



# **Los Angeles County Regional Occupational Program**

Western Association of Schools and Colleges  
Focus on Learning

## **MIDTERM PROGRESS REPORT**

**June 2009**



**Los Angeles County  
Office of Education**

**Los Angeles County Regional Occupational Program**

Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC)

Focus on Learning (FOL)

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**I. Significant developments at the ROP since the last full visit that have had a major impact on the school or specific curricular programs.**

California Budget Crisis

During 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 a growing budget deficit became major agenda items at Los Angeles County Regional Occupational Program (LACOROP) meetings. In December 2008 and in preparation for mid-year cuts, it was decided that all budgeted activities would need to be revisited and prioritized for the remainder of the school year. Each committee would decide if the budgeted item was 'mandated,' 'essential,' or 'desirable'. As the budget situation continued to decline budgeted activities were stopped except for mandated expenditures. The annual WASC All-District In-Service was deferred for 2009-2010. When the state budget was signed in February 2009, a 15% budget reduction was implemented on current year (2008-2009) expenditures with an additional 5% reduction to the following year (2009-2010). This represented a \$6.2 million reduction for 2009-2010. The state budget crisis and unprecedented fiscal challenge resulted in Average Daily Attendance (ADA) being suspended for four years. Funding agencies would receive a block allocation to fund the ROP or any other educational purpose. In addition, ROPs were categorized under Tier III permitting governing boards to redirect, or 'flex' funds for any other purpose without penalty. Staff and districts met and agreed that necessary cutbacks would be implemented away from the ROP classroom program. The ROP administrative operation located in Downey accepted a 55% cut to staff at all classification levels resulting in a major reorganization and additional cuts were made to non-salary items. Though the classroom funding remained untouched, ROP supplemental funds for districts were also reduced. Without the necessity to maintain ADA goals, a block funding model is being proposed providing districts with maximum flexibility on funds to operate classes until the ROP ADA provision is restored in 2013. As a result of the dramatic cut to ROP funding and resulting reorganization, the WASC Leadership Team will propose to defer all budgeted activities for the 2009-2010 school year to establish the new organization and review priorities as they relate to the Action Plan.

Legislation

Governor Schwarzenegger signed AB2448, authored by Assembly Member Hancock, on September 28, 2006, making its provisions effective January 1, 2007. AB2448 was a comprehensive piece of legislation that changed many aspects of ROP administration and operations. Its main focus was to redirect training and service to better serve high

school students. This would be accomplished by limiting the number of adults served allowing enrollment of more high school students and to require ROPs to align (sequence) their course offerings with high school and community college courses leading to apprenticeships, certificates or degrees, industry certifications or entry into high skill/high demand jobs. As prescribed by California Education Code (E.C.) 52302 (a), the governing board of each ROP shall ensure that at least 90 percent of all state-funded courses offered by the ROP in occupational areas in which both the ROP and the community college offer instruction, is part of occupational sequences that target comprehensive skills. LACOROP responded to the new legislation by working with the 23-partner districts to develop a timeline to assure achievement of the targets established. The Leadership Standing Committee, that has oversight of the Action Plan accomplishment, developed and revised the 2006 Action Plan to incorporate the major objectives and dates to meet the requirements of this new law. The WASC Executive Committee provides the reports, communications, or activities required to accomplish tasks. The new state budget for 2008-2010 and supporting legislation SB3X 4 now creates a quandary if these requirements are still necessary.

Williams vs. the State of California was filed in 2000. The basis of the lawsuit was that state agencies had failed to provide public school students with equal access to instructional materials, safe and decent school facilities, and qualified teachers. County offices of education had to collect and report additional English learner data, and, on an annual basis, to report on the appropriate English learner certification held by teachers in kindergarten through grade twelve (K-12) classes in decile 1, 2, and 3 (2003 API Base) schools, if the class has 20 percent or more English learners. This is a school-by-school, classroom-by-classroom evaluation and several of our district partners were reporting that LACOROP teachers were being reported as a misassignment due to the lack of appropriate English Language Learner authorization. At that time, teachers holding designated subject credentials and without a Bachelors degree were ineligible to earn a supplemental authorization in methods of specially designed content instruction delivered in English (SDAIE). On September 29, 2006, SB1292 was signed into law allowing teachers with designated subjects teaching credentials (vocational) to complete the teaching English Language learners staff development and earn a Certificate of Completion of Staff Development. This bill requires these credential holders to complete the staff development in SDAIE of not less than 45 hours. The result was a shift of focus by several of the LACOROP partner districts in 2007-08 from the standards-based instruction initiative training called "Making Standards Work" (MSW) to supporting their teachers in participating in the SDAIE training to obtain their certificate. Coincidentally, a vote had been taken among district members of the Curriculum and Instruction (C&I) Standing Committee to offer the MSW refresher course trainings using district Professional Development Funds instead of LACOROP funds. The combined actions resulted in only one district hosting a refresher course for their teachers. The 2008-2009 C&I budget reflects full funding and refresher trainings have significantly increased.

### California State Plan for Career Technical Education/Perkins IV

The California Department of Education (CDE) and the California Community College Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) have collaborated to create a plan for career technical education (CTE) that not only meets the requirements of Perkins IV but also presents a broad and bold vision for CTE – one that will catalyze the development of a fully integrated approach to CTE, coordinating and drawing upon multiple funding streams, and embedding CTE within the state's overall education and workforce development systems to serve the needs of all Californians. Many new priorities are reflected in the Perkins IV and the Resource Group chose to leverage Perkins-funded efforts to improve the entire CTE system. Perkins funds programs at the secondary and post-secondary levels. ROPs receive funding through the post-secondary funding stream. With the added requirements of Perkins combined with a rapidly decreasing adult enrollment (resulting from AB2448 compliance of serving more high school students), LACOROP has less supplemental money to support adult student achievement in districts. LACOROP continues to meet the increasing requirements and support those districts with the largest percentage of adult students. As a result, the Action Plan was revised to include the Perkins requirements.

### Resignation of ROP director

At the end of August 2008, the ROP director resigned her position. During the 2008-2009 year, two veteran Assistant Directors and one newly hired Assistant Director shared in the duties to maintain the continuity of LACOROP. All responsibilities supporting the oversight, implementation, and accomplishment of the WASC Action Plan were maintained and made a priority by staff and district partners.

### Welcome a New District and a New School to LACOROP

Acton-Agua Dulce Unified School District joined LACOROP as of July 2007. The district is located approximately 70 miles northeast of the ROP administrative office in Downey. A conscious effort is made to provide the same level of support by LACOROP as a district within a few miles of the office. In addition, LACOROP offered its first class at I-Poly High School, a county-operated program located on the California Polytechnic State University, Pomona campus commencing with the fall semester 2008.

### **ROP's procedures for the implementation and the monitoring of the school-wide action plan. Include how annual progress reports, as well as this third year report, have been prepared.**

LACOROP is committed to the WASC Action Plan and demonstrates this through institutionalizing meetings and reporting structures. The WASC Leadership Team became one of the official standing committees in 2002-2003. The LACOROP Steering Committee is also supported by three additional standing committees: Budget, Support Services, and Curriculum and Instruction. Two sub-committees, Impact and

Technology, are attended on a voluntary basis, support the Action Plan, and report to the Steering Committee. The standing committees support and recommend guidelines for the general operation of LACOROP and report to the Steering Committee. After the accreditation visit, the Executive Committee, consisting of the committee co-chairs (one district Steering Committee member and one ROP Administrator), ROP director, and Self-Study Co-Coordinator (also one district Steering Committee member and one ROP Administrator) met and reviewed the Action Plan identifying each objective with the appropriate Standing Committee. This information was presented to the full Leadership Team for review and vote. The resulting chart was updated with the addition of a new initiative entitled "Data Driven Decision Making" that contain the AB2448 and Perkins requirements.

Each year Standing Committees review the full Action Plan, chart of responsibilities, and the report of progress from the previous year's committees to determine what goals and objectives are to be accomplished in the upcoming year. Any objective not fully completed, still in process, or commencing with the new year are listed and accepted through a vote. The resulting one-year list from the Action Plan is presented at the fall Steering Committee meeting for an official vote. From that time, the goals and objectives become an official part of each Standing Committee's agenda and discussed with supporting minutes provided. Detailed updates and discussions are held at every Leadership Standing Committee Meeting, including conversations regarding any barriers or circumstances that are interfering with achievement. Each committee co-chair submits a WASC Status Report that reflects accomplishments since the previous Steering Committee meeting. At every Steering Committee meeting (held five times per year), the 23-district partnership receives a copy of each committee's meeting minutes, WASC Initiative Status Report and an oral report of supporting activities. LACOROP management staff is accountable for the related WASC goals and objectives on their yearly evaluations. Staff Performance Evaluations are reviewed three times each year to assure accomplishment of the objectives. Each July LACOROP holds an annual retreat. This is an all-stakeholder meeting consisting of the Leadership Team, parents, students, business and industry members, support staff, teachers, counselors, and administrators. The retreat's main focus targets the WASC Action Plan, accomplishments of goals, and other related activities.

To keep educational stakeholders informed of progress made on the Strategic Action Plan, the "Focus On Learning" newsletter is disseminated three times per year and highlights key aspects such as the Expected Student Learning Results (ESLRs), as well as providing status reports on the progress of the plan. Annual meetings with business and industry provide up-to-date information on the Action Plan and implementation and assessment of the ESLRs. Student involvement and feedback is solicited through the Student Ambassador program. Created in 2001, in response to a need identified through the 2000 WASC Self-Study activities, ROP has quick access to a representative group of students to discuss issues, provide input, or communicate to peers at their site. Ambassadors meet periodically with other ambassadors in regional districts, as well

as attend ROP-wide leadership training. They are also invited to attend the annual ROP retreat and assist the committee and participants during the annual All-District In-Service.

Communication to the many stakeholders throughout a large organization is accomplished in many ways. The "LACOROP All-District In-Service" has been held since 1998 for educational stakeholders. All activities support the activities in the Action Plan with additional focus on technology, best practices, and the ESLRs. The annual business and industry advisory committees (industry input) generate continued discussion and suggestions regarding the ESLRs and Action Plan. The "Focus on Learning" newsletter is distributed to all educational stakeholders and includes articles supporting action plan steps. Many issues feature a special insert on the specific progress of the Action Plan and Leadership Team activities.

LACOROP continues to use Accreditation Plus (A+) during the Action Plan implementation years. It has been the goal to identify multiple uses of this web-based system to increase stakeholder use in preparation for the next Self-Study commencing in 2010. Annual online trainings are held for new staff and those wanting a refresher course. Periodic communications are sent via A+, and ROP staff is encouraged to use the calendar to post and communicate meetings. The document library, a feature within A+, stores course outlines, proficiencies, safety tests, and advisory minutes providing instant access by our stakeholders. Chat room meetings, another function of A+, are conducted with teachers from the convenience of their desk saving time and the expense of travel. There remains a constant group of staff and teachers that are unskilled and not confident in the use of computer technology. LACOROP continues to work with teachers to encourage experimentation with this particular technology to increase their comfort level.

Discussions on the Mid-Term Report formally began in the fall 2008 with the Leadership Team, and in December 2008 with the Steering Committee. Due to the success of the WASC Initiative Status Reports and year-end presentation at the July retreats, the progress portion of the report was easily compiled. First drafts were presented to the Executive Committee in February 2009 and those identified with lead responsibility for each initiative. These drafts were also reviewed by each of the respective standing committees. The Leadership Team selected the same format used for the 2003 mid-term report. The report development process was delayed due to the state budget and its serious impact on the ROP. The Steering Committee received a draft copy of the report in May. The report was also disseminated via A+ to all stakeholders for review and comment. The draft report was also posted on the LACOROP web-site. The Leadership Team reviewed the report at their May meeting. The Los Angeles County Board of Education formally accepted the report on June 2, 2009. The Steering Committee formally accepted the report on June 5, 2009.

**Progress on all critical areas of follow-up (or major recommendations) carried out within the school-wide action plan section. Comment on any additional areas that were addressed within the action plan. Indicate what impact the action plan has had on the quality and level of student learning.**

*The Visiting Team supported six areas already identified by the ROP in the Action Plan. Though rewording of the items are not expected a review of these items revealed that the areas had been edited. The ROP admits that these edits should have been discussed at the Exit Interview. Though the six revised items are considered important and valued by the ROP, this progress report will address the original wording from the Action Plan.*

**Identify and prioritize safety training needs such as First Aid, CPR, classroom emergencies, and disaster preparedness.**

- The Impact and Budget Standing Committees collaborated to develop and administer a survey in December 2006 to determine the safety training needs of the districts.
- Based upon results another objective was added to the 2008-2009 Action Plan to develop a budget request by February 28, 2009, allowing ROP teachers and support staff to acquire first aid and CPR certification. This item was deferred due to the budget crisis and its impact upon the ROP.
- Another survey was administered to gather information on First Aid and CPR training opportunities within districts. Over 75% of the districts offer or provide access to these trainings for all staff.
- ROP Administrative office staff has been offered trainings in both areas since 2007. Two trainings were held in 2007-2008 and one training was held in the fall 2008.
- Since 2000 the ROP has communicated CPR trainings through the Red Cross. Staff checks the internet monthly to locate low-cost trainings, usually under \$10.
- The ROP Health Consultant periodically disseminates relevant and timely articles to districts and staff related to health concerns. Examples of topics include: how to handle stress over the holiday, healthy habits during the summer, and most recently, information on the flu and preventative measures.

Evidence

- ✓ Survey and results
  - ✓ Downey office publications
  - ✓ Red Cross publications
  - ✓ Copies of correspondence by Health Consultant
  - ✓ Impact Committee Meeting Minutes
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- The Impact Standing Committee developed and disseminated a Safety Plan Checklist, template, and crosswalk focusing on after-school and Saturday classes to

Steering Committee members on December 8, 2006. Results were reviewed to identify gaps to discuss with district partners.

- In 2007 a Safety Plan Sample Template was developed by the Impact Committee and provided to districts with results submitted by June 2008. Twenty of the 23 districts have submitted completed plans.
- ROP supported districts in the communication of the safety plans to staff and other site administrators.

#### Evidence

- ✓ Safety Plan Checklist
- ✓ Safety Plan Sample Template
- ✓ District meeting agendas
- ✓ Impact Committee meeting minutes

### **Review student work by implementing assessments that will provide teachers feedback on student achievement of standards including the ESLRs.**

- A basic process to review student work was introduced through the WASC Self-Study process and was applied inconsistently but the importance of this was recognized by staff.
- In May 2008 the Center for Leadership and Learning conducted a workshop on "Common Formative Assessment" to ROP and district management. This process focuses on aligning assessment to standards and also includes a process for reviewing student work, implementing objectives based on student data, followed by a review of student work etc. Based on this experience districts supported the implementation of this training to district teachers.
- The first student review of student work was conducted with business teachers at their annual subject-specific workshop.
- Three ROP managers have been certified in "Common Formative Assessments."
- The first workshop was held in March for one district and attended by 34 ROP instructors, two counselors, and one administrator.
- Activities have been deferred resulting from the state budget and impact to the ROP.

#### Evidence

- ✓ May 2008 training information
- ✓ Teacher workshop agenda
- ✓ Common Formative Assessment teacher sign-in sheet and evaluation
- ✓ First drafts posted on the lacorop.org website

### **Train instructors on standards-based instruction including the ESLRs.**

#### Training in standards-based instruction

- In 2005 two curriculum managers were certified by the Center for Performance Assessment (now known as the Center for Leadership and Learning) on standards-

based instruction entitled, "Making Standards Work" (MSW). Training was piloted in three districts during the self-study process for the 2006 WASC Accreditation.

- The workshops were so well received by the teachers that districts supported a budget item to provide trainings throughout LACOROP. Additional curriculum managers were certified to present the workshop.
- Two-hundred ninety-five teachers, counselors, and administrators have completed the three-day training.
- In 2007-2008 MSW was regularly scheduled three times each year. In addition, special workshops were conducted at district sites.
- In 2007-2008 refresher workshops were created and conducted regionally at district sites. Advanced writing workshops were also conducted to support and maintain the standards-based effort.
- As of May 1, 2009, 295 teachers have participated in the 3-day training.

Evidence:

- ✓ Data base of attendees
- ✓ Workshop materials
- ✓ Evaluations of workshop participants
- ✓ Teacher work products

Incorporating CTE standards and Language Arts and Math

- During 2005-2006 Consultant staff worked with business and industry, through advisory meetings, to prioritize the CTE foundation and specific content standards.
- During 2006-2007 Consultants conducted workshops with teachers to also prioritize CTE foundation and specific content standards using input provided by business and industry.
- Since 2006 Consultants have been incorporating the 'priority' standards into the course outlines which include academic standards within the foundation standards. These standards are **bolded** within the course outline and are to be taught by all teachers within the content area. Due to staffing changes within the curriculum management group, progress in marketing, creative arts, and trade and industry have slowed.
- A standards-based lesson plan template is used by the ROP and also posted on the [lacorop.org](http://lacorop.org) website for teacher access. Instruction on use of the form is conducted at New Teacher In-Service and subject specific workshops.
- Work products through MSW are based upon the priority standards and posted on the [lacorop.org](http://lacorop.org) website as a resource for teachers.

Evidence:

- ✓ Advisory meeting agendas and minutes
- ✓ Workshop presentation
- ✓ Workshop agendas, sign-in sheets, evaluations
- ✓ Course outlines
- ✓ Standards-based lesson plan template

- ✓ New Teacher In-Service agenda and PowerPoint
- ✓ New Teacher In-Service sign-in sheets, evaluations

#### Training in standards-based assessment

- Three curriculum managers are certified trainers in standards-based assessment called "Common Formative Assessments." Due to the 2009 budget situation all activities have been deferred.

#### Evidence:

- ✓ Copies of certification
- ✓ Workshop materials
- ✓ Agenda, sign-in sheets, evaluation, and work products from pilot training

### **Develop and implement training on incorporating reading and writing across subject areas.**

- This objective is listed in the Action Plan to commence on July 1, 2009. Through the MSW trainings ROP presenters required that reading and writing be incorporated in every instructional task developed by the workshop participant. The English Language Arts standards, grades 9-10, are disseminated to every teacher during MSW.
- In December 2008 business teachers received beginning instruction on how to incorporate reading and writing into classroom instruction.

#### Evidence:

- ✓ Business teacher workshop agenda, sign-in sheet, handouts, evaluations

### **Conduct review of student work to determine the degree of achievement of ESLRs, CTE and academic standards.**

- Activities were scheduled during 2008-2009 in two areas: Business and Home Economics.
  - Business Occupations instructors participated in professional development December 17, 2008, to discuss priority standards that had been identified for each course. Course outlines were revised to align content to priority standards identified. The process of reviewing student work was presented. Instructors were to begin gathering student work on the identified power standards beginning January 2009 to bring to the next subject area workshop to continue reviewing student work and begin to develop common formative assessments. This activity has been deferred as a result of the state budget crisis and its impact on the ROP.
  - Training was scheduled for home economics teachers in the spring 2009, but was cancelled as a result of the state budget crisis and its impact on the ROP.
  - Training was scheduled for health occupations teachers in the spring 2009, but was cancelled as a result of the state budget crisis and its impact on the ROP.

- Activities for marketing, creative arts, and trade and industry were deferred to allow recently hired staff to complete their job orientation.

Evidence:

- ✓ Business teacher workshop agenda, sign-in sheet, handouts, evaluation

### **Strengthen those areas already in the action plan sections**

#### **Enhance services and intervention strategies to support achievement for students with special needs.**

- During 2006-2007 Support Services Committee gathered input from all stakeholders to identify, review, and discuss the definitions for special needs students.
- During 2007-2008 counselors and technicians were presented with the definitions for special needs students and began a review of student data using these definitions to address implications for student services and support.
- The Technology Committee reviewed the ROPOnline enrollment module January 2008 to include RSP Students to the disability category and adjusted the economic status eligibility guidelines to more align with Federal and State guidelines.
- During 2007-2008 Support Services Committee and Counselors identified and discussed practices that serve special needs students and recommended best practices.
- Since 2006 staff development was expanded for counselors, teachers, administrators, and technicians on different topics that support student achievement for students with special needs. Topics covered were "Student Disabilities – Not Just Ramps", October 2006; "Teaching English Language Learners: Strategies for Success", March 2006 and October 2007; "Diversified Occupations", October 2007; "Differentiated Instruction for CTE Teachers", April 2008; "Teaching Strategies for Students with Disabilities in the CTE Classroom", October 2008.
- New Teacher In-Service annually provides a component on information and instructional strategies to assist students with special needs.
- Since 2006 student data – program completion and placement – are reviewed and discussed at the LACOROP Annual Retreat and counselor meetings. Attempts are made to make data more relevant and understandable in order to make judgments about student, staff, and program success. The Support Services Committee determined that, while there are fundamental limitations to data, test results/scores are an indication of learning, and work portfolios/products do matter, especially for certain subgroups within special needs populations. LACOROP continues to seek ways to improve data and discern reliable findings to support student achievement.
- Annually a counselor and manager attend the California Joint Special Populations Advisory Committee Leadership Training and share best practices with colleagues.
- In May 2008 and October 2009, three regional trainings on the National Standards for School Counseling were provided to ROP and School-Site Counselors, 167 total

participants. In addition, supplementary strategies for students with special needs were provided.

- In January 2009, ROP Counselors received an overview of the Special Populations and Non-Traditional Student Resources binder.
- Since 2005, ROP Counselors have received annual data reports on Special Populations and Non-Traditional Students by district/school to review and develop effective strategies to support access to ROP courses and increase student achievement.

Evidence:

- ✓ Support Services Committee Highlights
- ✓ ROP Counselor and Technician meeting agendas
- ✓ National Standards for School Counseling Training Binder and registration lists
- ✓ CDE Perkins E-1, E-2, and CDE 21 reports
- ✓ Workshops agendas and registration lists
- ✓ LACOROP Retreat agendas and materials
- ✓ Technology Committee Highlights
- ✓ Special Populations and Non-Traditional Resources Binder