

SRI International and J. Koppich & Associates

Peer Review

Getting Serious About Teacher
Support and Evaluation

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Peer Review: Getting Serious About Teacher Support and Evaluation

Executive Summary

SRI International and J. Koppich & Associates examined the peer assistance and review (PAR) programs in the Poway and San Juan school districts in California. This is not the first study of these exemplary programs. Indeed, one of the reasons we selected the PAR programs at these sites was because of their reputations for excellence. Given the current tumultuous policy environment, we believed a fresh look at these programs was in order.

Policymakers Are Looking For Effective Solutions for Evaluating Teachers

Teacher effectiveness and evaluation are topics in high policy relief. Policymakers continue to seek means to appropriately support and gauge the efficacy of teachers' classroom practice and strategies to ensure that successful teachers are in the classroom. How to accomplish this is an ongoing policy and practice dilemma. We believed that an intensive examination of these programs might point toward possible solutions.

Both Poway and San Juan gave us extraordinary access to their programs and participants. Most important, the unions and the districts provided us with redacted files that documented the support and evaluation work of the Consulting Teachers and the progress of participating teachers. In addition, the districts provided us with the principals' evaluations of the participating teachers so that we could compare traditional evaluation methods with peer review.

Peer Assistance and Review Programs Provide Rigorous Evaluation and Support

All this led us to two key conclusions about the work of the Consulting Teachers, those carefully selected experienced teachers who provide intensive support and conduct the evaluations of teachers in PAR:

- **Peer support and evaluation can and should coexist.** The experience of Poway and San Juan illustrates that integrating support and evaluation can be a more effective approach to improving instructional practice than isolating one from the other.
- **The programs in Poway and San Juan clearly show that PAR is a rigorous alternative to traditional forms of teacher evaluation and development.** In an era when policymakers are calling for better teacher evaluation, our research shows that peer review is far superior to principals' evaluations in terms of rigor and comprehensiveness. Equally important, peer review offers a possible solution to the lack of capacity of the current system to both provide adequate teacher support and conduct thorough performance evaluations.

Governance Boards Lead to Better Collaboration between Districts and Unions

While we were not surprised by the quality of the Consulting Teachers' work, we were surprised about the central role of the programs' Governance Boards. The Governance Boards not only ensured that the Consulting Teachers' evaluation of participating teachers were based on solid evidence, but also that the Consulting Teachers' focus was on improving instruction. Most surprisingly, the Governance Boards turned out to be problem solving forums where district officials and union leaders collaboratively addressed routine operational and policy problems.

Finally, we found that these districts built their PAR work on strong foundations of labor-management cooperation. More than simple collaborative efforts, the partnerships developed through PAR enabled union and management together to make high-stakes decisions about teacher practice and evaluation.

Recommendations for State Policymakers, Districts and Unions

This study points to some important policy and practice changes for the state, and districts and their local unions to consider. These changes could lead to markedly improved opportunities to ensure effective teachers in California classrooms.

- **The state should eliminate current statutory barriers to comprehensive PAR programs.** At present, the Education Code section on PAR (Section 44500) allows the program for only tenured teachers. This policy could be broadened to enable support and evaluation for all teachers to come under PAR.
- **Local districts and unions interested in the PAR model should reexamine their teacher evaluation policies.** This reexamination should have an eye toward implementing the kinds of in-depth support and evaluation that are the hallmarks of these exemplary programs in Poway and San Juan. Districts and unions can work to refine their practices around individualized support for beginning and struggling tenured teachers and look to experienced teachers to expand the pool of professionals available to do this work. They can use what they learn about new ways to support and appraise beginning and underperforming tenured teachers to rethink their evaluation systems for all teachers.

- **Local districts and their unions should use lessons learned from the work of the Poway and San Juan Governance Boards to improve labor-management collaboration.** They can work to form cooperative union-management partnerships authorized to make decisions about high-stakes matters. Such partnerships would imbue these labor-management relationships with a “share the wealth, share the pain” significance that could render tough choices fair, credible, and workable.

Peer Review: Getting Serious About Teacher Support and Evaluation

Introduction

We began this study from a position of some knowledge. We knew of the extant literature on peer assistance and review (PAR)—well-designed, well-executed case studies that generally described in some detail the components of a PAR program. Some members of our research team had participated in these studies. In fact, some had previously reviewed the PAR programs in Poway and San Juan.

Thus, we did not enter into this work with an eye toward rechronicling what already had been said. Rather, we took a different tack. We sought to discover more about three specific elements that are key to any PAR program. First, we wanted better to understand the work of Consulting Teachers, those experienced educators whose job it is to both support and evaluate colleagues. What do their efforts look like up close? Second, we wanted a more intimate view of the PAR Governance Board. We understood the mechanics of how these joint district-union bodies work. We wanted to learn *why* they work—what makes them tick. Third, we knew that PAR is a collaborative union-management effort, but we were eager to get a feel for what “collaboration” means in this sensitive teacher evaluation context.

We focused the study on these three program elements, and we found some surprises—the Consulting Teachers’ intensive support for and rigorous evaluation of their colleagues, the Governance Board’s dual roles of program oversight and problem solving forum, and the contributions of the PAR programs to labor-management relations.

The data in this report, to be sure, are from the exemplary Poway and San Juan school districts. Perhaps these districts are different—having consistent and solid leadership, always taking the long view. But we believe the story we tell here could go beyond these two districts. What we have tried to do in this report is to paint a picture about potential: the potential to shape teacher evaluation around the complex work of teaching, the potential of a district-based governing body

to serve both its stated purpose and as a proving ground for what might be, and the potential of collaborative labor-management relations to reshape collective bargaining.

PAR's Origins in Poway and San Juan

In 1986, Don Raczka was a middle school mathematics teacher in the Poway Unified School District, located about 20 miles outside San Diego, California. As part of the California Mentor Teacher Program, he investigated a pioneering peer assistance and review program in Toledo, Ohio. Building on what he learned from Toledo, Mr. Raczka worked to convince both the district leadership and the union leadership that Poway teachers could benefit from a PAR program. At the same time, Poway joined the Stuart Foundation-funded Trust Agreement Project, which brought together districts and unions to develop agreements on substantive education issues that were not part of regular collective bargaining agreements. The Trust Agreement Project involved 12 California school districts and their unions and was run under the auspices of Policy Analysis for California Education.¹ (San Juan was also one of the Trust Agreement Project districts; it negotiated an agreement on site-based management.) Poway developed its Trust Agreement around peer assistance and review.

Out of those efforts came PAR in Poway. When the program began, it had two components: the Poway Professional Assistance Program (PPAP) for beginning teachers and the Permanent Teacher Intervention Program (PTIP) for struggling veteran teachers. Both these programs provide support and evaluation.² With nearly 25 years of experience and program refinement, Poway's programs have become recognized as the standard for how to do PAR effectively.

San Juan union leaders Tom Alves and Steve Duditch spent the 1990s learning from Poway and other districts with strong PAR programs but were unable to convince district officials to establish a similar program until 1999, when California provided districts with significant funds for both beginning teacher induction and PAR programs serving veteran teachers. San Juan used these funds to develop its version of PAR, which uses Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) for mentoring for new teachers and Poway-like PAR for support and evaluation of struggling veterans. Like Poway's, the San Juan PAR program uses experienced teachers, fully released from their classroom duties, to provide support and evaluation.

Overview of the Study—Research Questions and Data Collection

This study and data collection were organized around three research questions:

1. To what extent do exemplary PAR programs support and measure teaching effectiveness?
2. What is the nature of the contributions exemplary PAR programs make to the teaching culture and to the professionalization of teaching?
3. What are the contributions of exemplary PAR programs to improved labor-management relations?

¹ Charles Kerchner and Julia Koppich were the project directors.

² When California mandated BTSA (the Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment program) in 1998, Poway adopted it. However, BTSA precludes summative evaluation. Not wanting to eliminate this crucial component of its PAR program, Poway added BTSA as a third PAR element.

This report begins with an overview of our research methods, highlighting the unprecedented access and cooperation we received from Poway and San Juan. Next are provided program profiles laying out the basic facts about the PAR programs in these districts. The report then addresses our three key areas of interest. First, we describe the work of the Consulting Teachers, examining the documentation of the professional support they offered their colleagues and the rigorous evaluations that accompanied that support. Next, we describe the work of the PAR Governance Board, highlighting its characteristics, responsibilities, and contributions. We then address the implications of the Poway and San Juan examples and of PAR more broadly for labor-management relations. The report concludes with the implications of our findings for policymakers, district officials, and union leaders.

Research Methods

The Poway Unified School District, the Poway Federation of Teachers, the San Juan Unified School District, and the San Juan Teachers Association provided us with unprecedented access to data on their PAR programs. The research team began with a detailed examination of all documentation on the programs and a review of the existing research on PAR, teacher evaluation, and labor-management relations. The research team developed a proposed study design based on available program documentation and informed by the research base. Research team leaders then met with union and district officials in Poway and San Juan to describe the proposed study design and seek their participation in the study.

Data collection activities began in San Juan in May 2010 with an all-day meeting to review the 10-year history of that PAR program with union leadership, district officials, Governance Board members, and Consulting Teachers. During the same time period, study leaders conducted preliminary telephone interviews with district and union officials in both Poway and San Juan. These two activities provided foundational information that prepared the study team for the site visits to each district conducted in fall 2010. While on site, we conducted interviews and focus groups using semistructured interview protocols with a variety of individuals involved in the programs (Exhibit 1). In addition, we conducted two classroom observations with Consulting Teachers and attended the subsequent conference between the Consulting Teacher and the participating teacher.

Exhibit 1
Number of Interviewees, by Role Type

Role	No. Interviewed
Governance Board members	11
District leaders	3
Union leaders	4
Program leaders	3
Consulting Teachers (current and former)	7
Participating teachers – beginning	17
Participating teachers – referred veterans	2
School administrators	8

Note: Governance Board members have another role in the union or district (e.g., union leader). We interviewed some Governance Board members about each of their roles. In those cases, we counted the interview twice, once in the Governance Board member role and once in their other role.

The research team also entered into agreements with both unions and both districts to gain access to redacted files of a sample of teachers who had participated in the PAR programs. In both Poway and San Juan, a team composed of a union official and a district official randomly selected a set of Consulting Teacher files and principal files. These files, which included both beginning and veteran teachers, represented the accumulated documentation on these participating teachers. The district-based teams then removed all identifying information from the files so that researchers could not determine the names or other identifying characteristics of the teachers or any other individuals. The redacted files were then sent to the research team for analysis. The number of files analyzed is indicated in Exhibit 2.

Exhibit 2
PAR Files Analyzed

Number of Files	Poway	San Juan
Beginning teacher files	7	6
Referred veteran teacher files	4	15
Principal evaluations of referred veteran teachers (total)	5	13
Principal evaluations corresponding with reviewed veteran teacher files	3	13

The research team systematically analyzed the files to determine the comprehensiveness and rigor of the evaluations conducted by Consulting Teachers and by principals. Specifically, the research team completed a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the files that included (1) an inventory of the various categories of documents; (2) a count of the number of pages in the

evaluation reports; (3) a count of the number of contact hours and types of contacts between the Consulting Teachers and the participating teachers, as well as the principals and participating teachers; (4) where possible, an estimate of the number of contact hours between principals and participating teachers; and (5) a retrieval of typical examples of the documentation and evidence used to determine teacher effectiveness.

To communicate the breadth and depth of Consulting Teachers' work with participating teachers, the research team used the case of one referred veteran teacher ("Elizabeth"), her principal ("Carolyn"), and her Consulting Teacher ("Amanda") to construct many of the examples in this report. (These names are pseudonyms, as are all other names of participating teachers, Consulting Teachers, principals, and schools used in the examples.) The details of this case and the contents of the corresponding file are typical on relevant criteria such as the reasons why the teacher was referred into the program, the nature of the Consulting Teacher's work, the progress and outcome of the case, and the quantity and level of detail of documentation contained in the file.

The research team held two lengthy in-person meetings and numerous telephone calls to analyze the interview data; to form hypotheses based on integrated analyses of the interview data, document review, and files; and to prepare further questions for program leaders. The team then conducted an all-day retreat with Don Raczka and Tom Alves (the founders of the Poway and San Juan PAR programs). At the retreat, the research team asked follow-up questions and tested the hypotheses derived from the research. After the retreat, the research team conducted further analyses of the data, refined these analyses, and formed a set of conclusions and policy implications.

Program Profiles

The PAR programs in Poway and San Juan are strikingly similar owing to their shared antecedents. They are not, however, identical. Differences stem partly from local context and culture but primarily from shifting California policy. Perhaps the most important feature the programs have in common is that they were built on a foundation of fairness. In both districts, the union gained acceptance for peer review among its members by providing convincing evidence that the new system was fair and that teachers' rights were protected.

The basic structures of these programs are outlined below. Detailed information is provided in subsequent sections of this report.

PAR in Poway

As mentioned, PAR in Poway encompasses support and evaluation for both beginning and struggling tenured teachers. The program, which began in the 1987–88 school year, is a collaborative effort of the Poway Unified School District and the Poway Federation of Teachers. The program component for beginning teachers is the Poway Professional Assistance Program (PPAP). PAR for tenured teachers is the Permanent Teacher Intervention Program (PTIP).

PAR in Poway is overseen by a joint union-management Governance Board composed of three union and two district representatives. The Governance Board is empowered to make consequential recommendations to the superintendent (which rarely are reversed), including whether or not a first-year teacher should advance to year 2 and whether a veteran teacher should be returned to the classroom or other action should be pursued.

Consulting Teachers³—experienced, highly skilled teachers selected on a competitive basis—work with the teachers in PAR. They offer comprehensive mentoring for pre-tenure teachers and conduct their first-year evaluations. (The principal conducts the second-year evaluation.) In recent years, Poway's PAR for beginning teachers has been somewhat complicated by California's Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) program. Poway's PAR program predated this required 2-year induction for new teachers. BTSA precludes summative evaluation of beginning teachers as part of the program. Poway has developed two programs for beginning teachers in response to this restriction, PPAP with summative evaluation and BTSA without summative review.

Consulting Teachers also work with underperforming veteran teachers in PTIP. This component of PAR is a tiered process from less intensive to more intensive assistance for teachers who have received ratings of *unsatisfactory* from their principal.

Consulting Teachers provide these experienced teachers with intensive guidance and direction, including helping them design and implement individualized improvement plans. In the most serious cases, where a teacher has received two consecutive unsatisfactory ratings, the Consulting Teacher also works with a three-person evaluation team of site and district administrators and a person chosen by the Governance Board. Consulting Teachers make periodic reports to the Governance Board, marshaling accumulated evidence about the teacher's professional practice. At the conclusion of the teacher's time in PAR (usually a year), the Governance Board examines the Consulting Teacher's reports, the administrator's evaluations, and other evidence and makes a recommendation to the superintendent about whether or not the teacher should be retained in the district.

PAR in San Juan

Established in 2000, San Juan's PAR is a cooperative effort of the San Juan Unified School District and the San Juan Teachers Association. This program, like Poway's, is overseen by a joint union-management Governance Board. Slightly larger than Poway's board, San Juan's Governance Board is composed of four members appointed by the union and three appointed by the district.

San Juan's PAR program nominally includes both beginning and struggling veteran teachers. Novice teachers in San Juan, however, fall under the constraints of the state's BTSA program. Experienced Consulting Teachers provide support, but state law precludes them from conducting evaluations of beginning teachers. Consulting Teachers are responsible for support to *and* evaluation of veteran teachers in PAR.

A veteran teacher who receives ratings of unsatisfactory on two or more standards in a given evaluation is automatically referred to the PAR program in San Juan. A teacher who receives one rating of unsatisfactory can also be referred to PAR at the principal's discretion. The Governance Board⁴ can either accept or reject this referral. Veteran teachers in PAR are assigned a Consulting Teacher. The Consulting Teacher works with the PAR teacher to develop

³ Poway refers to these individuals as teacher consultants, but for the sake of consistency between Poway and San Juan, we use the term Consulting Teachers.

⁴ San Juan calls this group the PAR Panel, but we use Governance Board for the sake of consistency.

an improvement plan, in consultation with the principal, and continues to support, guide, and provide detailed advice and recommendations on teaching practice. The Consulting Teacher makes periodic reports to the Governance Board about the teacher's progress.

After the typical 1 year of PAR support, the Consulting Teacher presents a final report containing accumulated evidence about the extent of the teacher's improvement. The Governance Board determines whether the teacher referred to PAR has successfully completed the program, whether support should be extended for a second year, or whether further assistance is not likely to be successful. In the last case, the Governance Board can recommend to the superintendent, who recommends to the school board, that the district initiate dismissal proceedings.

Consulting Teachers

*"This program, as designed, is only as good as the Consulting Teachers."
—Tom Alves, Executive Director, San Juan Teachers Association*

Over the course of this study, we met some remarkable individuals serving in all the different roles associated with PAR. But to a person, we were most impressed by the Consulting Teachers because of their demonstrated knowledge of teaching, their ability to collect and analyze data on teachers' practice, and their determination to improve teaching in their districts. Consulting Teachers are a select group of accomplished teachers who also have the ability to improve the teaching of their peers. They know how to have difficult and sensitive conversations about a teacher's job performance in ways that engender trust and acceptance while holding constant their commitment to students' learning.

In this section, we address our first research question regarding the extent to which PAR programs support and assess effective teaching. We delve into the work of the Consulting Teachers and describe an extraordinarily rigorous approach to improving teaching quality. This section includes descriptions of the Consulting Teachers' duties—the details of their workdays, the products of their work—and the programs' processes for selecting, assessing, and supporting individual Consulting Teachers. Finally, we present our analysis of the redacted PAR files on participating teachers produced by the Consulting Teachers and the principals.

The Consulting Teacher's Duties

The Consulting Teacher's primary role is to provide targeted assistance and support for teachers in the program to improve their performance, whether they are beginning teachers or veteran teachers referred to PAR. Consulting Teachers are released from the classroom full time to support and assess participating teachers, to act as a liaison between the teacher and the administration, and to present evidence of the teachers' progress to the Governance Board. Consulting Teachers evaluate their peers, but their focus is on aligned support and improvement.

As we noted earlier in the program profiles section of this report, Poway Consulting Teachers conduct evaluations of both beginning and veteran teachers referred to PAR, while San Juan Consulting Teachers' evaluative work is limited to struggling veteran teachers referred to PAR. As a reminder, this difference is largely attributable to state policy. Poway's PAR program predated California's required two-year induction for new teachers, the BTSA program. BTSA

precludes summative evaluation of beginning teachers as part of the program. Poway has developed two programs for beginning teachers in response to this restriction, PPAP with summative evaluation and BTSA without summative review. San Juan has had to restrict the evaluative aspect of peer review to veteran teachers referred to PAR.

Consulting Teachers engage in a wide variety of activities during the year, from working directly with teachers on instructional matters and presenting the results of their efforts to the Governance Board to administrative tasks such as ensuring that all the necessary documentation and other paperwork is complete. Their activities vary depending on the time of the year and the needs of the participating teachers in their caseload. Exhibit 3 provides an overview of Consulting Teachers' activities based on our analyses of program documentation, interview data, and the redacted files of participating teachers. This exhibit shows the ways in which Consulting Teachers support teachers, document their support and the participating teachers' progress, present their work to the Governance Board, and improve their own practice as Consulting Teachers.

Exhibit 3

Consulting Teachers' Activities

Over the course of a year, Consulting Teachers engage in a range of activities that may include the following:

Providing instructional support for participating teachers

- Observing and giving feedback
- Developing lesson plans, assessments, and grading systems
- Developing classroom management systems
- Analyzing student work
- Conducting case studies of a specific student or students
- Modeling a lesson while another Consulting Teacher quietly narrates for the participating teacher
- Jointly observing expert teachers and discussing implications for the participating teacher's practice
- Jointly attending a professional development event and discussing implications for the participating teacher's practice
- Leading professional development events
- Identifying and sharing resource materials with participating teachers
- Creating effective classroom environments with participating teachers by organizing classrooms to remove outdated materials, create access to needed materials, and facilitate student engagement
- Revising seating charts and student grouping plans
- Locating, organizing, and ordering materials, including teacher manuals and other curriculum or classroom supplies

Evaluating and reporting on participating teachers

- Documenting the participating teacher's progress toward meeting standards
- Presenting the participating teacher's progress to the Governance Board
- Meeting with principals
- Meeting with fellow Consulting Teachers and the program director

Participating in their own training and professional development activities

- Iterating with peers on drafts of reports and presentations to the Governance Board
- Participating in weekly meetings to brainstorm about strategies for struggling teachers and improve coaching skills
- Participating in training on coaching or other topics

Completing administrative tasks

- Completing forms for BTSA
- Reviewing and responding to emails
- Other tasks as requested by the program director.

Notably, most of the Consulting Teachers' activities are focused on supporting and improving each participating teacher's practice. At the same time, each activity is carefully documented, as is each participating teacher's progress.

While the emphasis of their work is on support and improvement of participating teachers, Consulting Teachers must carefully assess and document progress or lack of progress to the Governance Board. The Governance Board insists that the reports be thorough, specific, and clear about the connections between the district's agreed-on teaching standards, the evidence collected through classroom observations and meetings, and the next steps for the participating teacher. These reports are often critical, but program leaders agree that the Consulting Teachers' "role is to fix the problem...not to further document the problem...."

Consulting Teachers work with both beginning and veteran teachers (typically, 12 to 14 beginning teachers and 1 to 2 veteran teachers). Given Consulting Teachers' variety of responsibilities and the fact that each Consulting Teacher's work with veteran teachers is particularly challenging and intensive, the daily schedule of a Consulting Teacher is full. An example of a typical day (Exhibit 4) provides a glimpse into how Consulting Teachers balance their time and support the teachers in their caseload. The example is a composite based on an analysis of our interviews and the Consulting Teachers' contact logs.

Exhibit 4
A Composite Picture of a Consulting Teacher's Typical Day

7:45 a.m.	Arrived at Congress Springs Elementary, checked in, greeted principal.
7:50–8:50	<p>Informal observation with handwritten feedback for Kaathya, a beginning teacher. Observation included all the standards with a focus on two particular items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modifications for students with special needs • Use of strategies to check for understanding.
9:00–10:00	Met with William, a first-year teacher, to collaboratively develop a lesson plan for his math class that identifies the standards and objectives to be addressed and includes all the essential lesson components (focus, objectives, instruction, assessment, and reinforcement). Checked to make sure William had reviewed the materials, could work the problems himself, and had read and prepared additional examples.
10:00–10:20	Photocopied feedback for Kaathya's files and dropped off original during recess.
10:20–10:45	Drove to Fremont Older Elementary, checked in, and greeted principal, who joined the Consulting Teacher for a formal observation of Elizabeth, a teacher referred to PAR.
10:45–11:45	<p>Observed Elizabeth and scripted lesson. Focus of observation included all the standards with follow-up on a few previously identified items of concern:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of a variety of instructional strategies • Use of strategies to check for understanding • A classroom check to see whether she has reorganized it per the last meeting • A check of her lesson plan book • Confirmation that she has been and is using the teacher manuals associated with specific curricular areas • A review of the materials posted on her bulletin boards.
11:45–12:45 p.m.	Grabbed lunch while analyzing the scripted lesson, completing the formal classroom observation form, and identifying next steps for Elizabeth.
12:45–1:00	Caught up on a few emails and phone calls.
1:00–1:15	Drove to Sedjwick High, checked in, greeted principal, and went to classrooms.
1:15–1:30	<p>Popped in to Owen's classroom; left a note to acknowledge this first-year physics teacher's growth while posing a pushing question:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good use of strategies to engage students • What did this tell you about your students' understanding of acceleration?
1:30–2:30	Met with Nalini, a first-year teacher, to review her individual learning plan in light of a recent observation. Updated the next steps in each of the domains in the teaching standards.
3:00–4:00	<p>Drove to Consulting Teachers' office; read and responded to emails and calls; provided a preliminary presentation to the program director about Elizabeth's progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewed all the materials from the formal observation and prior contact • Identified gaps in teacher's progress toward meeting standards • Identified additional supports that may be available • Wrote up next steps for Elizabeth, planned postobservation meeting, and emailed Elizabeth to confirm the postobservation meeting • Identified gaps in documentation of teacher's progress.
4:00–5:00	Updated files for today's beginning teachers; pulled files for tomorrow's beginning teachers and checked the status of their BTSA paperwork to determine whether BTSA work should be prioritized over other instructional concerns; gathered reference materials to share.

Consulting Teachers have demanding jobs and often work long days. As Exhibit 4 illustrates, they spend most of their time in direct contact with teachers. Typically, Consulting Teachers spend more of their time working with teachers referred to PAR than with beginning teachers. In our interviews, Consulting Teachers reported that their work with teachers referred to PAR is the most difficult and time-consuming aspect of their jobs because teachers referred to PAR often enter the program reluctantly and are in denial about their problems.

Classroom observations are central to the Consulting Teachers' work. Consulting Teachers must have a full understanding of their districts' standards for good instruction; in San Juan these are the California Standards for the Teaching Profession (CSTPs), and in Poway they are the Poway Continuum of Teaching Standards, which are aligned with the CSTPs). Furthermore, they must be able to gather evidence of participating teachers' practices that meet or fail to meet these standards. Drawing on their own knowledge and expertise as well as that of their colleagues, Consulting Teachers identify strategies for improving participating teachers' practice. Consulting Teachers may model or coteach lessons, offer pedagogical tips, and take teachers to view other teachers' classrooms.

During our site visits, we accompanied Consulting Teachers during their classroom observations. In addition, we analyzed Consulting Teachers' logs of their classroom observations and conferences. The summary of a classroom observation in Exhibit 5 is typical of this core part of the Consulting Teachers' work.

Exhibit 5

Consulting Teacher's Observation of a Teacher Referred to PAR

Today, Amanda is conducting her first formal observation of Elizabeth, the fifth-grade teacher referred to PAR by her principal for not meeting two standards: (1) engaging and supporting all students in learning and (2) creating and maintaining effective environments for student learning. Amanda has conducted four informal classroom observations and has provided specific feedback and suggestions after each one. She has also had two planning meetings with Elizabeth, provided resources on classroom and homework management, and helped tidy and rearrange both the materials and desks in the classroom. After the third observation, Amanda decided to focus more on lesson content and direct instruction. In specific preparation for today's formal observation, Amanda met with Elizabeth to give her a copy of the forms she would be using during the evaluation and discussed the objectives, strategies for direct instruction, and strategies to check for understanding.

Amanda scripts the 50-minute lesson, noting the observable teacher and student behaviors, describing the activities, and capturing some of the teacher and student dialogue. For example, she makes the following notes approximately 10 minutes after class begins:

Teacher	Students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (10 mins: monitor room once) • [Mis]pronounced: Commutative • Ex: Ties associates, friends, to Associative Property • Stopped teaching to discuss squeaky chair • Is this math? (no) let's do math • Commutative Property of Addition on overhead: finished writing definition on overhead (monitors room) • Pencils down, eyes on me. $2 + 3$ what is the sum – not a trick question $2 + 3 = 5$, $3 + 2 = 5$, $2 + 3 + 1 = 6$, $1 + 3 + 2 = 6$ • (20 mins only 2 concepts discussed) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interruption: squeaky chair • Boy in back playing with H₂O bottle, dropped on floor, etc. • Today is [student's] birthday • Student calls out, teacher says \$30 please [referring to discipline system of "Elizabeth's Bucks"] • Student checks to see time (calculates in head) • Laughter [student] answers

Amanda completes the formal observation form, which is organized by teaching standard and element, by listing evidence for each element. For example, for Element 2-6: Using instructional time effectively (within Standard 2: Creating and maintaining effective environments for student learning), Amanda notes that "Lesson took a long time in Explicit Direct Instruction of concepts. Effective use of instructional time does not yet meet standard. Lesson pace: drawn out and slow."

Amanda types up a specific to-do list for Elizabeth that includes items she wants to Elizabeth to provide her from that point on, such as detailed daily lesson plans for each week. In addition, Amanda summarizes all the things she has discussed with Elizabeth in their prior meetings that Elizabeth still needs to follow through with, such as planning with her grade-level colleagues and locating the missing teacher manuals that are necessary to guide her instruction and assess the curriculum she is teaching. On the to-do list, Amanda confirms that Elizabeth's principal is ready to get the materials Elizabeth needs and that the principal will contact the Facilities Department to make needed changes to the room as soon as Elizabeth makes the request.

Amanda prepares her key points and agenda for the post-observation conference with Elizabeth. Amanda decides that during the conference she will read over the scripted four pages of notes she took during the observation, and will, together with Elizabeth, identify Elizabeth's strengths and weaknesses. Next, they will review her improvement plan and the concerns identified by the principal to see how they are identical. They will then go over the to-do list Amanda prepared. Amanda decides to ask the teacher about her intentions to determine whether she is serious about improving her teaching practice or whether she is serious about looking for other work. If Elizabeth is ready to commit to teaching, Amanda will wrap up the meeting with a summary of Elizabeth's strengths (confirming that the principal saw the strengths as well) and an offer to support her including meeting after school and on a weekend to organize her classroom.

Amanda updates the PAR program leader on her work with Elizabeth. They agree on the next steps that Amanda has outlined for Elizabeth as well as Amanda's plan for her post-observation conference. They put this case on the agenda for their weekly team meeting so that Amanda can get feedback from the team of Consulting Teachers to be sure she is not missing an avenue of support.

As this example illustrates, the Consulting Teacher's documentation of her classroom observation is used to help the participating teacher understand the nature of the instructional problem or problems. By scripting the entire lesson and then closely examining that script with the participating teacher, the Consulting Teacher is able to begin to break down the participating teacher's resistance and denial. In other cases, Consulting Teachers have used video recording of a participating teacher's lesson to help identify both areas of weakness and strengths.

"Learning how to have hard conversations, how to document and analyze information from classroom observations, and how to link that analysis to the standards is an important part of the Consulting Teacher's job."

In this case, the Consulting Teacher's agenda for her post-observation conference includes having a hard conversation. This time, it is about the participating teacher's commitment to improving her practice. Consulting Teachers made it clear to us that having hard conversations about a teacher's performance was the most difficult part of their jobs. However, they also indicated that they were motivated by the negative consequences of poor teaching on students.

Learning how to have hard conversations, how to document and analyze information from classroom observations, and how to link that analysis to the standards is an important part of the Consulting Teacher's job in both programs. Selecting, training, and evaluating Consulting Teachers are, of course, critical to ensuring the success of the PAR program. We turn now to this aspect.

Selecting, Training, and Evaluating Consulting Teachers

The Governance Boards in both Poway and San Juan select Consulting Teachers on the basis of a strict set of criteria. Candidates must be credentialed, be tenured, and have a minimum of 5 years of teaching experience in the district. They must demonstrate exemplary teaching ability and knowledge of the teaching standards. Over the years, the Governance Boards have learned that good teaching alone is not a sufficient qualification for the Consulting Teacher's role and have identified additional required knowledge, skills, and abilities. Chief among these are the ability to work with and train adults, communicate effectively, collaborate with a variety of people in different roles, maintain independence in a way that allows them to retain credibility as teachers and simultaneously maintain a positive working relationship with principals, and have hard conversations when necessary with participating teachers. The relationship with the principal is extremely important. Consulting Teachers must be able to maintain both a positive relationship with and a professional distance from the principals. Consulting Teachers need to be able to balance the principal's interest in being fully apprised of a PAR teacher's progress with their obligation to maintain confidentiality so work with the participating teacher can proceed smoothly. In Exhibit 6, we summarize and identify the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that Consulting Teachers need to be successful. We developed this list through a review of program documents as well as through interviews with Governance Board members, program directors, Consulting Teachers, and school administrators.

Exhibit 6

Knowledge, Skills, and Disposition of Consulting Teachers

Consulting Teachers are highly skilled teachers who have credibility with their peers, have demonstrated the ability to work with and train adults, and are willing and able to have hard conversations with their peers. In addition to being expert classroom teachers, they need the following knowledge, skills, and qualities to be successful:

Knowledge of and ability to work with teaching standards

- Comprehensive knowledge of state and local standards
- Ability to foster development of instructional practices aligned with standards
- Ability to use standards as the foundation for providing concrete feedback
- Ability to script complex classroom interactions, linking the standards with both what was observed to be present and what was observed to be missing

Knowledge of adult learners and ability to work with adults

- Exceptional interpersonal and communication skills
- Ability to earn the confidence and respect of teachers, site administrators, and district personnel
- Ability to communicate feedback in a manner compatible with the participating teacher's style
- Ability to overcome resistance and break through denial
- Ability to handle disagreements and conflict

Disposition that fits the sensitive and consequential aspects of the job

- Willingness to maintain confidentiality of the participating teacher
- Willingness to maintain independence from administrators while maintaining a good relationship, able and willing to develop own assessment of the participating teacher's practice
- Willingness to provide full disclosure of a teacher's performance even when that teacher is in professional jeopardy
- Ability to stay highly organized and to manage and prioritize multiple tasks simultaneously
- Strong initiative and ability to work autonomously with little supervision
- Strong problem solving skills and ability to identify possible solutions
- Reflective and flexible working style, with a strong desire to learn and accept new challenges
- Keen intellect
- Curiosity about the work.

The Governance Board and the PAR program director take the lead in selecting Consulting Teachers. The process for screening and selecting Consulting Teachers is similar in both districts and includes posting the job, holding an informational meeting, screening applications, conducting interviews, and classroom observations. Applicants are encouraged to describe their experience and strategies for supporting new teachers (or student teachers), leadership experience, experience providing professional development, strategies they might use for supporting teachers referred to PAR, and how they stay current on developments in instruction. Application materials include recommendations from colleagues and principals that include an assessment of the candidate's ability to communicate with colleagues in an honest and diplomatic manner and their willingness to address issues, among other criteria. During the interview process, the applicants are rated on a number of criteria including their experience, ability to handle confrontational situations, communication skills, motivation for wanting to be a Consulting Teacher, and understanding of the role of the Consulting Teacher.

Both districts select applicants into a pool of potential Consulting Teachers. The districts use the pool to ensure that they have highly qualified teachers they can pull quickly into the program while minimizing disruption to school staffs. The Governance Board draws on the pool when Consulting Teachers rotate back into the classroom, when the number of participating teachers increases, or, less frequently, when a Consulting Teacher needs to be replaced. Consulting Teachers serve at the discretion of the Governance Board for a term of from 1 to 4 years depending on the caseload of teachers needing support and the performance of the Consulting Teacher. The Governance Board retains the right to release Consulting Teachers from that role to return them to a classroom assignment at any time.

Consulting Teachers learn how to fulfill their duties and build their skills through initial workshops, working directly with the program director and other Consulting Teachers, and through the feedback they receive from their reports to the Governance Board. The focus of the Consulting Teachers' initial training is on coaching skills, BTSA orientation, and the teaching standards. Most of the Consulting Teachers' training is tailored to their needs through an induction meeting with the program director and ongoing on-the-job support by the program director and their peers.

In both districts, Consulting Teachers meet weekly to discuss teaching standards and coaching strategies, brainstorm about strategies to help participating teachers, and support each other by critiquing Governance Board reports and presentations. If the Consulting Teacher and program director agree it would be useful to discuss a participating teacher's progress, the participating teacher is not identified. Typically, the Consulting Teacher will describe the strengths and weaknesses of the participating teacher and listen to his or her colleagues' reflections on what they heard and their suggestions for strategies for helping the participating teacher to improve.

Governance Board meetings serve as both an important training ground for the Consulting Teachers and a forum for evaluation of their work. In the context of training, Consulting Teachers learn from the questions the Governance Board members ask about their reports and their presentations. For example, they learn to highlight evidence that a particular standard was met, whether or not the support was effective, and whether other strategies might be used for helping the participating teacher. In interviews, these meetings were described as "intense but at the same time very collaborative and helpful."

The Governance Board also evaluates the work of the Consulting Teachers by analyzing their reports and presentations. Consulting Teachers serve at the discretion of the Governance Board, which retains the right to release them at any time. If the Governance Board identifies a performance issue, the board members try to provide support and opportunities for improvement; if the issue is not resolved, the Consulting Teacher may be released at the end of a semester or academic year. Because Consulting Teachers remain part of the teacher bargaining unit, an administrator conducts their official review. In practice, an appropriate administrator serving as a cochair of the Governance Board, in collaboration with the union cochair, handles these formal reviews. Thus, the Governance Board has the capacity to replace Consulting Teachers as soon as it determines that step is necessary.

Next, we turn to our examination of the PAR files—the collection of documents that provide a record of the Consulting Teachers' activities, the participating teachers' progress, and the formal reports for the Governance Board.

The PAR Files

In each of the districts, progress and outcomes for teachers who participate in the PAR programs are documented in a PAR file. These extensive and detailed files provide rich, thorough evidence of the Consulting Teachers' work with participating teachers and the progress these teachers are making. The research team examined redacted versions of these files for 19 veteran teachers referred to PAR as well as for 13 beginning teachers across the two districts. Exhibit 7 summarizes the characteristics of the PAR files of the 19 veteran teachers.

Exhibit 7 Summary of Files for Veteran Teachers Referred to PAR

Grade levels taught	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• K–5: 8 teachers• 6–8: 3 teachers• 9–12: 8 teachers
Length of time in PAR	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Average: 1.36 academic years (Shortest: 2.5 months, by a teacher who successfully completed the program. Longest: 2 academic years and 1 month, by a teacher who resigned upon initiation of dismissal proceedings.)
PAR file page count	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Average: 190 pages (Shortest: 52 pages, for a teacher who successfully completed the program after 5 months. Longest: 499 pages, for a teacher who successfully completed the program after 2 full academic years.)
Time spent working directly with Consulting Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Average: 80 hours per academic year (Shortest: 24 hours per academic year. Longest: 144 hours per academic year.)
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Successfully completed program: 11 teachers• Resigned before completion of the program: 3 teachers• Dismissed or resigned upon initiation of dismissal proceedings: 5 teachers

The files for the 13 beginning teachers averaged just over 70 pages long but typically included a good deal of documentation required by BTSA, especially in San Juan. The beginning teacher files from Poway's PPAP program (as distinct from BTSA) were particularly thorough, as they provided detailed evidence of the teacher's development over the course of the first year. Most notably, the files of beginning teachers who were struggling were nearly as long and as evidence-rich as the files of the struggling veteran teachers referred to PAR in the PTIP program.

Categories of Documents in the PAR Files

The PAR files typically contained four categories of documents: (1) a detailed improvement plan, (2) each summary report the Consulting Teachers produced every 2 months for the Governance Board, (3) the Consulting Teachers' detailed logs of each observation and conference with the participating teacher, and (4) a variety of other supporting evidence, such as meeting notes, email correspondence, and sample lesson plans. Exhibit 8 provides examples of the first two types of documents in the PAR files, the improvement plan and reports to the Governance Board.

Exhibit 8
Examples of Improvement Plans and Reports to the Governance Board

Description	Examples
<p>Improvement plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lists standards not met • Lists specifics (strategies, evidence) needed to demonstrate proficiency • Used by participating teacher, Consulting Teacher, and Governance Board as an initial benchmark to measure progress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “<i>Standard 1, Element 2: Using a variety of instructional strategies and resources to respond to students’ diverse needs.</i> In order to be considered meeting this element of the standard, Elizabeth will need to design (and provide to her Consulting Teacher) standards-based lessons that differentiate content, process, and/or product to meet all students’ needs. As part of this differentiation, Elizabeth will need to show proficiency in the application of several instructional strategies that might include (but are not limited to) cooperative learning, scaffolding, and student use of graphic organizers to connect ideas and concepts. The delivery of these lessons will be assessed through formal and informal observations.”
<p>Consulting Teacher-prepared reports for the Governance Board</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe participating teacher’s progress and summarize evidence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Document Consulting Teacher’s contact time, number of informal and formal observations, and other types of work with teacher referred to PAR since last panel meeting* – Address previous issues raised by PAR panel. • List next steps for teacher referred to PAR, for Consulting Teacher, and for others supporting teacher referred to PAR • Used by PAR panel members to understand where and how the Consulting Teacher’s work with the teacher referred to PAR has resulted in progress and where challenges remain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Since October 2, our work has included 12 conferences to discuss expectations, one formal classroom observation, 15 informal classroom observations, and 1 full day and 1 half-day of lesson modeling by the Consulting Teacher. Total time together, including observations, discussion, and modeling lessons in the classroom, has been approximately 30.5 hours over 6 weeks.” • “<i>Standard 2, Element 6: Using instructional time effectively.</i> This element has not been met. Lesson plans do not take into account the large loss of time during transitional times, nor has Elizabeth met the standard and criterion of maximizing instructional time because of the large amount of time used in dealing with classroom interruptions and off-task behaviors.” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Example of evidence (the Consulting Teacher included examples from eight observed lessons over a 6-week period; one example follows): “10/17: During 20 minutes of teaching time, only two of the four students [scheduled] to present their Current Events had time to do so. This was due to excessive interruptions. In 20 minutes, there were 27 times the teacher redirected student behavior, there were 32 observed off-task behaviors, and 5 minutes was spent transitioning from one activity to another.” – Next steps: “Elizabeth is to design and implement lesson plans that maximize use of instructional time, planning for transitions during lessons, and organizing material as needed during a lesson.... There has been some positive movement in the last week of this reporting period toward lessons that are quicker paced and better monitored for off-task and disruptive behaviors. It has become a realization to Elizabeth that these behaviors have got in the way of effective teaching time.”

*Common types of interactions between the Consulting Teacher and the teachers referred to PAR included debriefing observations, joint lesson planning, joint observations of other teachers, joint attendance at professional development activities, model lessons taught by the Consulting Teacher, and/or general discussions of the Consulting Teacher’s progress and next steps.

The Consulting Teachers’ logs of classroom observations and conferences provided the evidence used to prepare the reports to the Governance Board every 2 months. These logs described in substantial detail what the Consulting Teacher saw and heard in the participating

teacher's classroom, and they explained the strategies the Consulting Teacher used to help the participating teacher meet standards. Using these logs, the Consulting Teacher gave the participating teacher frequent informal feedback, typically once a week. For example, the Consulting Teacher referenced in Exhibit 8 used evidence from the following log to make a concrete recommendation to Elizabeth, the participating teacher:

I observed Elizabeth teaching her math segment. She began with a Mental Math problem for the whole classroom. Elizabeth has a strategy in place where students answer her questions with hand signals. The activity appeared to be enjoyed by the class, and there was a lot of class participation. She then moved on to a Math Facts practice sheet, where the students filled it in and then took turns reading off the answers. Because the sheet was 100 problems, this procedure took a lot of time and eventually many of the students lost interest and tuned out.... A lot of valuable teaching time was used in this activity. As I left, Elizabeth was moving into directed teaching of the daily math lesson. I was unable to observe the rest of her lesson, but about half the math time was gone before the directed teaching of the lesson started. It is suggested that these warm-up activities be abbreviated so that more time can be spent on the math lesson, with time to do guided practice and individual practice.

In addition to the logs, several other types of documents were in many of the PAR files. Common documents included corresponding notes from PAR panel meetings, emails exchanged with the teacher referred to PAR and/or other individuals working to support that teacher, handouts describing suggested strategies or best practices in a given area where a teacher referred to PAR needed support, specific artifacts related to areas in which a teacher referred to PAR was not meeting standards (e.g., lesson plans, portions of grade books), district correspondence with the teacher referred to PAR that documented his/her status in the PAR program, and any formal responses the teacher referred to PAR had to the Consulting Teacher's reports or the PAR panel's findings.

As can be seen, then, PAR reports were comprehensive and thorough. Next, as a point of comparison, we examine the evaluation files compiled by the principals of these teachers.

PAR Evaluations and Principal Evaluations

The research team was also able to examine redacted evaluations produced by principals. For 16 of the 19 teachers referred into PAR whose files we examined, we were able to examine both the principal evaluations that resulted in the teacher's referral into PAR and Consulting Teacher evaluations prepared during the PAR process. While direct comparisons are tempting, they are not really fair. Given that the principals spent far less time observing and evaluating their teachers, it is not surprising that the Consulting Teachers' reports were more comprehensive and evidence-rich. We did find considerable variation in the quantity and quality of the evidence supporting the principals' assessments, but the principals and the Consulting Teachers were almost always in agreement about the participating teachers' shortcomings. Moreover, the principals' reports were sometimes reasonably thorough, as one would expect given the high-stakes nature of referring a veteran teacher into PAR. A snapshot of a typical administrator-produced evaluation is presented in Exhibit 9.

Exhibit 9

Administrator Evaluation Resulting in PAR Referral: A Snapshot

Elizabeth, a fifth-grade teacher was referred into the PAR program after an unsatisfactory evaluation by her principal, Carolyn. Carolyn described Elizabeth as a teacher who “fosters positive, productive relationships between staff, parents, and community,” who welcomes suggestions and additional support, but who has trouble meeting elements of two core teaching standards that relate to student engagement and student learning. Carolyn visited Elizabeth’s classroom in September, November, March, and April, and she described checking in with Elizabeth over the course of the year to discuss areas where she was not meeting standards and to suggest strategies for improvement. In addition to their discussions, Carolyn suggested that Elizabeth visit other teachers’ classrooms and had her sign up for a behavior management workshop. Ultimately, Carolyn found that Elizabeth was receptive to her suggestions but was not able to implement them sufficiently to meet teaching standards. Carolyn’s assessment of the areas where Elizabeth’s teaching did not meet standards is as follows:

Several of my observations were lessons that did not engage students. Goals were not always clear to the students as evident with conversations I had with students. Students were off task during lessons and Elizabeth did not always see this off-task behavior. The physical environment did not engage all students. The room had backpacks, binders, sweaters, and papers thrown all over the room, which made it difficult for Elizabeth to walk around the room and correct behavior and check for understanding. Elizabeth did correct this problem and during the next observation, the room was clean, making it easier to walk around. I am still concerned with the use of instructional time. Lesson organization along with short-term and long-term plans would help foster student learning and maximize instructional time.

Another area of concern is “checking for understanding.” Elizabeth and I discussed the importance of checking for understanding and how it directs every step of the lesson. Seldom have I seen differentiated instruction to enhance student participation. Usually, there is a single instructional strategy to meet the students’ academic needs. I shared the [Explicit Direct Instruction] lesson design and have [given] an example lesson to Elizabeth. She was very open to working with this new lesson design, which includes checking for understanding at each phase of the lesson.

Lack of student engagement could be the reason for so many disruptive behaviors. Strategies that prevent or reduce disruptive behavior are not consistently applied. Seldom is there evidence that positive behavior is reinforced. The teacher occasionally monitors student behavior while teaching and during student work time.

Organizing curriculum to support student understanding of subject matter would also reduce disruptive behaviors. Using strategies that utilize students’ interests and background would also reduce disruptive behaviors.

CSTP Standard 1 [Engaging and supporting all students in learning] and CSTP Standard 2 [Creating and maintaining effective environments for student learning] not met.

Our examination of the principals' evaluations and the Consulting Teachers' evaluations of 16 teachers referred into PAR revealed three important differences. First, the Consulting Teachers' evaluations contained much more evidence, based on many more formal and informal observations, than the principals' evaluations (Exhibit 10).

Exhibit 10
Characteristics of Principals' Evaluations That Resulted in PAR Referrals
and PAR Files Prepared by Consulting Teachers

	Principals' Evaluations	Consulting Teachers' PAR Files
Number of <i>formal</i> observations per academic year	Average: 1 Fewest: 0 Most: 3	Average: 5 Fewest: 2* Most: 6
Number of <i>informal</i> observations per academic year	Average: 2 Fewest: 0 Most: 7	Average: 38 Fewest: 12 Most: 71
Page count	Average: 7[†] Shortest: 2 Longest: 27	Average: 190 Shortest: 52 Longest: 499

*The two teachers who were observed only twice in a given year were released from the program midway through that year.

[†]Typical principal evaluations consisted of official district-provided forms with rubrics explaining the teaching standards, checkboxes to indicate teachers' adherence to them, and space for comments or to attach additional documentation. Of the 18 principal evaluations we received (16 of which corresponded to Consulting Teachers'-prepared PAR files), only 3 exceeded 7 pages. They contained 7–20 pages of additional documentation such as examples of correspondence with dissatisfied parents or colleagues as well as more thorough evidence of the teachers' shortcomings (through lesson scripting or other notes). The remaining principal files were between 2 and 7 pages and contained standard district forms with an average of 1 page of written evaluative text explaining the teacher's deficiencies.

Second, Consulting Teacher's evaluations were much more comprehensive. Whereas the principals tended to identify a teacher's deficiency on a specific standard, the Consulting Teachers' evaluations took a broader view of the knowledge and skills needed to meet all the standards.

"...Consulting Teacher's evaluations were focused on improving the participating teacher's practice and not just on identifying the problems."

The third difference was that the Consulting Teacher's evaluations were focused on improving the participating teacher's practice and not just on identifying the problems. Given the limited amount of time the principals actually spent with the participating teachers, the focus of their evaluation was often primarily to identify deficiencies but not to develop a strategy to correct them.

Overall, the Consulting Teachers' evaluations reflected the extensive time they spent with the participating teachers. The files provided impressive documentation of participating teachers' practice, progress, or lack of progress, thus providing the Governance Board clear information to base its important decisions on.

The Consulting Teachers' emphasis on support and improvement of the participating teachers was evident in each of the PAR files we examined. In the example of Elizabeth, her successful completion of the PAR program was a result of the thoughtful work of the Consulting Teacher and her own willingness to make changes in her practice (Exhibit 11).

Exhibit 11

One Teacher's Progress Through PAR: A Snapshot

Elizabeth, the fifth-grade teacher referred into PAR, successfully completed the PAR program after a full academic year of intensive work with her Consulting Teacher, Amanda. Amanda worked directly with Elizabeth for at least 88 hours over the course of the year. Their work together included at least 52 informal observations (averaging 1–2 per week), frequent conferences about challenges and next steps, and in-depth collaboration on issues such as classroom organization, instructional strategies, and lesson planning (including joint meetings with Elizabeth's principal to clarify expectations for lesson plans). Amanda also modeled lessons in Elizabeth's classroom for at least 1 full day and 4 half-days over the course of the academic year.

Elizabeth's progress toward meeting the two standards for which she was referred into PAR appeared relatively slow at first. During each of the first two of the five reporting periods for the PAR panel, Amanda's formal evaluations of Elizabeth revealed that she was meeting only one of five elements related to engaging and supporting all students in learning (Standard 1) and one of six elements related to maintaining effective environments for student learning (Standard 2).

Early on, Amanda determined that if Elizabeth were to meet the standards, she would need to include strategies to improve the physical organization and environment of the classroom, strategies to consistently monitor and manage student behavior and to keep students on task, strategies to use teaching time effectively, and strategies to differentiate instruction and provide deeper, more reflective learning opportunities for students. Rather than address all these strategies simultaneously, Amanda focused on one strategy at a time. For example, during their early work together, Amanda spent substantial time on Elizabeth's physical classroom environment, suggesting changes to remove some barriers to student engagement, and showing Elizabeth that those changes made students easier to manage and more attentive. With this early change, Amanda was able to help Elizabeth see her own progress and made it easier for Elizabeth to see that many of her students were "quietly disengaged." This enabled Elizabeth to try new instructional strategies. Over time, Amanda built on this foundation to help Elizabeth see that the newly expanded range of instructional strategies she was using were better engaging her students.

The notes from these two observation periods revealed that Amanda had been guiding Elizabeth toward steady progress in understanding and addressing the barriers to effective instruction and student learning, setting Elizabeth up for more rapid progress as the year went on. By the end of the third reporting period, Amanda found that Elizabeth was meeting all but two elements of Standard 1 and all but one element of Standard 2. By the fourth reporting period, Elizabeth was consistently and successfully meeting all elements of these standards. Elizabeth continued to meet all elements in the fifth reporting period, and Amanda focused her support on helping Elizabeth maintain consistency and independently sustain these improvements.

The case of Elizabeth as documented in her PAR file was typical of the other cases we examined. That is, the PAR files illustrated the ability of the Consulting Teachers to build a foundation for overall improvement by carefully identifying basic problems, working with the participating teacher to making small changes, and then expanding the improvement efforts to

"...the integration of support and evaluation appears to be a more effective approach to improving instructional practice than isolating support from evaluation."

make fundamental changes to the participating teacher's instructional strategies. In this case and most others, the Consulting Teacher was fully aware of the overlapping and interconnected problems but was able to build the participating teacher's trust and sense of progress by targeting easy-to-implement strategies first.

Our analysis of the PAR files illustrates two key points. First, peer support and peer evaluation can coexist. In fact, the integration of support and evaluation appears to be a more effective approach to improving instructional practice than isolating support from evaluation. Neither the participating teachers nor the Consulting Teachers reported a conflict between giving support and assessing teaching.

Second, the programs in Poway and San Juan provide clear evidence that PAR can be a rigorous alternative to traditional forms of teacher evaluation and development. Not only were the PAR evaluations far superior in their rigor and comprehensiveness to the principals', but they also addressed the problem of principals' lack of capacity to conduct the many thorough evaluations they are responsible for each year.

"...PAR can be a rigorous alternative to traditional forms of teacher evaluation and development."

Rigorous Peer Support and Evaluation

The research base on the evaluation of instruction is limited but growing. From existing research, we know that rigorous evaluation needs to be able to differentiate between effective and ineffective teaching, be based on measures of effective teaching that are related to student learning (such as adherence to a set of standards), employ multiple measures of effectiveness, be predictive of future effectiveness, and apply to all teachers.⁵ In addition, the Poway and San Juan examples suggest that rigorous evaluation must include thorough documentation of

evidence and that the quality and quantity of evidence stem from intensive and sustained improvement efforts such as those provided by Consulting Teachers. Furthermore, the assessments made by the Consulting Teachers need to be replicable. In other words, the system must be able to offer evidence of interrater reliability; the work of Consulting Teachers must be tailored but not idiosyncratic. That is, the Consulting Teachers must be well trained, and an independent body (like the Governance Boards) must closely monitor their work. Finally, the evaluations must have improvement as their central purpose. To be sure, some teachers will not, despite every effort, improve their practice. But if PAR (and evaluation more generally) is to serve the goal of enhancing teacher effectiveness, improvement must be at the heart of the program.

⁵ See http://www.brookings.edu/reports/2011/0426_evaluating_teachers.aspx

Some readers will note the absence of explicit links between evaluation of instruction and student test scores. Although such links may be reassuring, the emphasis in Poway and San Juan is on the link between evaluation of instruction and the standards used to define effective teaching, standards that are associated with student learning. Future research should examine the direct link between evaluation of instruction and student learning, but that examination was not feasible in this particular study of Poway and San Juan. More important, we argue that measuring teachers' instruction is both the most proximal outcome of the PAR programs and central to a comprehensive examination of teacher effectiveness. The goal of PAR is to improve teaching, knowing that better teaching leads to better student outcomes.

As our description of the work of Consulting Teachers in Poway and San Juan confirms, these PAR programs meet a commonsense definition of rigorous evaluation and support. The programs provide clear examples of how to make teacher evaluation both meaningful and fundamental to improving teaching. Next, we examine what turned out to be a much more important component of the PAR programs than we originally expected—the Governance Board.

Governance Boards

The work of the Consulting Teachers proved to be an important line of inquiry, but we soon discovered that the role of the Governance Board was pivotal to the effort to improve teacher support and evaluation. We had expected that the work of the Governance Boards might affect the general tenor of labor-management relations, but we had no idea how this might play out. Overall, we underestimated the significance of the Governance Boards' work and the potential the boards hold for addressing a wide variety of high-stakes decisions in productive ways.

Establishing the Boards

Poway's PAR program roots are firmly grounded in the early efforts of PAR in Toledo, Ohio. Poway copied many of the program features of the Toledo PAR model, including the establishment of a Governance Board. Subsequently, San Juan borrowed many of the features of the Poway program. In both districts, the basic structure of the Governance Boards was set from the beginning of the programs, but each of the boards evolved over time.

Poway and San Juan have been working for many years to refine the policies and procedures that guide the Governance Boards. Representatives of both districts readily admitted that they have made substantial changes over the years and that the boards had plenty of problems in the early years. Chief among the challenges was ensuring that the Consulting Teachers' documentation of participating teachers' instructional practices was sufficiently thorough to serve as compelling evidence of progress or lack of progress. As Tom Alves, executive director of the San Juan Teachers Association, explained, "Some of our reports were pretty shaky in our initial stages. ...[The reports] were so bare, so terribly written, that they wouldn't pass muster." In the first few years, program leaders identified Consulting Teachers who wrote thorough reports and then used those Consulting Teachers to train others. In fact, San Juan brought in a particularly strong Consulting Teacher from Poway to train its Consulting Teachers in how to prepare their reports.

In Poway, the lack of precision of the evaluation tools also hampered the early efforts to improve the Consulting Teachers' documentation. Vague guidance like "plans appropriate lessons" led to a major effort to define standards and create rubrics. This effort predated the development of

the California Standards for the Teaching Profession and included clear elements that teachers would be evaluated on and spelled out a continuum toward meeting each element of each standard.

Thus, while any observer of a Governance Board meeting is likely to be as impressed as we were by the quality of the conversations about instruction and the professionalism of everyone involved, it is important to recognize that an effective Governance Board is not easily accomplished. Both Poway and San Juan continue to improve their PAR programs and emphasized to us that merely establishing a Governance Board is only a first step toward implementing an effective PAR program.

Governance Board Duties and Membership

The Governance Boards were established to oversee the work of the Consulting Teachers and to make recommendations to each district's Board of Education regarding individual cases. In Poway, the Governance Board closely monitors the progress of new teachers who are not meeting standards and recommends midyear dismissal, that they not be rehired after their first year, or that they be considered for tenure by the principal during the next school year because they have successfully completed the PPAP program. Similarly, the Governance Board in both Poway and San Juan might recommend that a veteran teacher referred to PAR be released from the program, continue in the program, or be removed from the classroom.

Beyond the high-stakes work of making decisions about the performance of referred teachers (and beginning teachers in Poway), the Governance Boards also serve as formal evaluators of the Consulting Teachers and informal evaluators of the principals. In the case of Consulting Teachers, the boards can remove them from the job and return them to the classroom. For the principals, their performance in front of the Governance Board is duly noted by the district officials who sit on the board and is factored in to the principals' evaluation.

Given the high-stakes nature of the Governance Board's decisions, the mix of board members takes on added significance. In both districts, the union and the district nominate candidates for membership and both sides must approve the nominees. The union and its teachers hold the majority of seats on each Governance Board (three to two in Poway and four to three in San Juan). All decisions need to be approved by a super-majority (four to one or five to two), but in reality all decisions are unanimous.

"[Governance Board] members did not play their professional roles while they participated in the discussions—in fact, it was difficult to identify the members who were teachers and those who were administrators."

Governance Board Meetings

Our observations of the Governance Boards were revealing. We were immediately struck by the fact that members did not play their professional roles while they participated in the discussions—in fact, it was difficult to identify the members who were teachers and those who were administrators. Moreover, during the Governance Board meetings the leadership was shared.

The work of the Governance Board is serious. Given that teachers' careers can be on the line, board

members came well prepared, demanded solid evidence on a teacher's performance from both the Consulting Teachers and the principals, and treated their work with the utmost seriousness. Typically, board members offered suggestions to the Consulting Teachers and asked them to consider alternative explanations for a teacher's poor performance. Board members could also be demanding. For example, during one meeting we observed, a principal was told to redo his evaluation report because the evidence for his conclusions about a participating teacher's performance was lacking.

The conversations were focused on an agreed-upon set of standards. The seriousness and thoroughness of the conversations reflected participants' stated belief that they were dealing with the fate of children and their learning. As one board member explained, "What is the cost to a class of second-graders who are not receiving any instruction? What is the cost to a class of algebra students who are not learning algebra?"

PAR Program and Governance Board Contributions

The goal of the PAR programs is to improve the overall quality of teaching in the districts. Our evidence suggests that the programs in both districts succeeded in improving the teaching of some poorly performing teachers and removing others from the classroom. Although recommended dismissals were relatively rare among tenured teachers referred to the program, a fairly substantial number of teachers referred to PAR chose to leave the profession on their own before formal dismissal. In Poway, 20 veteran teachers were referred into PAR and 13 successfully completed the program and continued teaching. None of the 20 was actually dismissed, but 7 left the district. In San Juan, 28 teachers were referred into PAR and 16 completed the program. Four teachers did not meet the standards and were recommended for dismissal, 5 others left on their own, and 3 are currently in the program.

Poway's program for beginning teachers has served 1,875 individuals. Seventy-seven were not recommended for rehiring and 21 resigned on their own. Actually, many more beginning teachers were not recommended for rehiring, but because they were hired as temporary teachers there was no official record.

"Board members reported that the difficulty of their deliberations and the importance of their decisions helped build a sense of shared responsibility and collaboration."

The reasons for the relatively small number of poorly performing teachers who have been referred into PAR are not entirely clear. PAR program leaders argued that the low number of teachers referred to PAR is largely a result of principals' reluctance or inability to identify poor performance. Poway officials also cited the success of their program for beginning teachers in weeding out poor performers at the beginning of their careers and pointed to the critical mass of Poway teachers who have successfully completed the PPAP program (more than 60% of all teachers currently in the district). As one principal explained, "If we give someone tenure, it will cost us \$1 million [over the course of their career]. We do not want to throw that down the drain."

Beyond the numbers, we found other important contributions of the programs and especially of the Governance Boards. Although board members, Consulting Teachers, and principals all reported that the work is exhausting and challenging, they all spoke glowingly about the benefits of the effort. Board members reported

that the difficulty of their deliberations and the importance of their decisions helped build a sense of shared responsibility and collaboration. As we discuss in the next section of the report, the Governance Boards illustrate that collective work on important instructional issues can build strong collaborative relations that transfer into other difficult negotiations between labor and management.

Board members also reported that working on issues involving teachers' instructional practice benefited union officials and high-level district administrators, whose jobs usually do not involve instruction. For example Associate Superintendent for Personnel Bill Chiment noted that his participation on the Governance Board helped keep him focused on the thing that mattered most—teaching and learning. Similarly, Consulting Teachers reported that the requirement that they carefully document teachers' instructional practice made them better teachers once they returned to the classroom. In effect, serving as a Consulting Teacher was a kind of professional development that helped them improve their own teaching practice.

Our observations of board meetings, review of the documentation on the boards' policies and procedures, and interviews with board members, Consulting Teachers, and principals revealed the importance of such bodies for overseeing PAR programs. But, as we learned from our observations, Governance Boards can also serve as a problem-solving forum where the union and management work to solve problems only indirectly related to their assessment of teachers' performance. The problems can be big or small. For example, we watched a Consulting Teacher explain to the board that one of her participating teachers had been unable to get a SMART board for her classroom because of the way that her classroom was wired. As the Consulting Teacher made her report, an assistant superintendent sent an email to the facilities department and the SMART board was installed a few days later. In another meeting, we listened to a discussion of how a particular district policy was unnecessarily burdensome on special education teachers and heard the union president and the associate superintendent for instruction agree to meet the next week to try to resolve the issue. Board members in subsequent interviews reported that such problem solving was a routine part of Governance Board meetings.

The Promise of Governance Boards

Both districts are rightfully proud of their efforts to create a high-functioning PAR Governance Board and are actively considering the establishment of Governance Boards for other high-stakes issues. In Poway, the union and the district have already established a Governance Board to oversee all professional development decisions in the district. Both San Juan and Poway officials expressed a desire to expand the role of Governance Boards to address all teacher evaluations, as well as tenure and compensation issues. As states and districts across the country reinvent their human resources policies, and especially their systems for evaluating teachers and administrators, the experience of the Governance Boards in Poway and San Juan suggests a promising approach.

PAR and Labor-Management Relations

Not long ago, a California legislative staffer asked one of the authors of this report, “Is it true that some California school districts have been able to get their teacher unions to sign on to PAR programs? And is it also true that these unions stay in even when they know the program involves teachers evaluating teachers?”

The questions were perfectly innocent, and they displayed an unfortunate but perhaps not surprising lack of understanding. In truth,

- It often is the union that brings the idea of peer review to the district.
- PAR programs hinge on the union being an active half of the partnership that makes PAR work.
- The unions that advocate for PAR know they have made a conscious decision to venture in to the high-stakes territory of teacher evaluation.

So far in this report, we have presented the work of Consulting Teachers—union members all—who provide comprehensive support and evaluate beginning and tenured colleagues. We have explored the critical work of the PAR Governance Boards—joint management-union bodies that make tough, thoughtful, consequential teacher employment decisions in ways that belie both tradition and role-specific expectations.

In this section, we take a closer look at peer review through the labor-management lens. In particular, we try to determine what it is about the district and union relationship in Poway and San Juan that allows PAR to flourish.

Collaboration Is More than Working Together

"Labor-management cooperation isn't incidental to PAR. It's what makes it tick."

One of the people we interviewed for this project said to us, “Labor-management cooperation isn’t incidental to PAR. It’s what makes it tick.” And that, of course, proved to be true. But it is only part of the collaboration story.

Collaboration is not a new concept in labor-management relations, but it remains unusual. Traditional labor-management relations most often are adversarial. Bargaining plays out as a zero-sum game as union and management engage in often fierce tugs-of-war over the distribution of resources—dollars, people, and time.

Labor-management relations traditionally are testy, so the argument goes, because union and management represent different, often competing, interests. The union is meant to protect the rights of its teacher members and to make them safe from arbitrary and capricious management actions. The district is said to represent the interests of the public and, more particularly, of the students it is responsible for. These conflicting management and labor interests create a naturally adversarial climate that plays out as a kind of periodic jousting tournament when contract time rolls around.

Collaborative bargaining takes a different approach. Under a collaborative bargaining (often called win-win or interest-based) scenario, union and management abandon their purely positional stances in favor of identifying and acting on common interests. They work to distribute available resources in a way that meets the needs of employees and simultaneously furthers the mission of the institution. As a result, labor-management discussions proceed more collegially.

So far, so good. In practice, collaborative negotiations often begin and end with civility. Management and union deal more respectfully with one another, and discussions are more cordial, but issues tend to remain limited to the traditionally defined triad of wages, hours, and terms and conditions of employment.

Here then is the rub. The promise of collaborative bargaining is not simply in changing the tenor of the discussion, in increasing the level of civility. The promise of collaborative bargaining lies in altering the substance of labor-management discussions and agreements. It lies in management and union being willing to examine the previously unexamined, doing the hard work together of confronting tough, high-stakes issues, and reaching accord on how to proceed when decisions carry real and human consequences.

In the PAR programs in Poway and San Juan, the promise of collaborative bargaining is fully realized. No weak demonstration of feel-good cooperation, the union-management bonds forged in PAR have created a culture of collaboration that enables the parties together to make important decisions on teacher performance and evaluation.

“The Way We Do Business Here”

Interviews with district and union leadership in Poway and San Juan sounded a common theme: Collaboration is the way we do business here. Collaboration has become the norm. It was not always so in either district.

At the time Poway’s peer review program began as Don Raczka’s mentor teacher project, labor-management relations in the district were tense and conflictual. But the then superintendent knew, as did the union, that teacher evaluation did not work. So the parties agreed to implement PAR for beginning and struggling tenured teachers.

After completing his mentor teacher stint, Mr. Raczka became union president. He continued to nurture the PAR program even as labor-management relations remained shaky. Then in 2001, the superintendent of 25 years retired. Mr. Raczka and the new superintendent worked hard to improve the union-management relationship, including bringing in an outside facilitator to help. As relations began to improve, so, too, did the trust requisite to sustaining PAR.

Poway’s collaborative labor-management relationship has strengthened and stabilized over the last decade. It has become integral to the district’s culture; both district and union are committed to preserving it. Said John Collins, who was appointed superintendent in September 2010, “I feel an obligation to maintain the relationship with the union.” Union president Candy Smiley said, “I walked in to an arranged relationship.” She talked about how she feels duty-bound to make sure the union does nothing that might jeopardize it.

San Juan’s labor-management history is a little different from Poway’s. In the 10 years since PAR began in San Juan, union leadership has been stable. District leadership, however, has turned over several times. The union advocated for peer review and worked with the district to

develop and implement the program,⁶ but labor-management relations remained on edge and unsettled through several administrations. Three years ago, the district experienced another leadership change, this time to an administration that embraced labor-management collaboration generally and PAR specifically. Deeper collaboration on peer review has led to increasingly expansive union-management collaboration on other issues and, as in Poway, to the development of a deep bond of labor-management trust.

The labor-management trust implicit in both districts through their work with PAR is manifested in specific ways. The parties trust one another to abide by the rules of the high-stakes process they have created together. They commit to using clear standards to diagnose teaching practice, provide intensive support to build on teaching strengths and buttress weaknesses, conduct careful and thorough evaluations of teaching, and take appropriate actions based on the results of these evaluations.

Union and management also have been careful to build and sustain PAR processes that ensure that the teachers who participate in them are treated rigorously but fairly. District and union leaders in Poway and San Juan spoke openly about the need for the system to be transparent, for teachers to believe they are getting a fair shake.

Under collective bargaining law, unions have a “duty of fair representation.” This means unions must bargain fairly for all teachers and represent any who claim disparate, or unfair, treatment. Allegations that the union treated some teachers differently from others could open the organization up to unfair labor practice charges before the state’s Public Employment Relations Board.

Yet treating some teachers differently from others is the essence of PAR. How, then, do the unions in Poway and San Juan perform this balancing act? How do they reconcile the union’s legal duty to ensure all teachers are treated equitably and represented fairly with the organization’s participation in a system that recognizes different classes of teachers and could result in a change in some teachers’ employment status? The answer lies in the comprehensiveness of PAR.

PAR sets a higher bar for performance review than conventional teacher evaluation. As we have detailed in the sections on the work of the Consulting Teachers and Governance Boards, by the time a teacher has completed PAR, the intensive support and multidimensional evaluation have shown that the teacher is ready to be responsible for a classroom or have provided ample evidence that he or she is not.

Union officials in both districts expressed great confidence in the PAR process. They believe that PAR accomplishes what traditional evaluation does not. It gives teachers ample and supported opportunity to improve their practice and be successful. For those who do not or cannot improve, the performance documentation generated through PAR offers what San Juan union president Steve Duditch called “an airtight case”—evidence so compelling that the action that needs to be taken is clear.

⁶ San Juan launched its PAR program after California had mandated BTSA for beginning teachers. Thus, San Juan’s PAR includes only tenured teachers.

The Poway and San Juan unions are not cavalier about their responsibility to their members. They take the necessary steps to ensure teachers' rights are protected. In San Juan, for example, a high-level union official who does not sit on the Governance Board works with PAR teachers to make sure all agreed-upon processes and procedures are followed, including, where appropriate, an expedited grievance and arbitration procedure, offering what Tom Alves called "a nice safety valve for members."

Both unions also actively help counsel out teachers who have completed PAR but whose practice still has been found wanting. The unions view this as part of their obligation to make sure their members have every opportunity make the right professional decision. Noted Poway's Candy Smiley, "We do a good job of remediating. [They make it] or they choose to resign."

Change Is Hard for Both Sides

PAR requires change for both district management and the union. With PAR, the district accepts the union as a partner and the union accepts the responsibility that accompanies partnership. The parties act as equals, assuming joint responsibility for the process. They come to understand they have a mutual obligation to make the system they developed together work. As we illustrated in the section on the Governance Boards, the district does not pull rank when it is time for decisions and the union does not shy away from making the tough calls. A clear "We're all in this together" philosophy pervades this partnership.

PAR also demands role changes for both principals and teachers—changes that defy traditional job boundaries. Principals relinquish their rights as the sole evaluators of teachers. This switch is often difficult for them to accept, at least initially. Principals we interviewed in Poway and San Juan told us that they looked askance at PAR when it first came into being in their district. They could not see how the system could possibly work, how teachers, especially unionized teachers, would have the skill or be willing to rigorously evaluate colleagues. But after the first year or so of PAR, they told us that they could not imagine how they got along without the program. They

"The joint responsibility that management and union assume in PAR means teaching quality becomes everyone's business, as much a part of the union's agenda as it is a part of the district's."

spoke enthusiastically about the concentrated support PAR teachers receive from Consulting Teachers and acknowledged that the performance reviews prepared by Consulting Teachers are generally more thorough and comprehensive than the evaluation reports that they themselves prepare.

As Consulting Teachers take on roles as evaluators of their peers, they shake conventional wisdom about what a teacher does and by so doing broaden the horizons of what a teaching career might be. Consulting Teachers also give the lie to critics who assert that unionized teachers will never judge a colleague's performance. And in Poway, where Consulting Teachers evaluate novices, teachers just beginning their careers come to accept evaluation by colleagues as the normal and expected course of events.

These role shifts implicit in PAR can be initially uncomfortable for both the district and the union. As San Juan's Tom Alves said, "It's just as big a problem for the

union to assume responsibilities management is willing to give as it is for management to concede them.” PAR requires both sides to adjust their mental models.

Changing Collective Bargaining

PAR leads to changes in collective bargaining. The kind of high-stakes collaboration that is part and parcel of PAR has enabled both Poway and San Juan to view labor-management negotiations with fresh eyes.

The joint responsibility that management and union assume in PAR means teaching quality becomes everyone’s business, as much a part of the union’s agenda as it is a part of the district’s. As enhancing the quality of teaching becomes a significant part of what the union does, the union’s perspective is changed. It becomes as much a part of the union’s job to protect the sanctity of the profession as it is to protect the rights of individual members. It moves the union from a position of self-interest to sharing a concern with management for the public interest. Poway’s Candy Smiley captured this idea when she said, “ ... almost any union could say, ‘Hey, I don’t hire or evaluate so don’t blame me’ [when teachers are ineffective]. I can’t say that here because we [the union] are very involved in ratings and recommendations to keep or release [teachers] and so we have a vested interest.”

This newfound sense of partnership, joint responsibility, and mutual interest opens the door to new kinds of labor-management agreements and to new means for dealing with vexing issues. As noted, Poway’s PAR program began as a trust agreement, a bipartisan pact that offered opportunities for midcourse corrections as the program developed. Poway’s trust agreement morphed into a now many-times-renewed memorandum of understanding between the district and the union.

San Juan’s PAR agreement began and remains a part of its contract. Normally, however, when one side or the other seeks to amend contract language, the district or the union bargaining teams bring requested changes to the bargaining table. In San Juan, the PAR Governance Board, with unanimous consent, may make recommendations to modify the contract language on PAR, although these recommendations still must be approved by the appropriate district and union governing bodies before they are brought to the bargaining table.

Both Poway and San Juan have discovered the difficulty of dealing collaboratively in the PAR arena and then returning to traditional adversarial behavior in contract negotiations and high-stakes problem solving.

This year, Poway, like many California school districts, faced huge budget cuts. Many districts tackled fiscal cutbacks by laying off teachers. Not Poway. Instead, the district and the union were able to reach an agreement that avoided layoffs. Teachers accepted a few more furlough days, but no pink slips were issued.

Even in day-to-day issues, the districts and unions have found ways to resolve problems quickly and informally. We have already noted how the PAR Governance Boards in both districts serve as problem solving forums. As further testament to this effort, Poway union president Candy Smiley said, “I can’t remember the last time the PFT [Poway Federation of Teachers] filed a grievance, maybe [once] in the last 5 years.”

In addition to resolving issues that naturally arise, the collaborative relationship developed through PAR has fostered labor-management discussions and agreements on other issues.

Poway has a memorandum that establishes a joint governing board, kind of an analog to the PAR board, that oversees teacher professional development in the district. In San Juan, district and union leaders are engaged in an ongoing conversation about de-privatizing teaching practice, encouraging teachers to open their classroom doors so their work becomes more public and so colleagues have an opportunity to view each other's work, comment on it, and learn from it. Said San Juan Interim Superintendent Glynn Thompson, "These discussions are the result of PAR."

Through PAR, then, management and union in Poway and San Juan have discovered common interest in improving teaching to improve student learning, found common ground through a system that enables them to share authority and responsibility for teacher support and evaluation. In short, they have discovered common membership in a professional community, fundamentally reshaping the labor-management relations in the process.

PAR Program Challenges and Implications

As with all educational enterprises, Poway's and San Juan's PAR programs are being buffeted by changing economic and policy conditions. Both programs remain works in progress, and neither program is perfect. In our examination of the programs, we identified challenges to their effectiveness, as well as practices that could be strengthened.

The BTSA Dilemma

Perhaps the greatest challenge the programs are facing is a direct result of state policy. We refer to this as the BTSA dilemma. In 1998, California passed legislation requiring that all teachers complete a 2-year induction program to earn a Clear credential.⁷ Requiring 2 years of induction put California at the forefront of what a comprehensive teacher preparation program should look like according to then-emerging research findings.

Cosponsored by California's Department of Education and Commission on Teacher Credentialing, BTSA is set up so that state dollars flow to districts (or consortia of districts) to provide support and formative assessment for beginning teachers. Our research in Poway and San Juan uncovered some troubling problems with BTSA.

First, beginning teachers we interviewed spoke openly about their frustration with BTSA's hefty, time-consuming paperwork requirements. These, they said, are often neither relevant nor helpful but instead simply repeat work previously done in their teacher preparation programs. Consulting Teachers reported that they have taken it upon themselves to complete much of the BTSA paperwork to free up more time for beginning teachers to learn to teach.

Second, BTSA allows only formative assessment. Those who support beginning teachers are prohibited from conducting their evaluations. Thus, in San Juan, which began its PAR program after BTSA, beginning teachers receive support and formative assessment from the Consulting

⁷ The Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment program is by far the most common induction program. It was recently renamed the Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment Induction Program but is still referred to as BTSA.

Teachers but not summative evaluation of their performance. The situation is even more complicated for Poway.

Poway's PAR program began before the state enacted BTSA. PAR in Poway has always included both beginning and struggling tenured teachers. However, the state is making this ever more difficult. Poway does not want to eliminate PAR with summative evaluation for beginning teachers. Thus, the district is forced to run essentially parallel programs—BTSA with no summative evaluation and PAR with a summative review. District officials told us that one of the consequences of the state's action is that Poway's PAR coordinator must devote 80% of her time to BTSA paperwork.

Third, the way BTSA is funded has changed. The program had been funded through categorical dollars set aside explicitly for BTSA-related expenditures. Because of budget shortfalls in recent years, these funds now are part of the block grant the state gives to school districts, and districts have begun to use funds formerly reserved for BTSA to fill various non-BTSA budget gaps. Nevertheless, teachers are still required to complete a BTSA program for their Clear credential. This has not yet become an issue in Poway or San Juan, but it certainly looms as a potential one, and it already has become a problem in other California districts.

These issues raise for us serious questions about BTSA's method and operation. We hope to explore some of these questions in a subsequent study.

Consulting Teacher Capacity

As California's budget crisis drags on, school districts across the state have been forced to give large numbers of teachers layoff notices. While many of the teachers initially laid off are ultimately hired back in the fall, these teachers are often forced to assume new assignments. Making matters worse, as is the case in Poway, these new assignments sometimes include several part-time teaching positions in different schools.

This causes two problems for beginning teachers. First, the annual cycle of layoff notices is demoralizing and discourages good teachers from staying in the profession. Second, taking on cobbled together assignments (e.g., a 0.6 FTE position here and a 0.3 FTE position there) makes it difficult for the teachers to become part of the school community, limits the opportunities for support from their colleagues, and adds to their workload (often increasing the number of subjects they must teach).

This also makes it difficult for districts like Poway and San Juan to support beginning teachers. In our interviews with beginning teachers, we heard both frustration and complaints about the extent of the supports they received in dealing with these difficult assignments. The adequacy of the supports and the capacity of the Consulting Teachers to address this new reality come into question.

This raises a larger question about the capacity of the Consulting Teachers to handle caseloads of up to 17 teachers, especially if the districts' PAR programs expand. Although Consulting Teachers did not complain to us about their caseloads, we did notice how hard they worked and how demanding their jobs were. To the extent that the districts consider expanding their PAR programs to take on more responsibility for teacher evaluations and to increase the supports for beginning teachers with challenging assignments, smaller caseloads will probably be a necessary adjustment.

Governance Board and Educator Awareness

Overall, our conclusions about the Governance Boards in Poway and San Juan are very positive. But despite our overall positive assessment, we noted that neither Poway nor San Juan do much to publicize the existence of a PAR program or the work of the Governance Boards. Because the ideas that teachers can rigorously evaluate other teachers and that the union and management can collaborate on high-stakes issues run counter to conventional wisdom, the lack of visibility may be politically prudent. Still, it seems like a lost opportunity.

Program leaders indicated that publicizing the programs was just not a top priority. But if teachers and parents understood and appreciated PAR and the Governance Boards' work, the districts might further advance a professional culture where teachers evaluate teachers and union and management work collaboratively. Poway has the distinct advantage of having had the majority of teachers complete its program for beginning teachers, thereby establishing a recognition of the value of having teachers evaluate teachers. But both districts could do more to promote their visions for teacher professionalism and collaborative labor-management relations.

Policy and Practice Implications of This Study

This study points to some important policy and practice changes for the state and districts and their local unions to consider. These changes could lead to markedly improved opportunities to ensure effective teachers in California classrooms.

What can the state do? California once tried to mandate PAR. That turned out to be a failed experiment. The state funded a halfway program that included only tenured teachers. Not many districts took it seriously. The state had set a strict schedule with no time for planning or buy-in, and it was too difficult to confront the pressing issues of support and evaluation for struggling tenured teachers within those constraints. Districts had to scramble for funds without being given the time to work with their unions to develop the labor-management partnerships that are the heart of PAR. The program specifically excluded beginning teachers.

Thus, simply remandating PAR is not a sensible state policy approach. Moreover, in this time of budget shortfalls, education does not need another mandated program.

The state can, however, take an important step. It can change policy to eliminate current statutory barriers to comprehensive PAR programs. At present, the Education Code section on PAR (Section 44500) allows the program for only tenured teachers. This policy could be broadened to enable support and evaluation for all teachers to come under PAR.

What can districts and local unions do? Those that are encouraged by the efforts in Poway and San Juan can reexamine their teacher evaluation policies with an eye toward implementing the kinds of in-depth support and evaluation that are the hallmarks of these exemplary programs. They can work to refine their practices around individualized support for beginning and struggling tenured teachers and look to experienced teachers to expand the pool of professionals available to do this work. They can use what they learn about new ways to support and appraise beginning and underperforming tenured teachers to rethink their evaluation systems for all teachers.

Districts and their unions also can use lessons learned from the work of the Poway and San Juan Governance Boards. They can work to form cooperative union-management partnerships

authorized to make decisions about high-stakes matters. Such partnerships would imbue these labor-management relationships with a “share the wealth, share the pain” significance that could render tough choices fair, credible, and workable.

