

2011 District Customer Service Interview Results

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NOTE: The word cloud on the front cover is a graphical representation of the district customer service interview text. The cloud gives greater prominence to words that appear more frequently in the source text (www.wordle.net)

Executive Summary

As a way to measure the goals of the Santa Clara County Office of Education (SCCOE), district customer service interviews were conducted by SCCOE staff at every school district (N = 32) in the county (including Metropolitan Education District), from December 2010 to May 2011. In 2009, similar interviews were also conducted.

The Bottom Line

Strengths: The majority of Santa Clara County's school districts reported a welcomed change in customer service focus and rated the SCCOE well above average on overall usefulness.

- Ratings of the usefulness of the SCCOE are on the rise when compared to overall ratings from the last five years. In 2007, districts rated the SCCOE as a 3.7 on a scale of 1-5 (1=low satisfaction; 5=high satisfaction). In 2011, districts rated the SCCOE as a 4.2 on a scale of 1-5 (1=dispensable; 5=indispensable).
- When asked about the most useful/indispensable services of the SCCOE, across all branches, Curriculum & Instruction support (Educational Services) was mentioned the most, followed by Credentialing Services and support in Human Resources. Educational Services leadership (Linda Aceves) was also mentioned as providing the most useful/indispensable services, followed by Communication Services from the Office of the Superintendent.

Areas for Improvement: Although the overall culture of the SCCOE was praised for a focus on customer service, certain services were identified that will require additional work in the area of customer service/support to districts.

- Customer service or support in Business Services has been consistently mentioned as an area of concern since 2009. Most districts reported a welcomed change in Business Services leadership (Ken Shelton) and were hopeful that their concerns will be addressed.
- When asked about the most problematic/dispensable services of the SCCOE, across all branches, customer service or support in Business Services was mentioned the most, followed by budget leadership and expertise in Business Services. QSS and QCC concerns were next (Technology Services) followed by the budget process (Business Services) and customer service and support in Student Services.

The conclusion: The districts have provided the SCCOE with a road map of services to continue, ways to make improvements, a list of services to provide that would support them, and ideas about how the SCCOE can better serve them.

- Districts want the SCCOE to continue to serve as a leader and are pleased with the overall customer service focus of the organization.
- When asked about services that the SCCOE could provide assistance and/or support in light of the fiscal crisis, across all branches, the cost of SCCOE services and ways to combine resources across districts were mentioned the most, followed by support from Technology Services.

Key Findings

A total of 32 school districts were interviewed by Dr. Charles Weis, Santa Clara County Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Cary Dritz, Deputy Superintendent, and staff members in the Office of Superintendent from December 2010 to May 2011. Aligned with a focus on service, the SCCOE plans to address the concerns of school districts.

Five questions were asked of school district interview participants (32 districts; 139 district staff members). The comments from the interviews were analyzed to identify major themes and categories (NOTE: Quotes represent a sample from district participants in the most mentioned categories of service).

“We are very appreciative of the Educational Services team. Educational Services has been tremendously helpful. Attending monthly meetings has been helpful; the County Office of Education is a place I can tap in for information – great support and networking.”

- **Most useful/indispensable services/resources (641 total comments):** Districts expressed appreciation for Curriculum & Instruction staff and services (Educational Services; 60 comments) followed by Credentialing Services & Support (Human Resources; 29 comments). Districts value the leadership of Linda Aceves (Education Services; 24 comments) and like the Human Resources monthly meetings (21 comments).
- **Problematic/dispensable services/resources (235 total comments):** Top rated categories included improvements to customer service (22 comments), and increased budget leadership and expertise (19 comments) in Business Services.

“The County Office of Education has been really helpful in things like the Bay Area News Group response—love the teamwork on that and the consistency of the response. That also happened with the AB 3632 discussion—the MOUs—the coordination of efforts is what the County Office of Education is becoming really great at—coordinated responses are key. That is a real culture shift.”

- **Services that SCCOE could provide assistance/support for (80 total comments):** Districts would like the SCCOE to reduce the cost of services and to look into combining resources across districts (Office of the Superintendent; 9 comments) and would like support with technology (Technology Services; 9 comments).
- **Rating of the overall usefulness of the SCCOE on scale from 1-5 (1=dispensable; 5 = indispensable):** Average rating of all participants = 4.2; Average rating of superintendents = 4.6.

SCCOE can better serve districts (67 total comments): Districts want the SCCOE to continue serving as a leader and communicator with a continued focus on customer service (Office of the Superintendent; (15 comments).

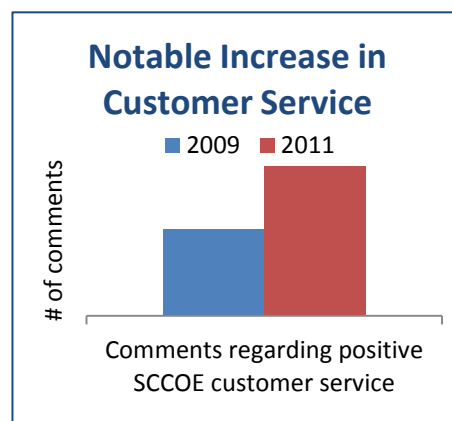
- **Other comments/ideas on how**

2009-2011 Trend Analysis

In 2009, similar interviews were conducted (the questions asked in 2009 were similar to the questions asked in 2011 but were revised slightly). There have been some notable changes since the 2009 interviews.

Strengths: The majority of Santa Clara County’s school districts reported a welcomed change in customer service focus and rated the SCCOE well above average on overall usefulness to them.

- Appreciation of customer service across all branches increased 74% (42 comments in 2009 compared to 73 comments in 2011).
- Across all branches, useful/indispensable services that the SCCOE provided to districts increased over 120% (289 comments in 2009 compared to 641 comments in 2011).
- Increases of favorable comments were expressed for Categorical & Special Projects (Educational Services Branch), Leadership in Business Services (Ken Shelton), Leadership in Educational Services (Linda Aceves), and Communication Services (Office of the Superintendent).



Areas for Improvement: Although the overall culture of the SCCOE was praised for a focus on customer service, certain services were identified that will require additional work in the area of customer service/support to districts.

- Overall, fewer comments were made about areas of concern in 2011 (235 comments) compared to comments about necessary improvements in 2009 (253 comments).
- While there were fewer comments in 2011 regarding problematic/dispensable services of the SCCOE, many services remain problematic or dispensable. Thus, while big strides are being made to improve the services that districts see as problematic or dispensable, there is still room for improvement. In particular, extra attention to customer service in Business Services is important.
- Improvement of the payroll process was mentioned in 2011 only twice compared with 12 times in 2009—suggesting most concerns in this area have been addressed.
- Content and delivery of Educational Services trainings have improved greatly from 2009 to 2011 as mentioned by districts (4 concerns in 2011 compared to 15 concerns in 2009).

The conclusion: The districts have provided the SCCOE with a road map of services to continue, ways to make improvements, a list of services to provide that would support them, and ideas about how the SCCOE can better serve them.

- Districts want the SCCOE to continue to serve as a leader (26 comments in 2009; 15 comments in 2011) and are pleased with the overall customer service focus of the office.
- When asked about areas where the SCCOE could provide assistance and/or support in light of the fiscal crisis, across all branches, the cost of SCCOE services and ways to combine resources across districts were mentioned the most, followed by support needed from Technology Services.
- With continued improvements dictated by the feedback provided from the districts and continued attention to customer service, the Santa Clara County Office of Education is sure to reach its goal of being indispensable to schools and districts in the county.

Next Steps

The districts have provided the SCCOE with a road map of services to continue, ways to make improvements, a list of services to provide that would support them, and ideas about how the SCCOE can better serve them. Aligned with a focus on service, the SCCOE plans to address the concerns of school districts and to improve the quality of the services provided to districts by undertaking the following steps:

- Analyze trends and cluster common concerns;
- Correlate data and apply to reorganization planning;
- Develop organizational objectives reflecting areas in need of improvement;
- Focus on improving services to districts through economy of scale analysis with a concentration on cost savings and containment efforts;
- Gather feedback from customers to assess and evaluate effectiveness of actions;
- Maintain the improvement cycle of setting goals (plan), implementing (do), assessing (study), and adjusting and refining (act); and
- Share results with all stakeholders.

“SCCOE should survey districts about other services they can provide—like grant writing assistance—that districts can combine services with across other districts.”

Specifically, the following services have been requested by most school districts:

- Reduce cost of services, working to help districts combine their resources to pay for services (Office of the Superintendent, Business Services);
- Support technology needs (Technology Services);
- Offer more professional development and trainings (Educational Services);
- Make improvements to Alternative Schools (Student Services);
- Strive to be a leader and communicator for the county (Office of the Superintendent);
- Offer more organizational development (Human Resources); and
- Offer emergency planning services (Business Services).