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ABSTRACT

A preliminary examination of two approaches adopted in California to address the high school dropout problem is presented. Focus is on comparing aggregate impacts of State Bill (SB) 65 and of California Local Educational Reform Network (C-LERN) approaches to high school dropout reduction and prevention between 1985-86 and 1987-88. Four groups of California high schools are compared: schools that have received funding through the SB 65 Motivation and Maintenance program, schools that have contracted with Sage Analytics to become a part of the C-LERN process, a small group of schools that are both SB 65 and C-LERN schools, and a comparison group of schools that met the criteria for SB 65 participation but were not funded. All schools were among California's poorest, and consistently score poorly in terms of both standardized tests and rates at which students leave school. The high schools in which SB 65 programs operate average about 53% Hispanic, 15% Black, and 18% White students. C-LERN programs operate in high schools that average about 35% Hispanic, 39% Black, and 6% White students. Of note was the apparent failure of schools that have instituted both C-LERN and SB 65 programs. Nevertheless, either program, adopted without the other, seems to have different but essentially positive effects on school dropout rates. An explanation for this outcome lies in conflicting sets of assumptions each program makes about school culture and organization. Fifteen data tables are included. (TJH)

Organizational Culture and Correlates of Effectiveness in California's Dropout Prevention Programs

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Alarm about the educational 'tide of mediocrity' is at its heart, as Sum and Berlin suggest, "a concern about the average achievement levels of our nations citizens". [1] It is also a concern that 'averages' frequently hide radical disparities in the way in which educational skills and attainments are distributed throughout the population. Whether the measure is based on economics, health or educational attainment, in the US during the past decade there has been a growing distance between the top and bottom of our social structure. We are a "nation at risk" precisely because the concept of 'average educational' attainment no longer describes a significant number of real individuals, but rather provides a thin statistical bridge, papering over the yawning chasm between the education experiences of the upper and lower segments of our society.

As James Fallows observes in his remarks on industrial productivity in Japan, the Japanese claim to "have the best bottom 50 percent in the world".[2] Few would make that claim about the products of our educational system. Viewing any measure of our current educational success, whether educational attainment, test performance or dropout levels, suggests that our bottom 50 percent is both a national disgrace and recipe for social and economic disaster.

While there have always been students who failed to complete school, the attention of policy makers to this problem is at best episodic. Beginning in 1985 or 1986, however, the 'issue-attention' cycle had brought educational issues -- especially of the underclass -- back into focus and the problem of dropouts again become a critical concern to policy makers at the Federal, state and district levels.[3] The scope of the problem is almost overwhelming.

I. The Structure of this Paper:

This paper provides a preliminary look at two approaches adopted in California in an attempt to address the dropout problem. The paper's central feature is a preliminary comparison between the aggregate impacts of the SB 65 and C-LERN approaches to high school dropout reduction and prevention for the 1985-86 through 1987-88 period. Compared in a largely descriptive fashion are four groups of California high schools: those schools which have received funding through the SB 65 Motivation and Maintenance program, those which have contracted with Sage Analytics to become part of the California Local Educational Reform Network (C-LERN) process, a small group of schools which are both SB 65 and C-LERN schools, and a comparison (or "control") group of schools which met the criteria for SB 65 participation but were not funded due to unavailability of funds. All these schools are among California's poorest, and consistently score worst in terms of both standardized tests and rates at which students leave school.

These preliminary results show that the SB 65 program has had a positive impact on decreasing the dropout rate when compared to similar schools without such a program. The effects of the C-LERN program, while measurable, were considerably more mixed. C-LERN schools appeared decrease the dropout rate among specific groups of 'at risk' students (male and female Afro-Americans), but were not able to decrease the rate significantly among other groups.

The finding which drew most attention during our preliminary research, however, was the apparent spectacular failure of schools which have instituted both C-LERN and SB 65 programs. As noted below, dropout rates among 12th graders rose for these schools in every major ethnic group (except Afro-Americans) at a significantly higher rate than in any other schools. The observation holds generally true across all levels. Among Hispanics enrolled in combination schools, for example, the rate of increase for 12th graders was three times that for either C-LERN or for schools without any program. (Among SB 65 programs, the rate decreased.) Among Whites, the rate increased by almost 17 percentage points; this in the face of a 1.8 percentage point drop in the control group.

What is disturbing about these figures is that both C-LERN and SB 65 by themselves seem to be having a different but essentially positive effect on school dropout rates. Schools with combination C-LERN and SB 65 programs, on the other hand, are clearly experiencing significant problems in terms of changes in dropout rates. Tentatively, at least, we believe that much of the explanation for this outcome lies a conflicting set of assumptions each program makes about school culture and organization. When the programs -- or assumptions -- are implemented by themselves the conflicts have little impact; when implemented together, they interact in a way which contributes to or exacerbates the dropout problem.

The following pages examine both programs in some detail, along with a highly preliminary assessment of their overall impact. While providing an initial, rough assessment of SB 65 and C-LERN program effectiveness in increasing school "holding power", the intent of this paper is not to provide a rigorous overall "evaluation" of these programs.

Rather, it is intended to be a preliminary examination and speculation about the causes and implications of these differences in aggregate outcome measures.[6] There are several reasons for this limitation. First, as discussed elsewhere, dropout rates are only one measure of program effectiveness. While SB 65 has as its primary objective "reduction of dropout rates", C-LEARN has a number of other objectives. Dropout rate comparisons examine only one program outcome and ignore the multiplicity of other goals addressed by both programs. Second, as also noted elsewhere (see note) aggregate dropout rates as a primary outcome measure appears to be somewhat flawed in terms of its accuracy and consistency. Finally, much of the data collection upon which this comparison is based is on-going; the programs are being examined through 1994 and a wide variety of student level and program implementation data is still being collected. As indicated earlier, therefore, the "speculations" presented here go considerably beyond any findings rigorously confirmed by our existing data; they constitute a portion of our emerging research agenda as we continue our data collection and analysis activities.

II. Dropouts in California - Definitional Problems & Programmatic Response.

As student attrition rates in California schools crept gradually upward during the last decade, concern rose, as well, about the implications of this incline. The concern had a number of components. It was feared that increased academic standards might be leading to higher attrition rates. Attrition rates appeared to be particularly high for minority students, a situation which raises difficult equity issues. High attrition rates suggested that far too many California students of every ethnic background were starting life with an educational handicap which would prevent them from realizing their full human potential. High attrition rates also suggested that the economic future was at risk in a state in which many jobs require increasingly sophisticated skills.

All of these early discussions of the problem, however, used attrition rates as stand-ins for dropout rates. Attrition rates are arrived at by looking at the number of graduates in any particular year and then comparing that number with the number of students who had enrolled in the tenth grade three years earlier. This is the easiest dropout figure to collect; the problem is that the attrition rate is always higher than the dropout rate. Some students who were enrolled in tenth grade but do not graduate with their class do, in fact, graduate (e.g., from private schools, from schools in other communities or states, or they graduate late). But there is no way to know, without additional data collection activities, how many of these students exist.

In an effort to identify more precisely the scope of the problem in California, the State Department of Education four years ago added data elements on dropouts to its CBEDS (California Basic Educational Data System) data collection instruments. The dropout rate, as defined by CBEDS, is arrived at by asking school districts to report on the number of students who had dropped out of school in the 12-month period before the October CBEDS information day. A dropout is defined as a student who has been out of school for 45 days without requesting a transcript. In order to project from this one-year rate to a three-year dropout rate, the rates for tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grades are combined.

Collecting dropout data required school districts to establish procedures to track students in a new way. Any student not found was identified as a dropout. Other problems with data reporting in the three years of this effort included how to handle students who dropped out of school less than 45 days before the end of the school year, students whose requests for transcripts were received more than 45 days after their last day of attendance, students who stopped attending school after the age of 18, and other such unanticipated issues. Although policies have been developed and disseminated as to how to deal with individual cases, it appears possible that rates reported in the first year were unrealistically high. The Department warns that it is important to keep in mind that the reporting system for dropouts is new and that some problems remain.

There are also reasons to believe that dropout rates for all of the years available are unrealistically low. Dropout rates are collected only for tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grades because it was felt that schools operating a 10-12 configuration would be unable to track students between junior high (or middle school) and high school. Yet it is clear that a certain number of students do drop out during (or before) ninth grade. One suggestive piece of evidence as to the number of dropouts is found in the SRA Associates' 1989-90 report on the SB 65 Educational Clinics and Alternative Education and Work Centers. [7] Data collected on students enrolled in the Clinics programs indicates that 25 percent are 15 years of age or younger; ten percent are 14 years or younger. If this population were representative of dropouts as a whole (and it may not be), then the rates reported above are too low by as much as 25 percent.

III. Differences in Program Assumptions: SB 65 & C-LERN

While potentially complementary at the school site level, the C-LERN and SB 65 programs employ fundamentally different strategies in attempting to implement school reform. SB 65 creates a new instructionally related position of Outreach Consultant, whose primary task is to work with other teachers, the administration, parents and the community in establishment of programs to motivate students and prevent dropouts. Despite a large diversity in job definition, one common thread in our surveys and site visits to SB 65 schools has been the view of the successful Outreach Consultant creating a position of "advocate" for the "at risk" student both to teachers and the school administration. As noted elsewhere, [8] there is an implicit conflict inherent in this role. That the outreach consultant is a "hybrid" position, neither teacher nor administrator, has meant that those occupying it have yet to find themselves a completely comfortable place within the "culture" of the local school site. The fact that the position is relatively new has meant that considerable problems of legitimacy were encountered during the first few years of the program. Nonethe-less, the Outreach Consultant has assumed a major role as a "gradualist change-agent" within California's SB 65 program schools. [9]

In contrast, the C-LERN process is an attempt to directly and 'radically' change the organizational culture of the school in an effort to improve low performance. Using an adaption of several organizational development techniques developed in the 1960's, the technique provides an analysis of the school's condition, and employs a mandatory, formalized survey on goals and "problem weighting" to assess school climate. The results of these analytic processes are then formulated into a 'final list of issues' (unique to each

school) which are then addressed by the school in its restructuring process. The minimum commitment for the process is three years. Schools enter a contract with Sage Analytics to provide facilitation and continued follow up and consultation. By its supporters, the C-LERN methodology is seen as offering a powerful catalyst to "disrupt the pathologies of an organization", focus staff energy and insights, create a restructured, site-base management environment, and allow principals to apply aspects of shared decision-making. Its detractors see it as a "destructive process" leaving a schools organizational infrastructure badly damaged, key staff isolated, and all members of the school culture badly polarized. Universally, however, the program is seen as being built on the attempt institute (and guide) dramatic changes in the school culture, and to involve community groups integrally in the local decision-making process.

IV. Details of Program Design & Implementation:

In both design and operation both the SB 65 and C-LERN programs are considerably more complex than indicated by the forgoing comparison. Both represent well developed attempts to reform education in high risk schools, and both have as at least one primary goal the measurable reduction of dropout rates among high risk students.

SB 65: Motivation and Maintenance Programs

SB 65, which passed in 1985, was billed as a major initiative on dropouts even though it stopped short of establishing a statewide dropout prevention or recovery effort. The legislation established a four-part initiative on dropout prevention and recovery. The largest of these, which is the subject of this paper, created 200 School-Based Motivation and Maintenance programs. [10] Established with the intent of increasing the holding power of schools, the programs provided a planning grant and $40,000 per year for an outreach consultant; added program flexibility at the school level to coordinate categorical program funding to meet the needs of high-risk students; and required that participating schools use the Student Study Team (SST) process at the school site for the purpose of identifying the needs of potential dropouts and developing individualized programs to meet the needs of these pupils. In addition, participating schools were required to establish a school site council and develop a school site plan similar to those required by California's School Improvement Program. While some of the participating schools were already involved in School Improvement, for many of the schools, (especially the 100 high schools and middle schools), these requirements were new. Finally, an administrative decision was made by the State Department of Education to establish Motivation and Maintenance programs in "clusters" which included two feeder elementary schools, a junior high, and a senior high school.

Interestingly, these program characteristics parallel closely those found to be effective in the USDE study of "Promising Strategies and Practices", [11] although none of the SB 65 programs were included in that study. In more detail, program features of SB 65 included:

a. The SB 65 Outreach Consultant

With the outreach consultant, SB 65 established the first new school-level position in

California (other than mentor teacher) in many years. Outreach consultants, as observed earlier, are a strange hybrid for most schools: neither teacher nor administrator, many outreach consultants spent the first two years of their tenure establishing realistic job descriptions and discovering their place in the hierarchy of the school.

b. School Based Coordination

The added flexibility to coordinate categorical program funding to meet the needs of high-risk youth is significant as a model for serving high risk students. In effect, however, the SB 65 legislation simply extended the School-Based Coordination model established in AB 777 of 1981. This program was created at a time of great controversy over issues of local control and the desire for increased coordination of categorical resources at the school site. For a number of years some districts had argued for converting the major categorical programs to a district-level block grant with minimum programmatic restriction. A compromise was reached in AB 777, which allowed districts receiving funds under the Consolidated Application to apply to the State Department of Education for a waiver of most regulations. Although this option allowed some measure of coordination of categorical resources, decision-making about funding and programs continued at the school site, utilizing the School Improvement model.[12]

Between 1981 and 1987, participation in the school-based coordination program was extremely limited. With the sunset of School Improvement, however, participation increased dramatically. The increase is widely attributed to the elimination of the eight staff development days which had been allowed under School Improvement--schools operating under the School Based Coordination option may still receive full ADA reimbursement for eight staff development days. Thus, the increase in participation did not necessarily reflect an increased interest in or commitment to the School-Based Coordination concept on the part of school districts, but it did increase substantially the visibility of the model. One result of this development was the increased emphasis placed on the model by groups like the Governor's Commission on Educational Quality, which were looking for a way of increasing the flexibility of categorical programs at the school site level without sacrificing the protection for special populations which formed the basis for the categorical program system. School-based coordination, then, emerged in the eyes of policy makers as a significant policy option for schools, with implications which go beyond the bounds of the SB 65 dropout prevention programs.

It is important to note that there are significant differences between the way in which school based coordination functions under AB 777 and the way in which it functions under SB 65. Those programs available to be coordinated under AB 777 (see note above) primarily impact elementary schools. To these, SB 65 added adult education, ROP/C, continuation education, independent study, opportunity schools, and work experience education. These additions have the effect of increasing significantly the flexibility available at the secondary school level. It should be noted that two types of funding have been explicitly and consistently excluded from school-based-coordination type programs: bilingual education funding and Federal Chapter I funding.

c. Student Study Teams

The student study team concept was well-established even before the passage of SB 65 as a school site program to respond to the needs of high risk students. Though the student study team is a non-special education model, it functions in a way similar to the IEP teams convened in special education, but lacks the prescriptive power of the IEP team.

d. Elements of School-Based Motivation and Maintenance Programs: School Site Councils and School Site Plans

SB 65 mandates a process which includes establishing a school site council and developing a school site plan. This process is based on that mandated for schools participating in school-based coordination, a process which has had a long and successful history of implementation by schools involved in the School Improvement Program.

Of all the educational programs terminated by Governor Deukmejian's veto during the past eight years, the SIP program was unquestionably the most popular and least controversial. With little fanfare, its improvement processes--school-level planning and program quality review--have transformed elementary education over the past 14 years and have made a significant impact on a majority of those middle and secondary schools which have been funded. This finding was supported by a number of sources. The sunset committee states: "This program is perceived as overwhelmingly positive and effective. In part, this is due to community and staff involvement and the resultant commitment to and support of program and school goals." Thus, in spite of the fact that School Improvement has sunsetted, funding for the program has been expanded and the process has been widely cited as a model for conducting planning--for a variety of purposes--at the school site level.

School site councils and school site plans are clearly well-established and successful models which have been shown over the years to have the flexibility to respond to local situations and changing issues. However, it should be noted that, although a number of groups advocated the expansion of SIP at the secondary level and full funding of SIP for grades 7 and 8, until recently the majority of school improvement schools were elementary schools. For this reason, there exists both less experience and less consensus about how school improvement works at the middle school or high school level.

e. Staff Development

SB 65 requires that the school site plan for schools participating in the Motivation and Maintenance Program contain a staff development program "for teachers, other school personnel, paraprofessionals, and volunteers, including those participating in special programs."

C-LERN : the California Local Educational Reform Network

The second approach to dropouts in California is less inclusive in structure, but takes a much more active role in organizational intervention and restructuring. The C-LERN

program was undertaken in 1986-7 at initiative of a Deputy Superintendent at the State Department of Education and in cooperation with Sage Analytics, a Utah based consulting firm. While the status of the program as officially supported by the California State Department of Education appears to have become somewhat unclear in recent months, [13] the Department's Specialized Programs Branch has been very active over the past three years in publicizing, promoting, and supporting the C-LERN concept and process. Department and Sage staff activities have been 'closely intertwined' during this period, with joint CSDE/Sage presentations, institutes and programs. At the Legislative level this support or advocacy was often seen as being at the expense of the SB 65 program; a situation which has created some conflict between the Legislative author of SB 65 and the Deputy Superintendent who has been the most active proponent of C-LERN. As of January, 1990, however, 91 schools in 21 districts had contracted with Sage Analytics to assist in reforming low performing schools through the use of Sage's "fault-tree analysis".

As indicated earlier, C-LERN is an organizational intervention based on the concepts that school culture and organization is the most critical variable in affecting school performance. Schools (or districts) contract with Sage Analytics for a minimum of three years to complete the restructuring of their organization. During the first year, activities consist of survey guided development of a mission statement and a fault-tree analysis of the school's "climate". During this process, the staff is encouraged to attend summer institutes, and work together and with "site-leadership groups" to develop and implement local change strategies. Site-leadership groups include parent and community representatives, and are chosen by the principal. These are seen as particularly important in the C-LERN process, as community involvement/feedback is both a requirement and central goal. Sage provides a 'facilitator' to assist in instituting these changes. Second year activities focus upon curricular analysis, a summer academy, and implementation of changes proposed during the first year. Third through fifth year activities are less prescribed, and appear to be largely a continuation and follow-up of second year activities.

V. Populations Served by C-LERN and SB 65 Schools: Caveats on School Samples & Measures of Performance

Both the C-LERN and SB 65 programs are intended to improve school holding power and academic performance among "high risk" students in schools serving lower socio-economic populations. As implemented to date, however, the programs serve markedly different populations. SB 65 programs operate in high schools which average approximately 55 percent Hispanic students. Slightly more than 11 percent of SB 65 high school students are Afro-American, while 20 percent are white. In sharp contrast, C-LERN programs operate in high schools which have a percentage of Afro-American students almost four times higher than in SB 65 schools. In these schools, the ethnic composition is almost 39 percent Afro American, 35 percent Hispanic and 6 percent white.

While the precise operational definition of "at risk" varies in each district, a recognized "common set of characteristics" has been defined as being a valid, early warning sign of students who are likely to drop out prior to completion of their high school education. Factors which may be seen as identifying a child as "at risk" include uneven attendance and

TABLE V.1
1988-89 Comparison of Ethnicity
Statewide, SB 65 & C-LERN Schools

Ethnic Group	Statewide Average	SB 65 Schools	C-LERN Schools	Combined C-LERN-SB 65
Hispanic	30.7%	52.5%	34.5%	34.5%
White	49.2	18.3	6.3	6.3
Afro-American	9.0	14.9	38.5	38.4
Asian	7.6	9.8	11.6	11.6
Filipino	2.2	3.1	7.6	7.6
Indian/Alaskan	.8	1.0	.8	.8
Pacific Islander	.5	.5	.8	.8
	100.%	100.%	100.%	100.%
HS Students Served		81,158.	12,793.	12,355.

tardiness, poor work habits, failing or unsatisfactory grades, and in-school behavior problems. These, in turn, are seen as related to problems such as early marriage or pregnancy, financial need, violent or dysfunctional family conditions, substance abuse, or violent and/or criminal behavior. Ideally, in addition to decreasing dropout rates, both the C-LERN and SB 65 programs address these corollary factors in an effective and meaningful fashion.[14]

Unfortunately, uniform data on attendance, work habits and in-school behavior are not available for the "at risk" population for each school. Program effectiveness must be assessed, therefore, by using dropout figures -- and their changes over time -- as one of the few measures obtainable to describe program outcome.

Other concerns center on the comparison schools used in this analysis. The 50 SB 65 high schools were those which in 1985-6 were judged by the State Department of Education to be the "most at risk" group of high schools in the state. The comparative group of 19 C-LERN high schools are also 'self-recruited', and are roughly comparable to SB 65 schools in terms of their socio-economic ranking (SES ranking). Virtually all schools represented in the comparison are in the bottom quartile of California high schools in the fourteen factors used by the Department to assess SES rank. SB 65 schools have an "average" SES ranking of 119, compared to a slightly lower average of 106 for C-LERN schools.

Eight schools included in the sample have both SB 65 and C-LERN programs in operation. While separated analytically in the figures which follow, these schools also differ significantly from either "straight" SB 65 or C-LERN schools in that they tend to be near the very bottom of the SES ranking scale: the SES ranking for these schools averaging 51. These schools form the third comparison group; one which permits examination of the impact on dropout rates of both the SB 65 and C-LERN programs.

A final comparison group included in the analysis are those high schools which were

those judged by the Department of Education as being the "second most at risk" group of high schools in the state. These "Cycle II" schools applied for and were chosen for SB 65 Program participation, but did not receive funding due to elimination of implementation funding by the Governor. While having a slightly higher average SES ranking (201), Cycle II schools provide a useful "control" group since they had neither C-LERN or SB 65 programs during the analysis period. [15]

TABLE V.2
SES Ranking & Number of School
In SB 65, C-LERN & Comparison Groups

	SB 65 Schools	Cycle II Schools	C-LERN Schools	Combined C-LERN-SB 65
Average SES Ranking	119.	201.	106.	51.
Number of Schools	42.	44.	11.	8.
10th-12th Graders	59,909.	56,231.	8,696.	8,630.

In examining the performance of all programs it is important to look at both the overall performance and the performance of programs within specific ethnic groups. In addition, since both dropout rates and reasons for leaving school vary widely between different gender groups, it is useful to further separate aggregate performance data into both ethnic and gender groupings. As in the case of the earlier SRA Associates' report on SB 65, different programs appear to have had differential effects at different grade levels. Dropout rates for tenth grade Pacific Islander females increased dramatically between 1987 and 1989, for example, while twelfth grade dropouts for the same ethnic/gender group decreased in an equally dramatic fashion. Whether these changes are due to programmatic or "cohort" factors can not be examined given the limitations of this analysis. The data for each of these groups, however, are presented below, along with an examination of change rates for each group during the entire three year period.

The remainder of this section of the paper examines performance within each of 8 major ethnic/gender groupings at each of the three grade levels for which data is available. (Ethnic groups include Hispanic, Afro-American, Asian and White). While data is presented on each level, two measures of performance and "success" which appear most critical are: 1) the three year dropout rate for those who should have graduated in 1988-89, and 2) the rate of change in twelfth grade dropouts between 1986-87 and 1988-89. The rational behind the second measure is obvious. The SB 65 program began in 1986-87. C-LERN began in many schools the following year. If the program is successful for a particular ethnic/gender group, by 1988-89 there should be measurable differences in dropout rates for twelfth graders between the 1986-87 and 1988-89 period. Given the timing of implementation and start up, students in the twelfth grade in 1986-87 could not have received much benefit from the Motivation and Maintenance Program. The 1988-89 cohort, in contrast, had at least a possibility of benefiting from the program during the three year period. If these programs have been successful in dropout prevention, it is

reasonable to expect that there will be a net decrease in twelfth grade dropout rates between 1986-87 and 1988-89.

The focus on the first measure of performance also requires a bit of explanation. Since both C-LERN and SB 65 programs are concerned with "motivation and maintenance" -- attempting to get the "at risk" student to remain in school as long as possible -- it is most reasonable to assess their performance in examining the rate over the entire period. At the time of SB 65's implementation in 1986-87 those who should have graduated in 1988-89 were enrolled in tenth grade. In 1988-89 these students were, or should have been, high school seniors. By creating a measure which aggregates tenth grade dropout rates in 1986-87, with eleventh grade dropout rates in 1987-88 and twelfth grade dropout rates in 1988-89, a composite measure of school performance is produced which measures aggregate performance over time.

VI. Impact of C-LERN & SB 65 Programs On Dropout Rates:

A comparison of the impact of the C-LERN and SB 65 programs produces striking contrasts. [16] While, in general, the SB 65 program has had a positive impact on decreasing the dropout rate, C-LERN schools were less successful in reducing dropout rates. Among 12th graders, for example, both SB 65 and C-LERN programs did better than either the comparison group of schools without programs or schools which had both a C-LERN and an SB 65 program. These latter, in fact, did dramatically worst among 12th graders, where the dropout rate rose over 13 percentage points. [17]

Table VI.1
Comparison of Change in 12th Grade
Drop-out Rates - C-LERN, SB 65 & Other Programs

Program Type:	SB-65	Cycle-2	C-LERN	C-LERN/SB65
All Ethnic Groups				
Both Genders	- .92	4.18	.84	13.12
Hispanic				
Female	- .04	2.01	3.93	6.64
Male	- .28	5.83	3.00	10.26
Afro-American				
Female	4.83	7.95	-1.43	3.50
Male	1.53	14.11	-2.24	18.60
White				
Female	-4.74	- .75	.84	18.51
Male	-3.76	1.01	1.15	-13.11
Asian				
Female	-1.43	1.98	-.61	4.31
Male	-1.97	4.39	.58	5.20

Among 10th and 11th graders C-LERN was out performed by all other schools. Interestingly, among 11th graders the combined C-LERN/SB 65 schools show the greatest improvement (-.88 percentage points), followed by SB 65 schools (-.36 percentage points), the control group (+.62). C-LERN schools showed an increase in 11th grade dropouts of 5.86 percentage points. C-LERN 10th graders show a 4.3 percentage point increase in their dropout rates since 1987, while all other programs showed a decrease.

Table VI.2
Changes in Dropout Rates
Between 1987 and 1989
C-LERN, SB65 and Other Programs

	SB 65	Cycle II	C-LERN	Combined
10th Grade	-1.27	-3.54	+4.30	-2.17
11th Grade	- .36	+ .6	+5.86	-.88
12th Grade	- .92	+4.18	+ .84	+13.12

While these figures are an accurate reflection of the programs' general impact, overall dropout rates show only one aspect of program performance. Dropout rates, as a wide variety of other studies have shown, vary widely among various ethnic and gender groups. In California, for example, the dropout rate among Hispanics and Afro-Americans is roughly twice that of whites, while the dropout rate of Pacific Islanders is almost three times that of Asians. Schools which differ in ethnic composition, therefore, are likely to differ in terms of dropout rates -- even if all other factors such as program effort or success are held constant. As indicated at the outset, C-LERN programs tend to be in schools with a higher than average number of Afro-American students, while SB 65 school serve populations with high numbers of students of Hispanic background. A comparison of these programs, therefore, must also examine the relative performance within each ethnic group. The sections attempt to assess the relative impact of the C-LERN and SB 65 programs among each of eight ethnic/gender groupings: Hispanic, Afro-American, Asian and White boys and girls. Given relatively small numbers of American Indians, Filipinos and Pacific Islanders involved in the C-LERN program, program performance for these groups is not specifically addressed. Summary tables for these groups are included, however, as an Appendix to this report.

Hispanic Males

Hispanic males are the largest single ethnic group within SB 65 schools, comprising 28.6 percent of students in SB 65 programs, compared to 17.8 percent in C-LERN and combination schools and 19.4 percent in the comparison Cycle II schools.

Among Hispanic males, SB 65 was the most successful program in reducing dropouts at all grade levels. While combined C-LERN/SB 65 programs were successful among tenth and eleventh graders, C-LERN schools generally were the least successful, with dropout rates increasing at all grade levels.

Table VI.3
Changes in Dropout Rates
Between 1987 and 1989
C-LERN, SB65 and Other Programs
Hispanic Males

	SB 65	Cycle	C-LERN	Combined
10th Grade	-0.47	-2.82	10.43	-2.63
11th Grade	-0.57	0.21	3.87	-13.08
12th Grade	-0.28	5.83	3.00	-10.26
Three Year Combined Rate: 10th to 12th	39.9	43.7	45.0	58.2

Hispanic Females

Hispanic females are also well represented in SB 65 programs. Over one-quarter (26.8 percent) of students in SB 65 schools are Hispanic girls. This group comprises 18 percent of the enrollment in Cycle II schools and slightly over 16 percent of the enrollment in both C-LERN and combination C-LERN/SB 65 schools.

For these students, as well as their male counterparts, participation by their high schools in the C-LERN program has not yet impacted dropout rates. SB 65 programs showed a small decrease in dropout rates (-.04 percentage point) among 12th grade Hispanic girls. All other schools showed an increase in this target group: Schools without any program showed an increase of 2 percentage points, C-LERN schools increased almost 4 points, while C-LERN/SB 65 showed a 6.6 percentage point rise.

In the 10th and 11th grades, the straight C-LERN schools also performed poorly. While dropout for this group in SB 65 program schools increased by .6 percentage points, in C-LERN schools it rose by over 10 points (10.2). Interesting, in combined C-LERN/SB 65 schools, the dropout rates for 10th and 11th grades declined significantly; 4 percentage points for 10th grade and almost 6 for 11th.

Table VI.4
Changes in Dropout Rates
Between 1987 and 1989
C-LERN, SB65 and Other Programs
Hispanic Females

	SB 65	Cycle	C-LERN	Combined
10th Grade	-0.02	-2.81	4.54	-4.08
11th Grade	0.64	-1.17	10.15	-5.91
12th Grade	-0.04	2.01	3.92	6.64

Three Year Combined Rate:				
10th to 12th	32.8	34.5	39.7	46.6

Afro-American Males

Afro-American males are among the largest single ethnic group within C-LERN schools, comprising 17.7 percent of students in C-LERN programs, compared to 5.6 percent in SB 65 schools and 8.4 percent in Cycle II schools. In ethnic and gender terms, the eight combination schools looked almost identical with the eleven C-LERN schools.

Among 12th graders, C-LERN program schools were generally more effective in reducing dropout levels. Schools without any programs saw 12th grade dropouts increase 14 percentage points over the 1987 to 1989 period. SB 65 schools saw a smaller, 1.5 percentage point increase, while C-LERN schools recorded a 2.2 percentage point decline. Disturbingly, C-LERN/SB 65 schools saw an increase even higher than the statewide level; among 12th graders this rate grew by 18.6 percentage points during this period.

10th grade Afro-american male dropout rates were among those groups not positively affected by SB 65. While the rates at Cycle II schools declined by almost 3 percentage points (2.92), SB 65 programs saw a rise of 4.2 points. C-LERN, however, had a rise of almost 8 percentage points (7.74). Neither C-LERN nor SB 65 was especially effective in dealing with 11th grade dropout rate: the rate increased 6 percentage points in SB 65 schools and almost 11 percent in C-LERN schools.

Table VI.5
Changes in Dropout Rates
Between 1987 and 1989
C-LERN, SB65 and Other Programs
Afro-American Males

	SB 65	Cycle	C-LERN	Combined
10th Grade	4.21	-2.92	7.74	2.48
11th Grade	6.01	5.10	10.91	6.60
12th Grade	1.53	14.11	-2.24	18.60
Three Year Combined Rate:				
10th to 12th	55.7	65.4	34.5	55.7

Afro-American Female

Slightly more than 20 percent of students enrolled in both C-LERN and the C-LERN/SB 65 high schools are Afro-American females. This contrasts with about 9.1 percent in the

Cycle II comparison group and 5.9 percent in SB 65 high schools.

As with Afro-American males, C-LERN has its greatest success in dropout reduction among 12th graders. Schools with neither the SB 65 or C-LERN program saw dropout rates increase among this group by almost 8 percentage points. In SB 65 schools this increase was slowed to 4.8 points, while in C-LERN/SB 65 schools it slowed further to 3.5 percentage points. In C-LERN schools, however, the rate decreased by 1.4 percentage points.

Among 10th and 11th graders, however, C-LERN schools did worst of any groups; growing by almost 6 percentage points in 10th grade while Cycle II, SB 65 and combination schools decreased. At the 11th grade level, the dropout rate for Afro-American females increased by over 7 percentage points; compared to a 4.8 percentage point increase at schools with no program and a 4.5 point increase among SB 65 schools. Among 11th graders in this group, combination schools performed best, slowing the rise to 1.4 percentage points during the 1987 to 1989 period.

Table VI.6
Changes in Dropout Rates
Between 1987 and 1989
C-LERN, SB65 and Other Programs
Afro-American Females

	SB 65	Cycle II	C-LERN	Combined
10th Grade	-2.09	-7.50	5.82	-3.69
11th Grade	4.48	4.82	7.25	1.36
12th Grade	4.83	7.95	-1.43	3.50
Three Year Combined Rate: 10th to 12th	46.8	49.9	19.6	38.3

White Males

Approximately 10.2 percent of students in SB 65 schools are white males, compared to 16.2 percent in Cycle II schools and only 3.3 percent in both C-LERN and C-LERN/SB 65 combination schools.

For this group, at all grade levels, schools with an SB 65 program appear to be most successful in cutting the dropout rate. C-LERN appears to be the least effective, including schools which have no program in operation. For 12th graders, SB 65 schools showed a net decrease across all grade levels, ranging from 4.4 percentage points in 10th grade, 5.3 percentage points in 11th grade, and 3.8 in 12th grade. C-LERN schools, in contrast, showed a 1.5 percentage point increase in grade ten, a .08 decrease in grade eleven, and a 1.15 percentage point increase in grade 12.

With the exception of 10th grade, which showed an increase of 3.8 percentage points, combined C-LERN/SB 65 schools did best in decreasing dropout rates. The rate for white males in both the 11th and 12th grades dropped over 13 percentage points over the 1987 to 1989 period.

Table VI.7
Changes in Dropout Rates
Between 1987 and 1989
C-LERN, SB65 and Other Programs
Anglo Males

	SB 65	Cycle	C-LERN	Combined
10th Grade	-4.37	-3.24	1.50	3.84
11th Grade	-5.33	-0.41	-0.08	-13.08
12th Grade	-3.76	1.01	1.15	-13.11
Three Year Combined Rate:				
10th to 12th	42.2	57.0	66.3	19.1

White Females

The proportion of White females in C-LERN and C-LERN/SB 65 schools approximates 2.9 percent, compared to 9.9 percent in SB 65 and 15.6 percent in Cycle II schools. For this group of students, schools with SB 65 programs consistently show the greatest improvement in dropout rates, while those with C-LERN or C-LERN/SB 65 programs show the least.

Among 12th grade white girls enrolled in SB 65 schools dropout rates decreased 4.7 percentage points between 1987 and 1989. This contrasted with a more modest decrease (.75 percentage points) in Cycle II schools and a .84 point increase in C-LERN schools. Schools with both a C-LERN and an SB 65 program in operation recorded an increase of over 18.5 percentage points during the same period.

Table VI.8
Changes in Dropout Rates
Between 1987 and 1989
C-LERN, SB65 and Other Programs
White Females

	SB 65	Cycle II	C-LERN	Combined
10th Grade	-6.08	-3.40	2.64	7.45
11th Grade	-3.24	-0.75	-0.85	-2.88
12th Grade	-4.74	-0.75	0.84	18.51
Three Year Combined Rate:				
10th to 12th	27.1	23.0	19.5	45.8

For both 10th and 11th graders the pattern was similar. SB 65 programs showed a 6 percentage point improvement in 10th grade and a 3.2 percentage point improvement in the 11th grade. Schools with no program showed a decrease of 3.4 and .75 percentage points respectively, while in C-LERN schools, 11th grade dropout rates decreased .85 points and 12th grade increased .84 percentage points.

Asian Males

Asian students in California have the lowest dropout rate of any ethnic grouping. While males from this group represent about 7.5 percent of the total high school population in the state, Asian male students in the group of comparison schools is significantly less. Just over 5.1 percent of students enrolled in SB 65 schools are Asian males, compared to 6 percent in both C-LERN and C-LERN/SB 65 schools, and 4.5 percent in Cycle II institutions.

Among this group of students, schools with SB 65 programs showed a decrease in dropout rates at all grade levels. C-LERN schools were less successful in the 10th and 12th grades, and more successful than SB 65 schools in reducing 11th grade dropout rates. With the exception of 10th grade, both programs were more successful than comparison Cycle II schools in reducing dropout rates. Interestingly, however, the 12th grade rate in combination schools climbed 5.2 percentage points.

Table VI.9
Changes in Dropout Rates
Between 1987 and 1989
C-LERN, SB65 and Other Programs
Asian Males

	SB 65	Cycle	C-LERN	Combined
10th Grade	-1.89	-5.87	-0.39	-1.28
11th Grade	-2.96	1.15	-4.83	-0.22
12th Grade	-1.97	4.39	0.58	5.20
Three Year Combined Rate: 10th to 12th	25.3	32.6	20.2	29.8

Asian Females

The percentage of Asian female students in comparison schools is significantly lower than statewide averages. Approximately 4.3 percent of students enrolled in SB 65 schools are Asian females, compared to 5. 5 percent in both C-LERN and C-LERN/SB 65 schools, and 3.7 percent in Cycle II institutions.

Among these students, who have the lowest dropout rate of any ethnic-gender grouping,

both C-LERN and SB 65 schools were successful in reducing dropout rates further. As elsewhere, however, success differed by grade level. With 12th graders, SB 65 schools were most successful in reducing dropouts (-1.4 percentage points), followed by C-LERN (- .61), Cycle II (+1.98) and combined C-LERN/SB 65 programs (+4.31).

For 10th grade students, schools with SB 65 programs were also more effective than any of the others. Cycle II schools decreased their dropout rate among this group 2.8 percentage points, while C-LERN schools decreased it 2.5 points. Schools with a combined C-LERN/SB 65 program decreased the dropout rate among 10th graders 2.1 percentage points. Among 11th graders, SB 65 was the least effective program -- showing virtually no change (.1). For this group schools with a combined C-LERN/SB 65 program showed a decrease of 4.4 percentage points, compared with a decrease of 3.0 for C-LERN and 1.2 for Cycle II schools.

Table VI.10
Changes in Dropout Rates
Between 1987 and 1989
C-LERN, SB65 and Other Programs
Asian Females

	SB 65	Cycle	C-LERN	Combined
10th Grade	-3.45	-2.83	-2.51	-2.09
11th Grade	0.19	-1.16	-3.04	-4.36
12th Grade	-1.43	1.98	-0.61	4.31
Three Year Combined Rate: 10th to 12th	23.2	23.9	10.3	19.4

IV. Conclusions and Observations

Evident from the forgoing is difficulty in providing a single measure of program success for either SB 65 or C-LERN schools. While this preliminary analysis has provided a number of measures of dropout program effectiveness, no single measure adequately reflects differential program impact among all ethnic/gender groups. As noted at the outset, however, the overall success of some schools in increasing their holding power and reducing dropouts is striking. During the years between 1987 and 1989, schools with funded SB-65 programs showed a decline in overall dropout rates. The total dropout rate for these school in grades ten through twelve declined from approximately 13.3 percent to 10.9 percent. This decline must be contrasted to a rise in the dropout rate in Cycle II schools during the same period. For these schools, which did not receive SB 65 funding, the dropout rate rose from 10.8 percent in 1987 to 12 percent in 1989. C-LERN schools during the same period rose a more modest .84 percentage points, from 12.55 percent in 1987 to 13.4 percent in 1989.

As stressed throughout this report, a second way to evaluate the programs' overall impact is to look at the rates of change over the past three years. In particular, for reasons specified earlier, the rate of change among 12th grader seems the most critical measure. Examining each of these measures in a summary fashion -- for all ethnic groups -- again shows that both C-LERN and SB 65 schools performed better than comparable Cycle II institutions, but that C-LERN schools were consistently outperformed by those with SB 65 programs. There is a significant caveat to this finding. Schools with C-LERN programs are most successful among Afro-American students. If success rates are examined by ethnic group, C-LERN's success becomes much more specific and limited. While among Afro-American students C-LERN appears to be effective, it is not particularly effective for other groups of students. Among Hispanics, there was only a .8 percentage point difference between schools without a program and those with C-LERN. In the cases of White students, C-LERN schools showed a 1.1 percentage point increase in dropouts, compared to a fall of 1.8 points among schools without programs and 4.2 percentage points among SB 65 schools.

Table VI.1
Comparison of Change in 12th Grade
Drop-out Rates - C-LERN, SB 65 & Other Programs

Program Type:	SB-65	Cycle-2	C-LERN	C-LERN/SB65
All Ethnic Groups Both Genders	- .92	4.18	.84	13.12
Hispanic	- .2	+3.8	+3.0	+9.0
Afro-American	+3.1	+10.8	-1.0	+9.9
White	-4.2	-1.8	+1.1	+16.9
Asian	-1.7	+3.1	- .1	+4.8

As noted at the outset, the apparent failure of schools which have instituted both C-LERN and SB 65 programs is most disturbing. Dropout rates among 12th graders rose in every major ethnic group (except Afro-Americans) at a significantly higher rate than in any other schools. While somewhat different for other grade levels, the observation holds generally true across all levels. For Hispanics the rate of increase for 12th graders was three times that for either C-LERN or for schools without any program. Among Whites, the rate increased by almost 17 percentage points; this in the face of a 1.8 percentage point drop in the control group. For Afro-Americans the rate at combination C-LERN/SB 65 schools was roughly comparable to the increase in schools without programs --9.9 percentage points as compared to the 10.8 percentage points.

The questions posed by this data is why schools with combination C-LERN and SB 65 programs are experiencing such significant problems in terms of changes in dropout rates. While the precise answer is probably beyond the scope of this study, a few tentative suggestions might be advanced. First, virtually all of the eight schools which are included

in this group have experienced major administrative shift during the past 24 months. Several are in districts with new superintendents; others have had principals fired or have experienced other administrative change. Many of these administrative changes were seen by school level personnel as the direct consequence of the C-LERN process and activities. While it is difficult to point with certainty to these administrative changes as the cause of the failure to improve dropout rates, the correspondence between administrative change and unfavorable program outcome is striking.

Another -- more speculative -- explanation may reside in our earlier observation that C-LERN and SB 65 programs employ fundamentally different strategies in attempting to implement school reform. SB 65, in establishing an "advocate" position for "at risk youth" in the school hierarchy has created a sort of "pressure group" within the school culture. Whether implicitly or explicitly, the Outreach Consultant serves to articulate the needs of high risk students in a bureaucratic and organizational setting where may be focused more routinely on higher achieving groups. Teachers, for example, in many of the schools included in the SB 65 study, routinely "pushed out" students with low scores or behavior problems. Within the cultures at these schools, "better" teachers -- or those with more "political clout" "didn't have to deal with problem students". The outreach consultant, while not changing this situation, became the "squeaking wheel" constantly redrawing attention to the "at risk" population by both teachers and administrators. The school hierarchy, both social and administrative, appears to have accommodated this newly institutionalized "pressure point" and the some change appears to have occurred.

In contrast, as observed earlier, the C-LERN process is an attempt to directly change the organizational culture of the school. By forcing school employees to 'reconceptualize' their goals, roles and inter-relationships, the entire school culture changes, and the hierarchical structure of the school becomes much more fluid and (often) unstable. The outreach consultant in this situation still may be an "advocate", but now has much less structure to "push against", so program effectiveness becomes much more problematic. It is difficult, one might suggest, to act as a "lobbyist" during a revolution: especially one where the distinction between winners and losers, or revolutionaries and loyalists, is unclear. While part of the failure of combination C-LERN/SB 65 schools to improve their dropout rates may be due to the fact that these schools (with their low SES ranking and high dropout rates) have failed administratively, it also appears likely -- from interviews and survey responses -- that the organizational change process begun, augmented or accelerated by C-LERN may be unfinished or "out of control". In this situation, successful implementation of a dropout prevention program is unlikely.

Concluding Comments:

To restate an earlier caveat, the intent of this paper was not to provide a rigorous overall "evaluation" of either the SB 65 or C-LERN programs. As a preliminary examination and speculation about the causes and implications of differences in aggregate outcomes, however, the questions raised here constitute an increasingly important research agenda both for our review and analysis of California's dropout prevention and recovery programs and for the broader educational research community. While there have been a number of important efforts to understand the causes and consequences of dropping out,

Mann's 1986 call [18] for a coalition of researchers, policy makers and practitioners has been only partially heeded. As Natriello, Pallas et'al observe in their "stock-taking" on dropout research [19] there is still a developing "agenda" on what research is needed, but it is clear that further research is required to integrate and expand our understanding of "school processes" as these affect or contribute to the dropout problem. As they acknowledge, however, this advocacy provides "very little focus and direction...(as) school processes encompass a wide variety of phenomena." [20]

Based upon the preliminary data presented here, the impact of organizational factors on dropout rates and school holding power seems apparent. What remains undone is an analysis, at the school site and individual actor level, which examines more closely the impact of structural, attitudinal and behavioral characteristics on overall dropout measures. The SB 65 Motivation and Maintenance Program appears to be a successful program which has both built upon and provided innovative new approaches to addressing the problems of dropouts in high risk schools. What remains for us, during the next three years of data collect and research activity, is to establish both why the program has worked and what understandings can be developed in terms of our view of the impact of school culture on programmatic effect.

1. Berlin, George and Andrew Sum, Toward a More Perfect Union: Basic Skills, Poor Families and Our Economic Future, Occasional Paper Number 3, Ford Foundation Project on Social Welfare and the American Future, Ford Foundation, New York, 1988, Page 24.

2. James Fallows, "Gradgrinds Heirs", Atlantic Monthly, March, 1987 Page 19.

3. Larry Cuban, among others, has observed that reform is interative process, with various proposals, approaches and methodolgies continually "reappearing" in what have almost become "predicable cycles" of educational reform and restructure. Cuban, Larry "Reforming Again, Again and Again", Educational Researcher, Volumne 19, Number1, January-February, 1990, Page 3-7.

4.Figures derived from Sherman, Joel D., Dropping Out of School Volume II: Promising Strategies and Practices in Dropout Prevention, Pelavin Associates Inc, Prepared for Office of Planning, Budget, and Evaluation. USOE, December, 1987.

5. See SRA Associates,"Final Evaluation Report of the SB 65 Dropout Recovery Programs: Educational Clinics and Alternative Education and Work Centers", Report submitted to the California State Department of Education, SRA Associates, Sebastopol, California, December, 1988 (707) 829-8567.

6. The results presented here must be treated as highly preliminary for several reasons. Most important is the fact that the primary outcome measure (dropout rate) appears to be badly flawed in terms of its accuracy and consistency. In the first two years that the data was collected, districts apparently used a variety of methodologies to assess and record the number of dropouts. The result is that much of the change in dropout rates between 1986-87 and 1988-89 (the last year for which data was available during the development of this paper) seems likely to be due, in part, to changes in collection methodology. More recent data (1988-89 forward) is likely to be more accurate and consistent; and hence provide more statistically reliable results for later reports. Equally important, data collection activities are scheduled over the next 28 months, and the project design anticipates measuring changes and outcomes over that period.

7. SRA Associates, Ibid.

8. Dixon, Donald, "Review and Analysis of SB65 Motivation and Maintenance Programs: Effectiveness of Dropout Reduction Programs in California Schools", SRA Associates, Sebastopol, California, December, 1990.

9. While Section 54721 of the Education Code defines an outreach consultant as "a person who is knowledgeable about school programs and operations, community agencies and resources, and business and employment, and who is capable of coordinating these systems and resources to support the needs of high risk pupils", it does not specify any educational, certification or experience requirements. (SDE,"Report to the Legislature:School Based Motivation and Maintenance Program", 1987, Page 11).

In the Department of Education's 1987 report on the SB 65 programs, it found that approximately 57 percent of outreach consultants were Certificated personnel, 36 percent classified, and 7 percent were neither. 55 percent reported that the position they "most recently held" prior to becoming an outreach consultant was either that of "teacher or counselor".

10. In the interests of completeness, it should be noted that SB 65 also established two programs for dropout recovery. Educational Clinics, which are operated by either private providers or by school districts, are funded on a five-dollar-an-hour basis and are a time-limited program (225 hours) whose goal is to return students to school or to place them in a job. The Alternative Education and Work Centers are also dropout recovery programs. They differ from the Clinics in that they are funded only with a planning grant and $40,000 (later reduced to $28,000) for an outreach consultant. Assessment of the impact of these programs is currently underway.

Appropriations for SB 65 Dropout Programs
(in millions)

Year	Dropout Clinics	Alternative Education & Work Centers	Motivation & Maintenance Progams	Dropout Prevention & Recovery Models
1985-86	1.0	.4	1.0	.4
1986-87	1.9	2.0	9.0	.35
1987-88	1.9	2.0	8.0	.35
1988-89	1.9	2.0	8.0	.35
1989-90	1.6	1.4	8.0	.35
1990-91*	1.6	1.4	8.0	.35

*Governor's Proposed budget, 1990-91

11. Sherman, Op Cit., Page x-xiii,61-74.

12. Programs falling under the scope of AB 777 are School Improvement, Economic Impact Aid, Miller-Unruh Reading, GATE, School Site Special Education, Conservation Education, School Staff Development programs, Classroom Instructional TV, and Career Guidance Centers.

13. "Study of the California Local Educational Reform Network: C-Lern", Executive Planning & Analysis Office. California State Department of Education, April, 1990.

14. Data on the number of students who would be classified as "high risk" is unavailable for C-LERN schools. In the SB 65 schools, however, approximately 14 percent of the population are defined as being "at risk". Starting at about 15 percent of the early grades (K-3), the percentage climbs to its highest point in grades 4 through 6 (18.1%) and progressively falls as students move into the upper grades. The lowest proportion of "at risk" students is reported in the 11th and 12th grades (7.2%); largely, in the words of one outreach consultant, because

"most of those at risk have already left the system". In all, 18,171 students are being served by the SB 65 program; a number up one-third from the 13,690 students reported as being served in 1986-87.

TABLE a1.
Percentage of Targeted "High Risk"
Students as a Proportion of SB 65 School Enrollment

Grade Level:	Number Enrolled	Number Targeted	Percentage of Total Enrollment
Kindergarten-3rd	31,048.	4,581.	14.8%
4th & 5th	16,755.	3,029.	18.1%
6th through 8th	24,000.	4,261.	17.8%
9th & 10th	32,708.	4,475.	13.7%
11th & 12th	25,520.	1,826.	7.2%
Total	131,031.	18,171.	13.97%

15. The use of "Cycle II schools" as a control group makes an assumption that these schools, which received approval but not funding for an SB 65 Motivation and Maintenance Program were not "tainted" by that experience. While one could raise issue by suggesting that these schools aspirations may have been raised and dashed by receiving approval, planning money ($2,000) and then being denied funding, the fact that the amounts were relatively small, that relatively few school site staff were involved, and that the events occurred in 1986 seems to limit the objection.

16. A major portion of this analysis was developed as part of an SRA Associates' report comparing the impact of SB 65 and C-LERN programs on dropout rates in selected California high schools. This report, submitted February, 1990 to the California State Department of Education, is included as part of the "Study of the California Local Educational Reform Network" cited above.

17. The figures below rely upon a measure of change in dropout rate, rather than a presentation of actual dropout rates in percentages. Given relatively similar starting rates for each school, these measures provide the most useful comparison between programs. It is clearly recognized, however, that change rates are a necessary simplification. To change the dropout rate from 50 percent to 45 percent, for example, is not the same as a change from 10 percent to five percent. It is neither the same when considering the proportion of students affected nor when one considers the difficulty of achieving the two changes in rate.

18. Mann, Dale, "Can We Help Dropouts? Thinking about the Undoable", in Natriello, Gary (Ed) School Dropouts: Patterns and Policies, Teachers College Press, NY, 1986

19. Natriello, Gary, Arron M. Pallas and Edward L. McDill, "Taking Stock" Renewing Our Research Agenda on the Causes and Consequences of Dropping Out", in Natriello,(Ed) School Dropouts, Op.Cit.

20. Ibid, Page 172