K-12 POLICY

A Report Card on District Achievement:

How Low-income, African-American, and Latino Students Fare in California School Districts

The Education Trust–West

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In this report, The Education Trust—West grades the 146 largest unified school districts in California on four key indicators of student performance to see how well they are serving their African-American, Latino, and low-income students. While most districts in California earn Cs and Ds on these indicators, some districts prove that more is possible. The grades and rankings in this report surface examples of higher-poverty districts that are achieving strong results, recording rapid gains in achievement, preventing large gaps from separating student subgroups, and preparing students for college eligibility. These districts and their results are cause for hope and can provide lessons for local, district, and state education leaders.

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BY LINDSEY STUART AND CARRIE HAHNEL

Sufficient evidence and proof points make it clear: low-income students and students of color can achieve at high levels when they are taught at high levels. Indeed, some California schools are proving that every single day. When we look at California's system as a whole, though, it is equally clear that most schools are not achieving anywhere near that level of success. Low performance and stubborn achievement gaps continue to plague our schools. Education leaders and policymakers across California, and throughout the nation, are painfully aware of these statistics, often decrying the stubborn gaps that separate students of color and low-income students from other students.

Over the last two decades, these same leaders have focused their attention on trying to bring about school improvements. They have measured school performance and progress toward proficiency goals, spent billions of dollars on reforms, and even threatened sanctions should schools fail. The language associated with federal and state accountability systems, from "schools in need of improvement" to the school-level "statewide API ranking," has become familiar to educators and the general public.

This focus on schools, while essential, ignores an important reality. Most schools leaders work in school districts. Many of the levers of change at the school level are controlled by district leaders, who make critical decisions regarding staffing and resources that can either tie the hands of promising school leaders, or free those same leaders to achieve remarkable results. District leaders also provide the vital strategic leadership necessary to improve teaching and learning at the school and classroom levels. With districts so often in the driver's seat when it comes to creating the conditions for reform, the lack of attention to their relative performance in improving the achievement of poor students and students of color is troubling.

To heighten visibility into the district's role, this report focuses on how well the state's large, unified districts are impacting the achievement of low-income, African-American, and Latino students, who comprise a large majority of California's children. Using primarily the Academic Performance Index (API), the central component of California's accountability system, we grade and rank districts on multiple measures, including: overall performance, improvement over a five-year period, the size of achievement gaps, and college-ready graduation rates.

Most California districts receive Cs and Ds on our rubric, suggesting that they are inadequately serving low-income students and students of color. In a minority-majority state like California, where Latino and low-income students comprise more than half of the student population, these statistics are downright dangerous to the state's future prosperity.

At the same time, most districts score well on at least one measure, even if they have room for improvement on others. Some districts prove that even more is possible, scoring well across a number of indicators. There are districts that boast high scores, substantial improvement, small achievement gaps, and relatively high college-readiness rates—and not just for their more affluent and white populations, but for low-income students and students of color. We highlight the promising practices of three of these districts and close with recommendations for how state and local education leaders and communities can use this data to promote more equitable educational outcomes for California students.

NO SINGLE INDICATOR ADEQUATELY DESCRIBES HOW A DISTRICT PERFORMS

Multiple measures of student achievement are needed to understand how well a district's low-income students and students of color are faring academically. We focus our analysis on four indicators:

The **PERFORMANCE** indicator tells us how well a district's low-income students (defined as those eligible for free or reduced-price meals) and students of color* score on state tests, as measured by their respective API scores.

The **IMPROVEMENT** indicator tells us how much a district's low-income students and students of color* have improved over a five-year period, as measured by the sum of year-to-year improvement on the API.

The **ACHIEVEMENT GAPS** indicator tells us how Latino and African-American student achievement compares to white student achievement, measured by the size of the API gap between African-American and white students, and between Latino and white students.

The **COLLEGE-READINESS** indicator tells us how many of a district's Latino and African-American students are graduating college-ready, as measured by the rate at which they complete the coursework (known as "A-G") required for admission to University of California (UC) and California State University (CSU) systems.

**The students of color Performance and Improvement indicators are composite figures, weighted by the number of African-American and Latino students tested in the district. For further details about the methodology, see Appendix A.*

Our current state and national accountability frameworks primarily emphasize the first measure: performance. However, accountability for educational equity demands that we also focus on the other three measures. Great district and school leaders ensure that all students are improving, that gaps between groups of students are narrowing, and that all student subgroups have access to and succeed in college-ready courses.

WE DEVELOPED OUR GRADING SYSTEM USING PUBLICLY AVAILABLE DATA

To grade and rank districts on performance, improvement, and achievement gaps, we use the API. To grade and rank districts on college readiness, we look at completion rates for the college-preparatory course sequence known as A-G.

How we grade and rank districts

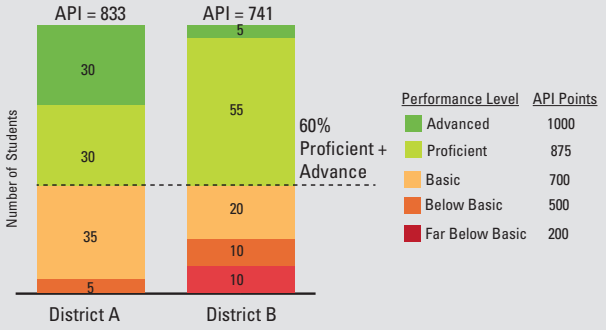
We grade and rank the 146 California unified districts that tested more than 5,000 students in 2009-10. These districts together represent 60 percent of California's student population, with almost four million of the state's more than six million students served by these districts. This subset of districts represents most of the state's African-American students (75 percent), and two-thirds of California's Latino (63 percent) and low-income students (64 percent). We objectively rank districts by sorting them from highest to lowest on each indicator. We then grade districts against a rubric developed according to the procedures described on page three. (See Table 1 for full grading rubric.)

ABOUT THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE INDEX (API)

The API summarizes into a single number, on a scale of 200 to 1,000, the performance of schools, districts, and student subgroups based on scores from multiple standardized tests (including the California Standards Test, or CST, and the California High School Exit Exam, or CAHSEE). The API, while admittedly opaque, allows us to include multiple tests, subjects, performance levels, and grade levels in our analysis. By allotting points to each performance level rather than depending upon a dichotomous division between "Passing" and "Not Passing," the API provides a more nuanced accounting of student performance. For example, the API gives more "credit" for students that reach "Advanced" levels of achievement on the state test, rather than lumping together all students who achieve "Proficient" or "Advanced." Similarly, the API awards fewer points for "Far Below Basic" scores than for "Basic" scores. (See Figure 1.)

In addition, the API places more emphasis on subject areas that are more heavily valued, while also including those that are still important. For instance, the API weighs English Language Arts (ELA) and math most heavily while also awarding some points for performance in science and social studies.

FIGURE 1: Illustration of two districts with very different API scores but the same hypothetical proficient and advanced rate on a California Standards Test



For more information about the API, see the California Department of Education 2009-2010 Academic Performance Index Reports: Information Guide.

For each measure, we benchmark an A grade to targets and/or precedents set forth by the state, whenever applicable. When no such state targets exist, we consider the distribution present among the cohort of large, unified districts, defining 'A' by the levels achieved by the highest ranked districts. In both situations, then, we set grade cutoffs at equal intervals.

TABLE 1: Grading rubric cutoffs

	Performance (2010 Growth API)	Improvement (API Growth 2006-10)	Gaps (API Gap)	College Readiness (A-G Rate)
A	≥800	≥100	≤30	≥45%
B	750-799	75-99	31 to 60	35-44%
C	700-749	50-74	61 to 90	25-34%
D	650-699	25-49	91 to 120	15-24%
F	<650	<25	> 120	<15%

PERFORMANCE: To earn an A, the district must meet or exceed the statewide performance goal of 800 for all schools, districts, and student subgroups. For B through F, we set cuts at equal 50-point intervals: 750-799 for a B, 700-749 for a C, and so on.

IMPROVEMENT: To earn an A, the district must gain at least 100 API points—significantly above California's overall API gain, which was 59 points between 2006 and 2010. For B through F, we set cuts at equal 25-point intervals: 75-99 for a B, 50-74 for a C, and so on.

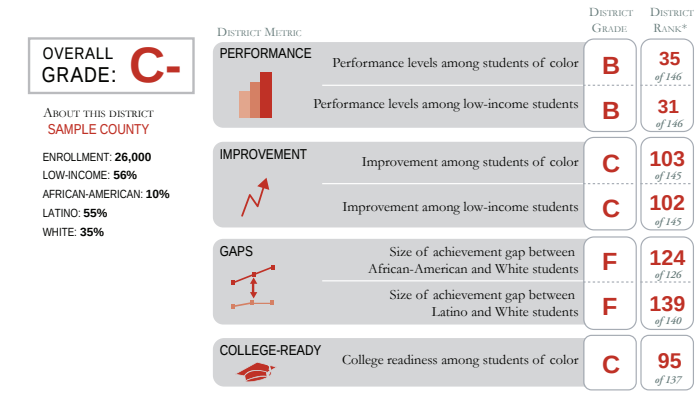
ACHIEVEMENT GAPS: To earn an A, the district must have less than a 30-point gap in achievement between its students of color and white students—something only the top 2 percent of districts have achieved. Grades of B through F were set at equal 30-point intervals: 31-60 for a B, 61-90 for a C, and so on.

COLLEGE READINESS: To earn an A, the district must post an African-American and Latino A-G rate above 45 percent—significantly higher than the state average of 25 percent for these students, but a level reached or exceeded by 4 percent of districts. While we would have liked to set an A grade at a more ambitious level, such as 75 percent or higher, no districts in our sample would have achieved that. For B through F, we set cuts at equal 10-point intervals: 35-44 percent for a B, 25-34 percent for a C, and so on.

Each letter grade is then averaged into an overall grade based on a traditional 4.0-0.0/A-F scale, such that an A is a 4.0, a B is a 3.0, and so on.

See Figure 2 for a sample report card, and Appendix A for further details on our methodology.

FIGURE 2: Sample of report card assigned to each school district



To find how a district measures up, go to http://reportcards.edtrustwest.org.

OVERALL FINDINGS

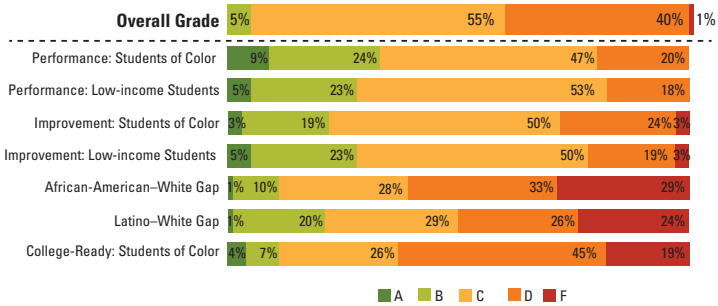
Among the 146 districts that receive grades and rankings, the highest overall grade is a B. However, A grades are found in each indicator category and in high-poverty and low-poverty districts alike, dispelling the myth that poverty and low performance are inexorably connected.

The distribution of A grades varies considerably by indicator (See Figure 3). While 13 districts earn an A for their performance among students of color, only one district earns an A for having small achievement gaps between African-American and white students. In fact, our analysis reveals that troublesome achievement gaps continue to persist across districts, even in those that have high overall performance (e.g., Arcadia Unified in Los Angeles County) and in those that have improved dramatically over the last five years (e.g., San Marcos Unified in San Diego County).

While the unfortunate fact remains that more lower-poverty districts tend to outperform higher-poverty districts on pure outcome measures such as the overall API score, we find that *enrollment and student demographics do not significantly matter when we collectively consider the additional indicators of improvement, gaps, and college readiness.*

Indeed, three of the top ten overall districts serve large numbers of low-income students and students of color. Val

FIGURE 3: Distribution of grades by indicator



SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- Most districts earn an **overall grade** of C or D.
- No district earns an **overall grade** of A, and only one district earns an F.
- 17 percent of districts earn an A on at least one indicator, and 64 percent of districts earn a B on at least one indicator.
- Of all indicators, the fewest As were earned for **achievement gap** sizes: just one district was awarded an A for the size of its African-American-white achievement gap, and two districts earned As for their Latino-white gaps.
- There are more As earned on the **performance** indicator than any other indicator, meaning that a number of districts are meeting or exceeding state targets. In addition, no district earns an F on this indicator.

Verde Unified, Baldwin Park Unified, and Paramount Unified are over 75 percent low-income, and each serves a student population that is over 85 percent African-American or Latino. (See our compendium report, *District Report Cards: Peer Group Rankings* for the full Top 10 list.) Tied for the second highest ranking overall, Val Verde Unified in Riverside County, which serves a diverse student population (comprised of 79 percent low-income students, 15 percent African-American students, and 72 percent Latino students), earns an overall grade of B-. By contrast, many wealthier districts fall to the bottom of our rankings. For example, Palo Alto Unified in Santa Clara County, with 8 percent low-income students, ranks at the bottom with an overall grade of D. Overall, the top district is Lake Elsinore Unified, with an overall grade of B, followed by San Marcos Unified, Clovis Unified, and Val Verde Unified, all with B-s.

ANALYSIS OF DISTRICTS SERVING LOW-INCOME STUDENTS AND STUDENTS OF COLOR, INDICATOR BY INDICATOR

While The Education Trust – West assigned grades and ranks to all of California's 146 large, unified school districts, this report focuses on districts that serve large proportions of low-income, African-American, and Latino students, based on the percentage of students tested. (See Appendix B and http://reportcards.edtrustwest.org for grades and ranks of all 146 districts.) When these higher-need districts rise to the top in our rankings, we believe they deserve a closer look. Therefore, for each indicator, we highlight higher-performing districts whose achievement can provide benchmarks of success for lower-performing districts.

Which districts are the highest performers?

A number of high-poverty districts earn Bs for the performance of their low-income students, scoring well above the state average of 712 for that subgroup. In Table 2, we highlight the five highest performing, high-poverty districts. One of these districts, Alhambra Unified in Los Angeles County, achieved an API score for low-income students that missed the 800-point mark by just one point. Though these top performing districts' low-income students perform well, none receive As because they did not meet the statewide goal of 800.

TABLE 2: High-poverty districts with highest performance grades for low-income students

District	% Low-income	Low-income API Score *(2010)*	Grade	Rank *(out of 146)*
Alhambra Unified *(Los Angeles County)*	63	799	B	8
Sanger Unified *(Fresno County)*	78	784	B	17
West Covina Unified *(Los Angeles County)*	60	775	B	24
Val Verde Unified *(Riverside County)*	76	767	B	27
Hacienda la Puente Unified *(Los Angeles County)*	72	766	B	28

Note: Districts only included in table if the 2009-10 free or reduced-price meal rate was ≥60 percent.

Table 3 focuses on the performance of students of color, and it highlights the top five highest performing districts among those that serve a sizeable proportion of African-American and Latino students. Of these districts, Clovis Unified in Fresno County is the highest performing, earning on A on this measure. Clovis Unified's weighted African-American and Latino average API of 819 was achieved by 60 percent of African-American and 65 percent of Latino students scoring proficient or advanced in math on the California Standards Test (CST), and 62 percent of African-American and 63 percent of Latino students doing so in English Language Arts.

On average, students of color tend to perform better in districts serving fewer low-income students. In Clovis Unified, for example, 38 percent of students are eligible for free or reduced-price meals. However, there are some high-poverty districts where African-American and Latino students achieve at high levels. For example, Sanger Unified, also in Fresno County, serves far more low-income students (78 percent), but posts similar performance levels as Clovis Unified, with a weighted African-American and Latino average API of 780. (It ranks eighth on this measure, so is not included in Table 3 below, which highlights just the top five districts.) To learn more about Sanger Unified, see its case study in the, "Three Districts Proving It's Possible" section of this report.

How much are districts improving over time?

Proving that rapid student achievement is possible, many high-poverty districts and those with sizeable communities of color have posted notable gains in proficiency among low-income students (Table 4) and students of color (Table 5) over the last five years.

Val Verde Unified, which serves large numbers of low-income students and students of color, earned As for improving achievement both among students of color and low-income students. African-American and Latino students, when considered together, have gained 111 API points over the last five years, while low-income students have gained 110 API points. This improvement is due in part to a significant decrease (more than 65 percent) in the number of African-American and Latino fourth graders scoring "Far Below Basic" in ELA between 2006 and 2010.

With a similar demographic composition, students in neighboring Moreno Valley Unified posted API gains that were 30 percent smaller (78 point gain for low-income students, and 70 point gain for students of color), demonstrating that districts serving similar communities can have profoundly different impacts on student learning. To learn more about Val Verde Unified, see its case study in the "Three Districts Proving It's Possible" section of this report.

TABLE 3: Highest performance grades for students of color among districts with large numbers of African-American and/or Latino students

District	% African-American	% Latino	African-American API *(2010)*	Latino API *(2010)*	**Weighted Avg. African-American and Latino API** *(2010)*	**Grade**	**Rank** *(out of 146)*
Clovis Unified *(Fresno County)*	4	28	796	822	**819**	**A**	6
Temecula Valley Unified *(Riverside County)*	4	30	807	818	**817**	**A**	8
Redondo Beach Unified *(Los Angeles County)*	7	24	799	805	**804**	**A**	10
Murrieta Valley Unified *(Riverside County)*	6	32	767	803	**798**	**B**	14
Lake Elsinore Unified *(Riverside County)*	6	51	802	789	**790**	**B**	18

Note: Districts only included in table if the 2009-10 number of students tested was ≥4 percent African-American and/or ≥50 percent Latino.

TABLE 4: High-poverty districts with highest improvement grades for low-income students

District	% Low-income	**Sum of API Growth** *(2006-10)*	**Grade**	**Rank** *(out of 145)*
Sanger Unified *(Fresno County)*	78	**114**	**A**	3
Val Verde Unified *(Riverside County)*	76	**111**	**A**	4
Desert Sands Unified *(Riverside County)*	62	**103**	**A**	6
Kings Canyon Joint Unified *(Fresno County)*	85	**96**	**B**	8
Compton Unified *(Los Angeles County)*	79	**95**	**B**	9

Note: Districts only included in table if the 2009-10 free or reduced-price meal rate was ≥60 percent.

TABLE 5: Highest improvement grades for students of color among districts with large numbers of African-American and/or Latino students

District	% African-American	% Latino	Sum of African-American API Growth *(2006-10)*	Sum of Latino API Growth *(2006-10)*	**Sum of African-American and Latino Weighted API Growth** *(2006-10)*	**Grade**	**Rank** *(out of 145)*
Lake Elsinore Unified *(Riverside County)*	6	51	136	141	**141**	**A**	1
Coachella Valley Unified *(Riverside County)*	0	97	n/a	115	**115**	**A**	2
Sanger Unified *(Fresno County)*	2	68	19*	114	**113**	**A**	3
Val Verde Unified *(Riverside County)*	17	69	107	111	**110**	**A**	4
Desert Sands Unified *(Riverside County)*	2	68	105	98	**98**	**B**	6

Note: Districts only included in table if the 2009-10 number of students tested was ≥4 percent African-American and/or ≥50 percent Latino.
*Sanger Unified did not have a significant subgroup of African-American students in 2006 or 2007. This is the sum of growth for 2008, 2009, and 2010.

Which districts have the smallest gaps?

There are districts with large numbers of Latino students where these students are performing nearly as well as white students. (See Table 6.) There are also districts with sizable numbers of African-American students, where the black-white achievement gap is smaller than we see statewide. (See Table 7.) However, most districts throughout the state continue to be plagued by unacceptably large gaps in achievement between Latino and white students and African-American and white students.

While achievement gaps are pervasive and unacceptably large in all cases, districts like Lake Elsinore Unified in Riverside County prove that more equitable outcomes are possible. This district's relatively small gaps between Latino and white students, and between African-American and white students, are achieved by ensuring high achievement among all three subgroups.

Unfortunately, Lake Elsinore stands out as an exception. There are very few other cases where we see both small gaps *and* high performance for students of color and white students alike. In fact, small gaps are too often attributable to low performance among both subgroups. As seen in Figure 4, Lake Elsinore Unified and Azusa Unified (Los Angeles County) post similar Latino-white gaps of 43 and 42 points, respectively. However, in Lake Elsinore Unified, Latino and white students achieve at notably higher levels than their peers in Azusa Unified.

We further analyzed the data in order to identify districts that have demonstrated progress in closing gaps between Latino and white students, and between African-American and white students. We arrived at two positive, noteworthy findings. First, most districts have closed their achievement gaps by some degree. Between 2006 and 2010, 63 percent of districts narrowed gaps between their African-American and white students, and 91 percent narrowed gaps between their Latino and white students. Second, each of these districts closed gaps by improving all student achievement, regardless of race. That is, *there is no evidence of gaps closing because one student subgroup is sliding backwards.*

Some top gap-closers stand out. Santa Ana Unified in Orange County closed 52 percent of its gap between African-American and white student achievement over the last five

FIGURE 4: A tale of two districts: similar gap sizes, different performance levels

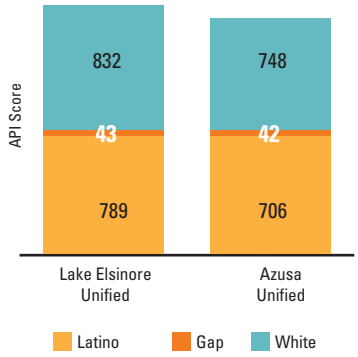


TABLE 6: Districts with large Latino populations and narrow Latino-white gaps

District	% Latino	% White	Gap between Latino and White API *(2010)*	Grade	Rank *(out of 140)*
Baldwin Park Unified *(Los Angeles County)*	91	2	23	A	2
Stockton Unified *(San Joaquin County)*	58	9	41	B	3
Azusa Unified *(Los Angeles County)*	90	5	42	B	4
Lake Elsinore Unified *(Riverside County)*	51	37	43	B	5
Rialto Unified *(San Bernardino County)*	76	5	44	B	6

Note: Districts only included in table if the 2009-10 number of students tested was ≥50 percent Latino.

TABLE 7: Districts with large African-American populations and narrow African-American-white gaps

District	% African-American	% White	Gap between African-American and White API *(2010)*	Grade	Rank *(out of 126)*
Lake Elsinore Unified *(Riverside County)*	6	37	30	A	1
Chino Valley Unified *(San Bernardino County)*	4	24	50	B	4
ABC Unified *(Los Angeles County)*	10	8	55	B	6
Corona-Norca Unified *(Riverside County)*	6	31	59	B	13
Beaumont Unified *(Riverside County)*	6	39	59	B	13

Note: Districts only included in table if the 2009-10 number of students tested was ≥4 percent African-American.

FIGURE 5: In Santa Ana Unified, the gap between African-American and white students closed by more than half in the last five years

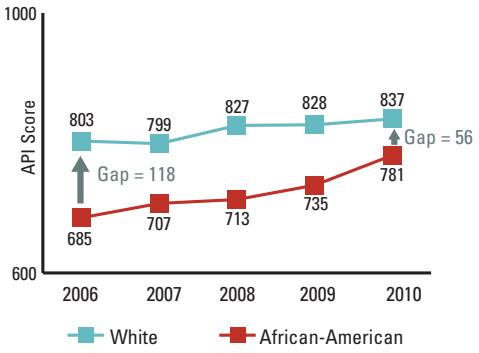
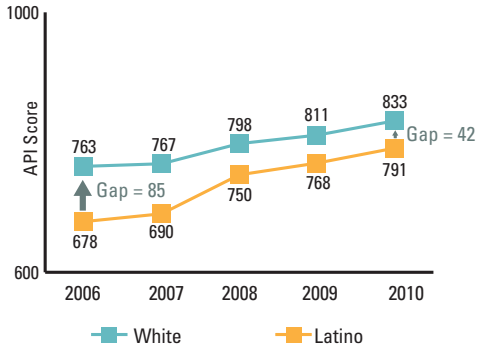


FIGURE 6: In Lake Elsinore Unified, the gap between Latino and white students closed by one half in the last five years



years, while also improving both groups' achievement levels. (See Figure 5.) Similarly, Lake Elsinore Unified closed 50 percent of its gap between Latino and white students, with both groups posting notable gains in achievement over the last five years. (See Figure 6.)

How well are districts preparing students for college and career?

With California facing a shortage of almost one million college-educated workers by 2025,[1] it is incumbent on state policymakers to ensure that all students exit high school prepared for college and career. However, too few students are graduating with the coursework needed to be eligible for admission to the state's four-year public institutions. Statewide, only 35 percent of high school graduates completed the necessary A-G coursework in 2008-09, the most recent year for which we have data. The rates for traditionally underserved students were even worse: 27 percent of African-American students and 26 percent of Latino students graduated having completed the A-G course sequence.

District leaders ought to expand access to these courses by requiring that all students take a college-preparatory course of study in order to graduate. With high expectations and

TABLE 8: Highest college-ready grades among districts with large numbers of African-American and/or Latino students

District	% African-American	% Latino	% of African-American and Latino Graduates with UC/CSU Required Courses	Grade	Rank *(out of 137)*
Santa Monica-Malibu Unified *(Los Angeles County)**	4	30	71%	A	1
Claremont Unified *(Los Angeles County)*	7	35	51%	A	2
Los Angeles Unified *(Los Angeles County)*	10	75	43%	B	7
Temecula Valley Unified *(Riverside County)*	4	30	39%	B	9
Paramount Unified *(Los Angeles County)*	2	85	38%	B	11

Note: Districts only included in table if the 2009-10 number of students tested was ≥4 percent African-American and/or ≥50 percent Latino.
*For the four districts that did not have 2008-09 data on 12th grade graduates completing courses required for UC/CSU eligibility, we used the most recent year of data available. For Santa Monica-Malibu Unified we used 2006-07 data. Four districts did not receive grades due to data unreliability. See Appendix A for further details on the methodology.

WHY WE CHOSE TO USE A-G AS THE INDICATOR FOR COLLEGE READINESS

With the passage of the college and career-ready Common Core Standards in 42 states, including California, there has been an increasing focus at the K-12 level on providing students with both access to and success in college-level work. In these report cards, we use A-G course completion as a proxy for college readiness. However, we know this is not a perfect measure. Through our Educational Opportunity Audit work, conducted in partnership with school districts across California, The Education Trust – West has found that the self-reported A-G completion rates are oftentimes higher than the actual A-G completion rates. It is clear that more guidance is needed around how to determine which students have and have not succeeded in the A-G course sequence.

Unfortunately, better measures are currently unavailable. The next best options—the CSU's Early Assessment Program (EAP) results and actual college-going rates—have significant drawbacks. While the EAP effectively measures college readiness, too few students—especially students of color and low-income students—take that exam. In fact, only about one-third of African-American and Latino students were eligible to take the 2009 EAP.[2]

And although actual college-going and persistence rates would be the best way to determine college readiness, the currently available data are suspect. The California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC)'s first-time freshmen rates vary considerably from those reported by UC, calling into question which source, if either, is most reliable.

For more information about the UC/CSU Graduation requirements, see the California Department of Education, High School Graduation Requirements or the University of California Office of the President's website, Doorways (http://www.ucop.edu/doorways).

sufficient support, all students can graduate from high school with true college and career options. Fortunately, we know this is possible. There are many districts that ensure African-American and Latino students have access to and are successful in the courses required to be eligible to apply to UC/CSU. (See Table 8.) For example, in Santa Monica-Malibu Unified in Los Angeles County, a majority of their graduates of color have completed the A-G course sequence.

Other ways we analyzed district-level data

Although this report focuses primarily on high-poverty districts and those with large numbers of students of color, we graded and ranked all 146 unified districts that tested more than 5,000 students. In the compendium report, *District Report Cards: Peer Group Rankings*, we report the names of the top ten districts, by indicator, from that full universe of districts. In addition, we report data, by indicator, for the 20 highest poverty districts from the sample of large, unified districts. Finally, we report data for California's 20 largest unified school districts. A number of districts, such as San Bernardino City Unified and Fresno Unified, fall on both of these latter two lists, as they are among California's largest and highest poverty unified districts.

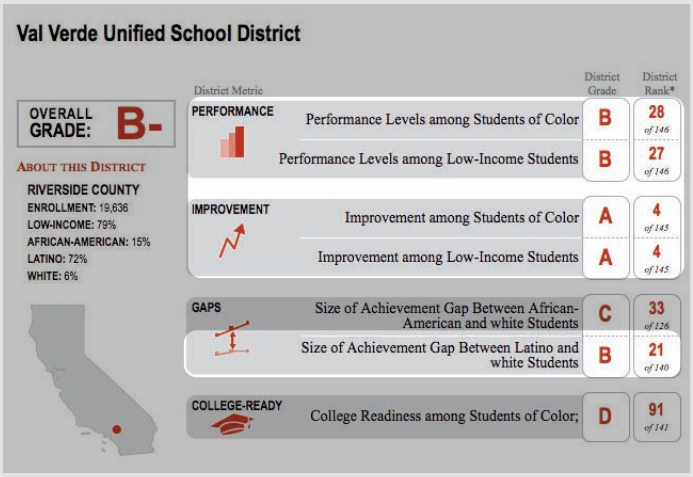
By dividing the rankings into these three peer groupings, we seek to offer a variety of lenses through which to understand district performance. And although we acknowledge that it often makes more sense to compare one high-poverty district to another, as opposed to a more affluent district, we believe—and our data demonstrate—that high achievement and strong improvement are possible, regardless of district size or demographic composition.

THREE DISTRICTS PROVING IT'S POSSIBLE

Across the state, schools and districts are proving that it is possible to serve high-need students well and achieve at high levels on a variety of performance indicators. Our data analysis identified a number of high-performing, high-poverty districts achieving success across a number of our indicators. Here, we profile three of them: Val Verde Unified School District in Riverside County, Sanger Unified School District in Fresno County, and Desert Sands Unified School District in Riverside County. District and school leaders in those districts have graciously shared the strategies and policies to which they attribute their success.

When visiting and talking with district and school leaders about their success strategies, several common themes emerged:

1. First, we heard about a strong, supportive leadership that establishes a singular focus on excellence in instruction and high expectations for student performance. A focus on standards-based instruction, common assessment, and coordinated pacing is aligned at the district offices, with the districts providing supports to their school sites. Districts credit deep professional development and staff collaboration, including professional learning communities (PLCs), with building teacher and principal capacity to function more productively toward a common, student-focused goal.
2. Second, these districts report a culture of data use to inform decision-making. Data is used to inform instruction, with teachers using frequent benchmark assessments to adjust and target their instruction. Data use at the classroom level is supported by investments in technology, which help deliver a constant stream of information on student achievement to teachers and principals. District leaders reportedly use data to evaluate programs and determine where funds need to be targeted, and from where funds may be cut. These districts reportedly embrace the use of data to inform teacher evaluation and development.
3. Finally, all three districts report a focus on directing extra supports, investments, and the very best staff to schools serving high-need students. These districts share that they have targeted top talent, including principals and teachers, to these schools. They have also made investments in instructional support staff, technology aids (such as voice amplifiers and computer-based instructional programs), and extra teacher professional development to support English learners and students who are below grade level.



Val Verde Unified School District
(Riverside County)

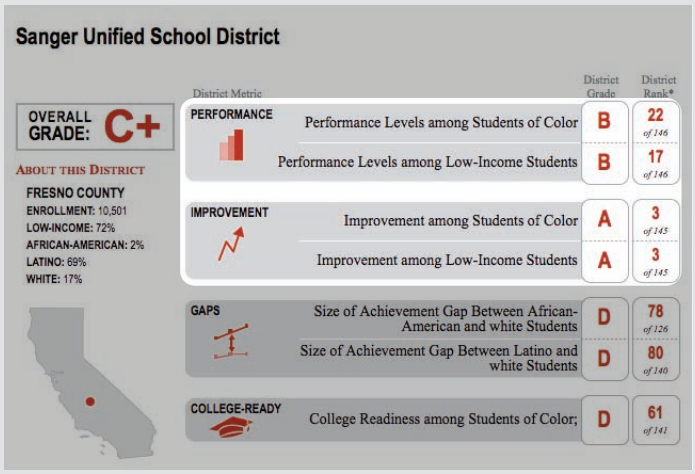
Val Verde Unified serves a diverse student body, consisting of 15 percent African-American students, 72 percent Latino students, and 79 percent low-income students. It serves approximately 20,000 students in 21 schools, including one small school and one alternative school. Val Verde Unified is tied for second overall among the 146 large, unified districts in California, with As in Improvement and Bs in Performance, as well as a B for the small gap in achievement between Latino and white students. Students of color, particularly the district's Latino students, achieve at somewhat comparable levels to their white peers. In 2010, Latino students in Val Verde trailed white students by approximately 14 percentage points in ELA, and 8 percentage points in math, representing a gap half the size of what we see statewide.

Assistant Superintendent Michael McCormick attributes the success of the district's students of color and low-income students, first and foremost, to the coordinated message of accountability for student achievement that permeates the district office and its schools. Val Verde Unified reports employing strategic professional development centered on the use of data to inform instruction.

Specifically, Val Verde Unified uses a system of benchmark assessments that are administered throughout the year and are based on the CST blueprint. Grade or subject-level teams, together with an instructional coach, analyze the assessment data and then use the results to develop strategies for improving student learning. According to McCormick, these benchmark assessments also guide conversations between school and district leaders.

Additionally, the leaders at Val Verde Unified describe how they leverage district resources in strategic ways. First, the district uses data and action research to determine the effectiveness of existing programs. When budget cuts are needed, this research helps determine which programs are kept and which are cut. This kind of strategic budgeting has contributed to the district's decision to place instructional coaches in each school. It also has led the district to employ what they call "impact subs," who are long-term substitutes placed in one school for at least one year. They are specifically tasked to work with struggling students, either side-by-side in the classroom or in a separate intervention room. These impact subs are intended to provide additional support to at-risk students while also allowing the district to budget scarce resources wisely.

Finally, district leaders work to foster a strong, positive relationship with their local collective bargaining unit. McCormick shared that the union president meets weekly with the superintendent. As testament to this relationship, union and district leadership are discussing how to build and implement a multiple-measure evaluation system for teachers and principals, with student achievement data included as one measure.



Sanger Unified School District
(Fresno County)

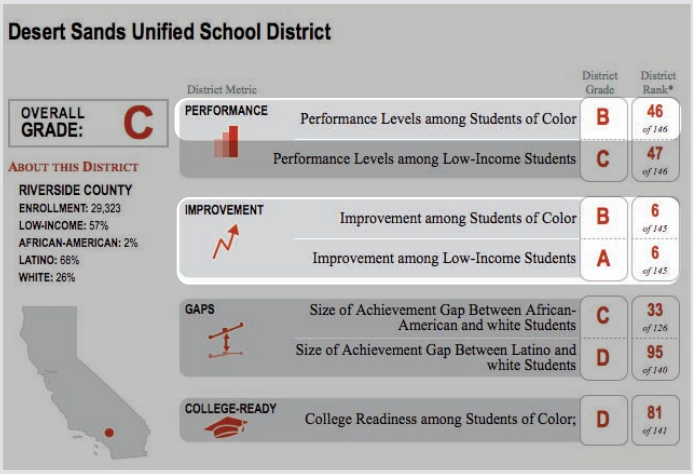
Sanger Unified serves a predominately low-income (78 percent are eligible for free or reduced-price meals) and Latino (68 percent) population. Located in California's Central Valley, Sanger Unified also educates many English learners (21 percent) and students whose parents do not speak English as a primary language (49 percent). The district serves over 10,000 students in 19 schools, including three district-sponsored charter schools, an adult school, and a community day school. Sanger Unified ranks third overall in Improvement among students of color and low-income students, earning As on that indicator, and it earns Bs for Performance.

Sanger Unified has emerged from a history of underachievement and has made great strides to improve its performance among students of color and low-income students. In 2004-05, it was one of 98 districts in California to enter Program Improvement (PI) status, with a district-wide API of 657. If we had assigned a report card to the district in 2005, it would have earned Ds in Performance and an F for its Latino-white Achievement Gap. Six years later, the district has improved its overall API to exceed the statewide target, with a score of 805. In addition, on average, its low-income students and students of color now outperform their peers throughout the state.

Recently-named Superintendent of the Year Marc Johnson and Deputy Superintendent Rich Smith attribute much of Sanger Unified's success to the coordinated adherence to three guiding principles: "First, hope is not a strategy. Second, don't blame the kids. And third, it is about student learning." A report by researchers Jane David and Joan Talbert says that this singular focus on student achievement, coupled with a small number of "keystone practices" over the course of many years, has contributed to Sanger's success.[3] These carefully chosen strategies, including explicit direct instruction (EDI) and response to intervention (RTI), initially instituted by district leadership, have become part of a common language used throughout the district. District administrators, school leaders, and teachers told us that this common lan-

guage has enabled staff collaboration, efficiencies in planning and delivering lessons, and shared expectations for students and teachers.

David and Talbert report that Sanger Unified has established a system of mutual, reciprocal accountability; adults are not only held accountable for student learning, but the adults also hold their superiors accountable for providing the support they need. This is particularly evident in the relationship between the district office and school sites. The district intentionally creates what Smith calls "tight/loose" systems—common systems that provide structure and dictate priorities, coupled with principal flexibility and autonomy. For example, the district has created a district-wide schedule, which includes bi-weekly early release days for teacher collaboration and professional development, and it has made PLCs a priority for all schools. However, principals can determine how best to use those extra two hours and are charged with building the on-site leadership and support structures needed to ensure PLC success. Schools throughout the district reportedly employ PLCs during this early-release time to allow teachers to collaboratively analyze data, plan lessons, and discuss instructional strategies. These PLCs also provide some teachers and staff with the opportunity to take on leadership responsibilities.



Desert Sands Unified School District
(Riverside County)

Desert Sands Unified is the largest of the three districts we profile, with 29,323 students enrolled in 34 schools, including two alternative schools. It serves a predominantly Latino student population (68 percent), and close to 60 percent of its students are low-income. Desert Sands earns Bs for the performance and improvement of its Latino and African-American students, and an A for the gains experienced by low-income students over the past five years.

In our conversations with Superintendent Sharon McGehee and Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services Kathleen Felci, we learned that, like Val Verde Unified and Sanger Unified, teachers and leaders in Desert Sands Unified use benchmark assessments to inform instructional improvements and professional development opportunities. As Felci describes it, "the data begins the story, and then we ask, 'what next?'" Teachers reportedly answer this question of "what next?" through the collaborative model of PLCs. This use of data and PLCs informs decisions ranging from the evaluation of best instructional practices to intervention strategies for struggling students. For instance, teachers and principals have used data to identify struggling students, and then through collaborative planning, have developed a restructured school day and an accelerated learning program, rather than remediation, for those students.

As with the other two districts, Desert Sands Unified shares a belief in the importance of setting priorities and expectations at the district level. However, Desert Sands also emphasizes the importance of striking the best balance between centralized supports and principal autonomy. McGehee and Felci said that some practices are established at the district-level as non-negotiable, but that new reforms are rarely thrust upon schools at once, or without their support. To encourage buy-in, the district targets motivated, innovative teachers and principals to act as early adopters of new practices. This "dream team" of educators blazes a trail for others to follow, and the district finds that others are likely and even eager to follow their peers' lead with time. Although the district sets a deadline for full adoption, McGehee and Felci have found that this process effectively leads to broad adoption without having to force it.

McGehee attributes much of the district's success to the value placed on developing strong principals and building a culture of professional trust and learning among school and district leaders. She described a multi-pronged strategy for developing the capacity of new and veteran principals. It includes: holding monthly meetings of new principals, in which they have the opportunity to network and share common experiences; convening instructional leadership teams comprised of principals and other instructional leaders once each month; offering three day-long meetings each year for full school site teams to focus on curriculum and instructional strategies; and conducting principal observations at least three times per year.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Districts like Val Verde, Sanger, and Desert Sands Unified School Districts show that it is possible to produce better results than most California districts—the majority of which earn Cs and Ds when it comes to the achievement of their low-income students and students of color. In these communities, district leaders describe policies and programs that support, rather than hinder, their school leaders.

In these districts, principals are trained to use tools that allow them to quickly access and act upon data, so that they are constantly fine-tuning school-wide and classroom instruction and addressing student needs. Stakeholders describe an emphasis on staff development, recognizing that great teachers and leaders are critically important in impacting student achievement. And, district leaders describe ways in which they have used their available resources creatively to ensure that, even in tough budget times, services and supports are directed to the students who need them the most.

There is nothing particularly innovative about these districts' strategies; the lessons for others lie in the intensity of focus and shared sense of urgency with which they approach the work. We urge districts across the state to create similar conditions for their schools. But regardless of the specific strategies used, we believe a primary focus on equity in achievement must be at the heart of any district's efforts. Specifically, we recommend that district leaders and community members:

1. **Establish clear, ambitious goals in a variety of areas, including performance, improvement, gaps, and college readiness.** Simply achieving the state's modest goals for API growth will not transform California schools and districts. It is imperative that districts and communities consider a broader range of achievement indicators that will offer deeper insight into how well the district's students of color and low-income students are performing. By continuously monitoring progress against targets in these areas, districts can ensure that equity in educational opportunity and achievement is a focus of their ongoing improvement efforts.
2. **Use the data in this report to help benchmark performance and spur action.** This report and its compendium of rankings provide district leaders with tools to benchmark their performance against other districts across the state. By seeing how their students of color and low-income students perform relative to those in other California districts, district leaders and community members are armed with the data necessary to understand baseline levels of performance and advocate for change. These data, which describe current levels of achievement, should serve as a catalyst for continued and increased investments in programs and strategies aimed at increasing educational opportunity and achievement among the district's highest need students.

Successfully implementing these two recommendations can only be accomplished against a backdrop of accountability for results and transparency into performance. California schools and districts are currently, and rightly, held accountable for performance and year-to-year progress. However, the state can strengthen its current accountability system by doing the following:

1. **Report data on achievement gaps between groups of students.** The public should know the extent to which achievement gaps exist and whether these gaps are closing.
2. **Calculate district, school, and subgroup improvement scores using student-level longitudinal data.** Such growth data would shed light on the impact teachers, schools, and districts have on student achievement and would highlight the progress made by every student and subgroup.
3. **Include a stronger focus on college-readiness.** We ought to know how well schools and districts are preparing students for college and careers, not just how well they are mastering the existing K-12 standards. By including indicators of college-readiness or college-going in the overall accountability framework, California will send an important message to its schools about what it values and expects.

Districts that consistently meet or exceed their accountability goals and positively impact the achievement of *all* students should be rewarded with increased flexibility over how funds, including categorical dollars, are spent at the local level. That way, schools and districts will be incentivized to innovate and use human and financial resources more effectively on behalf of students.

We know that good—and even great—results are possible for California's traditionally undeserved students. As these district report cards demonstrate, success can be realized in high-poverty and low-poverty districts alike, and in districts serving significant numbers of students of color. These districts prove it's possible, making it difficult for others to continue to hide behind the excuses of poverty and circumstance.

At the same time, we acknowledge that "success" is not always easy to define. In these report cards, we find C and D districts that are moving in the right direction. They may still be plagued by underperformance and large achievement gaps, but there is evidence of rapid improvement among students of color and low-income students. On the other hand, we find C and D districts that are stagnating. Their failure to improve achievement or to close gaps is doing a disservice to the poor, African-American, and Latino students in those communities.

We urge district leaders and community members to use these report cards to build a more comprehensive picture of performance in their districts, and to do so by considering each indicator in turn. Armed with this data and the language to describe performance and progress, we believe local leaders will be better positioned to identify the programmatic changes, strategic investments, and advocacy needed for California's low-income, African-American, and Latino students—who now comprise the state's majority.

NOTES

[1] Johnson, H. & Sengupta, R. Closing the Gap: Meeting California's Need for College Graduates. Public Policy Institute of California, 2009.

[2] Estimated based on the number of students taking Algebra II or advanced math CST exams, as compared with total enrollment figures reported by the CDE. Also see Rosin, Matthew and Kathy Wilson. "High School to Community College: New Efforts to Build Shared Expectations." Mountain View, CA: Ed Source, 2008.

[3] Talbert, J. & David, J. Turning around a high-poverty school district: Learning from Sanger Unified's success. N.p., 2010.

[4] To receive API scores for African-American, Latino, or socioeconomically disadvantaged students, districts must have a "numerically significant subgroup." The California Department of Education defines a "numerically significant subgroup" for the API as: 100 or more students with valid STAR Program scores, or 50 or more students with valid STAR Program scores who make up at least 50 percent of the total valid STAR Program scores. A subgroup must be numerically significant in both the Base year and Growth year in an API reporting cycle to have subgroup growth and target information.

[5] Seventeen districts did not have API scores for African-American students, so only Latino API scores were considered for the Performance of students of color grade.

[6] One district, Twin Rivers Unified, did not receive an Improvement grade because it recently became a unified district (2008-09).

[7] Some districts did not meet the criteria for inclusion in the Gap grade. For that reason, 126 districts receive an African-American-white Gap score, and 140 districts receive a Latino-white Gap score.

[8] Four districts did not have 2008-09 data available. For Folsom-Cordova Unified and South San Francisco Unified we used 2007-08 data, and for Kings Canyon Joint Unified, we used 2005-06 data. Santa Monica-Malibu Unified self-reported that its 2008-09 A-G rate of 92 percent was incorrect; therefore, we used the most recent year of reliable data (2006-07).

[9] Five districts did not have at least 100 Latino and African-American graduates: Las Virgenes Unified, San Luis Coastal Unified, Palo Alto Unified, Davis Joint Unified, and Palos Verdes Unified.

APPENDIX A: METHODOLOGY

Data for this report was obtained from the California Department of Education (CDE) website, primarily from two data sources: the Growth API file, from 2006 to 2010 (accessed September 2010), and the CBEDS file from 2008-09 (accessed Decemeber 2010).

How we assign grades

Each district is assigned letter grades for Performance, Improvement, Achievement Gaps, and College Readiness. These letter grades are based on rubrics created by the Education Trust—West. Each letter grade is then averaged into an overall grade based on a traditional 4.0-0.0/A-F scale.

Performance Grade

Description: District performance, measured by the 2010 Growth API score, for students of color and low-income students.

How we calculate the grade: For students of color, we calculate a weighted average of 2010 Growth API scores for African-American and Latino students based on the number of students tested from each of these subgroups. We use the 2010 Socioeconomically Disadvantaged (SD) Growth API score for the low-income students Performance grade.[4]

Notes: If API scores are not available for both African-American and Latino students, we use the API score for one subgroup.[5]

Improvement Grade

Description: The sum of year-to-year district improvement in API scores over the last five years (2006-10) for students of color (weighted) and low-income students.

How we calculate the grade: We sum each subgroup's five-year growth from year to year, using the "Growth" variable in the API Growth files of 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, and 2010. For low-income students, we sum the SD API growth over five years. For students of color, we calculate a yearly weighted average of African-American and Latino API growth and then sum these together.

Notes: If API scores are not available for both African-American and Latino students in any of the five years, we use the API score for one subgroup. Districts with five years of growth data receive an Improvement grade.[6]

Achievement Gaps Grade

Description: The difference in achievement between African-American and white students, and Latino and white students in 2009-10.

How we calculate the grade: We subtract the 2010 Growth API score for African-American and Latino students from the 2010 Growth API score for white students in the district.

Notes: If API scores are not available for African-American, Latino, and white students in 2010, districts were not given a Gap grade.[7]

College Readiness Grade

Description: The percentage of students of color graduating college ready, as measured by completion of coursework required for admission to University of California (UC) and California State University (CSU).

How we calculate the grade: We first sum the number of Latino and African-American graduates who completed the UC/CSU required coursework known as A-G with a grade of C or better. We then divide that number by the number of Latino and African-American graduates, arriving at the percentage of those graduates who completed the A-G course sequence.

Notes: We use the most recent graduation data available; for most districts in the sample, data comes from the 2008-09 academic year.[8] Districts with at least 100 African-American and Latino graduates receive a college readiness grade.[9]

As discussed in this report, data on the number of graduates completing A-G requirements is not always accurate. Therefore, we took an extra step to ensure data quality for this measure. We looked more closely at the data for districts that had an African-American and Latino A-G rate above the overall state average of 35 percent, and then looked at their previous two years of data for this indicator. If there was more than a 30 percentage-point spread between the highest and lowest reported rate, we sought to confirm data accuracy with the districts. For four districts, we were unable to verify data and have therefore excluded them from the analysis. These districts—Berkeley Unified, Hesperia Unified, Lynwood Unified, and Inglewood Unified —receive N/A values instead of a College Readiness grade.

Overall GPA/Grade

Each of the seven letter grades is assigned a GPA equivalent (0.0-4.0), and is then averaged together to form an overall GPA. This overall GPA is then converted into a letter grade based on the standard range (A = 4.0, A- = 3.67-3.99, B+ = 3.33-3.66, B = 3.00-3.32, etc.).

How we assign ranks

Districts are ranked for each indicator in the full report card (See Appendix B and http://reportcards.edtrustwest.org)

based on how they measure up among the other large, unified districts in the state. Two additional peer groupings were also created that rank: (1) the 20 highest poverty unified districts, or those districts with the greatest percentage of students eligible for free and reduced-price meals, and (2) the 20 largest unified districts, or those 20 districts with the greatest number of students tested. (See our compendium report, *District Report Cards: Peer Group Rankings.)*

Limitations

No student-level data

Without access to student-level longitudinal data in California, we are unable able to paint the most accurate picture of how districts serve low-income students and students of color. Our report focuses on three subgroups, and inevitably there will be double-counting between low-income and African-American students, and between low-income and Latino students. To be sure, many students in California fall into both groups. As a result, it is possible that a district's grades for students of color Performance and low-income student Performance may be based upon very similar student populations.

Comparison subgroup data

By choosing API as our indicator, achievement gaps could only be measured between students of color and their white peers. We could not present gaps between low-income students and more affluent students using the API, as the CDE does not provide API results for students who do not qualify for free or reduced-price meals.

Definition of students of color

To define students of color as African-American and Latino students, we invariably exclude other underserved students, including American Indians, Pacific Islanders, and subgroups of Asians not disaggregated in the API data.

Scope of analysis

By focusing our analysis on unified districts, we are able to report on the achievement of students as a whole, across the K-12 continuum. However, by doing so, we invariably mask some of the differences in achievement patterns among elementary and secondary students.

APPENDIX B: REPORT CARDS FOR ALL DISTRICTS

GRADING RUBRIC

	PERFORMANCE (2010 GROWTH API)	IMPROVEMENT (API GROWTH 2006-10)	GAPS (API GAP)	COLLEGE READINESS (A-G RATE)
A	≥800	≥100	≤30	≥45%
B	750-799	75-99	31 to 60	35-44%
C	700-749	50-74	61 to 90	25-34%
D	650-699	25-49	91 to 120	15-24%
F	<650	<25	> 120	<15%

District	County	DEMOGRAPHICS OF STUDENTS TESTED					PERFORMANCE		IMPROVEMENT		GAPS		COLLEGE-READY	OVERALL GRADE
		# Students	% Low-income	% African-American	% Latino	% White	Students of Color	Low-Income Students	Students of Color	Low-Income Students	African-American-White	Latino-White	Students of Color	
Lake Elsinore Unified	RIVERSIDE	13,373	34	6	51	37	B	B	A	A	A	B	F	B
Clovis Unified	FRESNO	27,322	38	4	28	49	A	A	B	B	D	C	B	B-
San Marcos Unified	SAN DIEGO	12,898	43	3	47	39	B	B	A	A	C	F	A	B-
Val Verde Unified	RIVERSIDE	13,856	76	17	69	8	B	B	A	A	C	B	D	B-
Arcadia Unified	LOS ANGELES	7,519	16	1	12	17	A	A	C	C	D	C	A	B-
Rocklin Unified	PLACER	7,973	17	1	14	70	A	B	C	C	C	B	B	B-
Temecula Valley Unified	RIVERSIDE	21,484	17	4	30	49	A	B	C	C	C	B	B	B-
Baldwin Park Unified	LOS ANGELES	11,810	83	1	91	2	C	C	B	B		A	C	C+
Paramount Unified	LOS ANGELES	11,555	90	2	85	0	C	C	B	B			B	C+
Los Alamitos Unified	ORANGE	7,171	10	3	19	60	A	A	C	C	C	B	D	C+
San Ramon Valley Unified	CONTRA COSTA	21,184	4	2	8	56	A	A	D	C	D	B	B	C+
Walnut Valley Unified	LOS ANGELES	11,700	13	3	20	11	A	A	C	C	B	B	F	C+
Beaumont Unified	RIVERSIDE	6,008	59	6	47	39	B	B	C	C	B	B	D	C+
Bellflower Unified	LOS ANGELES	10,458	63	14	59	13	B	B	B	B	C	B	F	C+
Burbank Unified	LOS ANGELES	11,560	33	2	37	47	B	B	C	C	B	B	D	C+
Culver City Unified	LOS ANGELES	5,025	38	19	40	24	B	B	B	B	C	D	C	C+
Manteca Unified	SAN JOAQUIN	16,896	60	10	10	27	C	C	B	C	C	A	C	C+
Sanger Unified	FRESNO	7,646	78	2	68	17	B	B	A	A	D	D	D	C+
Glendora Unified	LOS ANGELES	5,215	20	2	36	51	A	B	D	D		B	C	C+
Las Virgenes Unified	LOS ANGELES	8,603	5	2	7	78	A	A	D	D	C	C		C+
Palos Verdes Peninsula Unified	LOS ANGELES	9,057	3	2	7	58	A	B	D	F	B	B		C+
Porterville Unified	TULARE	9,617	74	1	73	19	C	C	B	B		B	D	C+

District	County	DEMOGRAPHICS OF STUDENTS TESTED					PERFORMANCE		IMPROVEMENT		GAPS		COLLEGE-READY	OVERALL GRADE
		# Students	% Low-income	% African-American	% Latino	% White	Students of Color	Low-Income Students	Students of Color	Low-Income Students	African-American-White	Latino-White	Students of Color	
Capistrano Unified	ORANGE	38,577	20	1	24	62	B	C	B	B	C	D	C	C
Desert Sands Unified	RIVERSIDE	21,428	62	2	68	26	B	C	B	A	C	D	D	C
Glendale Unified	LOS ANGELES	19,296	45	1	22	57	B	B	C	C	B	C	D	C
Hacienda la Puente Unified	LOS ANGELES	15,572	72	1	79	4	B	B	B	B	D	B	F	C
Irvine Unified	ORANGE	19,866	9	2	9	36	A	A	D	C	D	C	C	C
Redondo Beach Unified	LOS ANGELES	5,994	24	7	24	50	A	B	C	C	D	C	C	C
Rialto Unified	SAN BERNARDINO	19,069	45	15	76	5	C	C	B	B	C	B	D	C
South San Francisco Unified	SAN MATEO	6,776	44	2	44	8	B	B	B	C	D	B	D	C
Torrance Unified	LOS ANGELES	18,303	19	4	23	31	B	B	C	C	C	C	C	C
Yuba City Unified	SUTTER	9,059	62	2	37	36	C	B	B	B	C	C	D	C
Montebello Unified	LOS ANGELES	23,956	88	0	94	0	C	C	B	B			D	C
Azusa Unified	LOS ANGELES	7,921	76	1	90	5	C	D	C	B		B	C	C
Coachella Valley Unified	RIVERSIDE	12,876	56	0	97	2	D	D	A	A		C	D	C
ABC Unified	LOS ANGELES	15,308	43	10	40	8	C	C	B	B	B	C	F	C
Alvord Unified	RIVERSIDE	14,031	69	4	76	13	C	C	B	B	C	C	D	C
Bonita Unified	LOS ANGELES	7,488	27	3	44	38	A	B	C	C	D	C	D	C
Chino Valley Unified	SAN BERNARDINO	23,648	34	4	54	24	B	C	C	C	B	C	D	C
Corona-Norco Unified	RIVERSIDE	39,180	43	6	49	31	B	C	C	C	B	D	C	C
Covina-Valley Unified	LOS ANGELES	10,462	58	4	71	14	C	C	C	C	C	B	C	C
Downey Unified	LOS ANGELES	17,142	64	3	83	9	B	C	C	C	C	B	D	C
Gilroy Unified	SANTA CLARA	7,930	62	1	70	19	C	C	C	B	B	D	C	C
Jurupa Unified	RIVERSIDE	14,181	72	3	79	14	C	C	B	B	D	C	C	C
Placentia-Yorba Linda Unified	ORANGE	19,393	30	2	35	49	B	B	C	C	B	D	D	C
Poway Unified	SAN DIEGO	25,013	13	3	11	55	B	B	D	C	D	D	A	C
West Covina Unified	LOS ANGELES	7,747	60	4	73	7	B	B	C	C	C	C	D	C
Ceres Unified	STANISLAUS	8,512	74	2	66	23	C	C	C	C	C	B	D	C
Claremont Unified	LOS ANGELES	5,329	31	7	35	38	B	C	D	D	D	C	A	C
Fontana Unified	SAN BERNARDINO	29,220	68	7	84	6	C	C	C	C	C	B	D	C
Garden Grove Unified	ORANGE	35,545	59	1	53	11	C	B	C	C	B	D	D	C
Kings Canyon Joint Unified	FRESNO	6,639	85	0	82	13	C	C	B	B		D	D	C
Marysville Joint Unified	YUBA	6,785	74	4	35	43	C	C	B	C	C	B	F	C
Murrieta Valley Unified	RIVERSIDE	16,325	26	6	32	47	B	B	D	D	D	B	C	C
Norwalk-La Mirada Unified	LOS ANGELES	15,208	60	3	77	11	C	C	B	B	D	C	D	C

District	County	DEMOGRAPHICS OF STUDENTS TESTED					PERFORMANCE		IMPROVEMENT		GAPS		COLLEGE-READY	OVERALL GRADE
		# Students	% Low-income	% African-American	% Latino	% White	Students of Color	Low-Income Students	Students of Color	Low-Income Students	African-American-White	Latino-White	Students of Color	
Palm Springs Unified	RIVERSIDE	16,955	80	6	72	17	C	C	B	B	D	C	D	C
Saddleback Valley Unified	ORANGE	24,374	16	2	27	57	B	C	C	C	C	D	C	C
Visalia Unified	TULARE	19,444	64	3	59	30	C	C	B	B	D	D	C	C
Carlsbad Unified	SAN DIEGO	8,005	23	2	26	58	B	B	C	C	D	F	C	C-
Castro Valley Unified	ALAMEDA	6,665	20	6	22	34	B	B	D	C	D	C	D	C-
Madera Unified	MADERA	13,904	59	3	83	11	C	C	C	B	D	C	D	C-
Moreno Valley Unified	RIVERSIDE	25,106	77	19	63	11	C	C	C	B	D	C	D	C-
Riverside Unified	RIVERSIDE	31,042	59	9	55	29	C	C	C	C	C	D	C	C-
San Lorenzo Unified	ALAMEDA	7,850	53	13	51	13	D	C	C	B	D	C	C	C-
Santa Ana Unified	ORANGE	39,469	80	1	95	2	C	C	C	C	B	F	C	C-
Tracy Joint Unified	SAN JOAQUIN	11,902	41	8	45	27	C	C	C	B	D	C	D	C-
Turlock Unified	STANISLAUS	9,877	63	2	51	38	C	C	C	C	C	C	D	C-
Alhambra Unified	LOS ANGELES	13,756	63	1	41	4	C	B	C	C		D	D	C-
Hesperia Unified	SAN BERNARDINO	15,640	65	9	59	30	C	C	C	C	F	B		C-
Lucia Mar Unified	SAN LUIS OBISPO	7,878	48	1	38	55	B	B	C	C		D	F	C-
Yucaipa-Calimesa Joint Unified	SAN BERNARDINO	7,023	45	2	35	56	C	C	C	C		C	D	C-
El Rancho Unified	LOS ANGELES	7,716	66	0	97	1	C	C	C	C			D	C-
Apple Valley Unified	SAN BERNARDINO	9,390	62	12	39	44	C	C	C	C	D	C	D	C-
Hemet Unified	RIVERSIDE	16,011	68	8	46	40	C	C	C	C	D	C	D	C-
Lincoln Unified	SAN JOAQUIN	6,326	51	12	34	34	C	C	C	B	F	C	D	C-
Livermore Valley Joint Unified	ALAMEDA	9,544	24	3	26	60	C	C	C	B	F	D	C	C-
Los Banos Unified	MERCED	6,436	61	3	73	15	C	C	C	C	C	C	F	C-
Morongo Unified	SAN BERNARDINO	6,214	61	7	26	58	C	C	D	C	C	B	F	C-
Redlands Unified	SAN BERNARDINO	15,558	51	7	43	35	B	C	C	C	D	D	D	C-
Rowland Unified	LOS ANGELES	11,617	60	2	62	3	C	C	D	C	C	C	D	C-
Sacramento City Unified	SACRAMENTO	32,178	61	16	35	18	C	C	C	C	F	D	B	C-
San Jacinto Unified	RIVERSIDE	6,076	71	8	66	19	D	C	C	C	C	B	F	C-
Santa Clara Unified	SANTA CLARA	10,263	46	4	35	25	C	C	C	C	C	D	D	C-
Santa Monica-Malibu Unified	LOS ANGELES	8,550	25	4	30	28	B	C	C	D	F	F	A	C-
Tustin Unified	ORANGE	16,401	38	2	44	33	B	B	C	C	F	F	C	C-
Upland Unified	SAN BERNARDINO	8,677	40	9	48	32	B	B	D	D	D	C	D	C-
Vista Unified	SAN DIEGO	16,238	59	4	58	30	C	C	B	A	D	F	F	C-
Moorpark Unified	VENTURA	5,417	28	2	38	51	C	C	C	C		F	C	D+

District	County	DEMOGRAPHICS OF STUDENTS TESTED					PERFORMANCE		IMPROVEMENT		GAPS		COLLEGE-READY	OVERALL GRADE
		# Students	% Low-income	% African-American	% Latino	% White	Students of Color	Low-Income Students	Students of Color	Low-Income Students	African-American-White	Latino-White	Students of Color	
Petaluma City Schools/Petaluma Joint Union High	SONOMA	5,494	34	2	28	61	C	C	B	B		F	F	D+
Compton Unified	LOS ANGELES	18,653	79	21	77	0	D	D	B	B			F	D+
Colton Joint Unified	SAN BERNARDINO	16,829	73	7	80	9	D	D	C	C	C	C	D	D+
Newport-Mesa Unified	ORANGE	15,822	47	1	41	49	C	C	B	B	F	F	D	D+
Oakland Unified	ALAMEDA	26,483	64	33	36	7	D	D	B	B	F	F	B	D+
Pleasanton Unified	ALAMEDA	11,346	4	2	9	57	B	C	F	D	D	D	B	D+
San Bernardino City Unified	SAN BERNARDINO	35,720	85	15	70	10	D	D	C	B	D	C	D	D+
Vallejo City Unified	SOLANO	10,030	58	31	31	10	D	D	B	B	F	C	D	D+
Washington Unified	YOLO	5,110	67	7	40	37	D	C	C	C	C	C	F	D+
Pajaro Valley Unified	SANTA CRUZ	13,867	69	1	78	18	D	D	C	B		F	C	D+
Alameda City Unified	ALAMEDA	7,106	34	12	11	30	C	B	C	D	F	F	C	D+
Lompoc Unified	SANTA BARBARA	7,042	59	4	57	29	C	D	D	D	C	D	C	D+
Long Beach Unified	LOS ANGELES	62,575	68	16	52	18	C	C	C	C	F	F	C	D+
Morgan Hill Unified	SANTA CLARA	6,785	39	3	45	37	C	D	D	C	B	F	D	D+
New Haven Unified	ALAMEDA	9,352	44	9	33	8	C	C	D	D	D	D	C	D+
Orange Unified	ORANGE	21,100	41	1	47	34	C	C	C	C	D	F	D	D+
Pasadena Unified	LOS ANGELES	13,644	72	18	60	10	C	C	C	C	F	F	C	D+
Pittsburg Unified	CONTRA COSTA	6,829	67	23	56	7	D	C	C	C	D	C	F	D+
Pomona Unified	LOS ANGELES	20,446	81	6	82	5	C	D	C	C	D	D	D	D+
San Jose Unified	SANTA CLARA	23,485	48	3	51	27	C	C	C	C	F	F	C	D+
Simi Valley Unified	VENTURA	15,342	28	1	27	60	C	C	D	D	C	D	D	D+
Snowline Joint Unified	SAN BERNARDINO	6,288	51	6	36	53	B	B	F	D	D	C	F	D+
Ventura Unified	VENTURA	12,961	47	2	45	46	C	C	C	C	D	F	D	D+
Twin Rivers Unified	SACRAMENTO	18,131	82	16	37	28	D	C			D	B	F	D+
Woodland Joint Unified	YOLO	7,686	60	1	61	30	D	D	C	C		D	D	D+
Central Unified	FRESNO	10,430	60	11	50	21	C	C	D	C	F	C	F	D
Chico Unified	BUTTE	8,854	40	4	20	64	C	C	C	D	D	D	F	D
Elk Grove Unified	SACRAMENTO	45,116	53	16	25	24	C	C	D	D	F	D	C	D
Hayward Unified	ALAMEDA	14,917	69	14	55	8	D	D	D	D	D	C	C	D
Los Angeles Unified	LOS ANGELES	448,542	79	10	75	9	D	D	C	C	F	F	B	D
Milpitas Unified	SANTA CLARA	7,189	38	4	22	9	C	B	C	C	F	F	F	D
Napa Valley Unified	NAPA	13,040	45	2	50	34	C	C	C	C	F	F	D	D
San Diego Unified	SAN DIEGO	81,879	63	11	45	24	C	C	C	C	F	F	D	D

District	County	DEMOGRAPHICS OF STUDENTS TESTED					PERFORMANCE		IMPROVEMENT		GAPS		COLLEGE-READY	OVERALL GRADE
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San Francisco Unified	SAN FRANCISCO	37,232	57	10	23	13	D	B	D	C	F	F	C	D
Stockton Unified	SAN JOAQUIN	26,498	83	11	58	9	D	D	D	D	C	B	F	D
Vacaville Unified	SOLANO	9,383	37	9	28	52	C	D	D	C	D	D	D	D
Inglewood Unified	LOS ANGELES	9,749	83	38	60	0	C	C	D	F				D
Lynwood Unified	LOS ANGELES	11,928	99	6	93	0	D	D	C	D				D
Berkeley Unified	ALAMEDA	6,377	41	24	23	30	D	C	C	C	F	F		D
Davis Joint Unified	YOLO	6,247	19	3	16	60	B	C	D	D	F	F		D
Conejo Valley Unified	VENTURA	16,125	18	2	21	64	B	C	F	F	C	F	D	D
Fairfield-Suisun Unified	SOLANO	16,168	48	22	33	24	D	D	D	C	D	D	D	D
Folsom-Cordova Unified	SACRAMENTO	13,819	33	7	16	60	C	C	D	D	F	D	D	D
Fremont Unified	ALAMEDA	23,588	20	5	15	20	C	C	F	D	F	D	C	D
Lodi Unified	SAN JOAQUIN	21,568	61	9	38	27	D	D	C	C	F	D	D	D
Oceanside Unified	SAN DIEGO	13,828	49	7	57	24	C	C	D	C	D	F	F	D
San Juan Unified	SACRAMENTO	31,520	44	7	17	64	C	C	D	D	F	D	D	D
Antioch Unified	CONTRA COSTA	13,726	52	23	35	24	D	D	D	D	F	C	D	D
Fresno Unified	FRESNO	49,845	90	11	61	13	D	D	C	C	F	D	F	D
Mt. Diablo Unified	CONTRA COSTA	24,742	38	5	34	46	D	D	C	C	F	F	D	D
Palo Alto Unified	SANTA CLARA	8,413	8	3	11	46	B	C	D	F	F	F		D
San Leandro Unified	ALAMEDA	6,337	56	16	43	12	D	D	D	D	F	D	C	D
San Luis Coastal Unified	SAN LUIS OBISPO	5,120	33	2	24	65	C	C	D	F		F		D
Monterey Peninsula Unified	MONTEREY	7,587	56	8	49	24	D	D	C	D	F	F	D	D-
Natomas Unified	SACRAMENTO	8,682	43	24	28	20	D	D	D	D	F	D	D	D-
Novato Unified	MARIN	5,612	33	4	30	54	C	C	D	D	F	F	F	D-
Santa Rosa City Schools/Santa Rosa High	SONOMA	11,793	44	3	43	42	D	D	C	C	F	F	F	D-
West Contra Costa Unified	CONTRA COSTA	20,408	66	22	48	11	D	D	D	D	F	F	F	F

Note: Where grades have not been assigned, districts did not have numerically significant subgroups of African-American, Latino, white, and/or low-income students. For more details about our methodology, see Appendix A.

ABOUT THE EDUCATION TRUST–WEST

The Education Trust—West works for the high academic achievement of all students at all levels pre-k through college. We expose achievement and opportunity gaps that separate students of color and low-income students from other youth, and we identify and advocate for the strategies that will forever close those gaps.

The Education Trust–West

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