

Cambrian School District

ORGANIZATIONAL STUDY

School Employers Association of California (SEAC)
NOVEMBER 2023

About SEAC

The School Employers Association of California (SEAC) is a joint-powers agency that provides education, support, and professional development to superintendents, Boards, human resource professionals, and management teams through training, research, and advocacy in collective bargaining, personnel, governance and representation.

When a request for a service is received SEAC identifies a consultant(s) who works directly with the LEA. In conducting a study, the consultant will consult with the LEA to identify the specificity of the study and how the study will be conducted. The results of the study are put into a written report and provided to the LEA.

Background

The Cambrian School District (District) is in San Jose, California. The District is comprised of four elementary schools, one K-8 magnet school and one middle school. Four of the schools in the District are structured as “dependent charter schools”, which allows the district to welcome students from throughout the county. The District has deep roots in the Silicon Valley dating back more than 100 years. The staff share a commitment to excellence and continuous growth, which provides exemplary programs to the students they serve.

Objective

The Cambrian School District requested that SEAC conduct an organizational study of the administrative positions in the District Office, inclusive of a comparative analysis of the administrative staffing of comparable school districts.

The Organizational Review looked at Administration (including Superintendent’s office, Communications), Business Services Department (including Fiscal Services, Buildings and Grounds and Food Services), Human Resources Department, Educational Services Department, Student Services Department (including Student Services and Special Education) and Technology.

Within an organization there are several levels of leadership/management positions, executive management, middle management and lower-level management. In a school district the executive management sets direction based on the goals of the Governing Board and manages specific departments. The next in the chain of command would be the middle management who have responsibility to implement the direction of the executive management and finally the lower-level management who may supervise the day-to-day work of employees. Depending on the size of an organization there may not be three levels of management.

Procedure

As part of the study, SEAC conducted on-site and virtual interviews of administrators to discuss division of responsibilities, job duties, staff workload, interdepartmental communication, division of responsibilities, and the perceived effectiveness and efficiency of the current organizational structure. SEAC also reviewed the District organizational chart, the District LCAP, administrative job descriptions and salary schedules. Data from the Ed-Data website was also reviewed and utilized in this study. SEAC visited the District in person on October 27, 2023. Cindy Frazee, SEAC Consultant conducted this study.

The comparable school districts were chosen based on enrollment and the type of district. The comparable school districts are grade levels K to 8th grade. SEAC contacted each of the comparative districts to validate their staffing data. The percentage of English Learners was added to Figure 1 for discussion contained within this report but was not utilized in selecting comparative districts.

When analyzing the data for all the districts it was noted while they utilize various levels of management to support school sites, they also use support staff as well. The use of support staff varies between the districts, but throughout this report support staff will be utilized in the comparison when they support at the district level.

Comparative Districts

Figure 1

County	District	District Type	Enrollment	% of English Learners (Ed-Data Website)
Santa Clara	Cambrian School District	K-8	2912	13.9
San Mateo	San Carlos School District	K-8	2710	6.6
Sonoma	Rincon Valley Union School District	K-8	3500	12.7
Santa Clara County	Los Gatos Union School District	K-8	2700	7.2
Contra Costa County	Lafayette School District	K-8	3200	3.4

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

Figure 2

Positions	Full-Time Equivalent FTE
Superintendent	1.0
Administrative Assistant to Superintendent	1.0
Coordinator of Marketing, Communication, and Community Engagement	.5

The Superintendent has thirteen direct reports: the Assistant Superintendent of Personnel Services, the Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services, the Chief Financial Officer, the Director of Student Services, the Director of Information Technology, the Director of Education Technology, the six Principals and the Coordinator of Marketing, Communication, and Community Engagement.

The Superintendent functions as the District’s Executive Officer to administer the operation of the district. She keeps the Board informed of the operations and progress towards the goals of the district. All other District employees are hired by the Superintendent or designated administrator. The decisions the Superintendent makes are based on approved policies, laws, the district’s vision and mission statement, the strategic plan, the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP), knowledge/experience and what is best for the students of the district.

Administrative Services Administrative Comparison Data and Recommendations:

Comparison:

Figure 3

Administrative Services

Cambrian School District	San Carlos School District	Rincon Valley School District	Los Gatos Union School District	Lafayette School District
Superintendent	Superintendent	Superintendent	Superintendent	Superintendent
Administrative Assistant to Superintendent	Executive Assistant to Superintendent, School Board and Senior Management	Assistant to the Superintendent	Executive Assistant	Executive Assistant

Coordinator of Marketing, Communication, and Community Engagement	Director, Enterprise & Community Relations*		Communications Coordinator	District Administrative Specialist
2.5 FTE	2.5 FTE	2.0 FTE	3.0 FTE	3.0 FTE

The District’s administrative staffing is in line with the comparison districts (Figure 3). The average staffing ratio was 2.6. As community and stakeholder interest and inquiry regarding public schools has increased, SEAC has seen a significant increase in communication positions in school districts. Four out of the five comparison districts had similar communication positions as the District.

Administrative Services Recommendations:

- Staffing of Administrative Services is in line with the comparison districts.
- The Superintendent has thirteen direct reports. As a smaller school district, it is not unusual for executive managers to be diversified in their responsibilities, however, the District may consider reviewing their organizational chart to shift a few of the Superintendent direct reports to another executive manager.

BUSINESS SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Figure 4

Administrative Positions	FTE
Chief Financial Officer	1.0
Director of Grounds and Buildings	1.0
Controller	1.0
Director of Information Technology (Supt Report)	1.0
Food Services Coordinator	1.0

Contained within the Business Services Department is Fiscal Services, Buildings and Grounds, and Food Services (Figure 4). The Chief Financial Officer (CFO) oversees these areas and has three direct reports. There is one Director who reports to the CFO, the Director of Grounds and Buildings. The Controller is on the Confidential Salary Schedule and reports to the CFO. The Coordinator of Food Services, who is on the management salary schedule, also reports to the CFO. The Director of Grounds and Buildings supervises the

maintenance and grounds staff. The District organizational chart has the Controller supervising the fiscal support staff, while the Controller is listed as a confidential employee (this will be addressed later in the report).

Interviews stated that the Controller position in the District is comparative to a Director of Fiscal Services. The Coordinator of Food Services oversees the site operational functions of food services. The District contracts out with Sodexo for student meals. It was noted in interviews that the District does not have a position control system in place.

It was reported that the District has an eighty-eighty-million-dollar bond for modernization and new construction. The bond is about half-way completed. The District has contracted out for the Bond construction management; however, it was shared that the District must still monitor the management of the contract work. It was shared that it would be helpful to have a Project Manager for the remainder of the bond, about two and a half years, because the District level monitoring of the projects is done by the Director of Grounds and Buildings. This has had an impact on the Directors ability to fulfill all his other responsibilities. When asked if there were another area in which the department could use support it was indicated that having a full-time account clerk, rather than a part-time one would greatly assist the departments functioning.

Business Services Administrative Comparison Data and Recommendations:

Comparison:

Business Services

Figure 5

Cambrian School District	San Carlos School District	Rincon Valley School District	Los Gatos Union School District	Lafayette School District
Chief Financial Officer	Chief Financial Officer	Chief Business Official	Chief Business Official	Assistant Superintendent, Chief Business Official
Controller	Chief Operations Officer (Supt Report)	Accountant	Fiscal Services Manager	Accounting Specialist
Payroll & Benefits	Accounts Payable/Receivable Clerk	Accounts Payable Technician	Accounting Specialist	Payroll and Benefit Specialist
Account Clerk II .5	Payroll/Benefits Specialist	Payroll Technician	Business Services Technician	Business/Accounting Technician
Account Clerk III		Business Clerk		Shipping and Receiving Clerk

Director of Buildings and Grounds	Director of Facilities, Maintenance & Operations	Maintenance and Operations Supervisor (Supt Report)	Director of Maintenance and Operations	Operations Manager
Food Services Supervisor		Food Services/Operations Manager	Director of Food Services	Food and Nutrition Services Coordinator
		Warehouse Manager/HR Assistant	Administrative Assistant to M&O	Administrative Assistant to CBO (.5)
6.5 FTE	5.0 FTE	8.0 FTE	7.0 FTE	7.5

The average business services staffing for the comparison districts is 6.8, the median is 7.0 (Figure 5). Except for San Carlos School District, the District has slightly less staffing than the other comparison districts.

Business Services Department Recommendations:

- Business Services is staffed within the average range of the comparison districts, however, when compared with three of the comparison districts the department is slightly below their staffing.
- The position of Controller according to the District organizational chart has three direct reports. Currently, the Controller is on the Confidential Salary Schedule. The District should consider moving the position to the Classified Management Salary schedule and updating the job description.
- Develop a position control system in collaboration with Human Resources
- The District should consider hiring a Project Manager to monitor the contracted facility Bond work. This position would be for the remaining time of the Bond.

TECHNOLOGY

The District has technology separated into two areas, educational and informational. Both Directors report to the Superintendent. Interviews indicate that the informational side of technology works with the technology infrastructure (e.g., cloud, servers, systems security), and staff device support. The educational side addresses the use of technology for educational purposes, such as the laws regarding student utilization of technology, vetting student applications, supporting teacher and principal professional development, maintaining the District dashboard of student assessment data, and supporting educational technology as an effective tool to inform and strategically support student learning.

Technology Comparison

Figure 6

Cambrian School District	San Carlos School District	Rincon Valley School District	Los Gatos Union School District	Lafayette School District
Director of Information Technology	Data Systems Manager	Director of Education and Information Technology	Director of Technology, Assessment & Accountability	Supervisor of Network Services
Help Desk Network Technician	Technology Systems Network Specialist	District Technician, Level 2	Information Technology Systems Manager	Technology Device Specialist
Help Desk Network Technician		District Technician, Level 1	Information Technology Systems Administrator	Database Specialist
Director of Educational Technology			Information Technology Technician	
			Information Data Specialist	
4.0 FTE	2.0 FTE	3.0 FTE	5.0 FTE	3.0 FTE

The average staffing for technology staffing is 3.4 among comparable districts (Figure 6). The median is 4.0. While Technology is not a separate department, for the purposes of this study it was determined that all technology positions would be included in the district comparison. The responsibility to address technology infrastructure, security and devices is very different than providing support regarding educational technology and student data to inform instruction to school sites. As technology has become integrated into educational curriculum and supports districts have varied in how they address these needs. The District interviews indicated that the focus of the LCAP and the Educational Services Department is data driven instruction, with educational technology integration. Thus, the District determined the need for Director of Educational Technology that is separate from the Director of Information Technology.

Technology Recommendations:

- The staffing for the technology department is within the average range of comparison districts.
- Consider reviewing the District organizational chart to determine if Information Technology and Educational Technology should be direct reports to the Superintendent, a separate department or incorporated into other departments.

HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

Figure 7

Administrative Position	FTE
Assistant Superintendent of Personnel Services	1.0

The Human Resources Department is Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources (Figure 7). In addition, there is one personnel technician, and a substitute coordinator who also serves as the district receptionist. This is the Assistant Superintendent's second year in Human Resources.

During this study many of the District job descriptions were reviewed. A significant number of the job descriptions have not been revised in recent years. There are inaccuracies such as direct reports, essential functions, abilities, and knowledge needed. The job description for the Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services is one paragraph. There is not consistent formatting for all job descriptions. It was also noted that some of the Job Descriptions note the date of Board approval, and a several do not. The Society for Human Resource Management (SCHRМ) recommends updating job descriptions annually or when there is meaningful change in job responsibilities. While this reviewer recognizes that updating job descriptions is not practical on an annual basis for school districts there should be a review and update on job descriptions when there are significant changes or time between updates. Updated job descriptions are important to reflect an appropriate reporting chain, develop accurate job postings, manage employee performance, respond to workers' compensation and light duty accommodations, respond to accommodations under the American Disabilities Act (ADA), and support wage and hour classifications.

Human Resources Administrative Comparison Data and Recommendations:

Human Resources

Comparison:

Figure 8

Cambrian School District	San Carlos School District	Rincon Valley School District	Los Gatos Union School District	Lafayette School District
Assistant Superintendent of Personnel Services	Assistant Superintendent & Compliance Officer* .5 support to HR	Assistant Superintendent, Human Resources	Assistant Superintendent Educational Services/Human Resources * .5 support to HR	Director of Human Resources and Communication
Personnel Technician	Director of Human Resources	Human Resources Director	Human Resources Analyst	Human Resources Manager Payroll and Benefits Specialist
Substitute Coordinator/Receptionist (Assists all Depts) .5 support to HR	HR Assistant/AESOP Sub Caller	Human Resources Assistant	Administrative Assistant to the Asst Supt. .5 support to HR	
		Front Office Clerk (Assists all Depts) .5 support to HR		
2.5 FTE	2.5 FTE	3.5 FTE	2.0 FTE	2.0 FTE

An analysis of comparative districts (Figure 8) indicates that the average staffing for Human Resources is 2.5 and the median is 2.5. While the District is within the average of comparison districts, it should be noted that Human Resource departments in smaller districts constantly struggle to fulfil responsibilities of the legal requirements and overall functions and responsibilities required of them.

Human Resource Department Recommendations:

- Staffing of Human Resource Department is in line with the comparison districts.
- Job descriptions need to be reviewed for accuracy and to be reformatted to have a consistent alignment. This is a significant undertaking for the current staffing within Human Resources. The District could develop a schedule for this process and start

with non-represented positions first since represented job descriptions have negotiations involved. The District could also consider engaging with an outside partner to complete this process.

- Collaborate with Business Services to develop a position control system. It is important for districts to have processes and systems to track position control and hiring.

EDUCATIONAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Figure 9

Administrative Positions	FTE
Assistant Superintendent Educational Services	1.0

The Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services oversees the Curriculum and Instruction department (Figure 9). The Assistant Superintendent has been in his position for eight years. Interviews indicate that the Assistant Superintendent has two direct administrative reports. One is the Data Coordinator and the other is the Coordinator of Extended Care. Extended Care programs were not reviewed in this report and are not included in the District comparisons.

Educational Services Administrative Comparison Data and Recommendations:

Educational Services

Comparison:

Figure 10

Cambrian School District	San Carlos School District	Rincon Valley School District	Los Gatos Union School District	Lafayette School District
Assistant Superintendent	Assistant Superintendent* .5 FTE	Director of Teaching and Learning	Assistant Superintendent Educational Services/Human Resources .5	Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction
Data Coordinator	Wellness Director/Safe Routes to School Coordinator (Grant Funded)	Director of Equity	Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment	

	Literacy/English Language Development Coordinator (Grant Funded)	Student Data and Accountability Specialist		Teacher Induction Liaison/Mentor
	TOSA	TOSA Continuous Improvement Specialist		Teacher Instructional Coach
		TOSA Multilingual Learning Specialist	Administrative Assistant (Shared with Technology) .5	
Administrative Assistant			Administrative Assistant to Asst Supt* .5	Administrative Assistant
3.0 FTE	2.5 FTE	5.0 FTE	2.5 FTE	4.0 FTE

An analysis of comparative districts indicates that the average administrative staffing for curriculum and instruction is 3.4 FTE (Figure 10). It is important to note that this comparison included management and district level TOSA’s. Cambrian has one TOSA assigned per school site, but this was not included in the study since the focus of the study was on district level departments, not school site positions. Interviews indicate that San Carlos School District, somewhat like Cambrian, increased the number of Assistant Principals at school sites to provide curricular support at the site level.

Interviews indicated that while the District’s staffing was just slightly below the average range, the department is concerned about meeting the needs of a growing multilingual population. The District currently has 13.9% English Learners (Figure 1). The focus of the department, as aligned with the LCAP, is data driven instruction. It was also shared that the department would like to provide more support to the principals but lacks the time to do so. The District should also review the work of the site assigned TOSA’s to ensure that the curriculum and instruction support being provided is effective in the current delivery model, or if modifications need to be made.

There are many State and Federal mandated requirements for school districts, and they must be complied with whether a district has 2,000 or 50,000 students. For example, the District receives \$180,000 in Federal Grant money. This is for Title I, II, III and IV. While this is not a large amount of money compared to the entire District budget there are requirements that must be completed by a district to keep receiving these funds. Small districts have challenges providing site support and complying with State and Federal programs when they have such limited staff. Interviews indicate that this is also the case in Cambrian.

Curriculum and Instruction Department Recommendations:

- Staffing positions in the Curriculum and Instruction Department is just slightly below that average of the comparison districts., however, the District does have the highest percentage of English Learners in the comparison group (Figure 1)
- The District should also review the work of the site assigned TOSA’s to ensure that the curriculum and instruction support being provided is effective in the current delivery model, or if any modifications need to be made to support the overall demands of the department.

STUDENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Figure 11

Administrative Positions	FTE
Director of Student Services	1.0
Special Education Program Specialist	1.0
Student Services Program Specialist	1.0

The Student Services Department includes both Student Services and Special Education. The Director of Student Services oversees the department (Figure 11). The Director of Student Services has been in the position for five years. During the director’s tenure the number of due process filings has been reduced. This reviewer has found that districts who have longevity in special education leadership tend to have fewer due process cases. The director also attributed the ability to provide compliant services to students stems from the amount of training her department attends. It is important to stay current on special education laws and current special education cases when leading the provision of services for students with special needs.

The District is currently facing a disproportionality issue that must be addressed. Interviews indicate that the District is overidentifying students of Hispanic origin as students with special needs. This is an area that will require substantial collaboration between special education and educational services. The current focus of data driven instruction in educational services is important when addressing this issue, but it will require a significant amount of time from both departments to rectify this issue.

The Director has two management direct reports, and two support staff direct reports. This does not include the District nurse and school psychologists since this study did not look at these positions in any of the comparison districts. Interviews indicate that the

department should do an audit of workflow and responsibilities. Stakeholders shared that the Director holds a tremendous amount of responsibility and working hours that are unsustainable. An audit would indicate if there were areas that other administrators or support staff could take responsibility for, or if there is a need for additional staff.

Student Services Administrative Comparison Data and Recommendations:

Student Support Services

Figure 12

Comparison:

Cambrian School District	San Carlos School District	Rincon Valley School District	Los Gatos Union School District	Lafayette School District
Director of Student Services	Director of Student Services & Title IX Coordinator	Director of Student Services	Assistant Superintendent Educational Services/HR* .5 FTE	Director of Student Services, Homeless Liaison
Administrative Assistant	Student Services Administrative Secretary	Director of Special Education	Director of Student Services	Administrative Assistant
Special Education Program Specialist	Special Education Program Specialist	Student Services Office Manager	Program Specialist/School Psychologist	Special Education Program Specialist
Student Services Program Specialist	Mental Health Lead Counselor	Student Services Specialist/Program Specialist	Administrative Asst to Asst Supt* .5 FTE	Student Services Program Specialist
	2 part-time District Office Admin Asst.	Student Services Clerk		
	Special Education Preschool (LEAP) Supervisor			
4.0 FTE	6.0 FTE	5.0 FTE	3.0 FTE	4.0 FTE

The average Student Services/Special Education staffing for comparison districts for was 4.4 (Figure 12). The staffing for the department is slightly below the average range of the comparison districts.

Student Services Department Recommendations:

- Student Support Services staffing is slightly below the average range of comparable districts.

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- Review the workload and responsibility of the Student Services Department to see if adjustments are feasible. If not, then additional staff may be needed.

Overall Conclusion:

The administrative team and support staff possess a great pride and commitment to the District. It was evident during the interviews the stakeholders are focused on supporting student learning and overall well-being.

The study found the District to be staffed within the average range of the comparison districts. Recommendations made in this report should be reviewed by District administration in consideration of the District goals, budget, and prioritized accordingly.