

## News Release

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For immediate release

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### **Sonoma County schools receive new accountability report**

Sonoma County public schools made significant progress raising student achievement during the 2008-09 school year, posting across-the-board gains on both the state and federal portions of the Accountability Progress Report that was released today. This report provides educators, parents, and the community with important data about student progress as measured by the state's Academic Performance Index (API) and the federal Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) system.

**State API results best in five years.** The Academic Performance Index, which is the state program that measures year-to-year growth in academic achievement, shows that a full 80 percent of Sonoma County schools raised their scores this year and 73 percent met their annual growth targets. Over half (55 percent) of the county's schools are now at or above 800 on the API scale, which is the performance goal the state has set for all schools in California. Statewide, 42 percent of schools have achieved this goal.

On average, public schools in Sonoma County increased their standing on the API by 15 points this year, which is the greatest gain posted since 2004-05. The county bested the state in its rate of growth (15 points for the county vs. 14 points for the state) and now has an API of 773, which is well above the state average of 755.

"Since the STAR results reported in August were so positive, we were expecting a good API report," says Sonoma County Office of Education assistant superintendent Don Russell. "Elementary schools had especially impressive results, with 80 percent meeting their targets and 62 percent at or above 800."

Middle schools also performed admirably, with 63 percent meeting growth targets. Approximately two-thirds of Sonoma County high schools increased their API scores this year, although only 44 percent met their growth targets, which is down from last year.

“Progress at the high school level has been more difficult to achieve,” explains Russell, noting that this is the case not just in Sonoma County, but across the state.

**More schools meet federal AYP as requirements get tougher.** Sixty-three percent of Sonoma County schools met all of the federal Adequate Yearly Progress criteria, up from 60 percent last year. This is particularly good news given the fact that AYP requirements are increasing steeply from year to year and fewer schools were expected reach the federal targets.

As part of the No Child Left Behind legislation, the AYP requires a specific percentage of students at each school to test proficient in English-language arts and mathematics. That percentage is increasing by approximately 11 points annually with the expectation that all students will be proficient by 2014. About 45 percent of students needed to attain proficiency this year in order for a school to satisfy the AYP requirements.

Meeting federal AYP criteria can be especially difficult for schools with diverse student populations. Because the school as a whole and each student subgroup must meet the federal proficiency requirements, these schools may have as many as 20 or 25 AYP targets. Among these diverse schools are many that receive federal Title I funding, which supports education for low-income students. If Title I schools miss AYP targets for two consecutive years, they are designated Program Improvement schools and become subject to sanctions.

Even with the county’s positive performance on the AYP, six schools and two districts entered Program Improvement this year, while one school (Harmony Elementary) exited. A total of 33 Sonoma County schools and seven districts are now in Program Improvement.

**Data shows some narrowing of achievement gap.** Both the state and federal accountability systems indicate that Sonoma County schools are making some progress narrowing the achievement gap for English learners, which has been a countywide emphasis. Although the gap is still significant, the federal AYP data shows that a greater percentage of second-language learners reached proficiency this year. In English-language arts, 34 percent tested proficient, up from 27 percent last year. In math, 44 percent reached proficiency, up from 37 percent.

Sonoma County schools with large numbers of English learners were also more successful in reaching their state API growth target for this student subgroup. Seventy-three percent met their subgroup target in 2009, up from 60 percent last year, which is another indicator of the progress local schools made in addressing the achievement gap. These advances in English learner proficiency helped boost overall school performance and allowed more schools to meet this year's API growth targets.

More information about the Academic Performance Index (API) and Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) is available at the California Department of Education website, [www.cde.ca.gov](http://www.cde.ca.gov). Detailed results are available for each school, districts, and county in California.

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*Attachment: Sonoma County Results, 2008-09*

# Accountability Progress Report

## *Sonoma County results, 2008-09*

### State Accountability ■ *API, Academic Performance Index*

#### Percentage of schools at or above 800 on API

	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	State
Elementary	44	52	49	48	62	48
Middle	30	29	32	43	53	36
High	6	13	18	24	22	21
All Schools	37	43	42	44	55	42

#### Percentage of schools meeting all API targets

	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
Elementary	70	66	55	63	80
Middle	75	52	43	52	63
High	79	44	29	47	44
All Schools	72	61	49	59	73

#### Percentage of schools with increased scores

	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
Elementary	76	71	49	51	82
Middle	75	62	62	57	79
High	71	50	71	71	67
All Schools	75	67	54	54	80

#### Schools with numerically significant English learner subgroups

	2007-08	2008-09
Percentage meeting subgroup API target	60	73
Percentage with increased subgroup API scores	69	80

*API charts exclude schools in the Alternative Schools Accountability Model (ASAM), special education schools, small schools, and schools with missing data.*

## Federal Accountability ■ AYP, Adequate Yearly Progress

### Percentage of schools meeting all AYP criteria

	2006	2007	2008	2009	State
Elementary	77	79	65	72	61
Middle	59	45	54	48	29
High	56	61	52	50	37
All Schools	69	69	60	63	51

### Number of Program Improvement schools

	New	Advanced	Remained	Total
Year 1	6	-	0	6
Year 2	-	4	1	5
Year 3	-	1	3	4
Year 4	-	6	0	6
Year 5	-	1	11	12
Total	6	12	15	33

*One school exited Program Improvement this year: Harmony Elementary*

### Number of Program Improvement districts

	New	Advanced	Remained	Total
Year 1	2	-	0	2
Year 2	-	1	0	1
Year 3	-	0	4	4

### Percentage of English learners proficient or above

	2008	2009
English-Language Arts	27	34
Mathematics	37	44