Challenged Schools, Remarkable Results:

Three Lessons from California's Highest Achieving High Schools

A Report on Findings from Year Two of the California Best Practices Study
Conducted by Springboard Schools
Fall, 2005

by Ida Oberman

with
Caren Arbeit
Carla Praglin
Suné Goldsteen

Springboard Schools
A network committed to achievement, equity & inquiry

Acknowledgements

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Cleveland High School and Los Angeles Unified School District, Local District 1, central office
El Monte High School and El Monte Union High School District central office
Marysville Charter Academy for the Arts and Marysville Joint Unified School District central office
Middle College High School and Contra Costa Unified School District central office
Los Angeles Center for Enriched Studies and Los Angeles Unified School District, Local District 1, central office
Sherman Oaks Center for Enriched Studies and Los Angeles Unified School District 3, central office
Selma High School and Selma Unified School District central office
Southwest High School and Central Union High School District central office

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Preface: About Best Practices

In the past, educators almost always looked for best practices in classrooms. In fact, when educators say "practice," they are almost always talking about teacher practice. Yet ten years of work at Springboard Schools (and its predecessor, BASRC) argues that administrators, as well as teachers, need to worry about best practices. Equally important are organizational best practices for both schools and school districts. Most examinations of best practices in education have neglected both best practices for leaders and for organizations, but all of these kinds of best practices are turning out to be crucial if we are to create school systems in which good teaching is the norm for every student in every classroom.

Of course, all of these practices are called "best" but in fact what this means is that they are associated with improved performance. W. Edwards Deming, famous as the man who brought "Total Quality Management" to the private sector, taught that improvement is the result of a careful process of seeking out and addressing variations in quality, even small ones. The idea that dramatic improvements in quality could result from the cumulative implementation of many small improvements was key to Deming's approach. This means that "best practice" is the sum total of many "better practices" and that it is always evolving. It also means that in any field that is actively improving, today's "best" practice is likely to be tomorrow's second best. Still, without a systematic effort to identify, understand, and scale up best practices at all these levels of the education system, the broad-scale improvement of public education is impossible.

So, what is known now about best—or at least better—practices beyond the individual classroom? Springboard's first foray into understanding what might constitute best practices for school administrators and for schools as organizations came as part of our work to help schools narrow the achievement gap. Springboard researcher Kiley Walsh began by using test scores to identify one group of gap-closing and another group of non-gap-closing elementary schools. Walsh then used a combination of quantitative and qualitative methodologies to discover systematic differences in school-level practices between these two groups of elementary and middle schools. This approach revealed striking differences between the ways schools organized their reform or improvement work; the way school leaders explained and framed that work; and the ways that teachers worked together.[1] Often, best practices were revealed to be not individual programs or strategies but carefully orchestrated combinations that come together to produce results. Now, in this study, which includes high schools, these findings have been confirmed and expanded.

Finally, best practices only produce good results when well implemented. What is required is a particular combination of perseverance and humility. Perseverance matters—nothing results unless educators and their students are willing to "stay the course." Humility also matters—people need to be willing to adjust, adapt, or even abandon strategies when they don't pan out. All of this argues that this approach is promising, but not that it is easy. A best practice is not a silver bullet. But it—or rather they—are important components of our effort to improve schools.

[1] Walsh Symons, K., *After the Test: Closing the Achievement Gap with Data*, Bay Area School Reform Collaborative, San Francisco, 2004.

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Executive Summary

Overview

- At Southwest High School, a farm community hugging the Mexican border, five times as many students scored at the advanced or proficient level as their Average Yearly Progress (AYP) target. This result defies expectations for high schools with many low-income and English-learning students.
- English language learners at Garden Grove's Bolsa Grande High School outperformed comparable schools across the state by 138% in English language arts and 112% in Math. This is despite the fact that students at Bolsa speak twenty-nine different languages and nearly two-thirds are eligible for the free- or reduced-price lunch program.
- Last year, in Los Angeles, Cleveland High School's Academic Performance Index (API) reflected a 69-point improvement overall, and the API for Latino students increased almost twice as much—by 126 points. One would never guess that some of these students spend over two hours on the bus and when they arrive, the school is huge—serving almost 4,000 students.

As California's population changes, more and more of California's schools serve populations like these. These students will become the workers that will fuel the economy, and the voters that will determine the future of the Golden State. But too often, these are the kinds of children our schools shortchange.

Yet there are schools that are getting notably better results even with the most challenging students. What are these schools—including the ones cited above and others like them—doing right? What our schools need today is not one more failing grade but rather a practical plan to get better. We don't have to reinvent the wheel. The raw materials for such a plan are right here, in our own backyards.

This report examines the strategies that have helped some California high schools achieve high marks despite significant challenges.

The Challenge

In the year 1998, California began a massive experiment that focused on testing students and holding teachers and administrators accountable for results. The goal: dramatic, system-wide improvement. Schools' performance began to be measured using California's Academic Performance Index (API). In 2001, with passage of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), the focus became even sharper. NCLB required that all students be proficient in reading and math by the year 2014. "Annual Yearly Progress"—or AYP—measured schools' progress toward this ambitious goal. All subgroups of students had to make progress every year toward this goal of proficiency for all.

Now, in 2005, tests have been adjusted, curricula redesigned, and accountability measures debated—but overall, the results can seem discouraging. For example, the Education Trust reports that Latino eleventh graders

typically read below the level of white seventh graders. A recent report by California's nonpartisan Legislative Analyst estimated that dropout rates in California's largest urban districts are above 50%. And the California State University system reports that large numbers of students who do earn a diploma still need remedial courses before they are ready for college-level studies.

Yet some schools are doing better. *The California Best Practices Study* is one of the first to use California's new tests to identify our most successful high schools and then to take the crucial next step of launching an intensive investigation of what they are doing right. The study reveals a set of strategies that enable more high school students—of every ethnicity and English-language ability—to succeed. It shows—in detail—how some schools are beating the odds. This approach makes this study essential reading not only for school and district leaders, but for everyone willing to play a role in helping schools get better, rather than just hoping they do so.

The Study

Springboard Schools is conducting the three-year California Best Practices Study as part of a nation-wide investigation sponsored by the National Center for Educational Accountability. Year two of the study—just completed—examined high schools state-wide serving high percentages of English learners, low-income students, and students of color. It began by identifying over 100 schools in the state that were "beating the odds" by doing better—sometimes far better—at getting students to the challenging "proficient" level on the California Standards Test than would be predicted on the basis of their student populations. Springboard then examined a much broader set of data about these schools, from dropout rates to both API and AYP, as well as the rates at which students complete challenging coursework and master English. On the basis of this complete picture we selected ten of the best of these schools and subjected them to in-depth, on-site analysis. In order to ensure that the strategies identified really were the ones associated with better results, Springboard did a similarly detailed analysis of the work underway in a group of demographically similar schools achieving only average results.

The main finding is understood by every teacher and parent: what matters in schools is good teaching. However, this study goes beyond that platitude to discover how good schools and school districts go about ensuring that good teaching is the norm in every classroom for every child.

Lessons from Our Own Backyards

These California schools achieving surprising results have found and applied a few key strategies to enable teachers to do their best work. Our most successful high schools serving our most challenging populations:

1. ***Use consistent curriculum and frequent diagnostic tests***
   This means they give teachers timely and useful data on who knows what and who needs what.

2. ***Find and adopt "best practices"***
   This means they use what has been proven to work instead of asking teachers to reinvent the wheel.

3. ***Invest in improvement***
   This means they spend scarce resources, including money, time, and energy, to provide teachers with time to work together, tools to do their job, and coaching on implementation in their own classrooms.

These strategies may sound simple, but they are challenging, and perhaps even revolutionary, because they call into question many commonly held beliefs about teaching and about how schools work.

A Closer Look at Three Key Strategies

1. **Use consistent curriculum and frequent diagnostic tests**
   Traditionally, the high school teacher creates lessons, invents his or her own tests, and uses those tests to determine grades. But in high-performing high schools, this study found that teachers teaching the same course use the same curriculum, give the same tests, and work toward the same standards. They look at test results together and use these results to determine which students need more help. Then they work with colleagues to discuss how to provide that help. These frequent assessments are particularly important for English language learners and for students reading below grade level.

   Many worry that these approaches are taking the creativity out of teaching. It appears that teachers in these schools focus their creativity less on *what* to teach and more on *how*. Teachers in these schools often report feeling not less, but rather more like professionals, because for the first time in their lives they are part of a professional community that is working together toward success.

2. **Find and adopt "best practices"**
   Traditionally, teachers work in isolation, unaware of the successes or failures of their peers. But in schools getting the best results, neither teachers nor administrators waste time reinventing the wheel. They use the internet to find standards-aligned curriculum and assessments. Sites like Just for the Kids-California make it easy for educators to find schools getting better results with similar populations and challenges. Then they call or visit those schools to learn what teachers there are doing.

   But the search for best practices doesn't stop at the classroom door: One of the key findings of the California Best Practices Study is that meeting the needs of the lowest performing groups of students requires not just classroom-level changes, but also school-and district office-level strategies, programs, and interventions. This finding reveals that the definition of "best practices"—which traditionally meant classroom-level practices or programs—needs to be dramatically expanded to include every aspect of administration, teaching, and testing. Discovering best practices makes it possible to increase effectiveness, and the children benefit.

3. **Invest in improvement**
   "Just do it" may work in sports, but improving schools requires more than just asking teachers to try harder. Of course, teachers and administrators in both average-performing and high-performing sites do work hard—but they work hard on different things. They also spend their limited resources, including scarce time, money and energy, differently. The high-performing, high-poverty schools invest in providing teachers with access to new ideas and time to collaborate with peers to implement them. They hire coaches to help teachers teach and administrators lead; and their school districts invest in data systems that provide test scores and other information to teachers almost immediately. Some argue that these investments are "too far from the classroom." In fact they are essential to long-term success.

Conclusion

The private sector has repeatedly demonstrated the power of "benchmarking"— identifying and investigating the highest performers and using their ideas to fuel improvement. Consistent, standards-aligned tests now make this approach possible in education. Using test data this way may turn out to be every bit as important as using it to motivate people.

What we find when we begin this benchmarking process is not silver bullets or a few effective programs, but strategies that take hard, careful work. Yet what is most encouraging is that we are discovering not theories, but strategies that actually work to improve our schools, and we are finding them right here in our own backyards.

All High Performers Exceed AYP Targets – But By How Much?

Challenged Schools, Remarkable Results
School and Subgroup Performance Against 2005 AYP Targets*

	School Demographics					English Language Arts					Mathematics				
						AYP Target for No Child Left Behind: *22%*					AYP Target for No Child Left Behind: *21%*				
School (District)	**School Population**	**FRLP**	**ELL**	**Hispanic**	**African American**	**Entire School**	**FRLP**	**ELL**	**Hispanic**	**African American**	**Entire School**	**FRLP**	**ELL**	**Hispanic**	**African American**
California State Average	976	49.0%	25.2%	46.8%	8.0%	41.9%	26.6%	21.6%	26.8%	28.8%	44.9%	32.9%	31.6%	32.6%	27.4%
Average Performing High School Control Group: Mean	*1,810*	45.7%	17.5%	*50.2%*	*10.0%*	48.0%	31.3%	31.1%	32.4%	33.3%	41.8%	32.0%	31.4%	30.6%	17.0%
High Performing High School Group: Mean	*1,844*	54.5%	22.3%	56.2%	8.7%	**54.1%**	**45.3%**	**31.5%**	**45.6%**	**58.5%**	**54.6%**	**48.1%**	**38.7%**	**44.8%**	**53.0%**
Central High (Central Union High School District)	*1,706*	*56.8%*	35.4%	*87.7%*	2.5%	41.9%	**31.6%**	28.3%	**38.4%**	**	**45.2%**	**40.8%**	**34.1%**	**42.9%**	**
Southwest High (Central Union High School District)	*2,243*	*48.2%*	33.1%	*83.5%*	1.6%	46.1%	31.2%	30.2%	**42.1%**	**	**47.3%**	**37.2%**	**36.9%**	**44.2%**	**
Sherman Oaks (Los Angeles Unifed)	*1,787*	40.8%	10.8%	*35.1%*	*8.8%*	**67.1%**	**53.0%**	**39.3%**	**52.5%**	**52.2%**	**64.3%**	**49.6%**	**40.7%**	**46.0%**	**41.3%**
Cleveland (Los Angeles Unifed)	*3,754*	*68.3%*	24.9%	*56.3%*	*9.0%*	**50.3%**	**38.2%**	27.0%	**34.6%**	**38.3%**	**58.1%**	**48.0%**	**41.6%**	**43.4%**	**45.9%**
LA Center for Enriched Studies (Los Angeles Unifed)	1,626	31.7%	0.8%	*17.5%*	*36.3%*	**68.2%**	**57.7%**	**	**52.3%**	**57.9%**	**55.7%**	**47.6%**	**	**44.2%**	**38.9%**
Selma High (Selma USD)	1,606	*63.5%*	20.8%	*75.9%*	0.4%	33.0%	24.8%	27.5%	27.9%	**	41.8%	**36.2%**	**38.1%**	**35.6%**	**
El Monte High (El Monte Union HSD)	2,109	*79.8%*	38.4%	*80.7%*	0.3%	33.0%	**30.8%**	29.7%	26.6%	**	35.7%	**34.8%**	**34.8%**	28.2%	**
Bolsa Grande High (Garden Grove USD)	1,575	*65.8%*	41.9%	*35.5%*	1.6%	**55.0%**	**52.1%**	**42.3%**	**45.5%**	**	**59.7%**	**59.4%**	**54.1%**	**39.4%**	**
Middle College High (West Contra Costa USD)	266	***	2.8%	*35.2%*	*23.7%*	**91.0%**	**95.7%**	**	**96.2%**	**85.7%**	**88.1%**	**91.3%**	**	**84.6%**	**85.7%**
Lincoln High (San Jose USD)	1,768	35.8%	13.9%	*54.6%*	2.6%	**55.0%**	**37.9%**	27.4%	**40.3%**	**	**49.8%**	**36.1%**	29.6%	**39.0%**	**

Source: California Department of Education http://www.cde.ca.gov/index.asp

Italics indicates the school stats that exceed state or district average

Bold indicates that the designated group outperforms the control

*No Child Left Behind requirements for 2005 state that 22% of California high school students reach proficient or above in English Language Arts on the AYP and 21% reach proficient or above in Mathematics. This chart compares the proficiency rates of the high-achieving challenged high schools in this study against the state average and against the control group of average, challenged high schools.

**No Statistically significant student group
*** Data not reported by the state

How the study was conducted

The internet and powerful desktop computers, combined with the availability of multiple years of data on school performance, have made new kinds of research into schools possible. As often happens, new tools reveal new questions as well as new answers. Springboard Schools was founded as a school reform organization, not for research. But the federal *No Child Left Behind* legislation created an unprecedented appetite for information about the strategies that lay behind improved performance. In response, Springboard partnered with the National Center for Educational Accountability (NCEA) and its partner, Just for the Kids–California. NCEA was sponsoring a study—which they envisioned as ultimately involving all fifty states—to explore the work underway in a rigorously-selected group of high-performing, high poverty schools. Springboard volunteered to conduct this three-year study in California, and the California Best Practices Study was born. Spanning three years (2004-2006), this initiative spotlights the effective practices of elementary schools (Year 1), high schools (Year 2) and middle schools (Year 3) that show high levels of student achievement, with particular focus on high achievement among their English learners, students of color and students living in poverty. The study also includes a comparison group of "average performers." This report on high schools reflects year two of the study.

What we hoped to learn

A host of studies in recent years have documented the poor performance of this nation's high schools. Dropout rates are too high. Too few high school graduates are ready for college. Other nations produce far more scientists and engineers than we do. A second group of studies has sought out counter-examples, seeking so-called "existence proofs"—evidence that, "it doesn't have to be this way." The good news is that these studies have consistently found schools, including those serving challenging populations, which are doing better.

The current study falls into a third category of research studies that build on the first two types. These studies ask: what are the most successful schools doing differently? What sets them apart from similar schools getting only average results? These are the questions this study is intended to answer.

How we chose which high schools to study

Working with parameters established by the National Center for Educational Accountability and data analysis from Just For The Kids–California, Springboard Schools used a three step process to choose fifteen high schools for study:

We began with all high schools in California. We selected one group of "high performing" and one group of "average" performing schools. We categorized schools as high performing or average by looking at student performance for the past three years on the California Standards Test (CST), at enrollment in courses identified by the California Department of Education as challenging courses, and at the percentage of

students meeting A-G requirements for admission to the California State University and University of California systems. The process worked like this:

Step One: We selected an initial group of schools that were in the top third of the state in performance on the California Standards Test and had met all of their AYP targets for growth, both overall, and in the various subgroups of students. In contrast, average-performing schools were just that, average. Not all of the average schools met all of their AYP targets, and they had test scores falling between the 40th and the 55th percentile.

High-performing candidates for the final study also had to have at least one of the following:

- Above average enrollments in "good courses" (as identified by the California Department of Education) for 2 out of the last 3 years
- Better than expected percentage of students meeting A-G requirements for university admission; and
- Better than expected percentage of students reaching proficient on the CST in Math.

Step Two: We then analyzed student demographics to identify those schools that were "beating the odds" by out-performing schools serving similar student bodies. The demographic factors we considered included: degree of poverty as measured by enrollment in the free- and reduced-price lunch program (FRLP), percentages of English Language Learners, and ethnic group enrollments.

Step Three: For the final study, we picked high schools from the northern, central, and southern parts of the state, and tried to ensure that we had a group of schools that reflected the full range of the challenges facing California schools today.

How we collected the data

After sites were selected, research teams visited each site. Using a carefully-structured set of questions, researchers interviewed school district central office administrators, school leaders, and teachers. Research teams also reviewed a comprehensive set of documents reflecting work at district, school, department, and classroom levels. Finally, we collected the actual tools and materials used in the schools.

How we analyzed the data

The study employed the framework of the National Center for Educational Accountability to examine best practices in the following key areas

- Curriculum and Academic Goals
- Staff Selection, Leadership, and Capacity Building
- Instructional Programs, Practices, and Arrangements
- Monitoring: Compilation, Analysis, and Use of Data
- Recognition, Intervention, and Adjustment

How we packaged the findings

A chief objective of this study was to be useful to practitioners. With that end in mind, we built the *California Best Practices Framework for High Schools,* wrote a case study for each of the sites, and gathered and indexed specific tools and practices those high-performing sites used. All are accessible through the Springboard website: www.SpringboardSchools.org.

Final note on study design

Finally, we also want to acknowledge the limits of this study. First, this study describes practices that appear to be associated with high performance; it does not offer conclusive causal analysis of how these disproportionately high performing sites reached these levels of achievement. Second, the study provides a snapshot of the work underway in ten high performers at a particular moment in time. It does not offer a description of how they got there. Finally, each strategy should be seen as part of a larger whole. Schools are complex systems, and particular practices and strategies often depend on others. Readers are encouraged to think of these case studies as portraits of high-performing *systems* rather than as a list of disconnected "best practices."

What We Found:

Lessons from Our Own Backyards

These California high schools achieving surprising results have found and applied a few key strategies to enable teachers to do their best work. These strategies may sound simple, but they are challenging– even revolutionary—because they call into question many commonly held beliefs about teaching and about how schools work. These high performing schools do three things: They use consistent curricula and frequent diagnostic tests; they find and adopt "best practices" that range from curriculum to teaching strategies to school organization and how to set up the district data system; and they invest in a systematic process of improving the quality of teaching.

A Closer Look

1. **Use consistent curriculum and frequent diagnostic tests**
   It makes perfect sense to use diagnostic tests to give teachers timely and useful data on who knows what and who needs what. But traditionally, the high school teacher creates a teaching plan, invents his or her own tests, and uses those tests to determine grades. Yet in high-performing, high-poverty schools, this study found that teachers teaching the same course teach the same curriculum, give the same tests, and work toward the same standards. They use test results to determine which students need more help, and they meet frequently with colleagues to discuss how to provide that help. These frequent assessments are particularly important for English language learners and for students reading below grade level.

   Are these approaches taking the creativity out of teaching? It appears that teachers in these schools focus their creativity less on *what* to teach and more on *how*. These changes are dramatic: observers of school reform efforts often underestimate the difficulty of getting California's approximately 300,000 teachers to think differently about their profession. But the common goals, common curriculum, and common expectations for teacher practice turn out to be the foundation for a new kind of professionalism among teachers. In this new view, being a professional means not being autonomous, but rather being part of a professional community that works together toward success.

2. **Find and adopt "best practices"**
   This means that teachers and administrators seek out and use proven strategies rather than struggling to reinvent the wheel. Of course, this too is new: in the past, most teachers, most principals, and even most superintendents worked in isolation, unaware of the successes or failures of their peers. But in schools getting the best results, neither teachers nor administrators waste time reinventing the wheel. They use the internet to find the best resources, including standards-aligned curriculum materials and assessment items. They use a website like Just for the Kids-California, which makes it

easy for educators to find schools with similar populations and challenges that are getting better results. Then they call or visit those schools to learn what teachers there are doing.

But the search for best practices doesn't stop at the classroom door: One of the key findings of the California Best Practices Study is that meeting the needs of the lowest performing groups of students requires not just classroom-level changes, but also school- and district office-level strategies, programs, and interventions. This finding reveals that the definition of "best practices"—which traditionally meant classroom-level practices or programs—needs to be dramatically expanded to include every aspect of administration, teaching, and testing. Discovering best practices makes it possible to increase effectiveness, often dramatically—and the children benefit.

3. **Invest in improvement**
"Just do it" may work in sports, but improving schools requires more than just asking teachers to try harder. In fact, teachers and administrators in both average-performing and high-performing sites do work hard—but on different things. They also spend their limited funds differently. The high-performing, high-poverty schools invest their resources on providing teachers with access to new ideas and time to collaborate with peers to implement them. This means these schools spend money, time, and energy to provide teachers with time to work together, tools to do their job, and coaching on implementation in their own classrooms. In addition, they hire coaches to help teachers teach and administrators lead; and their school districts invest in data systems that provide test scores and other information to teachers almost immediately. Some argue that these investments are "too far from the classroom." In fact they are essential to long-term success.

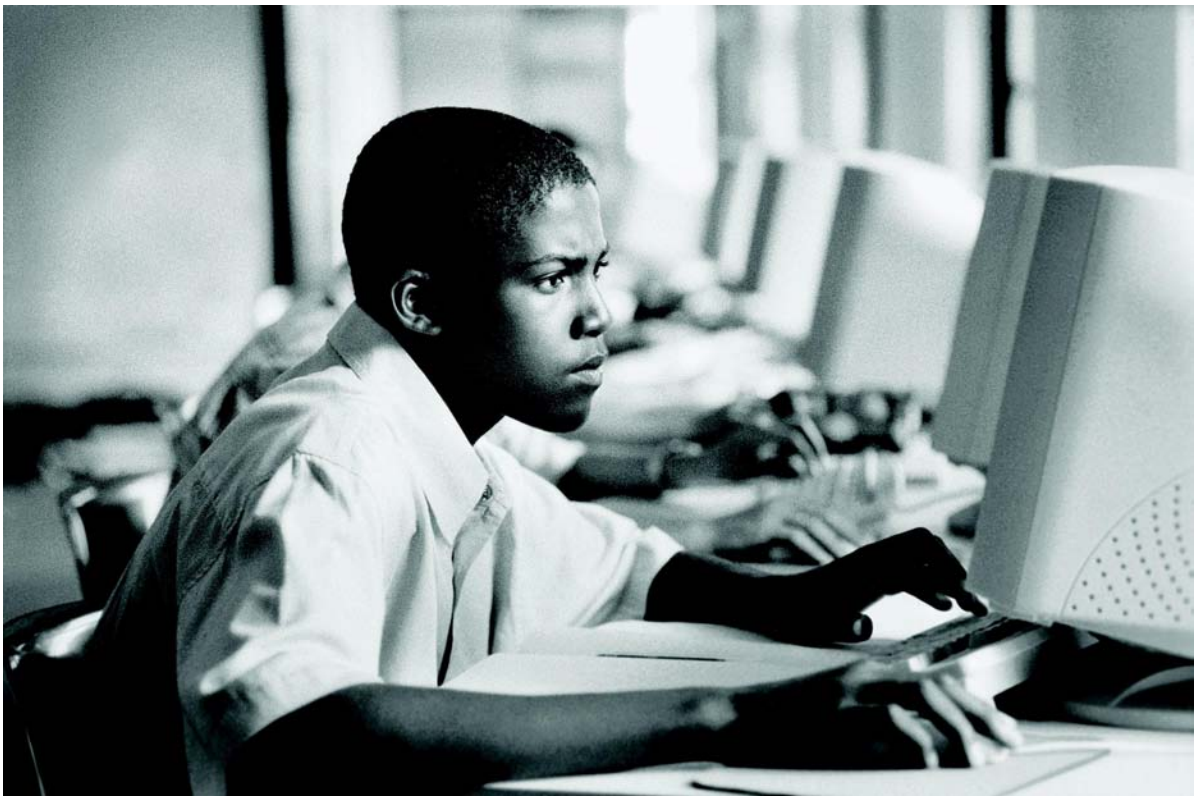
What It Takes: the Implementation Challenge

Perhaps surprisingly, this study finds that average-performing districts and schools are using many of the same individual programs and general strategies as are high-performers. In fact, one of the most striking findings that emerged is the very high degree of apparent agreement among both groups as to both the specific programs and the general approaches they believe they should use in order to further improve teaching and learning. Both groups of schools use the same adopted texts for English Language Arts and both set goals, develop staff, look at data—or, at least, both groups do things that they describe using these terms.

A closer look reveals that behind widespread agreement about a general approach lie significant differences, differences that are an important part of best practices. What matters for improving teaching and learning is apparently both *that* a combination of elements comes together and *how* they do so. The differences between the way average-performers and high-performers combine these elements appear to take three forms: differences in *intensity*, differences in *coherence;* and differences in *focus* and willingness to stay the course, that is, to sustain focus over time.

- *Intensity.* Average-performing schools often engage in the same strategies that characterize high-performers, but they do so with less intensity. Departments in average- performers may have regularly scheduled collaboration time once a semester or once a month rather than weekly; they may use common assessments and talk about data occasionally rather than regularly; and their principals, and colleagues may visit classrooms "whenever they get a chance" but not every week. Differences in intensity of effort do not necessarily mean that people are not trying hard: often they are. But they may have stopped short of working hard on the hardest things, such as ensuring that every teacher in every classroom is actively engaged in improving his or her practice to teach every student in the room. Apparently, getting robust results requires that schools adopt the right prescription—but also at the right dosage.

- *Coherence:* Average-performing schools often understand that "alignment" between standards, curriculum, and tests is important. But average-performers are less likely than high-performers to have done a really detailed analysis of the degree to which their assessments actually reflect their curriculum and subject matter standards at a given grade level. They are less likely to make sure that all their assessments are aligned from one grade level to the next and that the high school teachers and middle school teachers are aware of what the other group teaches. In sum, "the devil is in the details," and best practices include hard



work by both school and district leaders to ensure that strategies and tools are coherent and aligned not just in general terms, but at the level of these devilish details.

- *Focus:* Average-performing schools are more likely than high-performers to have adopted multiple strategies and goals. This mistake—which school leaders explain by saying "but, we have to do everything"—can lead to both lack of intensity and lack of coherence. If intensity is about depth and degree of penetration to the classroom and coherence is about linkages across the system, then focus is about school and district leaders' willingness to pick a few things that matter and give teachers the support they need to become expert at them. Thus, focus requires perseverance and willingness to "stay the course." School leaders are often buffeted by the multiple demands of a vocal community, the changing priorities of state or local political leaders, and the latest fad in education. The demand for results contributes to this by causing leaders to cast about for quick fixes. But best practices can only become "best" when done with intense, sustained focus.

Case Studies

The section that follows describes what the three key strategies described above look like in five different schools. In many ways these schools are dramatically different. They range in size from almost 4,000 students to less than 300, they serve student populations that are challenging in quite different ways, and they are located in settings that run the gamut from urban to rural. Three of these schools are traditional "comprehensive" high schools, while the other two are smaller, more "experimental" schools. One of these is a charter high school while another is an example of what is called the "middle college" model in which at-risk high school students take both high school and community college courses. Each of these schools is high performing in that, by multiple measures, it is beating the odds by outperforming other schools serving similar populations. And while each of these schools is different, there is a remarkable degree of consistency in the strategies they are using to improve.

I. Use of Data at Southwest High School

The District

Central Union High School District (CUHSD) is located in the agricultural hub of the Imperial Valley in the city of El Centro, only eleven miles from Mexicali, Mexico. Seasonal workers and their families are drawn to this region by its twelve-month growing season. In the last decade, the community has experienced explosive growth in housing and commercial enterprises, which has strained its infrastructure, including schools, which have become overcrowded.

Eighty-three percent of district students are Latino, almost double the state average of 45%. Ten percent are white, 2% are African American, and 2% Asian American. According to the 2000 census, a language other than English is spoken in over 70% of El Centro homes. Due to a high rate of reclassification to Fluent English Proficient (FEP) only 35.5% of students in the district are currently identified as English Learners. Nonetheless, this is a higher percentage than the statewide average of 25%. Of the EL population, Spanish-speaking English Learners comprise 99%.

CUHSD students come from families which have a significantly higher rate of poverty and higher unemployment rates than the state as a whole. Median income in 2003 in the county was $13,700 compared to the state average of $65,093 (http://www.census.gov/hhes/income/4person.html).

The School

With an enrollment of 2,118, Southwest High School serves a student body that is 84% Latino, 12% white, 2% African American, and 2% Asian American. Thirty-three percent of the students are identified as English Learners. Forty-eight percent of students are eligible for the Free- or Reduced-price Lunch Program (FRLP). This figure is particularly stark, as FRLP does not typically show the true extent of poverty among high schoolers. Many high school students are not comfortable filling out the form and claiming the funds, and thus go uncounted.

The Results

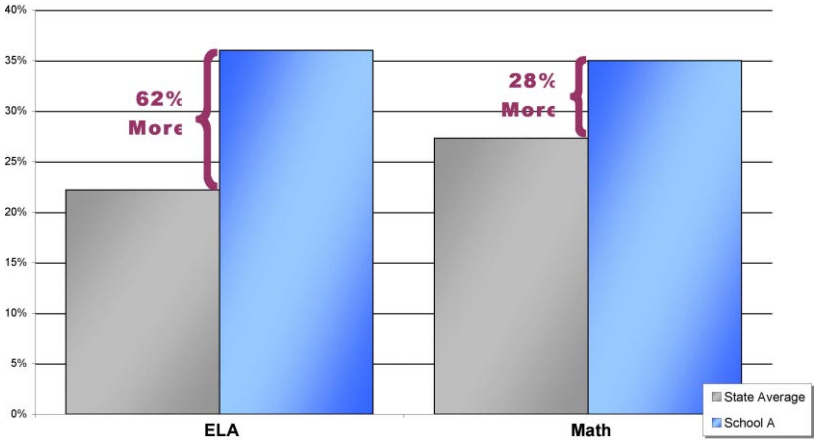
Though today this school seems an island of excellence in the county, Southwest was not always exemplary. Six years ago, Southwest High School was on the state's Program Improvement list with an API of 526 and a similar schools rank of 1. But since then Southwest has become a California Distinguished School with an API of 667. The achievement gap is narrowing and all subgroups met their growth targets. Compared to schools with similar demographics, Southwest is a 10 out of 10 in the state ranking. On the California Standards Test, all subgroups' performance, with the exception of whites, has improved in English Language Arts and all subgroups' performance, including that of whites, has shown gains in mathematics.

On the California English Language Development Test, English Learners have made

significant advances in the rate at which they move from Intermediate to Early Advanced levels. In addition, Southwest has made marked improvement in the percentage of students re-designated as fluent English proficient, outperforming the state average. The campus also has shown a strong record in advancing students to college. College rates for Southwest High School are high: 90% of graduates go on to a four-year college or university or a two-year community college.

***Joe Evangelist**, Principal, Southwest High School*

Southwest High School
Latino Students Outperform State Peers

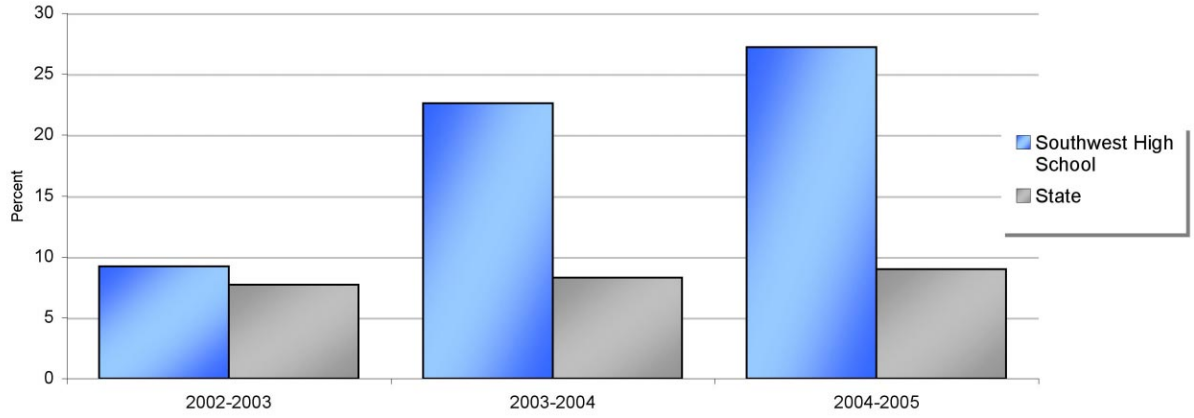


The School: 2,118 students.
84% Latino, 12% White.
33% English Learner.
48% Economically Disadvantaged.

The Results:

- 5 times as many students at advanced or proficient as 2004 AYP target.
- Outperforms the state by over 14 percent in the rate of redesignation to English fluency.

Percent of English Learner Students Redesignated to Fluent English Proficient 2003-2005



All data from the California Department of Education (http://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/), unless otherwise noted.

The Strategies: Use of data

In 1999, Southwest High School placed itself on the state's Immediate Intervention/Under-Performing Schools Program (II/USP) list.[2] This decision was led by the district office, and Central Union High School, the other comprehensive high school in the district, became an II/USP school as well. The decision to "accept being put in public view" as low achieving, as Assistant Superintendent Sheri Hart recalls, was not easy. The district superintendent convened cabinet and site leaders to consider the II/USP funds as "an opportunity to seize rather than a bullet to dodge." Upon careful deliberation, the school and district leaders concluded that the additional pressure and support available through II/USP—as well as the additional leverage which it gave them to develop and execute an improvement plan on a set timeline—would help them improve.

Frequent Common Assessments

At the beginning of this process, Southwest was like most high schools. Teachers invented their own tests, administered them at different times and did not share or discuss results with one another. But the district embraced the use of frequent common assessments and was willing to invest the resources that II/USP provided in this strategy. CUHSD used another portion of this funding to hire an external coach. Says one district employee, "All along the way, he was beside us, ahead of us, behind us, helping us do the hard work of starting to use data to guide our work." The district also provided two academic coaches, one for each of its two comprehensive high schools, and assigned them to help teachers learn to use data to make instructional decisions. The district made a parallel investment in the district data system to ensure that educators had quick and timely access to data.

A major goal was to shorten the amount of time teachers wait for information. Compared to the typical four-month wait for standardized test results from the state, getting test data back within the week, sometimes within the same day, feels almost magical to teachers. Due to district investment in software, quarterly assessments are now electronically scored and results are available soon after. One teacher marveled, "Waiting for the results is like watching TV during a presidential election." As the tests were run, the results popped up on each teacher's monitor.

Leaders in the district believed that frequent assessments would be far more useful if they were aligned across classrooms. Yet the introduction of common assessments was still challenging: According to an academic coach, "One of our hardest-won accomplishments is our common assessments. Teachers were reluctant to give up their autonomy, and they had little experience with standards." But the use of common assessments helped lay the foundation for teachers to work together in new ways. Says Principal Joe Evangelist, "With the common assessments, we are striving for collaboration within departments."

Southwest High School students along with other students in the district now take these common assessments every nine weeks. English Learners also take common assessments every quarter. These tests measure mastery of the standards taught in each subject area. The department's "content teams" (the entire faculty teaching one course), with support from the academic coach, regularly adjust the tests to make sure they are aligned to standards. Teachers now receive a color-coded one-page profile of every class: students coded in green are scoring at proficient or advanced, yellow is for students whose scores are borderline, and red indicates below basic or far below basic scores. A student with all red scores is in need of intervention. A class with the majority of the scores in red needs to be taught differently than one with the same title but mostly green scores. This strategy, which most elementary teachers would recognize, seems just as useful at the high school level.

The frequent common assessments also provide feedback to counselors about how well a student's courses are working for her.

[2] II/USP was in effect a voluntary program at this time. Schools that opted in received additional funding but also became subject to an additional level of accountability.

Using Data:

Average-performing schools miss the mark while high-performers are on target

Missing the Mark	On Target
Schools or individual teachers are expected to create their own assessments; there is no district-wide coordination.	The district provides assessments including formative, diagnostic, and progress-monitoring assessments that together reflect the standards and the adopted curriculum.
Student data is reviewed in the fall and rarely throughout the year.	Through regular meetings reviewing student data, district leaders hold school leaders accountable for helping students reach clearly articulated goals.
Principals rarely review data with teachers with an eye for adjusting lessons to help their students reach clearly articulated goals.	Through regular meetings reviewing student data, school leaders hold teachers accountable to help their students reach clearly articulated goals. Teachers hold school and district leaders accountable for providing them with the support they need.
Teachers do not adjust instruction based on assessment data or use data to evaluate new practices for success.	Teachers collect common data and use it to plan curriculum, differentiate instruction and then reevaluate students quickly to determine if new practices bring about desired results. Special focus is given to English learners and special education students.
District central office does not support the use of an observation tool to collect data about the quality of instruction.	District central office supports the use of an observation tool to collect data on teacher practice and to assess the quality of instruction. Teachers use this data as part of their collaborative work on improving teaching.

This is especially important for English Learners. English Learners in the district are placed in one of three programs: Mainstream, Structured English Immersion or Alternative (bilingual). The frequent feedback allows counselors to assess whether the student is successful in handling her class load or needs a different placement.

User-Friendly Data for Teachers

District and school-level academic coaches make sure that the data teachers receive is in an easily digestible form. These coaches were drawn from the ranks of veteran respected teachers at the site and this investment proved crucial. Coaches helped teachers to both understand what the data was saying and also to work together with colleagues to take action to address the problems the data revealed.

The user-friendly management system at CUHSD means minimal technical wording and a clear layout so teachers can easily track how students are doing. It includes:

- The class score
- The standards
- The assessment item
- The percent that scored 'proficient' on the standard

In addition, the clear format allows all teachers—not just those teaching English Language Development classes—to see key data on English Learners. This is consistent with the district's stated philosophy: English Learners are everybody's students. Thus, all teachers are provided the following data on English Learners: the student's name, grade, GPA, special education designation, language designation, English Learner program, U.S. school entry date, CELDT scores, CST scores, CAHSEE scores and grades in English and Math.

This reporting enables teachers to see instantly which students are prepared for the California Standards Test at the end of the year and to understand to what extent their own students are proficient on the California standards for their grade level. CST scores, when they finally arrive, rarely feel like a surprise. Perhaps more importantly, the data system helps teachers to group and regroup their students for intervention purposes, since they can easily sort their classes by performance bands or group all the students who need more help with a particular standard.

Collecting Data about Teacher Practice

Though most schools collect data about students, Southwest is somewhat unusual in collecting data about teacher practice as well. Academic coaches began by collecting data that would paint a picture of what kind of teaching was already happening in classrooms. Of course, teachers were nervous that this data would impact their performance evaluations, but the district defined the internal coach's role as working on improvement, and made it clear that the principal and assistant principal would do the teachers' evaluations. Anonymity was also important at the start: individual teachers received feedback on their performance but when whole departments met to look at data, it was presented in the aggregate.

With these assurances in place, Southwest staff began to engage in an exercise they came to call "Data in a Day." This process yields data on instructional practices, student engagement and levels of thinking, and the

connection between the teaching and curriculum standards and classroom climate. The entire process takes one school day and is conducted by teachers and administrators themselves. Classroom visits take 25 minutes per class and are highly structured. After the visit, the observers discuss and compare what each has seen. After they come to consensus, the coach gives feedback to teachers individually and aggregates it for department chairs. By the 2004-05 school year, all departments at Southwest were routinely looking together at this data by department. Cross-department comparisons allow them to see in which department's students are most engaged and how much time students are asked to think analytically.

II. Input on Best Practices: Cleveland High School

The District

The nation's second largest school district, Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), serves over 747,000 students in grades K-12. LAUSD is comprised of 693 schools—63 of which are high schools and seven that serve grades K-12. The students are ethnically diverse: the largest group is Latino (73%), followed by 12% African American, 9% white, 4% Asian American, and 2% Filipino. Forty-four percent of students in the district are English Learners, and just over half are eligible for the Free- or Reduced-Price Lunch Program.

The School

A Mixed enrollment policy governs student enrollment at Cleveland High. Students at Cleveland are drawn primarily from the Reseda, Winnetka, and Northridge areas. Other students from Local District 1 attend the residential school or the Humanities Magnet, one of the small learning communities at Cleveland. A third group of students, who live in areas with overenrolled high schools, are bussed to Cleveland from other parts of Los Angeles. The result is that twenty-five percent of the 3,669 students enrolled at Cleveland are English Learners; fifty-six percent are Latino; nine percent are African American; nineteen percent are white; and twelve percent are Asian American.

The Results

Extremely large high schools like Cleveland have not been places where people expect to see a rise in student achievement. Yet

***Allan Weiner**, Principal, Cleveland High School*

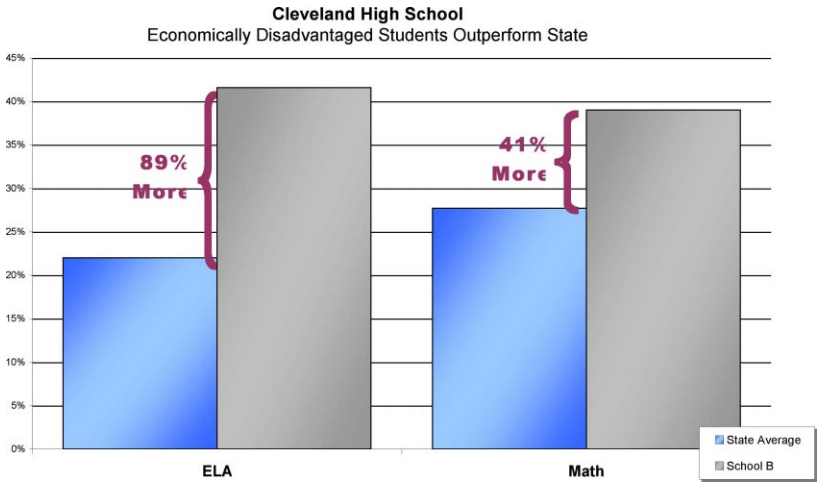
Cleveland is raising achievement overall and is also narrowing the achievement gap.

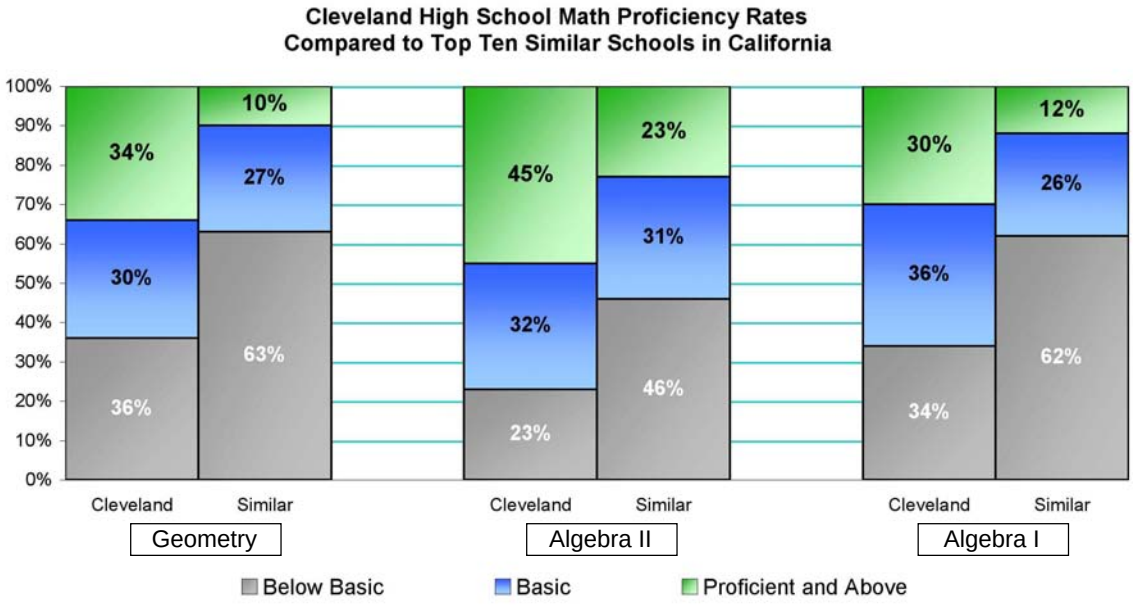
Cleveland has shown significant gains on both the Academic Performance Index (API) and Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) metric over the last three years. It was on the state's II/USP list in 1999. The school's 2004 API reflects an overall 69-point improvement for the period, with all student sub-groups making progress. Latino students' API scores showed a sharp increase of 126 points. The school is consistently meeting its AYP goals, with steady increases in the percentage of students in all major subgroups scoring proficient in both English Language Arts and Math. In addition, English Learners are making great strides towards English proficiency. The California English Language Development Test (CELDT) shows significant numbers of English Learners moving up from *intermediate* to *upper advanced*. In 2005, Cleveland was recognized by the governor as a California Distinguished High School. Also, in 2005 it was the highest

The School: 3,669 students. 56% Latino, 19% White, 12% Asian American, 9% African American, 24% English Learner. 68% Economically Disadvantaged.

The Results:

- 5-6 times as many students at advanced or proficient as 2004 AYP target.
- Outperforms the top 10 demographically similar schools by 17% in Algebra I, 22% in Algebra II, and 24% in Geometry.





Cleveland High School Math Proficiency Rates Compared to Top Ten Similar Schools in California
Source: Just for the Kids California, www.jftk-ca.org

performer in Los Angeles Unified on the California Test in Algebra 2, Geometry, and High School Math.

The Strategies: Accessing New Knowledge Together

At Cleveland, the label, "needing improvement" is not considered derogatory. To the contrary, seeking improvement has been made part of everyday business. Much of Cleveland's success stems from its establishment of professional learning communities for teachers. Department meetings have become forums in which teachers share knowledge and solve problems. Teachers typically use these weekly meetings to share instructional strategies, revise and review their agreed-upon sets of "power standards" (key standards for each department), adjust curriculum guides, develop benchmark assessments and common instructional materials, and assess the effectiveness of both in-class and out-of-class interventions to aid struggling students. Together, teachers map out, course by course, what standards they are teaching, which materials, including supplementary texts, they plan to use, any scaffolding strategies they need to include for students who are English Learners or are at different levels, and a time frame for covering the material (see Standards-Based Teaching and Learning Matrix). One department chair stressed how much she appreciates "the opportunities to collaborate and convene, the freedom to explore, create, and do something, and at the same time to incorporate the standards based content."

When teachers go to conferences, they go together. Cleveland teachers generally eschew one-shot workshops, which they view as ineffective, but when they do go to conferences, they go together. In this way, conferences serve not as field trips for individual educators but places where teachers are exposed to new ideas and lay the foundation for applying them.

Teachers work together to develop standards-based curricula. Teachers regularly review instructional materials and other resources to find and incorporate standards-aligned curricula, assessment items, instructional strategies, and best practice research. The learning community structures allow teachers to meet in groups small enough to get the work done. One department chair describes his faculty's appetite for new knowledge as "voracious." A colleague reports: "We look everywhere, we go to conferences, and at conferences to all the exhibitors, to see what they have. We look especially at many types of standards-based test items: the released items from the state and the workbooks from different publishers. We contact other high performing sites serving our demographic to ask about their test items. We're just putting in an order to Curriculum Associates for their test questions. We do this not to just lift. We are constructing our own test items because we know we can do it better. We build the worksheets exactly at the level for Cleveland High School students."

Part of the rationale for this level of teacher effort is the need to customize for a demanding population of urban students: "We'll use 'nice numbers': the test generators often don't do the stuff simply enough. In Algebra, here at Cleveland, we're talking about students who are two or three grade levels behind. So we need them to use really simple numbers to conceptualize a math problem. We had a 'math cadre' who looked at Prentice Hall, Curriculum Associates, and other publishers to evaluate the books. The district chose to go with Prentice Hall. Now we want to complement and strengthen it. For the higher-level classes we have books more on the intermediate level to supplement Prentice Hall. For the advanced students we have textbooks we chose for the highest level students."

This work by teachers does not happen without support from administrators. Allan Weiner describes teachers as naturally tending to be "isolationist". Weiner sees the administrator's role as "to get them in collaborative groups. Get teachers to sit and talk about what they do and how to make it better. Where they are sharing best practices and doing demo lessons, they get results."

Input on Best Practices:
Average-performing schools miss the mark while high performers are on target

Missing the Mark	On Target
School leaders may be working to develop leadership skills in staff but are not necessarily grooming specific teachers to move into administration.	School leaders set up structures for developing leadership among teachers and other staff at the school.
The school offers professional development (in addition to the district offerings) but it may be fragmented, too brief, or not tightly focused on helping teachers reach specific student academic goals. Limited time for collaboration is built into the school schedule.	School leaders support the creation of a learning community that encourages professional development which is focused on helping teachers and school leaders to improve their instructional practices in ways that respond to student knowledge and skill needs.
School leadership does not set high expectations for teachers to become lifetime learners. There is less pressure and support from administration to establish a practice of continuous inquiry among teachers.	School leaders provide teachers and staff with professional development opportunities on and off site that enable them to learn new teaching strategies, apply those new approaches, and collaboratively refine them to help more students meet standards.
School leaders do not provide opportunities to ensure ongoing common learning of best practices individually or across roles. Consequentially, individual and common learning cannot target the high need areas.	Structures and processes are in place to ensure that teachers individually, and by grade and department, as well as school and district leaders, regularly learn together peer-to-peer as well as across roles (English and special education; principal and department chairs; math and English), and across schools at all levels to improve their craft. Learning targets high need areas such as support to English learners.
School leaders do not provide sufficient support to teachers (materials, data analysis tools, professional development) to help them engage in the difficult practice of differentiated instruction.	School leaders differentiate support to teachers at their site, to ensure that all teachers develop the knowledge and skills to help all students meet standards.

III. Common Practice: Bolsa Grande High School

The District

Located in Orange County, just south of Los Angeles, Garden Grove Unified School District draws students from Garden Grove, Westminster, Santa Ana, Anaheim, as well as from Cypress, Fountain Valley, and Stanton. Just over half of the students in the district are Latino (52%), 28% are Asian American, and 17% are white. There are small numbers of African American, Filipino and Pacific Islander students (1% each). Sixty percent of students qualify for the Free- or Reduced-price Lunch Program. Over half of the students in the district (53%) are English Learners. The district is a large one, with more than 50,000 students enrolled.

The School

Bolsa Grande High School, a comprehensive high school which first opened its doors in 1961, is located in the City of Garden Grove. The school serves just over 1,500 students in grades 9-12. It has a higher proportion of Asian American students than the district as a whole, but also has a significant percentage of Latino students. Forty-two percent of the students are English Learners. Students at Bolsa speak twenty-nine different languages. Vietnamese and Spanish are the two largest language groups, but other languages include Korean, Khmer, Urdu, and Armenian. Just under two-thirds of the students are eligible for the Free- or Reduced-Price Lunch Program—slightly more than in the district and significantly more than the state as a whole.

***Terri Shook**, Science Department Chair, Bolsa Grande High School*

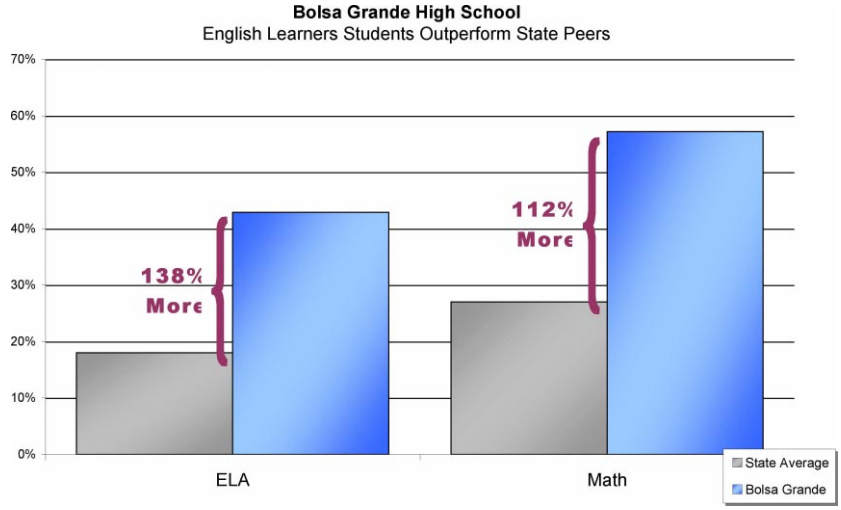
The Results

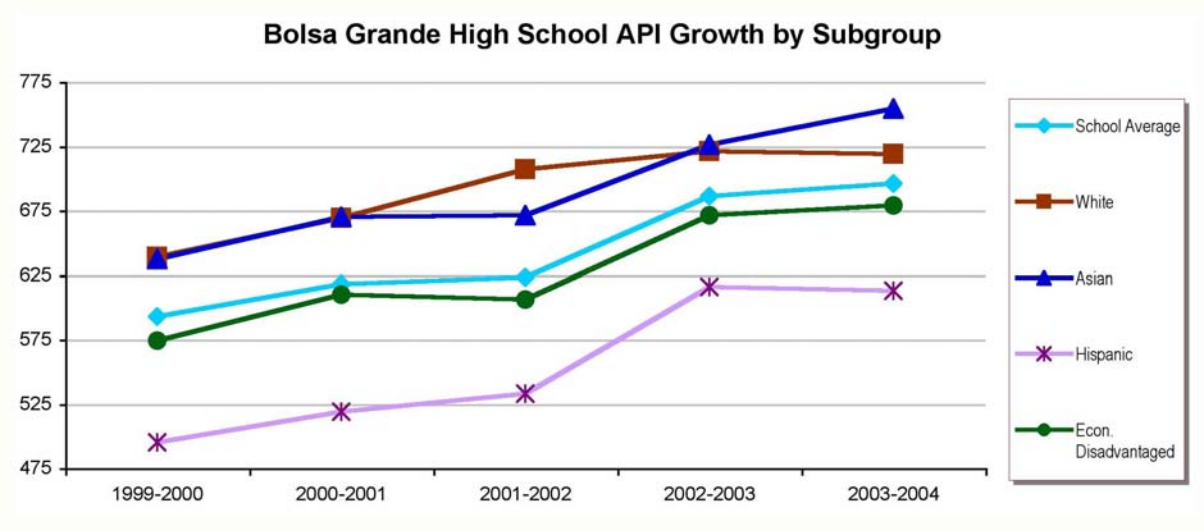
Bolsa Grande's students face significant barriers of poverty and language. Nonetheless, it consistently outperforms schools with similar demographics. In 2002, Bolsa Grande ranked 5 on the statewide list and 4 on the similar schools list. From there it rose to 8 on the statewide list and 7 on the similar schools list in 2004. Since 2002, the school's overall API score has increased from 623 to 696 in 2003-2004, and then to 735 in 2004-2005. In 2003-2004, all sub-groups showed progress. Asian American students are the school's highest performers, with a score of 754 in 2004, but the school's lowest performing group, Latino students, has shown significant growth, managing an 80 point gain between 2002 and 2004, to reach a score of 613, well outperforming state peers. In 2004, four times as many students were at or above proficient as the 2004 AYP target.

The School: 1,522 students. 50% Asian American, 36% Latino, 10% White. 42% English Learner. 66% Economically Disadvantaged.

The Results:

- 4 times as many students at or above proficient as 2004 AYP target.
- District outperforms 2001 state average of 68% of students graduating from high school within four years.





API 1999-2004 Fig. 3: 1999-2004 Bolsa Grande High School's API Growth by subgroup

The Strategies: Clear Standards and Common Curriculum

"We've made good progress in developing an aligned curriculum and pacing guides," says the principal. One result is that it is clear to administrators, teachers, students, and parents what teachers are expected to teach and what students are expected to learn. Course outlines and learning goals are posted on the school's website. The district office has played an active role in the development of expectations for common practice both at Bolsa Grande and across the district. For example, Garden Grove Unified adopted a curriculum guide, originally developed by teachers in Bolsa Grande, which details not only course objectives and standards, but also suggests pacing, offers timelines, suggests instructional strategies, and provides suggested sample assessments. Garden Grove Unified also administers common, quarterly benchmark assessments, which measure student progress toward mastery of standards.

This focus on clear goals and aligned curriculum impacts students in multiple ways. Counselors meet with students at the beginning of their high school career to design a four-year course plan. Teachers review the course outlines and learning goals with the students at the beginning of each year.

How did the expectations for common curriculum and teaching practice evolve? Much of the work was done by the teachers themselves. The faculty set aside time to look at the standards that needed to be met by the end of each grade. Then teachers looked at the year's schedule and created a timeline for teaching standards. From there, teachers looked at their units to see what they could all agree to teach. For example, in social science, teachers agreed when and how to teach the outbreak of World War I and the Great Depression. Afterwards, the team sketched out a pacing guide and agreed to the assessments they would all use to test students' grasp of the materials and mastery of the standards. These assessments, in turn, were shared with the district and aligned with the district assessments.

A Changing Role for Teachers

After each benchmark assessment, teachers teaching the same course meet to compare results, identify problems and possible solutions, and modify curriculum and instruction as needed. This new way of doing business demands more from teachers: more time for analysis, reflection, creation of new strategies to help students achieve standards, and also more courage. Teachers must be willing to let others see their work and willing to acknowledge that they are not perfect. Not surprisingly, the shift was a bit rocky. Science Department Chair Terri Shook reports, "There was an initial uproar but gradual acceptance. We started saying to each other, 'look at my data.'" One Bolsa Grande teacher summarized, "It was a remarkable transition in the way we educated students."

Teachers also need tools and structures that support collaboration. The tools are the easy part. Teachers at Bolsa Grande use a simple form (see Department Benchmark Reflection) which prompts them to look at overall student performance and identify disparities in scores between classes. The form ends with questions about the action steps teachers need to take, such as re-teaching concepts using different strategies or re-writing test questions.

Structures for teacher collaboration are harder to create. One mechanism the staff at Bolsa Grande uses to do this are the periodic reflection meetings by department and, as appropriate, across department. Review of data begins but does not stop at student work. Also, teachers review data on instructional quality. With active support from the principal (who brought in models and let teachers take trainings in rubric design), each department set to work to build a set of quality rubrics measuring progress in higher-order thinking skills such as evaluation, synthesis, and analysis, often involving reading and writing. The reflection meetings provided a venue where this work was completed. This work was not abstract or bureaucratic. It was clearly tied to helping teachers be better able to teach their students. In the case of the rubric exercise, for example, the outcomes were visible and

tangible for all. Once accomplished, departments posted their rubrics on the walls of their classrooms for teachers and students to use to measure progress.

The discussions that ensued have led to departments "deconstructing the standards" to obtain a deeper understanding of what it looks like for a student to master those standards. Deconstructing involves fine grain analysis of which concepts and skills a student needs to master a specific standard, and then deciding what assessments would test the student's mastery of those concepts and skills (see "unpacking standards" protocol).

Still, Bolsa Grande teachers are struggling to find enough time for reflection. Some departments established reflection meetings during zero periods, others at lunch time or after school. How much do teachers value this reflection time? Picture this: At one point, when the teacher's union and the district could not reach agreement on weekly collaboration time for teachers, one group of teachers gathered together at 7 AM by the swimming pool so that one of their members, the gym teacher, could reflect with them while coaching the swim team. Every so often, the coach would pause and call out encouragement to the swimmers.

Common Practices at Bolsa Grande High School

Average-performing schools miss the mark while high performers are on target

Missing the Mark	On Target
The district either does not support any deviation from adopted policies or it allows school sites and/or individual teacher's flexibility without accountability or data collection.	District staff provides the resources and supports for sites to make data-based decisions to supplement core texts when texts are not serving the needs of all students. District office ensures collaboration time for teachers.
School leaders may be working to develop leadership skills in staff but are not necessarily grooming specific teachers to move into administration.	School leaders set up structures for developing leadership among teachers and other staff at the school.
Teacher collaboration is infrequent; teachers opt to spend collaboration time in their classrooms doing individual planning; or collaboration time is spent talking about individual students rather than on how to improve teaching practice. Not all teachers are "on board" with the idea that they must continue to learn and grow.	Teachers meet regularly with colleagues in grade level/departments and across grade level/ departments to learn how to improve teaching and learning from a variety of sources—from both within and outside the school and district.
Teachers are reluctant to take on leadership roles; those that do may be criticized or even ostracized by their colleagues.	Teachers take on a variety of formal and informal roles as instructional leaders. Structures and processes are in place to ensure that departments and teacher leaders regularly collaborate within grade levels/departments as well as across grade levels/departments and across levels with school and district leaders.

Focus by Theme at Marysville Charter Academy for the Arts

Marysville Charter Academy for the Arts is a public charter school in the Marysville Joint Unified School District. Marysville is a small town in a relatively small Northern California community characterized by widespread poverty. Lack of opportunity leads to high teen pregnancy rates and one observer called the region "the methemphatime lab of the north."

Founded in 2001, the Marysville Charter Academy for the Arts (MCAA) serves students living in Marysville, Yuba City and throughout Yuba, Sutter, and Colusa counties.

Marysville Charter Academy's student population is 71% white, and 32% percent of students at the school are eligible for the Free- or Reduced-price Lunch Program (FRLP). The school serves just under 300 students in grades 7-12. It is located immediately adjacent to Marysville High School, so its student have access to a variety of sports and enrichment programs that many small schools lack.

The Academy is a school of choice open to all students through an application and interview process. Its curriculum focuses on project-based learning and the arts. The site is outperforming its demographically similar peers on multiple measures.

Many would argue that the higher-than-expected performance in this school is a result of its selection process; others would likely point to the match between the school's unique approach and the interests of its students.

But what is the approach being taken here? Are there lessons to be learned or bright ideas to be exported? There are interesting similarities between the work underway in this small, rural, alternative charter school and that seen in large comprehensive high schools getting similarly good results.

A Focus on Standards and Measurement

The Superintendent sounds like other superintendents around the state when he says: "Last year we introduced a process for each of the sites to look at essential standards, identify how you would pace those, and how you would align the textbook materials to that pacing " to create a standards based curriculum. Yet he adds a locally-driven imperative: "We needed to give parents and students a lot of choices." The confluence of standards and choice shaped the work at MCAA.

In keeping with the district demand that they create a standards-aligned curriculum, the Marysville Charter Academy for the Arts began its design of a common, standards-aligned curriculum. It designed the essential standards and helped build the first curricula by department. Yet, unlike other high schools in the district, it did so while using the less traditional structures of thematic courses and problem

based learning. The exercise required linking the school's goals to the standards based measures that the district and state had made central.

To that end, the school took seriously the requirement of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges that all high schools adopt "Expected School wide Learning Results," or ESLRs. Though many schools treat this as a pro forma exercise, MCAA went on to create a set of rubrics to measure progress against both the ESLRs, and the California Standards. The result was that faculty had a usable—though admittedly not perfect—tool for measuring how their students were progressing. Also, students and teachers had a common measuring rod so students could themselves take responsibility for their own progress. Now, in each classroom there are copies of the ESLRs and of the state's subject content standards. "We need to keep an eye on both all the time," notes one teacher.

Courses are highly interdisciplinary, project based, and focused on making connections to students' life outside of school. Every course seeks to give students a chance to be creative. A course outline, rubric, and sample tests make clear what is expected, and what the testing timeline is.

Making this approach work requires a substantial investment on the part of teachers. So the school operates a block schedule that allows for the in-depth work required. Says one MCAA teacher: "I do a lot of my own research and am careful to meet standards... I'm very glad that based on standards set by the state and the district we have a lot of freedom to try different methods." Team teaching complicates matters: "it takes even more time when you're planning a unit with someone else. And you want to ensure that its standards are aligned for both subjects involved. It's hard. ...that does not mean it is not worth it."

Unlike some alternative programs, MCAA has not devalued testing. In 2003, ahead of the state, the California High School Exit Exam was made mandatory for graduation. Students are required to take all district and state assessments, including STAR and end of course tests. In fact, testing is a key strategy. The school uses its own rubrics to make standards public and progress toward them transparent. Faculty welcomes the opportunity to share their own suite of pop quizzes, self assessments, jeopardy games, and fill-in-the-blanks. Tests are designed to be frequent and easy for students to use as self assessments or games, and students volunteer their own favorites.

The social science department is taking the lead in using the district's data system to develop a bank of items to be used by teachers in developing both formative assessments and more formal benchmark assessments. Those test bank items are linked both to the rubrics for research papers, and specific lesson units. Other departments are engaged in building similar test bank items linked to their unit and department rubrics.

In the Middle of College at Middle College High School

West Contra Costa Unified School District (WCCUSD) serves students from the cities of El Cerrito, Hercules, Pinole, Richmond, and San Pablo in addition to unincorporated areas of Contra Costa County. WCCUSD is 38% Latino, 29% African American, 14% white, 11% Asian American and 5% Filipino. A slightly higher percentage of the district's students (29 percent) have been identified as English learners (EL) than the statewide average of 25 percent.

West Contra Costa USD Enrollment 2004

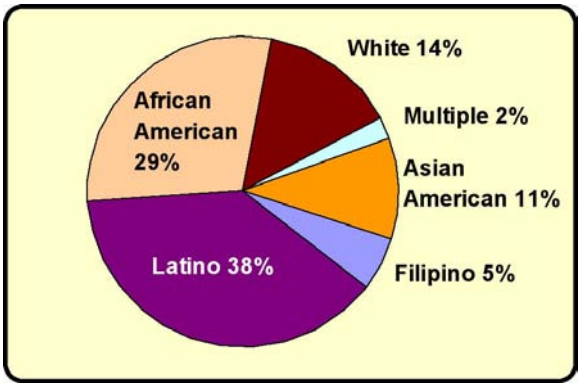


Fig. 1: WCCUSD Student Enrollment Percentages by Race/Ethnicity

Fifty-four percent of students in the district are eligible for the Free- or Reduced-price Lunch Program (FRLP), compared to the 49 percent who are eligible statewide.

Middle College High School (MCHS) is an alternative program of West Contra Costa Unified School District. Middle College High is located on the Contra Costa College (CCC) campus and serves 253 students who attend both high school and college courses at the college. The school's size and structure are designed to support students perceived by teachers not living up to their potential in traditional high schools. In the words of the school principal Gary Carlone, the aim is to provide "a nurturing, academically challenging environment for 'at-risk' youth to ensure high school completion and success in college and beyond."

Middle College HS Enrollment 2004

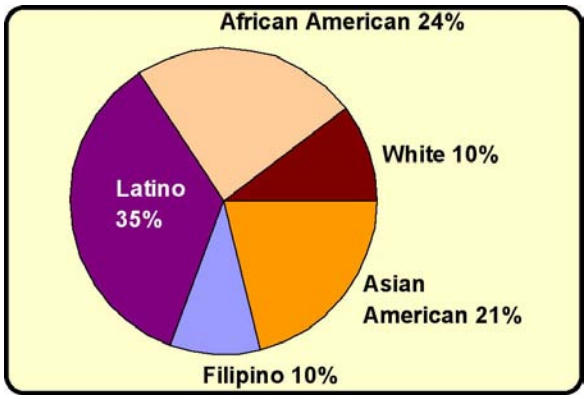


Fig. 2: Middle College High Student Enrollment Percentages by Race/Ethnicity[3]

At MCHS, Latinos are the largest student group at 35 percent. The number of African American students is 24 percent, three times the state average (8.3 percent). Other student groups are Asian Americans (21 percent), whites (10 percent), and Filipinos (10 percent).

[3]Unless otherwise referenced, all quantitative data in this study is drawn from the California Department of Education website: www.ed-data.k12.ca.us

Results: What Middle College High School Accomplished

MCHS has ranked 10 out of 10 on the API for the entire State and among similar schools for three years running. In that same time, it has steadily narrowed the achievement gap between ethnic groups.

African American, Latino and economically disadvantaged students at the school have all shown remarkable growth in proficiency rates on both the Language Arts and Math CST. Between 2002 and 2004 African American language arts proficiency rates increased from 48 percent to 86 percent, Latino proficiency increased from 53 percent to 74 percent and the proficiency rates of economically disadvantaged students tripled from 27 percent to 91 percent. The percentage of African American students scoring "proficient" or above on the math CST rose from 41 percent to 73 percent while increasing from 50 percent to 74 percent for Latino students.

The Strategy: High Standards in Action

MCHS has the luxury of being able to select students who are at-risk but who nevertheless are willing to commit to a challenging program. However, the school does not stop there, but uses a variety of strategies to make their slogan "high standards for all," into a reality. The counselor meets with every student and his or her parent or guardian during sophomore year to develop a formal individual plan that includes choosing a major and/or AA degree. The counselor also helps the student choose electives, college courses and internships to achieve the goal. At that time they also discuss graduation requirements from high school and college.

Making high standards a reality requires more than planning, however; it requires continual investment in the best possible curriculum. Many students arrive at the school with gaps in knowledge and skills. The school uses AVID strategies school-wide and invests in technology-based supplemental programs that help students build both English and math skills so they can move as quickly as possible into doing high school and then college-level work.

To keep students engaged, school learning is continually linked with real-world goals and many courses are linked to career pathways. Some of the most popular classes include computer science and technology, engineering, and nursing. Students are offered internships and job shadowing opportunites, and, when they are ready, they can enroll in a range of courses at CCC related to careers. MCHS students have access to all campus facilities and college students often provide strong role models for their younger peers.

Helping their students succeed in this challenging program also requires a strong support system. Many classes include a focus on emotional and physical as well as intellectual development. Students take a full year of health education in 9th grade, and the Teenage Program (TAP), provides a range of programming on health-related issues critical for this age group.

Every other week the entire faculty meets with the principal and counselor to discuss each student that is having trouble in school. Four times a year, when progress reports come out, the Counselor creates a list of all students who received a C- or below in any subject. The staff discusses each student, deciding on interventions and sharing strategies that have worked in other cases.

The faculty also works to help the students develop skills that enable them to support each other: Both self-evaluation and peer evaluation help students to create realistic expectations and to improve their critical thinking skills. For example, expository essays are evaluated according to a student-created rubric; students meet regularly in portfolio writing response groups; math students take part in group tests and collaboratively analyze the results; and Geometry students use portfolios to critique their work and assess areas needing improvement at the end of the unit.

According to a college faculty member: "They do real college quality work—sometimes better than my regular students. They go the extra mile. I really like that enthusiasm."

Summation of Tested Practices: California Best Practices Framework

Based on the fifteen districts in this study, the following framework describes the chief practices that we found disproportionately well developed in the high performing high school sites and significantly less developed in the average performing sites. From left to right the rows track district central office, school leadership and classroom teacher practices.

It is important to note that these practices are not exhaustive. (See below, Best Practice Study: Summary of Findings for a fuller list of strategies). It is also important to bear in mind that no one practice by itself is a silver bullet. Finally, it is not a matter only of the right set of ingredients. It is a matter of how these ingredients are combined, relative to the needs of each school and district, that creates a successful strategy.

CALIFORNIA BEST PRACTICE FRAMEWORK			
Organizing Theme	**District Practices**	**School Practices**	**Classroom Practices**
A. Curriculum & Academic Goals	Adopt standards; guide adoption and development of aligned curriculum. Set improvement goals for all students. Establish a sense of urgency about these goals.	Develop and adopt aligned curriculum; guide development of common course outlines; identify supplemental curriculum resources. Set specific student improvement and learning goals consistent with district goals. Reinforce a sense of urgency about these goals.	Base teaching on standards, aligned curriculum, and supplemental curriculum. Participate in development of and adoption of common course outlines. Set improvement goals for individual students.
B. Staff Selection, Leadership, & Capacity-Building	Recruit, develop, and support strong instructional leaders and highly qualified teachers.	Support leadership and staff, based on student achievement data. Foster the sharing of educational practices.	Collaborate to increase knowledge, monitor student achievement, and improve instructional quality for all students.
C. Instructional Programs, Practices, & Arrangements	Provide research-based instructional programs; ensure research-based site-appropriate practices and arrangements in every classroom.	Use and provide research-based instructional programs; ensure that all students have access to rigorous curriculum.	Teachers/Departments use research-based instructional programs to differentiate instruction for all students.
D. Monitoring: Compilation, Analysis, & Use of Data	Develop and make accessible to both teachers and administrators user-friendly student assessment and data-monitoring systems to track school, class, and individual student performance.	Use student assessments and data systems to monitor teaching and learning.	Monitor student learning at regular intervals and use this data to inform instruction. Assessments are written collaboratively to ensure alignment to standards and to monitor student progress.
E. Recognition, Interventions, & Adjustment	Recognize, intervene, or adjust curriculum, based on school leader, teacher, and student performance.	Use student achievement data to recognize, intervene or adjust curriculum based on teacher and student performance.	Recognize, intervene and adjust instruction based on student performance. Grade levels/ departments/teachers provide timely interventions.

What does it take? Looking across the High Performer's Common Practices

The Best Practices Study findings show that average-performing and high-performing high schools actually adopt many of the same programs and approaches. However, the findings help us by demonstrating that what is critical to success is not merely adopting recommended practices, but implementing them with commitment and diligence.

The combination of multiple elements into a system of practices is not sufficient to produce all desired results. Early evidence suggests that average-performing districts and schools are using many of the same individual programs and general strategies as are high-performers. In fact, one of the most striking findings that emerge from a comparison of average and high-performing schools and districts is the very high degree of agreement regarding the specific programs and the general approaches they use in order to further improve teaching and learning. Both groups of schools use the same adopted texts for English Language Arts and both set goals, develop staff, look at data—or, at least, both groups do things they describe using these terms. Yet a closer look reveals that behind widespread agreement on language and general approach lie significant differences, differences that provide important insight on best practices.

What matters for improving teaching and learning is apparently both *what* combination of elements are implemented and *how* they are implemented. The differences between the way average-performers and high-performers combine these elements appear to take three forms: differences in *intensity*, differences in *coherence;* and differences in *focus* and willingness to stay focused over time.

- *Differences in intensity.* Average-performing schools often engage in the same strategies that characterize high-performers, but they do so with less intensity. Departments in average performers may have regularly scheduled collaboration time once a semester or once a month—high performers meet weekly. Average performers may use common assessments and talk about data occasionally rather than regularly; and their principals, and colleagues may visit classrooms "whenever they get a chance" but not every week. When visitors do come into the classroom, they may lack common tools to measure quality of instruction, thus they are unable to provide a common language to engage in a conversation on what they saw and learned. Differences in intensity of effort do not necessarily mean that people are not trying hard: often they are. But they may have stopped short of working hard on the hardest things, such as ensuring that every teacher in every classroom is actively engaged in improving his or her practice to teach

every student in the room. Apparently getting strong results requires that schools adopt the right prescription—but also at the right dosage.

- *Differences in degrees of coherence:* Average-performing schools often understand the basic approach taken by high-performers and speak of "alignment" as important. But, for example, average-performers seem less likely than high-performers to have done a careful analysis of the degree to which their assessments actually reflect their curriculum and subject matter standards at a given grade level. They are also less likely to have conducted the analysis to ensure that all their assessments are aligned from one grade level to the next. Their high school teachers are unaware of the level of readiness of the students coming from middle school, or the standards in place at the middle school. They are also less conversant with the requirements that the students will have to meet to succeed in college. Average-performers may understand that professional development for teachers is a key factor, and they may even strive to ensure that professional development sessions or school-level coaching for teachers is generally aligned with an identified need (such as help in teaching reading comprehension to students who come to high school with below grade level reading abilities). But average-performers are less likely than high performers to have gone beyond the general issue of "reading comprehension" to analyze whether students specifically lack vocabulary skills, decoding skills, or comprehension strategies. Additionally, they often fail to ensure that literacy coaches have received intensive training on specific strategies that match carefully-understood student needs. In sum, coherence at a general level may mask lack of coherence at a specific, and more important, level. As has been often said, "the devil is in the details," and best practices include hard work by both school and district leaders to ensure that strategies and tools are coherent or aligned not just in general terms, but at the level of these devilish details.

- *Differences in focus:* Average-performing schools are more likely than high-performers to have adopted multiple strategies and goals. This mistake—which school leaders explain by saying "but we have to do everything"—can lead to both lack of intensity and lack of coherence. If intensity is about depth and degree of penetration to the classroom and coherence is about linkages across the system, then focus is about school and district leaders' willingness to pick a few things that matter and give teachers the support they need to become expert at them. Thus, focus requires perseverance and willingness to "stay the course." Schools leaders are often buffeted by the multiple demands of a vocal community, the changing priorities of state or local political leaders, and the latest fad in education. The demand for results contributes to this by causing leaders to cast about for quick fixes. Best practices can only become "best" when done with intense focus.

Conclusion: Implications and Recommendations

Improving results in public high schools requires both redefining and then scaling up best practices. This is not to say that classroom practice is unimportant. Quite the contrary, classroom practice is all-important. But classrooms are embedded in schools, which are located in school districts, and organizational practice in schools and districts must be reorganized to support the improvement of teaching if good teaching is to become the norm for all of our students.

The following recommendations reflect Springboard Schools' ten-plus years of supporting schools in a comprehensive improvement process, as well the findings of the current study of high performing high poverty high schools.

The High School Context: Challenges and Opportunities

The high performing high schools in this study are utilizing the strategies that have emerged from the standards-based reform movement and that are producing results in elementary schools. However, progress in the high school context has been slower than in elementary schools. There appear to be two reasons for this: First, high schools are more complex organizations that struggle with multiple purposes and an extraordinarily wide range of student skill levels. Second, the policy community has not provided high schools with the same level of tools and supports, either in the form of either a common agreement on goals or a common curriculum and aligned assessments similar to those that are in place to assist elementary schools.

Recommendation 1: Support the use of frequent and common diagnostic assessments

Teachers need frequent information on students' individual strengths and weaknesses to guide instruction. Though the kind of "big picture" data that annual summative assessments provide is useful for setting goals and tracking overall progress, teachers need much more fine-grained information about the specific skills with which students struggle. These formative assessments provide critical information to determine which skills students are lacking, what to teach, how students are doing in response to the instruction and whether students have mastered content. These assessments need to be precise, frequent, and aligned not only to standards, but also to larger objectives. They should inform end-of-course grades and also track students' progress toward the end-of-school standards of college and career readiness. These kinds of assessments are particularly important for English language learners and for students reading below grade level.

Though high school teachers traditionally invent their own tests, and individualized tests can inform teaching in individual classrooms, *common* diagnostic assessments are essential if the data from these tests are to be useful to

inform student placement and in program planning, as well as teacher planning. Even for teacher planning purposes, common assessments are better: they provide teachers with the raw material for a professional learning community in which they interact with colleagues to improve their practice. High performing high schools administer a common set of benchmark assessments that are tied to standards and a common pacing guide. Data from these assessments are used to regroup students frequently to ensure that they are placed in the appropriate learning environments. Though many high schools are working to develop and use such assessments, the process of building consensus on such tools from the ground up is costly and time-consuming. Local, state, and national policymakers could do much to facilitate this process.

The use of assessment data for regrouping students is essential. Of course we recognize that grouping is often mis-labeled "tracking" and has gotten a bad name. But tracking is a *permanent* placement of students; *grouping* is temporary. When students in a ninth grade English class, for example, are assessed and it is discovered that some are reading at a fourth grade level, these students need to be re-grouped into an intensive remedial program. The key word is *intensive*: the program must be intensive enough to allow these students to catch up. Educators often reject the "diagnose and regroup" approach because they doubt the possibility of accelerated learning for such students. But the alternative is to continue to ask teachers to teach to a range of skills that is so wide that they cannot succeed. Interventions for struggling high school students must include both classroom strategies and, for those students farthest behind, school-level intervention programs, which must be not dumping grounds, but high quality, high impact programs.

Recommendation 2: Provide educators with input on best practices at the classroom, school, and district level

The private sector invests significant resources in benchmarking and in "knowledge management"—accessing and using promising new ideas. But education is only just beginning to think about the role of these strategies in a continuous improvement process. Yet this is essential: the stakes for our students are too high, and time too limited, for teachers and administrators to be left to their own devices to find curriculum, create assessments, or discover the kinds of leadership practices and organizational structures and strategies that are needed. Of course, best practices can emerge internally in a school through a rigorous review of teachers' common work in a single department. They can also be found externally, through visits to classrooms of higher-performing colleagues in other schools and even other districts. Best practices also come from reviews of research and materials developed by textbook publishers, universities, and even nonprofit organizations like Springboard Schools. What is essential is that schools not lose sight of the importance that real evidence has on the process of selecting best practices for local use. Equally important, though, is that the data collection process does not stop and that local educators continually evaluate the usefulness of any new practice or approach in their own context.

What kinds of best practices offer the highest leverage and greatest potential for producing results? Currently there is a growing recognition of the need to invest in the creation of quality, standards-aligned curriculum. However, less attention has been paid to the need for diagnostic assessments that track this curriculum—and for this reason the set of assessments available to teachers varies dramatically in quality and usefulness. The needs here are great. However, the new focus on schools as the unit of accountability requires a parallel focus on the development of a research-based understanding of school- and district-level leadership practices, and school- and district-level organizational structures, and processes. This latter arena is particularly under-developed—and particularly promising. One of the key findings of the California Best Practices Study, as well as other studies conducted by Springboard Schools, is that meeting the needs of the lowest performing groups of students requires not just classroom, but also school-level strategies, programs, and

interventions. This finding argues that the concept of "best practices"—which traditionally in education has referred most often to classroom-level practices or programs—needs to be dramatically expanded. Good curriculum and instruction is only good when well implemented, and systematic, high-quality implementation requires best practices at multiple levels of the system.

Recommendation 3: Provide time for ongoing, site-based professional development and collaboration

Continuous improvement is a new requirement in the teaching profession. Teachers' and administrators' workdays have traditionally been spent doing school rather than improving school. Teachers teach and administrators respond to students, parents, and other stakeholders. Improvement—which inevitably involves planning, studying, reflecting, collecting data, and intense work with adults—gets short shrift. Even the need for investing in improvement is often overlooked. In a system that is chronically short of resources, it is common to hear leaders pledge to keep budget cuts "far from the classroom." This sounds right—but it often means dismantling the improvement infrastructure of professional development, planning, coaching, reflection, and study. Yet if the performance picture of our schools is to show dramatic improvement, teachers need: 1) regularly-scheduled collaboration time; 2) access to expertise; and 3) feedback and coaching on implementation. All three require dedicated resources.

Collaboration time: Teachers need regularly scheduled blocks of time during which they can work with colleagues to use assessment data. This data will help them understand which students are failing and what skills these students lack. It also permits them to tap into "just in time" support to find, use, and assess new strategies to help these students learn.

Access to expertise: The traditional approach to teacher professional development is to provide teachers with access to outside expertise. However, research has found traditional teacher workshops to be both underwhelming in their intellectual rigor and ineffective in their impact. What changes this is linking access to expertise to two things: assessment data that creates a new and focused appetite among teachers for information about best practices, and peer support and accountability for implementation. With these elements in place, access to expertise proves to be essential and highly effective.

Feedback and coaching: Teachers have traditionally been viewed as independent operators, working hard on implementing strategies that are often highly personal. For good teaching to become the norm in all classrooms, teachers must come to share a collective vision of excellence not only for their students, but for themselves. Any school can hang a banner declaring it a place where all children can learn; schools that are closing the gap actually define what high expectations mean and look like in practice for both students **and teachers**. Defining, and then meeting, a common set of high standards for teacher practice requires that teachers have multiple opportunities to visit each others classrooms and receive coaching and feedback both from other teachers and from administrators. Traditional teacher evaluation processes should be aligned with this goal.

Supporting the students who struggle the most—those with special needs, those learning English, or those reading far below grade, for example—cannot be framed as the task of each teacher working alone. Our most challenging students require both better teaching and better programs. This argues for a new emphasis on school site-based—rather than district-based or university-based—professional development and planning.

Work to be done: Looking across the high performers' common practice

To inspire schools to both raise student achievement overall and close the achievement gap, policymakers have emphasized annual testing and explicit improvement goals. These strategies have helped to create a sense of urgency around the need to improve and they have helped policymakers and the public gauge general school quality. They have also provided some—but not yet all—of the tools for education to begin to make a *continuous improvement* process the norm in public education.

Yet too often, annual testing results do not inspire school improvement. In the worst case scenario, data actually have a negative impact, contributing to teacher burnout and a sense of helplessness. This sense of helplessness is exacerbated when the tools of continuous improvement—including a common curriculum and common assessments—are understood by teachers as de-professionalizing rather than as laying the foundation for common practice and the creation of new kinds of professional learning communities for teachers. Nor are teachers to be blamed for this misunderstanding. As long as the local, state and federal policy communities continue to under-invest in the tools of continuous improvement—tools which we find to include diagnostic assessments, the identification and dissemination of best practices and site-based professional development—who can blame them.

Yet with the right building blocks, time, and tools, teachers can use these techniques to make real and exciting changes. This is the crucial step, and it is the area in which policymakers have the greatest opportunity to make a difference—supporting teachers to take action to improve their teaching. It's not because teachers don't care enough or don't want to do a good job; it's because teachers need the time and tools to improve.

Appendixes

A. Springboard Tools
Springboard Summary of Best Practice Findings—2003–2005

Best Practices Study: Summary of Findings in Monitoring Performance

District Practice: Develop user-friendly student assessment and data monitoring systems to track school, teacher, and student performance.

High-Performers

The district regularly monitors principal performance using a district-adopted evaluation tool. A review of school performance data and the school's progress toward its improvement goals is part of principal evaluation.

The district provides a district-wide set of student assessments that include formative, diagnostic, and progress-monitoring assessments that are benchmarked against the standards and serve to track the adopted curriculum. The district, with participation from principals and teachers, continually reviews the assessments to determine which provide the most useful data about students' progress toward standards. The district also provides a user-friendly data system that gives district office staff, principals, and teachers access to disaggregated student performance data.

Through regular meetings reviewing student data, the district uses data to consistently monitor its own performance and to monitor the performance of its schools. District leaders hold school leaders accountable for monitoring the performance of their schools and teachers. District leaders also hold school leaders responsible for helping teachers reach clearly articulated student performance goals. They use schools performance data to target support to school leaders who need it.

District provides professional development on its assessment system, the district-developed data system, and the data reports the district receives from the California Department of Education. The district also provides professional development in data analysis and using data to guide improvement efforts.

School Practice: Use student assessments and data systems to monitor teaching and learning.

High-Performers

School leaders monitor teacher performance, both formally and informally, using district-adopted evaluation tools and classroom observation tools that reflect shared understandings about the school's expectations for classroom practice. Principals review student achievement data disaggregated by all subgroups regularly with individual teachers. Teachers are provided with positive feedback and specific suggestions on how to improve performance, both from peers and from school leaders.

School staff use and supplement the district assessments to provide teachers with useful information on student progress.

Through regular meetings reviewing student data, school leaders hold teachers accountable to help their students reach clearly articulated goals. They use classroom performance data to target support to teachers who need it.

The school provides teachers with professional development on understanding the results of assessments and using data from the district's data system to guide improvement efforts. Interventions and professional development are assessed in real time for impact on teacher practice and student learning. Data is used immediately to improve the quality of professional development and interventions.

Classroom Practice: Monitor student learning at regular intervals to inform instruction.

High-Performers

Teachers monitor student performance, formally and/or informally within each lesson. Teachers use district and school assessments. They also supplement these assessments with their own on-going assessments to ensure frequent and focused review of their students' performance.

Teachers use common assessments to monitor student progress, adjust their teaching, and identify effective strategies to share with colleagues.

Through regular meetings with students, teachers hold students accountable and support students to reach goals. Students are supported to identify their own strengths and weaknesses as revealed by assessments and can articulate their own learning goals and strategies for improvement.

Teachers collect data, differentiate instruction based upon an accurate interpretation of assessment results and then reevaluate students quickly to determine to what extent new practices bring about desired results and to identify where they need to further strengthen their own skills to better meet their students' needs.

Best Practices Study: Summary of Findings in Monitoring Performance

District Practice: Develop user-friendly student assessment and data monitoring systems to track school, teacher, and student performance.	**School Practice**: Use student assessments and data systems to monitor teaching and learning.	**Classroom Practice**: Monitor student learning at regular intervals to inform instruction.
Average-Performers The district does not consistently monitor principal performance formally or informally, the criteria are unclear; or monitoring of performance is not tied to district-wide and building-level data, disaggregated by subgroups, about student learning. District office staff visits schools and classrooms infrequently to build their own knowledge of the quality of instruction at the building site. The district provides an incomplete set of assessments to schools and/or is not consistent in encouraging schools to use district assessments. Schools or individual teachers are expected or allowed to create their own assessment system. The district does not have consistent expectations that uniform assessments will be used to fuel teacher collaboration and learning. The district does not employ a strategy to consistently monitor and improve its own performance. Student data disaggregated by subgroup is typically reviewed in the Fall but rarely throughout the year. If reviewed, data is not consistently linked to specific strategies to improve performance and district-wide achievement benchmarks to be able to assess the quality of implementation of the specific strategies to improve performance over the course of the year. Likewise, improvement efforts may not be consistently tied to data. The district provides no or sporadic professional development on its assessment system, data system, and data analysis.	**Average-Performers** Principals either do not evaluate teachers on a regular schedule or they complete the formal evaluation, but rarely do informal classroom visits. Teachers may or may not be provided positive feedback and are not regularly given concrete suggestions on how to improve performance. Teachers do not use common assessments, or do so infrequently. Principals do not regularly review disaggregated data with teachers during the year with an eye for adjusting lessons and instruction to help their students reach clearly articulated goals. Interventions and professional development are rarely assessed to determine if teachers are implementing suggested changes in practice or if these changes are having an impact on student performance.	**Average-Performers** Teachers are assessing student performance but not on a regular basis and/or there is no clear expectation that they will share and discuss their findings with colleagues or the principal. Teachers do not review disaggregated student data on a regular basis. They may consider the review of student data to be a compliance exercise and fail to view it with a critical eye for how data is a signal to help them adjust their teaching to improve student achievement. Assessments are seen as most concretely helpful when it comes to sorting students rather than inform teacher practice. Teachers are not expected to meet with students regularly to hold them accountable for goals and help them build their own skill in self-assessment and in understanding how their learning goals are meaningful for them. Teachers do not adjust instruction based on assessment data or if they do, they fail to modify instructional strategies based upon a precise interpretation of assessment results and/or they make little or much delayed effort to evaluate new practices for success. There is often great lag time between when the teacher conducts an assessment and when they have the opportunity to critically look at the data and act on the results. Often those steps are taken in solitude rather than through joint planning with professional colleagues or joined with support from professional development that would help the teacher strengthen intervention in response to the data.

Best Practices Study: Summary of Findings in Instructional Programs, Practices & Administrative Support

District Practice: Districts provide state-adopted/ research-based instructional programs to their schools. They hold schools responsible for ensuring that research-based practices and arrangements are used in every classroom.

High-Performers

District leaders provide schools with state-adopted/ research-based programs. They provide adequate professional development for principals and teachers immediately following the adoption and provide ongoing training and support for effective use of these materials. Districts hold school leaders accountable for ensuring teachers use research-based practices. They also foster district and school structures and arrangements that are focused on areas of identified need and hold school leaders responsible for doing so as well at the building level.

District leaders provide pacing guides to ensure all students across classrooms and schools have access to the same rigorous curriculum.

The district also provides a process to adopt research-based materials to supplement the adoption in order to meet the needs of all students, including those accelerated or below benchmark learners. The district offers instructional programs and supports the use of effective practices and arrangements to supplement instruction for both accelerated learners and below benchmark learners. If supplemental materials are needed to address specific skills gaps identified via student assessments, research-based materials are selected to address these needs. Teachers are expected to differentiate instruction based upon disaggregated and regularly reviewed student performance data and are supported to learn how to do so.

School Practice: Schools provide state-adopted/ research-based instructional materials to teachers. Schools ensure every teacher uses research-based practices and arrangements. Schools also set schedules focused on meeting identified student needs.

High-Performers

The school provides teachers with state-adopted/ research-based programs. It provides professional development and ongoing support for effective use of these materials. School leaders hold teachers accountable for using state-adopted/research-based programs and practices. School leaders establish school schedules, structures and arrangements that are focused on meeting identified student needs and hold teachers responsible for doing so as well at the classroom level. The school provides teachers with a pacing guide that helps them ensure all students across classrooms and schools have access to the same rigorous curriculum. School leaders expect and support teachers to differentiate instruction within the framework of the adopted program and pacing guide. They allocate time and resources for teachers to collaborate on a regular basis to improve their practice.

The school also provides a process for teachers to adopt research-based materials to supplement the adoption in order to meet the needs of all students, including those accelerated or below benchmark learners. The school offers a variety of programs for students who may need differentiated instruction or extra help (GATE students, ELL students, special education students, and students scoring below benchmark). School leaders reinforce the idea that most student needs can be met within the regular classroom. They support the use of effective practices and arrangements to differentiate instruction to meet students' needs.

Classroom Practice: Teachers use adopted/ research-based programs and practices and grouping strategies.

High-Performers

Teachers use state-adopted/research-based programs, practices and arrangements. They participate in regular, ongoing professional development focused on effective use of materials and strategies. These professional development opportunities include time for teachers to work with colleagues on regular review of disaggregated student data and consistent and effective implementation.

Teachers also follow a process to utilize research-based materials to supplement the adoption in order to meet the needs of all students, including those accelerated or below benchmark learners. Teachers differentiate instruction within the framework of the adopted program and pacing guide to ensure that all students have access to the same rigorous curriculum. Teachers use and supplement district-adopted programs and arrangements in consistent and effective ways to differentiate instruction for accelerated and below benchmark learners. Teachers share curriculum and collaborate regularly. They see achieving improvement goals as a collective, collaborative activity.

Best Practices Study: Summary of Findings in Instructional Programs, Practices & Administrative Support

District Practice: Districts provide state-adopted/ research-based instructional programs to their schools. They hold schools responsible for ensuring that research-based practices and arrangements are used in every classroom.	**School Practice:** Schools provide state-adopted/ research-based instructional materials to teachers. Schools ensure every teacher uses research-based practices and arrangements. Schools also set schedules focused on meeting identified student needs.	**Classroom Practice:** Teachers use adopted/ research-based programs and practices and grouping strategies.
Average-Performers The district provides schools with access to a variety of programs and materials that may or may not be research-based or tightly focused on areas of student need. The professional development provided on the materials may be limited to a few teachers and/or principals and/or fail to provide sufficient depth and ongoing support to help teachers and principals develop a common understanding of what effective and consistent implementation of the adopted curriculum or supplemental texts looks like. Limited or unclear messages are given to school leaders in terms of how or if they are to hold teachers accountable for using the adopted materials. Limited or unclear messages are given to school leaders about when and how they are to identify, introduce and implement supplemental programs or practices. The district either does not provide schools with common tools such as pacing guides or they do not hold schools accountable for using them. Schools may create their own pacing guides or certain grade-level teams or individual teachers may make individual decisions about what to teach. Access to rigorous curriculum varies by teacher and/or grade level and school within the district. There are limited programs or expected practices for accelerated learners or students below benchmark. The district sends few and often inconsistent messages about differentiated instruction. The structures/programs in the district do not reinforce how most student needs can be met within the regular classroom.	**Average-Performers** The school provides teachers with access to a variety of materials that may or may not be research-based or tightly focused on areas of need and that need is not regularly or clearly identified based on disaggregated student data. The professional development provided gives incomplete or inconsistent information about effective implementation of the adopted curriculum or supplemental programs. School leaders provide teachers with infrequent or inconsistent feedback on effective use of the materials, and/or do not encourage teachers to work together on the basis of regular review of disaggregated student data and ongoing testing of appropriate strategies toward consistent implementation. The school does not provide teachers with pacing guides or school leaders do not hold teachers accountable for using them. Principals allow teachers to make individual decisions about what to teach, or if grade levels or individual teachers do attempt to use the pacing guide, insufficient collaboration occurs to ensure that there is consistent access to rigorous curriculum across all classrooms in the school. Principal allocate little time and resources for teachers to collaborate on a regular basis to improve their practice, or the use of these resources is not consistently and effectively focused on improving instructional practice. There are few, if any, programs or expected practices for accelerated learners or students needing extra help. Teachers make individual efforts to differentiate instruction.	**Average-Performers** Teachers choose materials from a menu of options with limited or no reference to disaggregated data about student needs. Teachers frequently work alone to plan and implement their lessons. Grade-level and cross-grade collaboration around student work and planning and grounded in a common pacing guide is irregular or absent. Few adjustments are made based upon assessment data. If there is any pacing, it is a compliant movement through the chapters without regard for indications that students are in need of differentiated instruction. Teachers might move on to the next material “ready or not” or spend so much time on certain concepts that they fail to cover all of the key standards in sufficient depth. Teachers may use an adopted text or standards-aligned curriculum, but there is no clear expectation that they follow a pacing guides. Teachers struggle in isolation with implementation of a new text and/or their collaboration time is not tightly structured around review of student work and planning and so does not result in more effective differentiated instruction. Teachers differentiate instruction for some student sub-groups but not all. Teachers may be expected to make individual decisions about whether and how to use supplementation materials; they may be unfamiliar with the supplemental district adopted programs; or they may lack the knowledge and skill level concerning high quality implementation of the supplemental materials. Teachers have little or no time, professional development or explicit incentive to test new strategies or share tested strategies with colleagues and/or school or district leaders.

B. Artifacts from Case Study Sites

1. Data Tools at Southwest High School, Central Union High School District

2. Tools for Input on Best Practices at Cleveland High School, Los Angeles Unified School District

3. Tools for Common Practice at Bolsa Grande High School, Garden Grove Unified School District

Assessment Type	Target Population	Timeline for Administration	Person(s) Responsible for Administration/Coordination	Format of Results to be Shared	Persons Responsible for Data Dissemination	Timeline for Receiving/ Using Information	Persons Responsible for Data Use	How Data is to be Used	Developing Understanding of Data and Analysis Process	Timeline	Outcome
California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE)	10th Grade Students & 11th/12th Grade students who have not passed	9/13-14 Gr. 11-12 2/7-8 Gr. 10-12 3/21-22 Gr. 10 5/9-10 Gr. 12	Assistant Superintendent & Curriculum A.P.s	District Summary Reports	Assistant Superintendent	Spring	Board of Trustees; Certificated Staff	Annual Review; Site and District policy decisions	Presentation at regular Board meeting; Discussion and recommendations	October	Verbal/written direction to the Superintendent as appropriate
				Class Lists - "Springboard to Success" **Form A**	Site Administration	Spring	Gr. 10 & 11 Math & English Teachers	Instructional progam modification decisions	Independent and/or departmental review and discussion. Clarification by principal available upon request.	Ongoing	Modifications to instructional program as indicated.
				Site Summary Reports; Sub-group Reports	Principals	Spring	Teachers; School Site Council; ELAC	Site level program improvement decisions	Presentation at regular council or committee meetings; Discussion and recommendations	October	Verbal/written recommendations to the principal and/or Board of Trustees
				EL Student Pass/Fail Summary	EL Program Specialist	Ongoing	Principals & ELAC	Site and district level program improvement decisions	Presentation at regular advisory committee meetings; Discussion and recommendations	April	English Learner Program Annual Goals Report **Form F**
CELDT	Students whose HLS indicates a language other than English	July 1 to October 31 of Each Year; ongoing for new students	EL Program Specialist	Site and District Summary reports	Assistant Superintendent	February	Board of Trustees	Annual Review; Site and District policy decisions	Presentation at regular Board meeting; Discussion and recommendations	March	Verbal/written direction to the Superintendent as appropriate
				Site and District Summary reports	EL Program Specialist	February	ELAC; DELAC	Annual Review; Site and District program recommendations	Presentations at regular advisory committee meeting	March	Verbal/written recommendations to the principal and/or Board of Trustees
				Class lists - "Springboard to Success" **Form A**	EL Program Specialist	Class Lists Received at the beginning of each semester; Ongoing use by teachers	Classroom Teachers	Instructional progam modification decisions	1. Ongoing Content Team discussion, review and analysis 2.. Ongoing training/support may be provided upon request for individuals and departments.	Minimum Wednesday & other	1. Needs Assessment, Improvement Goals, Interventions; **Form B** 2. Language levels highlighted in grade book. Instruction differentiated according to linguistic level.
				CELDT Level Growth Summary	EL Program Specialist	Ongoing	Principals & ELAC	Site and district level program improvement decisions;	Presentation at regular advisory committee meetings; Discussion and recommendations	April	English Learner Program Annual Goals Report **Form F**

Assessment Type	Target Population	Timeline for Administration	Person(s) Responsible for Administration/Coordination	Format of Results to be Shared	Persons Responsible for Data Dissemination	Timeline for Receiving/ Using Information	Persons Responsible for Data Use	How Data is to be Used	Developing Understanding of Data and Analysis Process	Timeline	Outcome
Common Assessments	All Students	Quarterly	Teachers	Common assessment grade/score breakdown Edusoft Benchmark Assessment Item Analysis and Intervention Group Reports	Department Chairpersons	Quarterly	Classroom Teachers	Instructional progam modification decisions	Ongoing Content Team collaboration Ongoing training/support may be provided upon request for individuals and departments. Voluntary EduSoft Training	Q1- by 11/18 Q2- by 2/10 Q3- by 4/7	Quarterly Analysis Reports - **Form C** Modifications to common assessments and/or instructional program as indicated.
Data-in-a-Day	Teachers	District - Once per Semester Site - Once per Semester	Designated Site and District Teams	DIAD Observation **Form D**	Principals	Quarterly	Principals & Classroom Teachers	Instructional progam modification decisions	Independent and/or departmental review and discussion. Clarification by principal available upon request.	Q1- by 10/28 Q2- by 1/20 Q3- by 3/24 Q4- by 5/31	DIAD Summary Report - **Form E**
Grades and/or G.P.A.	All Students	Each Grading Period	Teachers	*Aeries* Mark Analysis Reports Class lists - "Springboard to Success" **Form A**	Principals and Department Chairpersons	Each Semester	Principals & Department Chairpersons	Instructional progam modification decisions; Individual teacher assessment of comparative performance of his/her students	Independent and/or departmental review and discussion. Analysis of EL v. non-EL performance. Clarification by principal available upon request.	February; August	Modifications to instructional program as indicated. Initiate interventions for failing students.
Reclassification Data	English Learners	Spring	EL Program Specialist	Reclassification Summary Reports; Annual Language Census Report	EL Program Specialist	Ongoing	Principals & ELAC	Site and district level program improvement decisions;	Presentation at regular advisory committee meetings; Discussion and recommendations	April	English Learner Program Annual Goals Report **Form F**
Demographic Data	All Students	August; Upon Student Enrollment	Principals	CST CAHSEE API Subgroup Reports (Ethnicity; Economic Status; Gender)	Superintendent; Assistant Superintendent; Principals; Resource Teachers	Ongoing	Administrators Teachers Advisory Committees	Disaggregated data analysis for the purpose of site and district level program improvement decisions	Independent, departmental and /or schoolwide review and discussion. Training/support may be provided upon request for individuals and departments.	Ongoing	Incorporated in SPSA and SARC.

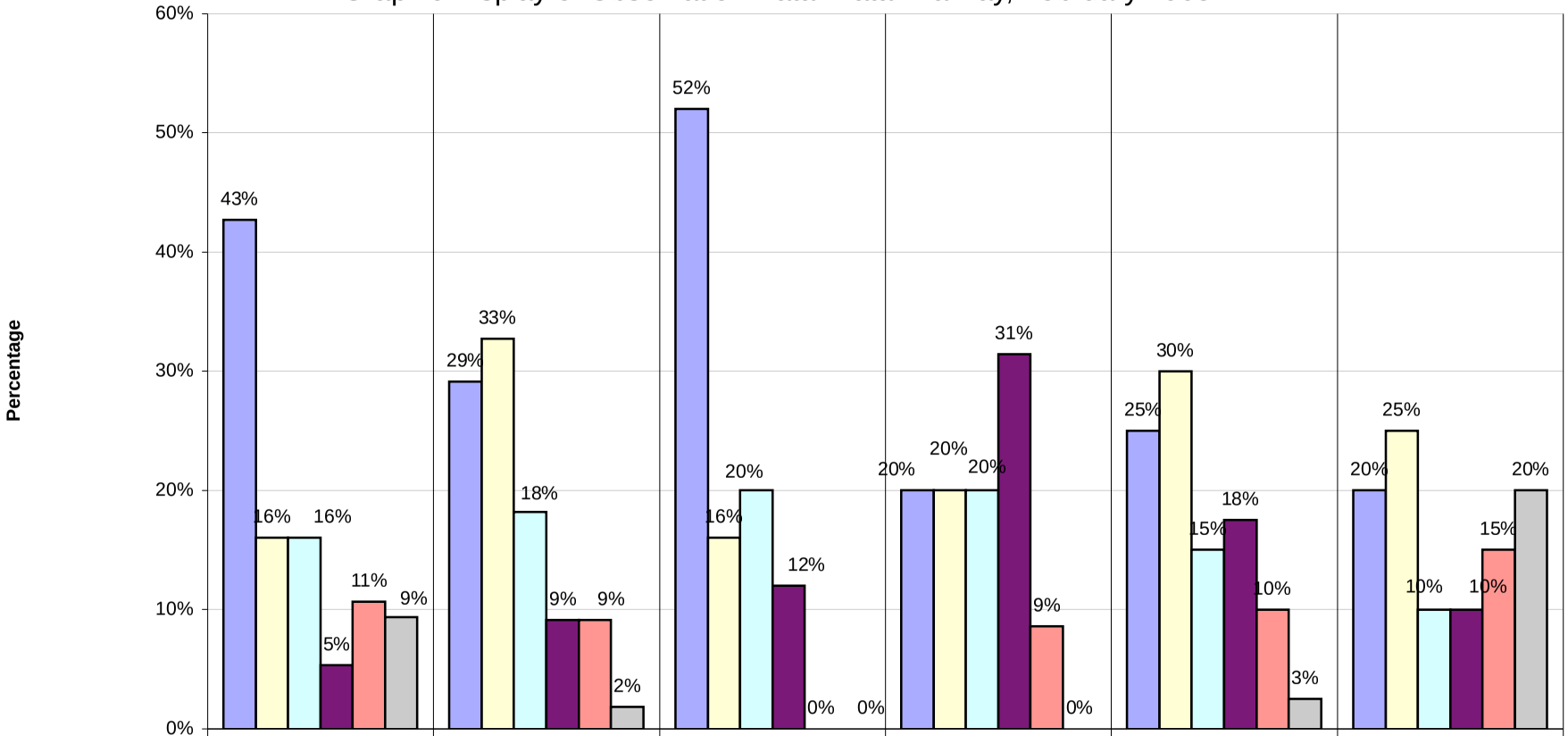
Assessment Type	Target Population	Timeline for Administration	Person(s) Responsible for Administration/Coordination	Format of Results to be Shared	Persons Responsible for Data Dissemination	Timeline for Receiving/ Using Information	Persons Responsible for Data Use	How Data is to be Used	Developing Understanding of Data and Analysis Process	Timeline	Outcome
Surveys	Teachers	August 2004;	Principals	Snapshot of School Effectiveness Factors	Principals	September	Administrators Teachers Advisory Committees	Site level program improvement decisions	Departmental and /or schoolwide review and discussion during department and/or staff meetings. Training/support may be provided upon request for individuals and departments.	October	Modifications to SPSA, WASC plan, or other program improvement process as indicated.
		As Needed	Principals	Other surveys as necessary for WASC and program improvement	Principals	When results are compiled				Following complilation of results	
	Students	Biannually	FRC Health Coordinator/ Nurse	California Healthy Kids Survey;	Principals	Biannually (Next - Spring 2005)	Administrators Teachers Advisory Committees	Site level program improvement decisions	Departmental and /or schoolwide review and discussion during department and/or staff meetings. Training/support may be provided upon request for individuals and departments.	Biannually	Modifications to SPSA, WASC plan, or other program improvement process as indicated.
		As Needed	Principals	Other surveys as necessary for WASC and program improvement	Resource Teachers	When results are compiled				Following complilation of results	
	Parents Community	Annually	Principals	Title I Parent Surveys; Other surveys as necessary for WASC and program improvement	Resource Teachers	When results are compiled	Administrators Teachers Advisory Committees	Site level program improvement decisions	Presentations at regular advisory committee meetings.	Following complilation of results	Modifications to SPSA, WASC plan, or other program improvement process as indicated. Summary of findings in parent newsletter.
Truancy/ Suspension/ Expulsion Data	All Students	June	Assist. Principals for Student Services	Consolidated Application	Assistant Superintendent	June	Board of Trustees Administrators	District and site level program improvement decisions	Presentation at regular Board meeting as part of Consolidated Application; Discussion and recommendations	July	Modifications to school level policies/practices. Incorporated Comprehensive School Safety Plans.

FORMS

- **A** Springboard to Success
- **B** Needs Assessment, Goals
- **C** Common Assessment Analysis
- **D** DIAD Observation Form
- **E** DIAD Summary Report
- **F** EL Program Annual Goals Report

Assessment Type	Target Population	Timeline for Administration	Person(s) Responsible for Administration/Coordination	Format of Results to be Shared	Persons Responsible for Data Dissemination	Timeline for Receiving/ Using Information	Persons Responsible for Data Use	How Data is to be Used	Developing Understanding of Data and Analysis Process	Timeline	Outcome
California Standards Tests (CSTs)	All Grade 9-11 Students	April/May of Each Year	Assistant Superintendent & Curriculum A.P.s	District Summary Reports by Content Area	Assistant Superintendent	Fall of Each Year	Board of Trustees; Certificated Staff	Annual Review; Site and District policy decisions	1. Presentation at regular Board meeting; Discussion and recommendations 2. Presentation to teachers	1. October 2. August	Verbal/written direction to the Superintendent as appropriate
				Class Lists - "Springboard to Success' Mult.Measure Profiles (Includes CST, GPA, HSEE, CELDT, EL & SpEd status) **Form A**	Principals	September (1st Sem Students) February (2nd Sem Students)	Classroom Teachers	Instructional progam modification decisionmaking	1. Ongoing Content Team discussion and analysis 2. Individual review, study and planning	Minimum Wednesday & other	Needs Assessment, Improvement Goals, Interventions; **Form B**
				Edusoft; Intervention Groups;	Data Analyst	Quarterly Roster Updates	Classroom Teachers	Instructional progam modification decisionmaking	1. Edusoft group training 2. One-to-one support from on-site experts	1. August '05 2. As requested	Specific interventions and strategies to target areas of need.
				Scaled Score Results by Teacher Number and Course (Comparative Report); Cluster Analysis Report	Site Administration	November	Classroom Teachers	Site level program improvement decisions; Individual teacher assessment of comparative performance of his/her students	Independent and/or departmental review and discussion. Clarification by principal available upon request.	Ongoing	Modifications to instructional program as indicated (pacing, key standards/assessment)
				Site Summary Reports; Sub-group Reports	Principals	August	School Site Council; ELAC	Site level program improvement decisions	Presentation at regular council or committee meetings; Discussion and recommendations	September	Verbal/written recommendations to the principal and/or Board of Trustees
				EL Student Performance Level Summary	EL Program Specialist	Ongoing	Principals & ELAC	Site and district level program improvement decisions	Presentation at regular advisory committee meetings; Discussion and recommendations	April	English Learner Program Annual Goals Report **Form F**
Academic Performance Index (API)	All Students	NA	NA (Various Assessments)	Base Report; Growth Report; Longitudinal Report	Assistant Superintendent & Principals	Growth - August Base- February	1. Board; School Site Council; ELAC 2. Teachers	Site level program improvement decisions	1. Presentation at regular Board or committee meetings; Discussion and recommendations 2. Presentation to teachers	1. October & March 2. Sept. & March	Modifications to instructional program as indicated.

Central Union High School District
Student Engagement by Department
Graphic Display of Observation Data: Data in a Day, February 2005



	Dept 1	Dept 2	Dept 3	Dept 4	Dept 5	Dept 6
All: 95% or more	0.426666667	0.290909091	0.52	0.2	0.25	0.2
Most: 80-94%	0.16	0.327272727	0.16	0.2	0.3	0.25
Many: 65-79%	0.16	0.181818182	0.2	0.2	0.15	0.1
Some: 40-64%	0.053333333	0.090909091	0.12	0.314285714	0.175	0.1
Few or 1 on 1	0.106666667	0.090909091	0	0.085714286	0.1	0.15
None	0.093333333	0.018181818	0	0	0.025	0.2

Southwest High School

Springboard for Success

Spring 2005

Teacher name	Student Name	Pd	Gr	GPA	Spec Ed	Lang	Migrant Program	EL Prg	Date enter US Schools	CELDT				Eng	CST	Math	CST	CST	CST	CAHSEE	
										O	L/S	R	W	Gr	ELA	Gr	Math	Soc Sc	Sci	ELA	Math
X	X	1	12	3.58		R03	Y		8/30/93					C	406	A+	387	391	387	1	1
X	X	1	12	3.21	Rsp	EO			8/27/91					A-	315	A	291	263	294	1	1
X	X	1	12	2		I-F	Y		11/10/93					F	322	F	280	275	294	1	0
X	X	1	12	2.39	Rsp	EO			8/27/92					D	344	F	293	336		0	1
X	X	1	12	2.6	Rsp	EO								P	239	A	218	223	271	1	0
X	X	1	12	3.59		R95			8/30/93					B	399	B	361	409	364	1	1
X	X	1	12	2.84		EO								B-	369	C	301	365	313	1	1
X	X	1	12	2.75		I-F			5/3/93					A	348	B	315	290	316	1	1
X	X	1	12	2.18	Rsp	EO			8/27/92					D-	290	D-	246	279	269	1	0
X	X	1	12	2.74	Rsp	EO								C	230	A+	252	248	290	0	0
X	X	1	12	2.24		R05			8/30/93					B	365	C+	305	336	316	1	1
X	X	1	12	1.84	Rsp	L-4		M	8/27/92					C-	224	F	270	290	298	1	0
X	X	1	12	2.85		I-F			8/24/92					C	311	C	239	258	284	1	1
X	X	1	12	2.11	Rsp	I-F	Y							F	246	P	218	269	286	0	1
X	X	1	12	2.03		EO			8/24/93					C	318	C	276	284	272	1	1
X	X	1	12	2.22		EO								D-	356	F	233	375	327	1	1
X	X	1	12	2.88		R04			8/27/93					B	304	C	284	299	316	1	1
X	X	1	12	2.93		EO								D	344	B	309	360	355	1	1
X	X	1	12	2.43		EO								B	294	C	272	313	290	1	1
X	X	1	12	2.54		EO								C-	360	C	301	332	299	1	1
X	X	1	12	2.19										C-		C					
X	X	1	12	2.87		R02			9/5/00					A-	369	C	255	380	319	1	1
X	X	1	12	3.79		R02	Y		8/27/93					B	388	A-	335	391	320	1	1
X	X	1	12	1.86	Rsp	EO								P	356	D	249	365	273	1	1
X	X	1	12	3.06		EO			8/27/92					B	406	B	353	318	305	1	1
X	X	1	12	1.88		EO								D	322	D-	284	323	287	1	1
X	X	1	12	2.86		R04	Y		8/22/92					B-	301	B	343	313	356	1	1
X	X	1	12	2.95	Rsp	EO			8/27/92					D	283	D	289	309		0	1
X	X	1	12	2.43		EO								A-	444	C-	367	370	352	1	1
X	X	1	12	2.75		EO								C	406	A-	396	386	397	1	1

Adapted from Elkhart Community School District, Indiana

Cleveland High School
Classroom Visitation Form for Evaluation

Employee Name: _____
Location Code: 8590 Date _____
School: **Grover Cleveland High School**

1. SUPPORT FOR STUDENT LEARNING

COMMENTS

_____ a. Uses the results of multiple assessments to guide instruction _____
_____ b. Guides all students to be self directed and assess their own learning _____
_____ c. Engages students in problem solving, critical thinking and other activities that make subject matter meaningful _____
_____ d. Uses a variety of instructional strategies and resources to respond to student's diverse needs _____
_____ e. Integrates students' prior knowledge, life experiences, and interests into the instructional program _____

2. PLANNING AND DESIGNING INSTRUCTION

_____ a. Demonstrates evidence of short-term and long-term plans to foster student learning and achievement of the state standards _____
_____ b. Uses state subject matter content standards to establish rigorous learning goals for students _____
_____ c. Interrelates ideas and information within and across subject matter areas _____
_____ d. Uses instructional strategies, materials, resources, and technologies that are appropriate to the subject matter _____
_____ e. Plans instruction to ensure that all groups of students have equal access to the curriculum _____

Cleveland High School
Classroom Visitation Form for Evaluation

3. CLASSROOM PERFORMANCE

COMMENTS

_____ a. Demonstrates knowledge of state standards and student development
_____ b. Uses a grading/evaluation system that is aligned with State Standards
_____ c. Establishes and maintain standards for student behavior and created a climate that promotes fairness and respect
_____ d. Plans and implements classroom procedures and routines that support student learning
_____ e. Uses instructional time effectively
_____ f. Provides an effective classroom environment

4. DEVELOPING AS A PROFESSIONAL EDUCATOR

_____ a. Establishes professional goals and demonstrates continuous growth
_____ b. Works with colleagues to improve professional practice
_____ c. Provides effective supervision of students
_____ d. Collaborates in the improvement of the school program
_____ e. Communicates regularly with students and parents about instructional goals and student progress
_____ f. Follows district and state policies, laws and regulations
_____ g. Communicates and interacts with colleagues, staff, parents, and students in an appropriate manner
_____ h. Performs adjunct duties effectively

5. PUNCTUALITY, ATTENDANCE AND RECORDKEEPING

_____ a. Regularly arrives on time, starts class schedule
_____ b. Regularly in attendance for the total contract day
_____ c. Maintains accurate and timely records

Cleveland High School - LAUSD

ELD 5 OBSERVATION SHEET

Teacher_____ Subject_____ Period_____

Support for Student Learning

Classroom Environment
____ Standards are posted
____ Standards are evident in lesson/ student work
____ Agenda posted
____ Standards are explained

Varied Instructional grouping
____ Whole Group
____ Small/Cooperative groups
____ Independent/Individual

Visual and Print Rich Environment
____ Word/Picture Wall
____ Current student work posted
____ Rubrics posted
____ Other _____

Varied Delivery Mode
____ Auditory
____ Visual
____ Kinesthetic

Interaction Opportunities
____ Teacher to student
____ Student to teacher
____ Student to student

Use of SDAIE

Instructional Scaffolding
____ Activitates student prior knowledge
____ Use of paraphrasing and repetition
____ Visuals, graphic organizers,realia
____ Comprehension check
____ Teacher models use of standard academic English
____ Explicit teaching of metacognitive strategies i.e. think aloud, reflection, self assessment
____ Differentiated assignments
____ Other _____

____ Links concepts and skills to student experiences
____ controlled use of idioms (explanation)
____ Meaningful hands-on activities
____ Increased wait time
____ Variety of questioning techniques
____ Varied reading strategies i.e. choral reading paraphrasing/ summarize

Comments:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Observed by _____
Date _____

Cleveland High School - LAUSD

ELD OBSERVATION SHEET

Teacher_____ ELD Level_____ Period____

Support for Student Learning
Classroom Environment
____ Standards are posted
____ Standards are evident in lesson/ student work
____Agenda posted
Visual and Print Rich Environment
____ Word/Picture Wall
____ Current studentwork posted
____ Rubrics posted
____ Other _____
Interaction Opportunities
____ Teacher to student
____ Student to teacher
____ Student to student

Use of High Point Resources
____Student Textbook
____ Teacher's Edition
____ Student Practice Book
____ Overhead/transparencies
____ Theme Library/Basic Bookshelf
____ Language, Selection tapes/CDs

Classroom Performance (continued)
Varied Instructional grouping
____Whole Group
____ Small/Cooperative groups
____ Independent/ individual
Varied Delivery Mode
____ Auditory
____ Visual
____Kinesthetic

ELD Portfolios
____ Language Acquisition Assessments
____ Selection Tests
____ Writing Assessments
____ Unit tests
____ Student work samples

Use of instructional scaffolding
____ Activitates student prior knowledge
____ Use of paraphrasing and repetition
____ Visuals, graphic organizers,realia
____ Comprehension check
____ Teacher models use of standard academic English
____ Explicit teaching of metacognitive strategies i.e. think aloud, reflection, self assessment
____ Differentiated assignments
____ Other _____

Comments:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Observed by_____
Date _____

Cleveland High School - LAUSD

REVISED 02/04/04

STANDARDS-BASED TEACHING AND LEARNING PLANNING MATRIX

NAME OF COURSE__ _____

TIME FRAME	CONTENT STANDARD(S) (Write them out as they appear in CDE documents) Include language arts standard needed to assist students in meeting content standard.	UNIT OF STUDY- SUBJECT CONTENT (Title and description)	MATERIALS RESOURCES (textbook, supplementary materials, library, etc.)	CULMINATING PERFORMANCE TASK(S)	SCAFFOLDING LESSONS	RUBRICS

Reflection Process

Bolsa Grande High School

Norms and Expectations

1. Curriculum is aligned:
    - to state standards
    - across department
        - course-alike teachers must be on the same pacing schedule
2. Some common assignments are given by all course-alike teachers.
3. One common assessment per unit of instruction is given by all course-alike teachers
    - 15 to 30 questions (3-5 questions per standard)
    - teacher written or district sponsored
4. Assessments are scored using a Pearson or Scantron grading machine
    - grading system should include a computer interface to prepare data for analysis.
5. All course-alike teachers are willing to participate, be open to discussion, and flexible.
6. Test and reflection dates are calendared at the beginning of the year or semester.

Process

1. All course-alike teachers administer the common assessment within a specific window of time (approximately 3 days).
2. Test coordinator scores answer sheets and gives individual class results to teachers (approximate 2 day turn-around).
    - assessments are scored together so that class, and total statistics are available.

*3. Teachers individually review and analyze class test results and reflect on specific strategies used.
    - this step is critical to the success of the group discussion.
    - individual class results must be analyzed ahead of time because there is not enough time once the reflection meeting begins.

4. Course-alike teachers meet together to compare and contrast results (approx. 45 min. to 1 hr.)
    - each teacher briefly shares their class results with the group.
    - commonalities are identified and anomalies considered.
        - Ex. commonality – most classes did poorly on standard 5b
        - Ex. Anomaly – teacher X had very low results, but teacher X had jury duty for 1 week.
5. As a group, address the issues listed on the Reflection Minutes sheet. decide which quiz questions to re-write (if it is within your power to do so).
    - identify which concepts need to be addressed differently or more in-depth.
    - submit a copy of the minutes to school administration.
6. Decide as a group on a possible new activity or choose one or two volunteers to investigate and design one.

*7. Establish a date to meet again to review/revise the new quiz question(s) or activity. (this step is extremely critical to ensure that the quiz is re-written or the activity is prepared *before* it is needed the following year. Experience has proven that if not done immediately, it will not get done).

Start slow. Every teacher has a different comfort zone, and each one is at a different place in their ability to diagnose and design curriculum, instruction and assessment. This process is meant to facilitate collaboration and encouragement.

Department/Benchmark Reflection
Minutes

Department: _____ Date: _____

Content Area: _____ Topic(s): _____

Test No./Name: _____

Section 1 – Parking Lot Issues

1. Issues that teachers dealt with that are beyond teacher control: (copy machines broken, etc)

Section 2 – General Analysis

2. Overall student performance: (Disparity in scores: between classes, teachers, etc.)

3. Proficiency band comparison: (Percentage of students within each category)

Section 3 – Test Analysis

4. Questions missed by an abundance of students/validity of question vs. material not covered.

Section 4 – Standards/Material Coverage

5. Of those questions/standards missed, what topics need to be covered more in-depth or using a different strategy?

Section 5 – Modifications/Assignments

Test Question re-writes: _____ _____

New Activities: _____ _____

Completion date: _____

Department/Benchmark Reflection
Minutes

Sample

Department: Science Date: April 11, 2005

Content Area: Biology Topic(s): Protein Synthesis, DNA, RNA, Natural Selection

Test No./Name: 3rd Qtr Benchmark

Section 1 – Parking Lot Issues

1. Issues that teachers dealt with that do not directly affect test outcome:

   Secretaries were not available when some teachers went to get testing materials.

Section 2 – General Analysis

2. Overall student performance: (Disparity in scores: between classes, teachers, etc.)

   Natural selection was low for all except Jones and Smith.
   Smith had 43% in one class and 61% in another for protein synthesis
   Baker was much lower than all others in Amino Acid Sequencing

3. Proficiency band comparison: (Percentage of students within each category)

   Most teachers were within range of each other - only 2 out of 6 teachers had "far below basic students". Most had between 25% and 35% "proficient", and 30%-55% "basic". One teacher was anomalous.

Section 3 – Test Analysis

4. Questions missed by an abundance of students/validity of question vs. material not covered.

   Questions no. 23, 25 - natural selection.
   Questions no. 13, 14 - gene translation
   Question no. 19 - amino acids

Section 4 – Standards/Material Coverage

5. Of those questions/standards missed, what topics need to be covered more in-depth or by using a different strategy?

   Natural selection should be covered more in-depth. Perhaps add a few more homework assignments and at least one more class activity. Gene translation - just needs different activity.

Section 5 – Modifications/Assignments

Test Question re-writes: Turner will take Comments back to District Consult

New Activities: Jones/Smith - Ntl. Selct. Thompson - Gene Transl.

Completion date: May 18, 2005

Bolsa Grande Data Team

Role and Responsibilities

Role of the Team:

The Bolsa Grande Data Team consists of teachers and administrators who engage in site-based data collection and research for the purpose of supporting standards-based instruction in the classroom and data-driven decision making.

Responsibilities of the Team:

The Garden Grove Unified School District and the Faculty and Administration at Bolsa Grande High School support the use of data as a tool to promote improved teaching and learning. The bold statements below are district goals, and the bulleted statements are the actions that the Bolsa Grande Data Team will undertake to help facilitate those goals:

1. **Create a mind-set that decisions are made on data, <u>not</u> <u>instinct.</u>**
   - The Data Team will collect and disaggregate site-based achievement data and provide that data to Administration, Leadership Team, Department Chairs and individual teachers for reflection, instruction modification, and school-wide decision making.
   - The Data Team will work with the Principal in collecting and disseminating appropriate data to the School Site Council and parent advisory groups.

2. **Offer professional development for principals and teachers on the effective use of data.**
   - The Data Team will collect site-based achievement and demographic information to assist Administration, Leadership Team, and Department Chairs in designing effective school-wide staff development.

3. **Ensure that regular formative and summative assessments are given to monitor student progress and to facilitate the adjustment of instruction and curricular programs as necessary.**
   - The Data Team will collect and disseminate survey and anecdotal data on teacher knowledge and implementation of formative and summative assessments.
   - The Data Team will provide teachers with current research and information on what formative and summative assessments are available, and their implementation.

4. **Ensure that an individual student's data will remain confidential and only be used for purposes of planning instruction and communication with the child's parents or guardians.**

   - Ensure that teacher's data will remain confidential and only be used collectively with respect to school improvement and strategy implementation.

5. **Fostering a culture of inquiry that supports the use of data at all levels leading to a culture of continuous improvement.**
   - The Data Team will be trained on the use of *DataDirector* to collect data and generate reports.
   - The Data Team will act as peer-coaches on the use of *DataDirector*.
   - The Data Team will generate charts and graphs from raw data to assist teachers in its interpretion.
   - The Data Team will provide tools, such as templates or rubrics, to assist teachers in collecting, disaggregating and interpreting raw data
   - The Data Team will set a tone for collegiality during data walks and resulting reflections.
   - The Data Team will assist the Administration in the planning and implementation of DataWalks.
     - The purpose of DataWalks is to collect observational data on the implementation of school-wide or departmental strategies or programs.
     - The focus of DataWalks is on student learning and achievement.

Garden Grove Unified School District

GOAL 1 - ACADEMIC PROFICIENCY AND PROGRESS

Academic Proficiency

Students in our district five years or longer will meet grade-level standards in core academic subjects as measured by proficiency on the:

- California Standards Test: English Language Arts and Math
- California Standards Test: Science and Social Science
- California High School Exit Exam

Academic Progress

Students in our district will steadily progress toward meeting grade-level standards in core academic subjects as measured by the California Standards Test and demonstrated as:

- Students at "Far Below Basic" will progress to the "Below Basic" level
- Students at "Below Basic" will progress to the "Basic" level
- Students in lower "Basic" will progress to the upper "Basic" level
- Students in upper "Basic" will progress to the "Proficient" level
- Students reaching "Proficient" will maintain this level or progress to the "Advanced" level

Academic progress will be supported and indicated during the year by:

- District Benchmark Assessments
- District Writing Assessments
- Standards-based Report Cards

GOAL 2 - ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRESS

English Language Proficiency

English Learners in our district four years or longer will meet the English Proficient level as measured by proficiency on the:

- **C**alifornia **E**nglish **L**anguage **D**evelopment **T**est

English Proficiency on the CELDT is defined as the "Early Advanced/Advanced" level with all sub-skills (Listening/Speaking, Reading, and Writing) at the "Intermediate" level or above.

English Language Development Progress

English Learners in our district will steadily progress toward developing English language proficiency as measured by the **C**alifornia **E**nglish **L**anguage **D**evelopment **T**est and demonstrated as:

- Students at "Beginning" will progress to the "Early Intermediate" level
- Students at "Early Intermediate" will progress to the "Intermediate" level
- Students at "Intermediate" will progress to the "Early Advanced" level
- Students at "Early Advanced/Advanced" will progress to the "English Proficient" level
- Students reaching English Proficient will maintain this level until designated as **R**eclassified **F**luent **E**nglish **P**roficient

RFEP denotes a student who has been reclassified Fluent English Proficient by meeting the English "Proficient" level on the CELDT as well as specific academic criteria in English Language Arts.

English Language Development progress will be supported and indicated during the year by:

- Curriculum-based assessments correlated to California English Language Development Test Standards

District Goals

Appendix II. Glossary

Academic Performance Index (API)
API produces a single numerical rating of a school's performance. That number serves as the basis for ranking schools, calculating how much they must improve their performance each year, and comparing their growth to similar schools.

Accountability
The notion that people (e.g., students or teachers) or an organization (e.g., a school, school district, or state department of education) should be held responsible for improving student achievement and should be rewarded or sanctioned for their success or lack of success in doing so.

Achievement Gap
A consistent difference in scores on student achievement tests between certain groups of children and children in other groups. The data documents a strong association between poverty, language status, race and in some cases gender and students' academic success as measured by achievement tests. Recent legislation, including the Federal *No Child Left Behind Act,* hold schools and school districts accountable for narrowing the achievement gap.

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)
An individual state's measure of yearly progress toward achieving the federally-mandated goal of all students being "proficient" in English and math by 2014. Adequate yearly progress is the minimum level of improvement that states, school districts, and schools must achieve each year, according to the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB).

A-G Courses
The set of 15 one-year college prep courses high school students must take to be eligible to enter either the California State University (CSU) or University of California (UC) systems.

Alignment
The degree to which assessments, curriculum, instruction, textbooks and other instructional materials, teacher preparation and professional development, and systems of accountability all reflect and reinforce the educational program's objectives and standards.

Benchmark
A detailed description of a specific level of student achievement expected of students at particular ages, grades, or developmental levels. A set of benchmarks can be used as checkpoints to monitor progress in meeting performance goals within and across grade levels.

California English Language Development Test (CELDT)
A test for students whose primary language—as reported by their parents—is not English. These students take the CELDT upon initial enrollment and annually thereafter until it is determined that they

California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE)
A state exam that California public high school students, beginning with the class of 2006, must pass in order to graduate. It is a pass-fail exam divided into two sections: English language arts (reading and writing) and mathematics.

California Standards Tests (CSTs)
Tests that are part of the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) program and are based on the state's academic content standards—what teachers are expected to teach and what students are expected to learn. They are primarily multiple choice and cover four subject areas: English language arts (grades 2–11); mathematics (grades 2–11); history/social science (grades 8, 10, and 11); and science (for high school students who are taking specific subjects like biology, chemistry, or integrated science). CSTs are criterion-referenced tests, and students are scored as "far below basic, below basic, basic, proficient, and advanced."

Charter School
A public school operated independently under a performance agreement with a school district, a county office of education (COE), or the State Board of Education. Charter schools are funded on a per-pupil basis, freed from most state regulations that apply to school districts and COEs, usually able to hire their own teachers and other staff, and subject to closure if they fail to meet their promises for student outcomes.

English Learner (EL) or English Language Learner (ELL)
Students whose home language is not English and who qualify for extra help. EL students were formerly known as "Limited English Proficient" (LEP). (See CELDT and FEP.)

Fluent English Proficient (FEP)
A designation that means a student is no longer considered as part of a school's English learner (EL) population.

Free- or Reduced- price Lunch Program (FRLP)
A federal program to provide lunch and/or breakfast for students from low-income families. The number of students participating in the National School Lunch Program is used as a way to measure the poverty level of a school or district population.

Golden State Exams (GSE)
Rigorous tests given to upper-grade students. Established in 1983, California's Golden State Exams were given to upper-grade students in a number of key academic subject areas. In 2003 the tests were limited to English language arts for 11th graders and mathematics for 9th–11th graders. The tests, which are aligned to state academic content standards, include both multiple-choice and written-response questions. State educators are considering using GSEs to determine placement in English and mathematics in the California State University (CSU) system.

High School Exit Exam (HSEE)
See California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE).

Immediate Intervention/ Underperforming Schools Program (II/USP)
A component of California's Public Schools Accountability Act (PSAA) designed to provide assistance and

intervention for schools identified as underperforming. Schools that meet improvement goals will be eligible for financial and non-monetary rewards; schools that fail to meet growth targets over time may be subject to district or state interventions.

Limited English Proficiency (LEP)
See English learner.

Local Education Agency (LEA)
A public board of education or other public authority within a state that maintains administrative control of public elementary or secondary schools in a city, county, township, school district, or other political subdivision of a state. School districts and county offices of education are both LEAs. Sometimes charter schools function as LEAs.

No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)
The 2002 reauthorizaton of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Originally passed in 1965, ESEA programs provide much of the federal funding for K–12 schools. NCLB's provisions represent a significant change in the federal government's influence in public schools and districts throughout the United States, particularly in terms of assessment, accountability, and teacher quality. It increases the federal focus on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils, including English learners and student who live in poverty, provides funding for innovative programs, and supports the right of parents to transfer their children to a different school if their school is low-performing or unsafe.

Professional Development
Programs that allow teachers or administrators to acquire the knowledge and skills they need to perform their jobs successfully. Often these programs are aimed at veteran teachers to help them update their skills and knowledge. Researchers have found that effective professional development focuses on academic content and requires adequate time, resources, and working conditions.

Proficiency
Mastery or ability to do something at grade-level. In California, students take California Standards Tests (CSTs) and receive scorces that range from "far below basic" to "advanced." The state goal is for all students to score at "proficient" or "advanced."

Program Improvement
An intervention under the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). Schools and districts that receive federal Title I funds enter Program Improvement when—for two years in a row—they do not make adequate yearly progress (AYP) toward the goal of having all students become proficient in English language arts and mathematics by 2013–14. Each state, with federal approval, sets measurements of what is considered AYP each year. Once a school makes AYP for two years in a row, it can leave Program Improvement. NCLB lists a series of increasingly serious interventions for schools that remain in Program Improvement. Schools that do not receive Title I funds are not subject to Program Improvement even if they do not make AYP.

Public Schools Accountability Act (PSAA)
A law that outlines a comprehensive process for measuring schools' academic performance and ranking schools based on that performance. When schools fall short of the expectations, the state may intervene—first with assistance and later with sanctions. Successful schools are expected to be recognized and rewarded. The PSAA, which was approved by California lawmakers in April 1999, has three main components: the Academic Performance Index (API), the Immediate Intervention/ Underperforming Schools Program (II/USP), and the Governor's Performance Award program (GPA).

Significant subgroup
A group of students based on ethnicity, poverty, English learner status, and Special Education designation. Under both California and federal accountability rules, various data must be reported for significant subgroups of students. To be considered "significant," a subgroup must include either 100 students or a smaller number if they represent at least 15% of the overall school population. For the state's Academic Performance Index (API), the smaller number is 30. Under the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), the smaller number is 50.

Special Education
Programs to identify and meet the educational needs of children with emotional, learning, or physical disabilities. Federal law requires that all children with disabilities be provided a free and appropriate education according to an Individualized Education Program (IEP) from infancy until 21 years of age.

Standards
Degrees or levels of achievement. The "standards movement" began as an informal effort grown out of a concern that American students were not learning enough and that American schools did not have a rigorous curriculum. The U.S. Congress adopted this concept more formally with its 1994 reauthorization of the federal Title I program.

Standards-Based Reform
A recent shift in education policy and school reform toward reaching consensus on and establishing standards for what students need to know and be able to do at each grade or developmental level. While the momentum for standards-based education is well on its way, tension still exists over how much influence national, state, or local policy makers should have over setting the standards. Although a strong backlash to national control continues, a growing number of states are taking on this responsibility, including California.

Appendix III. Sample Sites: Demographic Data

CALIFORNIA BEST PRACTICES STUDY SAMPLE 2004 - 2005

Demographic Analysis of Study Participants

High-Performing Schools

Bold indicates school stats that exceed state &/or district stats

District Name	Dist Size	School Name	Geography	School Size	% FRLP	% ELL	% Black	% Hisp
Central Union	4,129	Central High	Southern CA	1,706	**56.80%**	**35.40%**	2.50%	**87.70%**
Central Union	4,129	Southwest High	Southern CA	2,243	**48.20%**	**33.10%**	1.60%	**83.50%**
Los Angeles Unified	747,009	Sherman Oaks	Southern CA	1,787	40.80%	10.80%	**8.80%**	35.10%
Los Angeles Unified	747,009	Cleveland	Southern CA	3,754	**68.30%**	24.90%	**9.00%**	**56.30%**
Los Angeles Unified	747,009	LA Center for Enriched Studies	Southern CA	1,626	31.70%	0.80%	**36.30%**	17.50%
Marysville Joint Unified	9,626	Marysville	Northern CA	249	35.60%	0.90%	**5.30%**	5.80%
Selma USD	6,304	Selma High	Central CA	1,606	**63.50%**	20.80%	0.40%	**75.90%**
El Monte Union HSD	10,446	El Monte High	Southern CA	2,109	**79.80%**	**38.40%**	0.30%	**80.70%**
Garden Grove USD	50,030	Bolsa Grande High	Southern CA	1,575	**65.80%**	**41.90%**	**1.60%**	35.50%
West Contra Costa USD	32,719	Middle College High	Northern CA	266	0.00%	2.80%	**23.70%**	35.20%
San Jose USD	31,874	Lincoln High	Northern CA	1,768	35.80%	13.90%	2.60%	**54.60%**
		Summary:	3 Northern CA 7 Southern CA 1 Central CA	Average: 1,699	6 of 11 exceed state and/or district averages	4 of 11 exceed state and/or district averages	6 of 11 exceed state and/or district averages	6 of 11 exceed state and/or district averages

Average-Performing Schools

District Name	Dist Size	School Name	Geography	School Size	% FRLP	% ELL	% Black	% Hisp
AP district 1	8,543	AP1	Northern CA	2,686	12.40%	4.60%	4.00%	12.40%
AP district 2	58,670	AP2	Northern CA	2,120	**58.40%**	**30.50%**	**34.20%**	**24.30%**
AP district 3	2,454	AP3	Central CA	724	**78.80%**	**26.00%**	0.60%	**91.40%**
AP district 4	4,584	AP4	Southern CA	1,177	37.20%	4.50%	**8.50%**	**63.90%**
AP district 5	8,868	AP5	Southern CA	2,345	**28.50%**	**22.10%**	2.50%	**59.20%**
		Summary:	2 Northern CA 2 Southern CA 1 Central CA	Average: 1,810	3 of 5 exceed state and/or district averages	3 of 5 exceed state and/or district averages	2 of 5 exceed state and/or district average	4 of 5 exceed state and/or district averages

Comparison of Districts to State

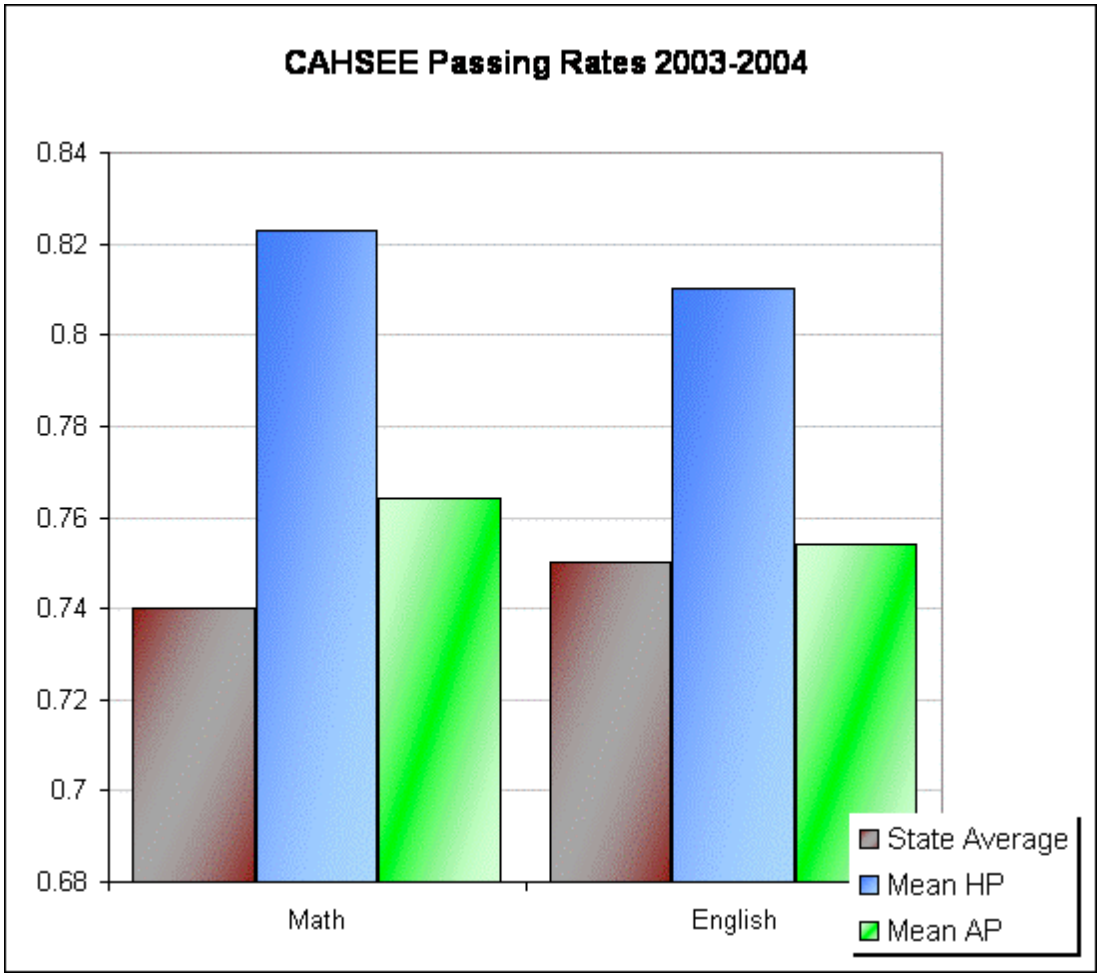
District Name	% FRLP	% ELL	% Black	% Hisp
Central Union	46.30%	16.70%	**8.60%**	44.40%
Los Angeles Unified	**76.50%**	**43.80%**	**11.80%**	**72.50%**
Marysville Joint Unified	**73.70%**	23.50%	3.50%	26.00%
Selma USD	**78.90%**	**33.80%**	0.70%	**80.10%**
El Monte Union HSD	**66.10%**	**30.00%**	0.60%	**77.00%**
Garden Grove USD	**60.40%**	**49.10%**	1.10%	**51.90%**
West Contra Costa USD	**53.90%**	**29.40%**	**28.80%**	38.10%
San Jose USD	43.70%	**26.00%**	3.50%	**50.70%**
AP1	16.70%	6.70%	5.40%	14.10%
AP2	38.60%	18.40%	**18.90%**	19.80%
AP3	**81.40%**	**37.40%**	0.80%	**92.70%**
AP4	**62.70%**	18.50%	**9.90%**	**65.20%**
AP5	15.70%	17.80%	2.60%	44.60%
California State Average	49.00%	25.40%	8.10%	46.00%

Appendix IV. Sample Sites: Achievement Data Summaries

California Best Practices Study Sample 2004 - 2005

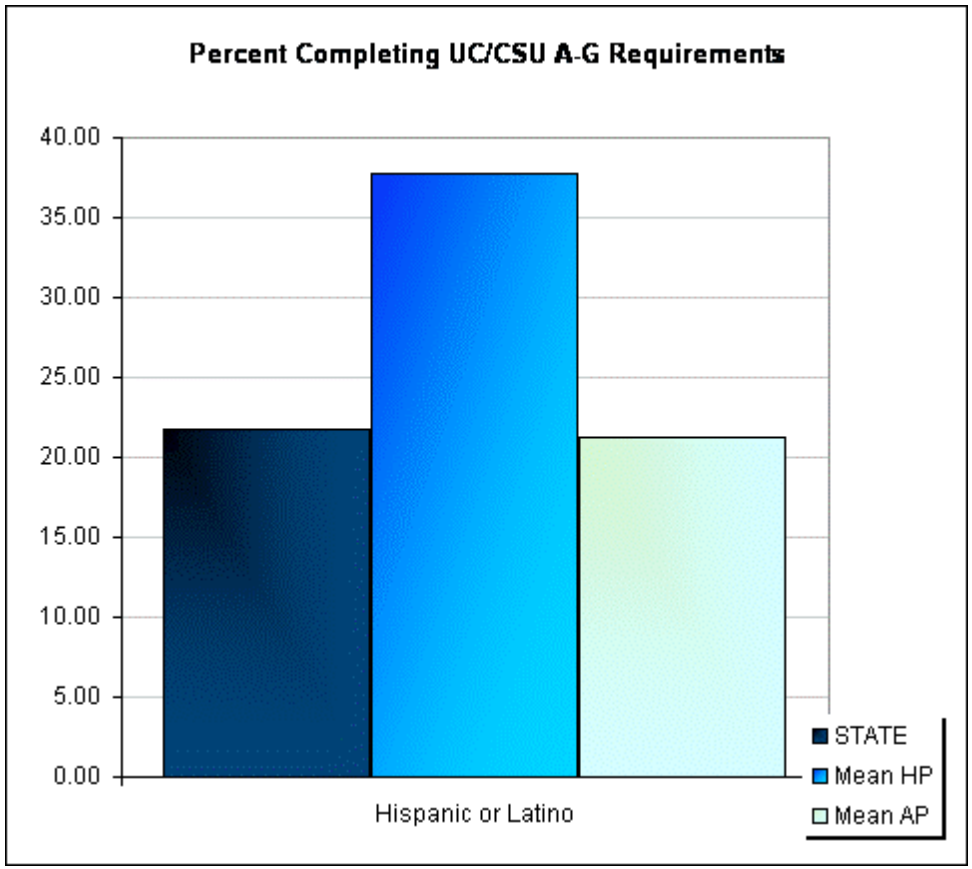
CAHSEE
All Students

	% Passing Math	% Passing English
Central	65%	66%
Southwest	69%	67%
Sherman Oaks	96%	97%
Cleveland High	80%	77%
LACES	94%	99%
Marysville	84%	93%
Selma	79%	71%
El Monte	73%	64%
Bolsa Grande	84%	76%
Middle College	99%	100%
Average HP	*82%*	*81%*
STATE	74%	75%
AP 1	95%	92%
AP 2	67%	66%
AP 3	70%	67%
AP 4	74%	76%
AP 5	76%	76%
Average AP	76%	75%
State Average	**0.74**	**0.75**
Mean HP	82%	81%
Mean AP	76%	75%



California Best Practices Study Sample 2004 - 2005

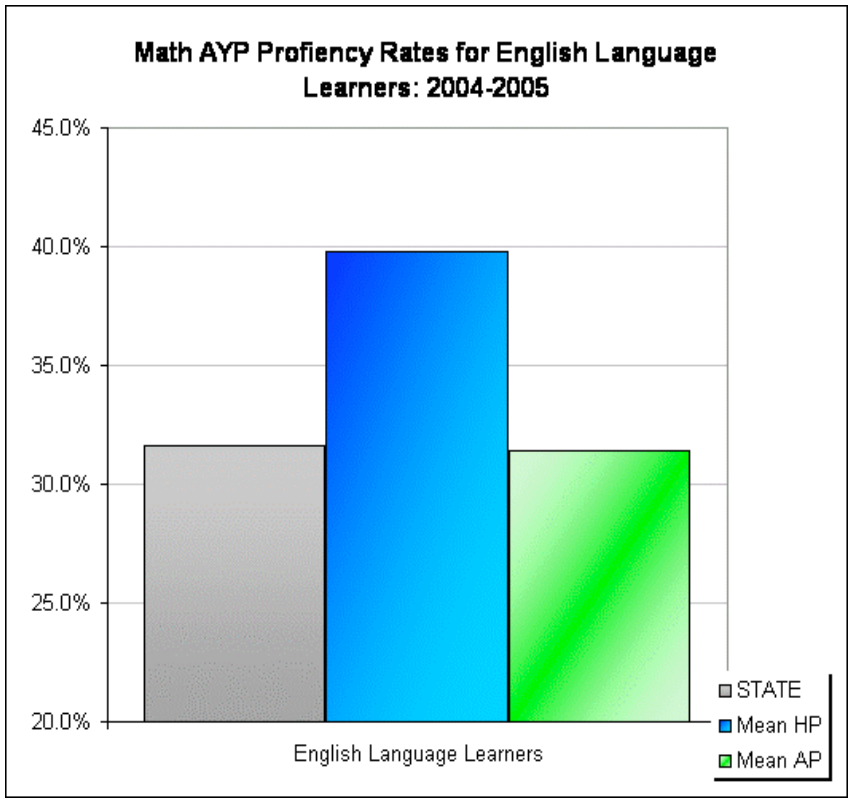
	Hispanic or Latino	
	% Students	% Completing A-G
Central	85.4	27.0
Southwest	83.5	38.6
Sherman Oaks	35.1	20.3
Cleveland High	56.3	40.7
LACES	17.5	86.7
Marysville	*5.8*	*n/a*
Selma	75.9	9.3
El Monte	77.1	8.6
Bolsa Grande	35.5	8.0
Middle College	35.2	100.0
Mean HP	50.73	37.69
STATE	46.8	21.7
AP1	12.4	18.2
AP2	24.3	12.5
AP3	91.4	25.2
AP4	63.9	22.8
AP5	59.2	27.6
Mean AP	50.24	21.26
STATE		21.70
Mean HP		37.69
Mean AP		21.26



Only schools with 10% or more Hispanic students are included in calculations.

California Best Practices Study Sample 2004 - 2005

	English Language Learners	
	% of students	*% AYP Math Proficent*
Central	35.1%	34.1%
Southwest	34.4%	36.7%
Sherman Oaks	8.3%	40.7%
Cleveland High	25.1%	41.5%
LACES	*0.9%*	*N/A*
Marysville	*0.8%*	*N/A*
Selma	20.9%	37.7%
El Monte	37.7%	34.8%
Bolsa Grande	40.3%	54.1%
Middle College	*1.5%*	*N/A*
Mean HP	32.3%	39.8%
STATE	25.2%	31.6%
AP1	*4.7%*	*N/A*
AP2	26.0%	34.1%
AP3	26.8%	36.1%
AP4	*3.2%*	*N/A*
AP5	19.6%	24.1%
Mean AP	24.1%	31.4%
STATE	25.2%	31.6%
Mean HP	32.3%	39.8%
Mean AP	24.1%	31.4%



****Only schools with 10% or more ELL students are included in calculations**.**

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Appendix VI. California Best Practice Advisory

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About Springboard Schools

Springboard Schools
A network committed to achievement, equity & inquiry

Springboard Schools is a California-based nonprofit and non-partisan network of educators committed to raising student achievement and narrowing the achievement gap. Springboard Schools was founded in 1995 as the Bay Area School Reform Collaborative (BASRC). Since that time, Springboard Schools has worked with 325 schools in 74 districts in the San Francisco Bay Area, Central Valley, and Southern California.

Springboard's "research to action" approach to improving schools consists of three parts: 1) we study high-performing, low-resource schools to understand what they're doing right; 2) we provide professional development to educators and administrators; and 3) we partner with school districts to provide intensive, on-site coaching so new ideas are transformed into practical strategies for change. The Springboard Schools research team has developed a reputation as a reliable source of information that is useful to both practitioners and policy-makers.

We created this unique data-based decision-making process for improving schools because we believe the best results start with asking the right questions. We also believe that examining student achievement data alone is not enough; we must also closely examine how teachers teach and how schools and districts are organized. All of this has a huge influence on student learning. The Cycle of Inquiry process can be used at multiple levels of a school system, from the classroom to the boardroom.

Springboard works with education leaders at all levels of the system, from teachers to district administrators. Our clients are school districts across California. They range from large (Fresno Unified, with more than 80,000 students) to small (Exeter, with 2,000 students) and include urban, suburban and rural districts. Springboard is one of very few organizations in the state that offers a model for change at the district level as well as the school level—a model that is already showing results. Over the years, we have worked with more than 70 districts and more than 300 schools.

Springboard's program for improving schools was rigorously evaluated over a five-year period by an independent research team at Stanford University's Center for Research on the Context of Teaching (CRC).[4] CRC's intensive study documented that test scores in Springboard schools rose more rapidly than those in a carefully matched group of schools that did not take part in our program. Those schools that implemented the Springboard model most faithfully made the biggest gains.

Springboard Schools was founded with a $50 million grant from the Annenberg and the William and Flora Hewlett foundations. Today, Springboard is supported in part from fees charged to districts for our services and in part by a diverse coalition of foundations, corporations and individuals committed to investing in the improvement of public education.

Springboard Schools' goal is to provide education organizations and their leaders at every level of the system with the knowledge, skills and tools to create school systems in which good teaching is the norm in every classroom for every student.

For more information, please visit the Springboard Schools website: SpringboardSchools.org or email info@springboardschools.org.

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[4]Bay Area School Reform Collaborative: Phase One (1996-2001) Evaluation; Center for Research on the Context of Teaching, Stanford University

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