



Californians Together: A Roundtable for Quality Education

**Bilingual schools make exceptional gains
on the state's
Academic Performance Index (API)**

**Norm Gold
Sacramento, CA
ncgold@prodigy.net
916 - 731-4734**

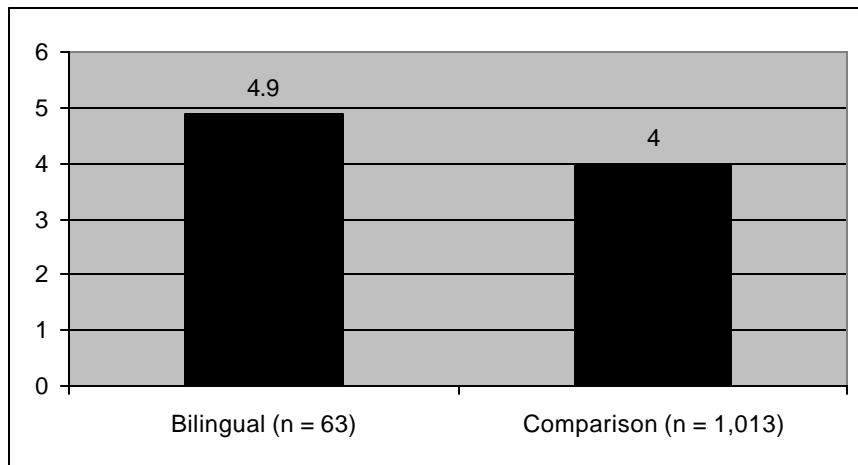
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Bilingual schools make exceptional gains on the state's Academic Performance Index (API)

Sixty-three schools with bilingual education programs did better on tests of academic achievement in English than over one thousand similar schools that provided instruction to most of their students only in English. The bilingual and comparison schools have Hispanic enrollments that average 73 percent. The students in these schools come overwhelmingly from low-income families where the parents have limited formal education. Both groups of schools did make progress on California's Academic Performance Index (API) from 1999 to 2000. But the bilingual schools exceeded their growth targets for Hispanic students by almost five times, while the comparison schools exceeded their targets by only four times (See Figure 1).ⁱ

Figure 1.

Times the schools exceeded Hispanic API growth targets



The California Department of Education (CDE) released API growth scores for most elementary, middle and high schools in the state on October 4th. The API in 1999 and 2000 is based exclusively on the results of a standardized, norm-referenced test, the SAT-9.ⁱⁱ This preliminary review of the API scores for elementary schools in California reveals that dozens of schools implementing bilingual instruction under the parental exception waiver provisions of Proposition 227 made impressive gains on the API. They did so while testing virtually all their students.ⁱⁱⁱ

EXAMPLES OF SCHOOL SUCCESS

Among the 63 bilingual schools in the sample reviewed were some that gained many multiples of their API growth target. This was not just the case for schools that had very low 1999 scores. There were higher-performing schools that also made excellent gains. A few examples of the bilingual schools with the greatest API growth beyond their target are the following (See details in Table 1):

1. **Niemes Elementary** in ABC Unified, exceeded its school-wide target by **8.3 times**. (Growth from 545 to 653).
2. **Robinson Elementary** in Long Beach USD, exceeded its target by **6.6 times**. (Growth from 562 to 641).
3. **Patrick Henry Elementary** in Long Beach USD, exceeded its target by **4.2 times**. (Growth from 574 to 620).
4. **Del Rey Woods Elementary** in Monterey Peninsula, exceeded its target by **5.4 times**. (Growth from 558 to 623). Socioeconomically disadvantaged students there did even better, exceeding their target by **9.2 times**.
5. **G. Brown Elementary** in Paso Robles, exceeded its target by **5.6 times**. (Growth from 450 to 550). Socioeconomically disadvantaged students there did even better, exceeding their target by **6.8 times**.
6. **Central Elementary** in San Diego USD, exceeded its target by **13.9 times**. (Growth from 611 to 736). It is a school with 99 percent of its students in poverty.
7. **Spreckels Elementary** in San Diego USD, exceeded its target by **7 times**. (Growth from 703 to 738).
8. **Franklin Elementary** in San Diego USD, exceeded its target by **6.3 times**. (Growth from 643 to 693).
9. **Berry Elementary** in South Bay USD, exceeded its target by **6.3 times**. (Growth from 568 to 643).
10. **Kings Beach Elementary** in Tahoe-Truckee, exceeded its target by **5.6 times**. (Growth from 512 to 591). Socioeconomically disadvantaged students there did even better, exceeding their target by **8.3 times**

METHODS AND SAMPLE

During September 2000, teachers and administrators from around California provided nominations of bilingual schools that resulted in a sample of 63 bilingual elementary schools in 23 school districts. This preliminary review has concentrated exclusively on Spanish bilingual programs in elementary schools because, historically, over 90 percent of bilingual programs have been implemented in Spanish and English and 82 percent of all English learners in California are Spanish speakers. The overwhelming majority of these English learners (70 percent) are enrolled in elementary schools.

The sole criterion for nomination of a school was the general opinion that the school was thoroughly implementing bilingual instruction.^{iv, v} The bilingual schools reported that 62 percent of all English learners were enrolled in a bilingual education alternative course of study. A comparison group of 1,037 elementary schools was chosen that was closely matched on the key variables of ethnicity, poverty, mobility, 1999 API base score, and percentage of English learners, since these variables are those that were most likely to influence the 2000 API scores. The comparison group included the elementary schools where the English learner enrollment exceeded 40 percent of the total enrollment (See Table 2).

The API may be a “somewhat better” measure of program effects for English learners than SAT-9 scores alone. Concerns about the validity and reliability of the SAT-9 are detailed in Endnote ii. The API has the advantage of bringing together the results of tests at all grades and for several subjects at a school. Given the specific characteristics of the bilingual and comparison schools in the present study, the API results for the Hispanic subgroup gives a composite way of viewing the impact of a specific type of instruction which aims to develop language and academic proficiency over several years.^{vi}

Analyses included calculation of measures of central tendency for all available variables in the API file for both the bilingual and comparison schools. In addition, separate data on parental waivers from SAT-9 testing was examined to ensure that few students were missing from the tests at the bilingual schools. Such an examination was not feasible for the comparison schools.

RESULTS

Almost all of the bilingual schools in this sample (98 percent) met their school-wide API growth targets. Seventy five percent of them achieved more than twice their target gains on the API and therefore are eligible for awards under the state’s Public School’s Accountability Act and related awards and incentive programs.^{vii}

The 63 bilingual schools outperformed other schools that had been in the lowest-performing ranks on the API in 1999. Statewide less than two-thirds of all schools in these lower ranks were eligible for awards.

The 63 bilingual schools sampled for this report enrolled over 29,000 English learners. They more than met their school-wide academic growth targets, and targets for numerically-significant subgroups. On average, they achieved school-wide growth on the API that was over 360 percent of their growth targets.^{viii} These schools did even better for the Hispanic sub-group, where they achieved 490 percent of their targets (See Figure 1 and Table 3).

The comparison group^{ix} also made substantial gains on the API, but did not gain as much as the bilingual schools. Hispanic students in both the bilingual and comparison schools started at virtually the identical point on the 1999 API. The bilingual schools, however, posted a 7.1 point greater gain (15 percent better) than the comparison schools.

These children of poverty are benefiting from bilingual programs, chosen by their parents, that are designed to teach English, and which initially use the students' home language for a substantial portion of academic instruction. As students learn more English an increasing portion of the academic content instruction is in English.

Table 1 provides an overview of the characteristics of the bilingual and comparison schools. Table 2 provides a summary of the achievement on the API for Hispanic students at the 63 bilingual schools and comparison schools. Data on all bilingual schools in this study is found in Table 4.

CONCLUSIONS

Dozens of bilingual schools made substantial gains on the API. In these schools the achievement for Hispanic students appears to be at least as strong, if not better, than in schools providing a program overwhelmingly in English. The performance of Hispanic students in these schools compares favorably to that in comparable schools providing instruction to most of their students only in English. Bilingual education has not been a barrier to academic achievement in English, as measured by the SAT-9, and may have helped.

In contrast to widely-discussed anecdotes of student achievement based on the performance of English learners on the SAT-9 in a single school district, the current analysis suggests that well-implemented bilingual programs in many school districts can lead to academic achievement that is at least as strong as the achievement in programs provided mostly in English.

Table 1

Selected Bilingual Schools with High API gains

District / County	School	Enrollment Total 2000 1	Percent Reduced meals (Poverty) 2	EL Tot 2000 3	Percent EL 4	Percent EL in B.E. 5	API 1999 6	API 2000 7	Growth target 99-00 [5%] 8	Actual Growth 99-00 9	<i>Multiples of target</i> 10
ABC USD LA	Niemes	634	56	290	46	53	545	653	13	108	8.3
Long Beach USD LA	Robinson	999	72	359	36	93	562	641	12	79	6.6
	Henry	790	66	358	45	66	574	620	11	46	4.2
Monterey Peninsula Monterey	Del Rey Woods	523	71	312	60	57	558	623	12	65	5.4
Paso Robles San Luis Ob.	G. Brown	500	71	261	52	89	450	550	18	100	5.6
San Diego SD	Central	1,187	99	824	69	56	611	736	9	125	13.9
	Spreckels	697	47	250	36	97	703	738	5	35	7.0
	Franklin	583	89	288	49	57	643	693	8	50	6.3
South Bay	Berry	744	60	320	43	69	568	643	12	75	

District / County	School	Enrollment Total 2000 1	Percent Reduced meals (Poverty) 2	EL Tot 2000 3	Percent EL 4	Percent EL in B.E. 5	API 1999 6	API 2000 7	Growth target 99-00 [5%] 8	Actual Growth 99-00 9	<i>Multiples of target</i> 10
SD											6.3
Tahoe-Truckee Placer	Kings Beach	506	69	276	55	44	512	591	14	79	5.6

Source: California Department of Education, 2000 (www.cde.ca.gov, using DataQuest demographic reports and API reports).

Data sources for Table 1

Column	Data	Source
1	Total school enrollment	Fall 1999 CBEDS, via CDE DataQuest
2	Percentage of total enrollment reported as receiving free or reduced price meals	Fall 1999 CBEDS, via CDE DataQuest
3	English learner total enrollment, all grades	Spring 2000 Annual Language Census, R-30LC, via CDE DataQuest
4	English learners as a percentage of total enrollment.	Col. 3/Col. 1
5	Percentage of English learners in a bilingual education alternative course of study as allowed by Proposition 227 with a parental exception waiver.	Spring 2000 Annual Language Census, R-30LC, via CDE DataQuest
6	Academic Performance Index for 1999	Base year API, CDE. Cols. 6 – 9 are taken directly from CDE’s web-site: www.api.cde.ca.gov
7	Academic Performance Index for 2000	Growth API from Spring 2000, CDE www.api.cde.ca.gov
8	Growth target for 1999 to 2000 API, calculated as 5% of the difference between 800 (the interim statewide performance target) and the school’s 1999 API.	CDE www.api.cde.ca.gov
9	Actual API growth (Col. 7 – Col. 6)	CDE www.api.cde.ca.gov
10	The number of times the actual growth in API exceeded the growth target.	Col 9 / Col 8

Data elements in columns 1 – 5 are from CDE sources that are more complete than those for similar variables in the API data files, but some are collected earlier in the school year. The API variables include demographic data from the SAT-9 header sheets filled out by the teachers or from a school district database, and only for those grades tested (not kindergarten or grade 1).

Table 2**Summary of school characteristics**

Schoolwide Group mean for these variables	Selected Bilingual Schools (<u>n</u> = 63 [a]) 1	Elementary Schools > 40% EL (<u>n</u> = 1,037 [b]) 2
English Learners (percent)	58.3	60.5
Hispanic (percent)	73.3	73.3
Mobility (percent)	16.5	18.3
Parent Education Range 1 (Lo) to 5 (Hi)	2.06	2.03
Poverty: Free/Reduced Meals (%)	77.5	85.8
Percent of eligible students tested [c]	99.2	98.1
API 1999	500.1	489.0
API 2000	550.0	532.6
Growth Target	15.02	15.57
Actual Growth	49.95	43.60
Multiples of target	3.60	2.99

NOTES:

- a. The schools in Col. 1 reported that 62% of all English learners were enrolled in a bilingual education alternative course of study. In contrast, only 13 percent of all English learners in California, kindergarten through grade 12, were enrolled in bilingual instruction in 1999-2000, most of these in elementary schools.
- b. Data on Parent Education was not available for 49 of the 1,037 schools, and one of the bilingual schools.
- c. Parents have a right to waive administration of the SAT-9, and some special education students are not tested. See Endnote iii.

Table 3

API and Gains for the Hispanic sub-group

Hispanic sub-group mean for these variables	Selected Bilingual Schools (<u>n</u> = 63 [a]) 1	Elementary Schools > 40% EL (<u>n</u> = 1,013 [b]) 2
API 1999	456.1	456.8
API 2000	509.6	503.1
Growth target	12	12.5
Hispanic API GROWTH	53.5	46.4
Hispanic sub-group: multiples of target	4.9	4.0

NOTES:

- a. The schools in Col. 1 reported that 62% of all English learners were enrolled in a bilingual education alternative course of study. In contrast, only 13 percent of all English learners in California, kindergarten through grade 12, were enrolled in bilingual instruction in 1999-2000, most of these in elementary schools.
- b. A total of 24 schools in the comparison school group of 1,037 had no separate data for the Hispanic sub-group.

Table 4

Selected Bilingual Schools

(n = 63)

	District	County	School	Enroll- ment Total 2000	Percent Reduced meals (Poverty)	EL Tot 2000	Percent EL	Percent EL in B.E.	API 1999	API 2000	Growth target 99-00 [5%]	Actual Growth 99-00	Multiples of target
				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	ABC USD	19	Niemes	634	56	290	46	53	545	653	13	108	8.3
2	Greenfield	27	Greenfield Primary	537	77	425	79	66	498	536	20	128	6.4
3			Oak Ave	697	78	606	87	79	416	507	19	91	4.8
4	Hayward	01	Cherryland	793	63	277	35	51	518	593	14	75	5.4
5			Longwood	754	62	358	48	61	547	589	13	42	3.2
6			Park	670	50	265	40	59	586	627	11	41	3.7
7			Ruus	836	41	394	47	45	535	567	13	32	2.5
8			Shepherd	540	76	306	57	62	482	545	16	63	3.9
9	Hueneme	56	Hathaway	730	78	393	54	64	531	567	13	36	2.8
10			Larsen	755	92	581	77	88	500	521	15	21	1.4
11			Williams	756	68	321	43	59	603	642	10	39	3.9
12	Long Beach	19	Henry	790	66	358	45	66	574	620	11	46	4.2

District	County	School	Enrollment Total 2000	Percent Reduced meals (Poverty)	EL Tot 2000	Percent EL	Percent EL in B.E.	API 1999	API 2000	Growth target 99-00 [5%]	Actual Growth 99-00	Multiples of target
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
13		Robinson	999	72	359	36	93	562	641	12	79	6.6
14		Webster	741	91	365	49	47	475	515	16	40	2.5
15	Los Angeles	Cahuenga	1,297	91	1,039	80	56	600	627	10	27	2.7
16	19	Esperanza	978	96	861	88	62	333	389	23	56	2.4
17		Gridley St.	1,067	92	682	64	34	425	455	19	30	1.6
18		Hubbard St	922	76	543	59	20	530	582	14	52	3.7
19		Independence	1,030	96	716	70	36	423	474	19	51	2.7
20		92 nd St	998	97	728	73	44	359	402	22	43	2.0
21		Sharp	1,127	94	832	74	57	378	416	21	38	1.8
22	Montebello	Bell Gardens	1,362	96	1,120	82	80	354	379	22	25	1.1
23	19	Gascon	1,166	82	854	73	66	420	446	19	26	1.3
24		La Merced	721	53	250	35	64	554	579	12	25	2.1
25	Monterey Peninsula	Del Rey Woods	523	71	312	60	57	558	623	12	65	5.4
26	27	Highland	459	89	260	57	67	467	489	17	22	1.3
27		Ord Terrace	565	64	254	45	48	519	559	14	40	2.9
28	No. Monterey Co.	Castroville	509	92	268	53	65	479	504	16	25	1.6
	27											

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				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
29			Elkhorn	544	69	151	28	65	524	609	14	85	6.1
30			Prunedale	624	71	216	35	74	533	592	13	59	4.5
31	Norwalk	19	Dolland	901	69	289	32	78	546	582	13	36	2.8
32			Edmondson	511	88	199	39	45	505	560	15	55	3.7
33	Pajaro Valley	27	Amesti	606	67	365	60	63	451	507	17	56	3.3
34			Freedom	809	77	569	70	73	450	505	18	55	3.0
35			Hall District	705	85	513	73	50	393	440	20	47	2.3
36			Salsipuedes	496	93	308	62	33	399	455	20	56	2.8
37			Starlight	753	85	490	65	80	448	506	18	58	3.2
38	Paso Robles	40	Brown	500	71	261	52	89	450	550	18	100	5.6
39	Reef-Sunset	16	Avenal El	1,028	93	669	65	71	372	410	21	38	1.8
40			Kettleman City	305	100	225	74	44	387	419	21	32	1.5
41	Sacramento City	34	Fruit Ridge	724	90	343	47	63	503	525	15	22	1.4
42			Kemble	779	93	484	62	37	507	539	15	32	2.1
43			Washington	329	89	157	48	64	540	610	13	70	5.3

	District	County	School	Enrollment Total 2000	Percent Reduced meals (Poverty)	EL Tot 2000	Percent EL	Percent EL in B.E.	API 1999	API 2000	Growth target 99-00 [5%]	Actual Growth 99-00	Multiples of target
				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
44	Saddleback	30	Gates	769	49	301	39	42	682	689	6	7	1.2
45	San Diego	37	Central	1,187	99	824	69	56	611	736	9	125	13.9
46			Franklin	583	89	288	49	57	643	693	8	50	6.3
47			Rosa Parks	1,533	99	1,033	67	45	455	537	17	82	4.8
48			Spreckels	697	47	250	36	97	703	738	5	35	7.0
49	San Jose	43	River Glen	511	29	143	28	97	684	710	6	26	4.3
50			Washington	683	75	525	77	91	418	446	19	28	1.5
51	Santa Ana	30	Davis	780	87	689	88	88	381	471	21	90	4.3
52			Lowell	1,056	89	926	87	60	437	473	18	36	2.0
53			King	1,056	91	836	79	38	416	481	19	65	3.4
54			Pio Pico	948	89	856	90	73	413	444	19	31	1.6
55			Washington	1,327	78	952	72	46	477	505	16	28	1.8
56	Santa Ana	30	Heninger	1,088	90	953	88	36	504	537	15	33	2.2
57	South Bay	37	Berry	744	60	320	43	69	568	643	12	75	6.3
58	Tahoe-Truckee	31	Kings Beach	506	69	276	55	44	512	591	14	79	5.6
59	Tracy Jt Union	39	South	688	63	271	39	90	550	567	13	17	1.3

	District	County	School	Enroll- ment Total 2000	Percent Reduced meals (Poverty)	EL Tot 2000	Percent EL	Percent EL in B.E.	API 1999	API 2000	Growth target 99-00 [5%]	Actual Growth 99-00	Multiples of target
				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
60	Ventura	56	Juanamaria Elem	526	38	101	19	72	674	730	6	56	9.3
61			Montalvo	435	60	113	26	47	643	677	8	34	4.2
62			Will Rogers	490	72	180	37	80	588	636	11	48	4.4
63	Woodland	58	Beamer	532	64	248	47	87	458	493	17	35	2.1

Californians Together is a statewide coalition of groups which work on behalf of English learners in public schools. Its mission is to secure the trained teachers, appropriate materials, and high quality educational programs that will afford English learners the access, opportunities and skills to fully participate economically, intellectually, politically and socially in our society. Member organizations include: Association of Mexican American Educators (AMAE), California Association of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (CATESOL), California Association for Bilingual Education (CABE), California Latino Civil Rights Network, California Teachers Association (CTA), California Tomorrow, Chinese for Affirmative Action (CAA), Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF), Multicultural Education, Training and Advocacy (META), and others.

ENDNOTES

ⁱ Twenty four of the schools in the comparison group of 1,037 did not report separate Hispanic growth data.

ⁱⁱ The API was created as a result of the Public Schools Accountability Act (PSAA) in 1998. It is a scale that ranges from a low of 200 to a high of 1000. In elementary schools, the API is currently made up of the scores on the Stanford Achievement Test (SAT-9) in all subjects for all students, grades 2 – 6 (kindergarten and grade one are not included in the state’s testing program). The content areas are weighted as follows: mathematics, 40%; reading, 30%; language, 15%; and spelling, 15%. For more information on the API, and for detailed reports on each school in this report, consult the California Department of Education website: www.cde.ca.gov. The API growth reports are available at: www.cde.ca.gov/psaa/api/. School and district demographic data (counts of total enrollment, English learners, and students in poverty) may be found via DataQuest at: <http://data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/>.

Most educational researchers and psychometricians strongly criticize the SAT-9 as inappropriate for the testing of English learners, since (in California) it is given solely in English with no accommodations. It is also being used for high-stakes purposes contrary to the norm-referenced purpose for which it was developed. The group that provided its norms was markedly different from the enrollment in California’s schools. The norming population consisted of only 1.8 percent English learners. California’s enrollment of English learners surpasses 25 percent. Furthermore, the SAT-9 is not aligned with the state’s content standards in reading, mathematics and other areas. The SAT-9 has questionable validity and reliability as a measure of academic achievement for English learners as it is currently being used in the state’s accountability system.

Nevertheless, the SAT-9 and the resultant API scores are required by law, and are being used as the central focus for statewide academic accountability. This report provides insights into how selected bilingual schools perform on this measure, with the understanding that many local school districts continue to develop more comprehensive, standards-based accountability systems that assess the growth of English learners on a scale of English proficiency as well as on performance measures in other areas of the curriculum. Such efforts are important supplements to the limited information provided by the API. When they include testing in the students’ home language, they often show that students in bilingual instruction have mastered advanced concepts in literacy, mathematics, science and social science that are underestimated by tests given only in English.

ⁱⁱⁱ The bilingual schools tested over 99% of all eligible students, with less than 2% of all students waived by parents from SAT-9 testing, while the comparison schools tested only 98 % with a much greater proportion of waivers. Such differences in testing would likely favor results for the comparison schools .

^{iv} Since 1998, bilingual instruction has been allowed with approved parental exception waivers to the provisions of Proposition 227 [Education Code Sections 310, 311].

^v After nomination, schools were removed from the bilingual school sample for one of two reasons: a) they had few English learners reported as enrolled in bilingual instruction, or, b) they had a substantial percentage of students who had been removed from SAT-9 testing by parental request. Only six schools remained in the sample with more than 5 percent of students removed by parental request. These schools are still eligible for awards under state law, since parents have a right to remove their child from SAT-9 testing.

^{vi} The SAT-9 scores for Spring 2000 were released in August by separate English proficiency group. These include: English learners (ELs), fluent English proficient (FEP), and English only students. See Note ii, above, for concerns about the use of the SAT-9 for ELs and for high-stakes assessments.

Comparison of SAT-9 Spring 2000 scores with scores for these groups in 1999 focuses only on the cross-section of different groups of students, and does not account at all for program success, since the former ELs are no longer in the scores of ELs in 2000. Schools which are slow in reclassifying ELs as fluent-English proficient (FEP) can artificially boost their EL scores on the SAT-9. Schools which are particularly effective, and efficiently reclassify ELs, will have more difficulty in showing gains on the SAT-9 for their EL group, since the most able and English-proficient students have moved to the FEP category (former ELs). In addition, dramatic gains can be shown in single years for ELs, particularly at second and third grade. These gains may not be sustainable into higher grades.

Since we are interested in the success of a school in helping all its students master English and the academic content areas, the API provides a way for grouping the performance of all ELs and former ELs together. The state law (PSAA) provides only for disaggregating the API by ethnic group and socioeconomic groups (disadvantaged and not disadvantaged), not by English proficiency group.

The 63 bilingual schools in our sample and the 1,037 comparison schools are comprised overwhelmingly of Hispanic students (73 percent) and English learners (58 to 60 percent). Therefore, in these schools, the ethnic subgroup of Hispanic students is a close proxy for the academic performance of all ELs and former ELs. It can be assumed that most of the bilingual schools had been operating some form of bilingual instruction prior to 1998, and that the educational program (and subsequent SAT-9 scores) across the grades have been influenced by this. Prior to 1998 only 30 percent of all ELs were in bilingual instruction. Now less than 13 percent receive such programs.

^{vii} Three programs provide financial awards to schools: the Governor's Performance Award, School site Employee Performance Bonus, and Certificated staff Performance Incentive programs.

^{viii} The growth targets were set by the state at 5 percent of the difference between a school's 1999 API score and the interim goal of 800. Another way of viewing the Hispanic growth of 490 percent of the target is to see that these schools made up one-quarter of the distance between their 1999 API score and the state goal of 800 (5% [target] X 4.9 = 24.5%).

^{ix} Included in the 1,037 comparison schools are a number of schools that also provide some bilingual instruction. However, the vast majority of the English learners in those schools receive only Structured English Immersion. Only 12.7 percent of all English learners, Grades K – 12, receive some form of bilingual instruction.