created one of the first dual-language programs in the country where children are being schooled in both English and Chinese. They have also created small learning communities at the high school level to help students transition into fields like biotechnology, information technology, and health-related fields.
- ✓ The district does not mandate particular teaching practices and schedules. Schools have the choice to adopt those practices that best suit the needs of their students. However, the district does promote the direct instruction model and in some cases will direct schools to use scripted programs in low-performing areas.

Use of Data

- ✓ Before the beginning of each school year, San Francisco's research department provides principals with CDs that have all available student data broken down into different criteria. They also provide principals with a PowerPoint presentation covering district and school trends that they can share with teachers and school site committees.
- ✓ Teachers receive individualized data reports that illustrate students' performance in key areas on state assessments and in some cases on district assessments. Teacher teams (grade level and/or subject-specific) use this data along with subsequent data collected throughout the year to adjust their practices and develop interventions to help students achieve proficiency.
- ✓ The district is creating a new teacher evaluation process called STARSS (Standards, Teaching, Assessment and Reflection Support System) that moves away from traditional compliance evaluations to foster professional growth by engaging teachers in self-evaluation processes. San Francisco is currently in negotiations with the teachers' union to implement STARSS across the district.

Interventions and Adjustments

- ✓ Leveraging resources to create equity for student success is a major initiative in San Francisco. In compliance with a consent decree resulting from a suit brought by the NAACP, the district allocates \$40 million annually to support struggling poor and minority students. Additionally, the superintendent instituted a weighted student formula for resource allocation, which allows monies to shift with changing school populations and demographics.
- ✓ San Francisco has undertaken two major initiatives for struggling students. Funded by a consent decree and Title I, the STAR school initiative leverages additional instructional support resources for 47 of the 114 schools. The second initiative, the Dream schools, provides similar structural supports; however, these schools undergo reconstitution to ensure buy-in to the structured format and curriculum implemented at these newly formed schools.
- ✓ San Francisco has implemented a literacy intervention program across the district for students performing below the basic proficiency standard on the California Standards Test (CST). In addition to the literacy program, some schools have elected to be a part of the Reading First program.
- ✓ Student interventions are often organized by Care or Student Success Teams (SST), which consist of principals, teachers, and various other stakeholders. Care Teams operate as grade-level specific case managers, while the SST develops specific intervention plans for individual struggling students.

Stability of Leadership

- ✓ Dr. Arlene Ackerman was appointed superintendent of San Francisco Public Schools in 2000. Prior to her appointment, she served as the superintendent of Washington, D.C. schools. She has over 36 years of experience in the field of education.

Other Factors

- ✓ The superintendent established the San Francisco Business Advisory Council, which was instrumental in the success of two bond campaigns, one that will support capital improvements and the other that will provide the district with \$60 million annually in support of arts and athletic programs.

- ✓ San Francisco reaches out to parents by creating opportunities for them to serve on school site councils where they can have an impact on decisions being made at their child's school. In an effort to facilitate the involvement of all parents, the district has created a translation office that provides translators and translated materials for the 49 languages spoken within the district.