

DOES THE AGE AT WHICH AN
ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER IS
RE-DESIGNATED IMPACT THEIR
SUCCESS RATE ON STATE TEST
SUCH AS THE CAHSEE IN ELA?

by

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ABSTRACT

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Under the U.S. Supreme Court's interpretation of the Civil Rights Act in *Lau V. Nichols* (1974), local school districts and states have an obligation to provide appropriate services to Limited-English-Proficient students (in California now referred to as EL or English Learner students), but policymakers have long debated setting time limits for students to receive such services. (Hakuta, January 2000)

The purpose of this paper is to determine if we have given sufficient services to EL students prior to them being re-designated in the Bonita Unified School District. (The name of the school has been changed to protect the identity of the students.) This study reports on data based on the passage rate of sophomores the first time that they took the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) in March 2005. Once the passage rate was determined, the study was conducted by identifying the LEP status of all of the students who did not pass the CAHSEE on that first attempt. They were divided into four categories: English Only (EO), Initial Fluent English Proficient (IFEP), Re-designated Fluent English Proficient (RFEP) and current English Learner (EL). Students who did not pass

the exam in March 2005 were grouped by their LEP status. Once they were grouped by their LEP status, their EL enter date was added for the English Learners and the date of re-designation was added into the excel sheet for those who had been re-designated. The RFEP students who did not pass were looked at closely to determine the date of re-designation, the services that they received and whether they had been successful in ELA since their re-designation. It was determined that most of the RFEP students struggling with the CAHSEE the first time that they took it were re-designated in 1999 and 2000. These students could have been re-designated in response to Proposition 227.

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Chapter 1

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Statement of the Problem: I chose to do this research project as a direct result of the concern surrounding the significance of the state required test: the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) and the California Standards Test (CST) specifically in the area of English Language Arts (ELA). How a school performs on these tests has a tremendous amount of importance at both the Federal and State levels. The state and federal governments use the CAHSEE as a measure of school and school district accountability. Schools must show growth per the Academic Performance Index (API) for the state in order to avoid being placed on a state "watch" list. We volunteered to be a participant in the Immediate Intervention Under-performing Schools Program (IIUSP) three years ago. Part of the requirements of that participation was that there is growth within our API in two consecutive years out of the three years that we were in the program. Unfortunately, even though our Hispanic students continued to meet their target all three years, the rest of the school only had one year of large growth sandwiched between two years of flat line overall growth. The high school was notified at the March 9, 2005 school board meeting that they would be put on a "monitored" status by the State Board of Education (SBE) for the next school year. Under the federal guidelines of No Child Left Behind schools must show growth per the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). In 2002-2003, the high school did not meet its AYP goal due to participation but it was met in the 2003-04 school year. How an individual student performs on these state administered tests has a direct impact on how a

school ranks within the state and at the federal level. This ranking has such an impact on a school politically that schools are pressured to outperform their neighboring schools both within a district and with neighboring districts. For example, within a district, elementary schools are compared with the other schools within the district in regards to their scores. Last year our middle school did not meet their goal and they were determined to be a Program Improvement (P2) school. As a result, the rest of the schools in the district had to give up a portion of their Title One money so that it would go to the middle school to help create interventions. This unfortunately divides a unified district because the other schools feel some animosity towards the middle school because the student's didn't meet their goals and the other school's lost approximately 20% of their Title One money. There has been a significant amount of debate on to what extent districts will go to in order to teach to the standards and thereby teaching to a test.

California has a significant number of English Language Learners (ELL's) who have been identified based on state criteria. When a student enters a school their parent(s) fill out a Home Language Survey (HLS) on their child. If the child spoke another language other than English when they first began to speak or if the parents communicate with their child in a language other than English or if the parents speak in a language other than English at home, schools must initiate testing to determine if the child is Fluent English Proficient (I-FEP) or if they are an English Language Learner (ELL). Unfortunately, this state criterion includes both recent arrivals and students who have been in the United States for a longer period of time but who have not become Fluent in English into the same category of English Learners. There has been a significant amount of debate on the criteria that are

utilized to determine whether a student has reached the necessary level of Fluent English Proficient. Throughout the years, in order for a student to reach the level of Fluent English Proficiency, certain requirements must be met before they are re-designated. Proposition 227 promised that Limited English Proficient (LEP) students would learn English within one year. During the 2002-03 school year, according to the California Department of Education's Annual Language Census, approximately one in thirteen LEP students were re-designated as Fluent English Proficient. (Crawford, 2003) When Proposition 227 took effect on August 2, 1998, many Californians were under the misconception that Prop 227 would eliminate bilingual education in California. In fact, we had a large number of EL students re-designated in the next two years from 1999-2000. Part of this may have been because of a big push from the state to re-designate students as soon as possible. Seven years later we still have Bilingual Education and our LEP enrollments have grown. Although Proposition 227 claims that English Learners can become proficient within 2-3 years, most research indicates that it takes from 5-7 years for English Learners to become proficient.

Throughout the years, students have been re-designated in our district based on varying criteria set forth by the state and adopted by our district. In the past, prior to the move towards standards based instruction and statewide testing, the state looked at different criteria for re-designation. As I look back through the folders of re-designated students, re-designation criterion was based on some tests scores but mainly was determined by class grades. Now, the state requires that students perform at Basic or higher on state exam in addition to other requirements. As a district we have gone a step further and we currently look at a variety of criteria before re-designation. In order to be re-designated in our district

a student must meet the following criteria: they must score at the Early Advanced or Advanced level on the CELDT test; they must score at the midpoint of Basic on the CST in ELA; they must be performing in the 80th percentile on the district level assessments in ELA and if they are in high school, they must have passed the CAHSEE in ELA before being re-designated. We also look at teacher recommendation and how the student is doing in his/her classes but these categories are used as indicators whereas the test scores are mandatory. We are now seeing a group of students at Bonita High School who were re-designated at an early age who are struggling in ELA and who are not always successful on state exams. During the past two years, we have done a lot of School Study Team (SST) meetings on the current 9th and 10th graders. A lot of these students have been identified as R-FEP students who were re-designated back in elementary school. A significant amount of these re-designated students were re-designated in 5th or 6th grade and a few have never passed an English class since. Because of this discovery, we re-vamped our criteria in November 2004 to the requirements listed above. In the last 2-3 years, we looked at teacher recommendation and grades equally with state test. Now we look at state test first and then the teacher recommendations.

Background/Significance of the Problem: We have noticed at Bonita High School that many of our former EL students who were re-designated at an early age continue to struggle in their English classes at the high school level. Bonita Unified School District has tried to better meet the needs of our ELD students by revising curriculum and programs. Over the past few years, the district has reviewed the performance of EL students in relation to their

English Only (EO) counterparts to determine if they are learning at the same rate. When deficiencies have been identified, BUSD has made curriculum and program changes. Over the past few years, the district has moved from a bilingual program to an immersion program. In the immersion program at the elementary level, EL students are placed in clusters in regular education classrooms. Teachers use the adopted ELD curriculum and SDAIE techniques to instruct. Students who are labeled a 1 or a 2 also receive ELD instruction through a pullout program. For 40 minutes each day, students are grouped by their EL level and then switch teachers for directed instruction. This year, the district purchased a new ELD curriculum for the elementary level. The curriculum is called *Avenues* and Hampton Brown publishes it.

The middle school currently has five levels of ELD classes. Both ELD 1 and ELD 2 are four periods long. In ELD 1 they receive instruction in High Points Basic. ELD 2 receives instruction in High Points A and Side by Side. ELD 3, 4 and 5 receive instruction in a class consisting of 55 minutes. ELD 3 receives instruction in High Points B and Side by Side. If an ELD 3 student scored Below Basic on the CST they are given a second period of instruction. ELD 4 receives instruction in High Points C and ELD 5 receives instruction in Support HOLT using the Interactive Reader from Holt.

The High School places students in ELD classes for English Development based on their EL level that is determined by their scores on the CELDT, CST, placement test and performance on an end of book exam given at the end of the semester. Each period at the high school is 55 minutes long. If the student is a newcomer (a student who is new to the country), they have two periods of ELD with an intervention period added in to help them

cover the parts of the curriculum that they missed. For example, if a student enrolls after the start of the year, they have missed the beginning chapters of the book. They will receive an additional period in an attempt to bring them up to speed with the rest of the class. ELD 2 and ELD 3 are placed into a 2 period block and ELD 4 and ELD 5 students are placed in a one period class. (This is due to the lack of sections available in the master schedule. Our goal is to eventually create double blocks for the ELD 4 group.) They use a variety of books dependent upon the ELD level of the students. They use the Visions series, Side by Side and Voices. The ELD Students attend sheltered class for other subjects such as Algebra, World Cultures, U.S. History, Integrated Science and Biology. They are placed in the sheltered classes if they are in the ELD 1 and ELD 2 classes or if they are a low performing ELD 3 student. They are placed in mainstream classes for all other subjects such as Geometry, Algebra 2, Calculus, U.S. History, Economics, and electives. They receive SDAIE instruction from those teachers if they are in ELD 3, ELD 4 and ELD 5.

One of the newest interventions that were put into place during the 2004-05 school year was a mandatory after school class that all tenth grade R-FEP students were required to attend if they scored Far Below Basic or Below Basic on their 9th grade ELA portion of the CST. They received additional interventions to help them prepare for the CAHSEE that they would be taking in the spring. We received our results from the spring administration of the CAHSEE and our 10th graders had a 78% passage rate on the ELA portion of the CAHSEE.

I want to look at how well we have met the needs of our previously identified EL students who were re-designated prior to high school. Were they prepared for the CAHSEE

in the spring or not? In particular, how well are they doing on state test such as the CAHSEE? Did we meet the needs of those previously identified EL students and did the age at which they were re-designated have an impact on their passage rate on the CAHSEE during the end of their sophomore year?

Research Question: What was the EL status of the students who did not pass the CAHSEE the first time that they took it in the spring of their sophomore year? What is the difference in the passage rate on state exams such as the CAHSEE between students that were re-designated in elementary, middle school and high school? I am going to look at the students that take the test as sophomores in the Spring 2005 and review the scores of all students. Once I have done this, I will break them up into the four main EL levels: EO, FEP, EL and RFEP. Do students that were re-designated in elementary or middle school have a higher passage rate on state test such as the CAHSEE than those that were re-designated in high school? Does the added time spent in classes identified as an ELD student versus an R-FEP have a significant impact on whether they pass the CAHSEE the first time? One would need to take into consideration a variety of components such as grades in classes, years in the state/country, and curriculum used while they were learning English.

Setting and Sample:

Bonita began as a railroad town and today its main economy is tied closely to citrus farming, the oil industry and tourism. It is nestled in the Santa Clara Valley between Valley on its

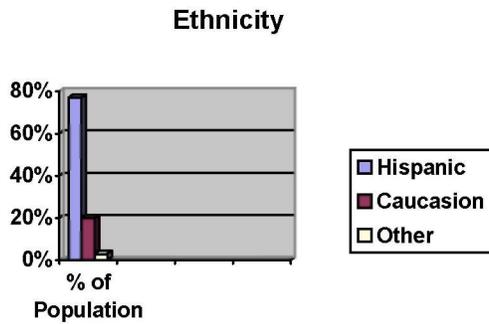
East and Santa Susana/Ventura on the West. The school district serves the residents of Bonita (population 15,128), Pinta and unincorporated areas of Ventura County (population 4,221). According to the City of Bonita, the majority of the residents (66.6%) are Hispanic, 30.6% are white and less than two percent (1.6%) are classified as other. The median household income of the community is \$45,510 per year with 27% earning less than \$15,000 per year. The median housing cost is \$431, 000 and the median housing rental is \$1550 a month for a 3 bedroom house. English is not the primary language spoken in over half of the homes. Many of our students live in overcrowded housing conditions, mostly multiple family dwellings.

The Bonita Unified School District is a small (ADA 3,825) rural, unified district of six schools. There are currently three elementary schools with a new elementary school currently under construction. One of the elementary schools is located in Pinta, which is a small town that is considered part of the Bonita Unified School District. There is one middle school with over 950 students and one high school with 1074 students. There is also a Community High School with 40 students and an Independent Study program with 8 students. For the past several years, BUSD has experienced a steady increase in enrollment (about 3% per year), with most new students being Limited English Proficient.

The high school was founded in 1909, shortly after the town Bonita was established. It is a comprehensive high school. Currently, the demographics of the high school are as follows:

Suspension Rate	26%
Expulsion Rate	1%
Attendance Rate	94.48%
Drop Out Rate	1.3%
Reduced Lunch	55%
ELD Students	31%

Racial Make-up:



According to the most recent 2004 California Basic Educational Data System (CBEDS), the BHS population is 79.1% Hispanic or Latino, 18.3% white and 2.8% classified as other. Forty nine percent (49.3%) of the students are or have been classified as Limited English Proficient. Currently, 29.3% are English Learners and 20% are Re-designated Fluent English Proficient (R-FEP) students. We also have a school wide migrant population of 256 students (23.6%). We qualify as a Title one school. Our staff is comprised of many new teachers, 26% of which have fewer than six years teaching experience. We do have a unique

situation in the fact that 29 of our staff members are graduates of Bonita High School so they have a better understanding of the culture and climate of the school.

Researchers perspective: I was born in the hospital in the neighboring town to the west that used to serve the residents of this part of the Santa Clara Valley. I was educated in the Bonita Unified School District from Kindergarten through Eighth grade so I know a lot about the culture of Fillmore. I attended a Private Catholic High School located in Ventura that happens to be one of Bonita's greatest rivalries today. Although I did not graduate from Bonita High School, I still remained close to many of my former classmates at Bonita and today I know several of the parents of my students. By returning to the community in which I grew up, I have an advantage than other teachers who have come in from other communities. I have been teaching Social Studies classes for over nine years and I have worked with ELL for the entire time. Three years ago, I became the ELD Site Coordinator at the high school and this has provided me with a window into other subject areas in the school. With the addition of site coordinators at each of the schools, we have made significant leaps in the EL programs at our school sites. We are constantly reflecting on what works and what needs to be changed and we re-evaluate our program continuously. It was in my position as the ELD Site Coordinator that I became aware of the difficulties that the RFEP students were having in their regular English classes. We picked up on a trend among the RFEP students and their scores on state exams, district exams and grades in their English classes. Unfortunately, once a student has been re-designated, we cannot un-due the process. All that we can do is offer interventions for the student. Maybe this is part of the

reason that the state of California has increased the monitoring time of RFEP students from no monitoring, to one year of monitoring, to two years of monitoring in their core classes. Hopefully, I will be able to identify areas that we are still weak in so that we may improve in those areas.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Community members have claimed that students in California are graduating from high school without the basic skills in English and Math. This is a common complaint that can be heard from the employers that employ those students who do not go to college. It can also be heard from college professors who must spend valuable time teaching the basic skills in their classes rather than covering subject matter. These complaints were eventually heard in the state department and state law was enacted in 1999 authorizing the development of the California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE). The students in California public schools would have to pass this exam in order to earn their high school diploma. Beginning with those students scheduled to graduate in 2005-06, all California public school students are required to pass the CAHSEE and meet all other state and local requirements to earn a high school diploma. The purpose of the CAHSEE is to improve student achievement in high school and to help ensure that students who graduate from high school can demonstrate grade level competency in reading, writing, and mathematics at the 10th grade level. Rather than relying on districts to determine competency as in the past, the state department created a uniform test that all schools must use in order for their students to receive a high school diploma. There were too many concerns that some schools may have less stringent requirements to graduate. This can be seen with the movement towards standards based instruction.

English Language Learners (ELL) and former English Language Learners also known as Re-designated Fluent English Proficient (R-FEP) are required to pass the CAHSEE along with their English Only (EO) counterparts. Are the ELL and R-FEP students performing at grade level compared to their English Only counterparts in the state of California? Do they receive the same level of educational benefits that English only students receive? Not according to the *Williams vs. the State of California* (2000) class action suit on behalf of poor children in the state. This case argues that California provides a fundamentally inequitable education to the students based on wealth and language status. It was determined that not all schools are alike and that even though schools in California must all take the same California Standards Test in the Spring, not all students receive their education through the same resources.

In this chapter, I will review research from sources that provide information dealing with ELL students including the dropout rates for Latino students, R-FEP students and how they are impacted by the passage of various state laws such as Prop 227 and the Public Schools Accountability Act, and Federal laws such as the No Child Left Behind Act. I will then proceed to articles revolving around the topic of how long it takes for English Learners to attain Proficiency in English and bridging the academic gap for ELL's.

Latino Drop-Outs

Youth from non-English-language backgrounds are 1.5 times more likely to leave school before high school graduation than those from English-language backgrounds (Cardenas, Montecel, Supik & Harris, 1992). We are dealing with a special population of students that tend to come from economically disadvantaged background in addition to

having non-English speaking parents. These two factors put the English learner at a significant disadvantage compared to the English Only student coming from a wealthy district. How can we assume that they are learning at the same rate or even compare them as apples to apples? According to the Census Bureau, in 1992 roughly 50% of Hispanics ages 16-24 dropped out of high school (GAO, 1994). By the year 2010, Hispanics are expected to be the largest minority group in the United States. It is projected that they will make up 21% of the population (OEM, 1993). Therefore, the rising dropout rate among these students should be of concern to educators in the United States. As a result of this rising number, several programs have developed in the hopes of eliminating or slowing the dropout rate among Hispanic students. The goal for most of these programs is to strengthen the English Learners perception of themselves and their schools. A variety of strategies are used such as cross age tutoring, using middle and high school students as paid tutors for high risk elementary students, field trips, academic instruction, career and personal counseling, before and after school interventions and mentoring by Hispanic professionals. Successful dropout prevention programs for language minority students must have a variety of components a few of which are listed: respect for the language and cultural backgrounds of the students they serve and for the positive qualities students bring to school; the possibility of long-term involvement, from middle school through high school; a well-designed academic curriculum; family and community involvement. For language minority students, programs must also include appropriate components for native language support and English language development (Vaznaugh, 1995). There are several theories that claim that students learn best from teachers who understand their culture.

Impact of State Mandates

We have known for well over ten years that EL students are at a greater risk for failure than their English Only counterparts and yet there continues to be more and more roadblocks created to decrease their chances of being successful in school. One of these catastrophic events was the passage of Proposition 227 in June of 1998 by the people in California. Ron Unz was detrimental in his influence on the people of California during the Proposition 227 campaign. Most of Ron Unz' claims were never supported by evidence and yet they were widely circulated by the media. I believe that one of his more critical claims that "blamed bilingual education for the increasing enrollments of Limited English Proficient (LEP) students in California" (Crawford, 2003) helped make the decision for a lot of the voters in California. We were in a time where many people were losing their jobs or having to re-locate out of state and they needed someone to blame. This issue has risen again in the present as a result of the proposed Assembly Bill 4437 that restricts the immigration into the United States and makes it illegal for people to employ illegal immigrants. This will eventually trickle down to whether their children have the privilege of a First Amendment right to a free and public education (Xihucoatl, May 2006). Ron Unz also promised that "structured English immersion" lasting "no more than one year", would speed up the acquisition of English (Crawford, 2003). Four years later we have yet to see the data that support Ron Unz' claims. In fact, according to the Language Census figures from the California Department of Education (CDE), Proposition 227 has clearly broken its promise to teach students English within one year (Crawford, 2003). Since Proposition 227 took effect on August 2, 1998, LEP enrollments have grown nearly 14 percent statewide and their rate of English acquisition

remains unchanged. Only 42% of the ELL's in 1998 have become proficient in English. That is roughly 2 out of 5 students that have met the requirements to re-designate. In 2003, California's statewide re-designation rate increased only slightly (seven 10ths of one percent) between 1998 and 2003, continuing a trend that began in the early 1990's (Crawford, 2003). Another issue that evolved out of this push to re-designate is the fact that many schools didn't have definitive guidelines or procedures for re-designating. They were feeling the push to re-designate as many students as possible. I know that in my district it wasn't until they started monitoring the students that they started to tighten up the requirements for re-designation. As a state, we need to revisit what methods and programs that work with non-English speaking students not continue to repeat the process over and over. It was Governor Ronald Reagan who ended California's English only policy back in 1967 in recognition that it was a failure and an unjust obstacle to equal educational opportunity for Latino students (Kerper Mora, 2003). There was great debate over Ron Unz' assumptions that short term successes of "sheltered immersion" will turn into long term gains in academic achievement. He set his goals for English Learners very low.

Length of time to learn a Second Language and State Testing

Having EL students perform two standard deviations below the average range will satisfy Unz and his supporters (Kerper Mora, 2003). According to Robert Linqanti's report on "The Re-designation Dilemma", there are common misconceptions surrounding EL students. One of these misconceptions is that an EL student only needs to learn English and their academic achievement will naturally follow (Linqaniti, 2001). Unfortunately, this does not satisfy the state of California and the Federal government when they review our scores.

As teachers, we are focused on raising the scores of our EL students because we must meet our Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) and API or we may lose funding for our programs. Then the flip side is if your sophomores score too high on the CAHSEE the first time that they take the exam, you may lose valuable Title One money that helps to pay for many of the intervention programs. That is what happened to us this year (2006) because our students scored higher than other schools on the 2005 administration. Many schools have identified these students as one of the groups that tend to score below Proficient on the California Standards Test (CST).

Now in addition to needing to show yearly progress on state mandated test, English Language Learners (ELL) need to also pass the CAHSEE. Students who are English Learners are required to take the CAHSEE with all other 10th grade students. All students take the CAHSEE for the first time in tenth grade in February or March depending on the date set by the state of California. Students who do not pass one or both parts of the CAHSEE in grade ten will be given up to five additional opportunities to retake the test. A scale score of 350 or higher is required on each part of the CAHSEE to pass. Both the state and federal governments use the CAHSEE as a measure of school and school district accountability; therefore, high schools feel pressured to ensure that all students pass the CAHSEE including English Learners. The role of high stakes testing in reform movements designed to increase accountability in public schools and improve students achievement are high priorities for many of the education initiatives in the United States. Because English Language Learners represent an increasing percentage of students enrolled in public schools (Kindler, 2002), this group of learners must be considered when such initiatives are

implemented. Educators must make critical decisions on how to include ELL's in high stakes tests in ways that are fair and that address their needs. Again, one cannot compare apples and oranges.

The increase in numbers of high stakes test, which are assessments in which "students, teachers, administrators and entire school systems must account for student performance (Loschert, 2000). If schools do not meet their Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), corrective actions may be imposed such as school-wide restructuring or requiring schools to provide students the option of transferring to another school. Our middle school is currently a program improvement school and if they do not meet their goal this year, the next level is the restructuring of the school including administrators. There can be both positive and negative effects for ELL's because of the increased emphasis on high stakes testing. The concern is that high stakes testing are meant to raise standards for student learning but they do not account for the ELL who must learn the English language and be able to compete with their English Only counterparts at grade level. These students may be working at a higher level than the EO student but the state may not be assessing their knowledge correctly. This leaves ELL's at a disadvantage because educators are overwhelmingly focused with the results of the testing since they affect such issues as school funding, grade-level promotion, and graduation. (Coltrane, 2002) One of the sessions that I attended at the CAFE conference in 2003 specifically discussed the large number of misplaced Special Education students that are also English Learners. The presentation was titled "To Refer or not to Refer... Should I refer an English Learner who is 'not making progress' for special education testing?" Nancy A. Snodgrass, a Bilingual Special Education Resource Teacher from Turlock,

California was the presenter. She did a great job explaining that there was a trend that misidentified EL students because they were struggling in their success with the English Language. They did not need to be classified as a Special Education student; they just needed more specialized EL interventions.

The California Department of Education provides assistance to local schools and districts to achieve the following goals (CDE Factbook, 2003):

- Offer instruction to promote the English Language Development (ELD) of EL's so that these students reach levels of proficiency commensurate with native speakers of English.
- Eliminate the academic gap that separates English Learners from their native English-speaking peers.
- Support English Learners to help them achieve, within a reasonable period of time, the same rigorous grade-level, academic standards that are expected of all students.

Per the California Language Census in Spring 2005, English Learners constitute 25% percent of the total enrollment in California public schools (1,591,525 English Learners). Per the 2005 CBEDS, the total K-12 enrollment for the state of California is 6,312,102. Approximately 42 percent of the students speak a language other than English in their homes. The language spoken in most of the homes of English Learners is Spanish (85.3%). The English Learners are placed in specific instructional settings in accord with the statutes and regulations established by Proposition 227 and a wide range of instructional staff all trained in different ways to help them learn. According to the CBEDS collected in October 2004, and

published in the Spring of 2005, 47% of English Learners are enrolled in structured English immersion classrooms. 39% of English Learners are placed in mainstream classrooms and they are receiving additional services. A smaller number (8%) have been placed in an alternative program such as bilingual education per parental request. 4 % of English Learners are placed in instructional settings other than those authorized by Proposition 227 and they may not be receiving any services. The remaining two percent are placed in mainstream classrooms at the request of their parents (CDE Factbook, 2005). These students have not met the criteria set by their school district to re-designate to Fluent English Proficient. The following chart illustrates the breakdown in the state of California according to the CBEDS collected for 2005.

Number of Teachers	Type of Credential
6,792	Bilingual Teaching Authorization
146,120	CLAD Credential or SB 1969/395
841	Training for Bilingual Teaching
21,296	Training for CLAD or SB 1969/395
16,568	Bilingual paraprofessionals in classrooms

By looking at this chart it is clear that the majority of the teachers have either a Bilingual Teaching authorization, CLAD Credential or they have gone through the training for the

SB1969 and SB395 training. There are still over 22,000 teachers in the state who are going through training while they are teaching our students. The point is that not all of the teachers in the state of California have the same type of training and many of the more qualified teachers are not working in the schools with the most need. In Bonita High School, out of the fifty teachers, there is one teacher with a BCLAD; twenty-eight teachers with a CLAD Credential; three teachers with a SB1969 Certificate; sixteen teachers with a SB395 Certificate and two teachers on an Emergency CLAD Credential. All but two of our teachers at the high school have completed the necessary training to work with English Learners. There are many potential problems of including ELL's in high stakes tests. Some questions arise concerning the validity and reliability of the test that students take to measure growth in specific areas such as Language Arts, Math, Science and Social Studies and how this can be measured for ELL's since the test are given in English. One of the biggest concerns is that the tests don't accurately assess the student's knowledge because it doesn't account for the language barrier. I remember about five years ago a student transferred to Bonita High School from Mexico as a sophomore or junior. Because he didn't speak English, the counselors mistakenly placed him in Pre-Algebra, and a lower level Science class. Somewhere along the line a bilingual teacher discovered his great knowledge of Math and Science but the student had been unable to share it with the other teachers because he couldn't speak English. Two years later, when this student was a senior, he was in Physics and AP Calculus, which were more appropriate placements for him. This is a prime example of a student who has the knowledge but does not have the language skills necessary to express his knowledge in English. The state had begun to allow for testing variations for EL students on the CAHSEE as of September 2003 and on

other state assessments. English Learners can use bilingual dictionaries on the test to help them. Every year it is important to read the guidelines set forth for EL's because they are constantly changing. According to Rivera et al. (2000), the accommodations most frequently used for ELL's are timing/scheduling and settings.

How long to English Language Proficiency?

Eventually, the question arises as to *how long does it take English Learners to Attain Proficiency?* Under the U.S. Supreme Court's interpretation of the Civil Rights Act in *Lau V. Nichols* (1974), local school districts and states have an obligation to provide appropriate services to Limited English Proficient (LEP) students, but policy makers have long debated setting time limits for students to receive such services (Hakuta, Butler and Witt, 2000). One of the cautions that have been discussed is differentiating between oral and academic English proficiency. Academic English proficiency refers to the ability to use language in academic contexts, which is particularly important for long-term success in school (Hakuta, 2000). This is what we have been noticing in the Bonita School District particularly at the high school level. Many of the EL students have oral English but they do not have the academic English necessary for them to be successful in school. There have been many discussions regarding moving a student to higher levels of ELD based on their oral English. Most of the time students who were misplaced because of this move are the ones who have been in the program for many years. The clear conclusion emerging from a study in four different school districts, two in California and two in Canada is that oral proficiency takes 3-5 years to develop and academic English proficiency can take 4-7 years (Hakuta, 2000). These estimates are dependent on the fact that the students remain in the same school district from Kindergarten

on. The analysis also displayed a continuing and widening gap between EL students and native English speakers. Again, there is evidence that EL students not only have to acquire oral and academic English but they also must keep pace with native English speakers. The results in the study done at Stanford University strongly suggest that policies that assume rapid acquisition of English are unrealistic.

It has been in the last decade that the ESL Standards began officially to take root in Bilingual Teaching settings. The state's ELD standards are only beginning to take root. The *ESL Standards for PreK-12 Students* (TESOL, 1997) was written and released for review and comment in 1996 and the draft was revised and published in 1997. Nine content standards were organized under three educational goals. These have been promoted at a much slower rate than the CORE subject areas such as Math, Science, Social Studies and English Language Arts. In *Williams v. the State of California*,(2004) one of the accusations is that English Learners receive an education that is demonstrably inferior to that of English speakers. For example, these students are assigned to less qualified teachers, are provided with inferior curriculum and less time to cover it, are housed in inferior facilities where they are often segregated from English speaking peers, and are assessed by invalid instruments that provide little, if any, information about their actual achievement (Gándara, Rumberger, Jolly and Callahan, October 2003). In their study, they attempt to make the case that the achievement gaps are so wide that they threaten the well being of the state and its economy. Educators in public schools throughout California and specifically in lower socio-economic areas most likely agree with this statement. I know in Bonita, we have noticed a gap between our EL and EO students. Our goal has been to shrink that gap and that is why we have put extra emphasis on interventions

for our EL students. In the middle school we have added reading courses to attempt to bridge the gap between EL and EO students. As a group, the English Learner continues to perform at a lower level than English speaking students throughout their entire school career (Gándara, 2003). They also make the statement that R-FEP students who were reclassified at an early age begin to fall behind by 5th grade and it becomes more obvious by 7th grade. This is evident in Bonita as I mentioned earlier with our 9th graders for the 2004-05 school year who were re-designated in 3rd and 5th grade and who have not passed a single English class since they started middle school. As a district we have significantly tightened our requirements to re-designate based on these findings. One of the reasons for underachievement of English learners is that they begin school significantly behind their English-speaking peers (Gándara, 2003). They do not speak English and yet they are attempting to learn content area information while at the same time that they are learning English. Many times they are being taught in English without so they must decipher the words and attempt to grasp the content matter at the same time. English Learners are trying to learn how to speak, read and write English at the same time that they are required to learn the specific subject being taught. We see these often when a student moves to Bonita from Mexico and there is a gap in their schooling. That means that this student starts off with a language barrier that must be overcome and an academic barrier that affects their learning. They tend to remain behind other students in their age group academically when it comes to district and state assessments. Many times it is difficult for English only students to obtain the subject matter being taught, imagine how difficult it is for ELL's to learn both the English language and the subject matter. This is why many of them fall behind in their classes especially if they are not receiving the SDAIE strategies necessary to

support them in their acquisition of the English Language. Some of the different analysis that we have been doing in our district deals with looking at scores of English Learners, Re-designated students, Special Education students and English Only students and monitoring the gaps between their scores on district assessments in the hopes of bridging the academic gap between these different sets of students.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Method: This study will utilize a quantitative approach to data collection and analysis and a qualitative approach with the collection of data out of their English Learner files. I will review the list of RFEP students who did not pass the CAHSEE during the Spring 2005 administration. Once it is determined who those students are that did not pass, I will then look at the requirements for re-designation at the time that they were re-designated in order to determine how well prepared the R-FEP students are for school achievement at Bonita High School. The study will focus on the last years (2004-05) 10th graders and how well the 10th grade R-FEP students performed the first time that they took the CAHSEE in March 2005. The study will first look at the percentage of students who passed the ELA portion of the CAHSEE during the Spring Administration. Out of the 270 students who took the test, 78% passed leaving sixty students who did not pass. Out of the sixty students who did not pass the exam the first time that they took it, 10 % of the R-FEP students, 68% of the EL students, 17% of the EO students and 5% of the FEP students did not pass the exam. This information can be obtained from EDUSOFT which is a program that we use in our district to gather data on each student. EDUSOFT also provides us with information on the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE), the California Standards Test (CST), the California English Development Test (CELDT), district benchmark assessment scores, Program Status identifying each student as English Only (EO), Initially Fluent English Proficient (IFEP), Re-designated Fluent English

Proficient (RFEP), English Learner (EL) along with the specification of their program and whether the student is identified as a migrant student or if they come from a lower socio-economic background. It is useful to know all of this information because it helps to get a clear picture of the student's background. Once the information is gathered on the results of the CAHSEE, (a student must score 350 or higher to pass), specific attention will be given to the different dates and grades of re-designation to determine the significance of the age of the students at the time of re-designation and how it lined up with their score on the CAHSEE. The next step is to determine whether our re-designated students received adequate ELD support before they were re-designated and sufficient support as they were immersed into English Only education. Next, the EL files will be reviewed to determine what criterion was used to re-designate and whether they received any monitoring. If a student was re-designated prior to 1999, the chances are they were re-designated primarily based on their grades and teacher recommendations. If they were re-designated more recently, they may have more information and concrete numeric data to review. In fact, there should be quarterly monitoring done to determine their grades in the core classes (English, Math, Science and Social Studies). Upon reviewing the results 3 of the 6 R-FEP students were re-designated in 1999 and 3 of the 6 were re-designated in 2000. If they are not being successful in their core classes, we will place them in an intervention class either before or after school if one cannot be identified during the school day.

Once it is determined which R-FEP students passed the CAHSEE and those who didn't pass the CAHSEE, specific attention will be given to those who did not pass

the CAHSEE. A query will be run identifying their enter date as an EL student, their date of re-designation and what their current status is in more recent administrations of the exam.

Chapter Your

FINDINGS

The research question "Does the age at which an ELL is re-designated impact their success rate on state test such as the CAHSEE?" guides this investigation. A list of the sophomores who took the CAHSEE in English Language Arts (ELA) for the first time in the Spring of 2005 was generated. I contacted the Assistant Superintendent's office and requested a list of the students who did not pass. I then took that list and prepared an excel sheet with the student, EL status, EL enter date, ELA score, SPED status, Re-designation date and whether or not they are currently enrolled and whether they have passed the exam since the first attempt. After I had the excel sheet filled out, I placed them into four groups.

Figure 4.1 Breakdown by EL Status

EO	10
FEP	3
EL	41
R-FEP	6

Figure 4.1 illustrates a breakdown of the students who did not pass the exam on the first attempt. There were ten EO students, 3 FEP students 41 EL students and 6 R-FEP students who did not pass the exam. There were a total of 270 sophomores who took the test. The results yielded a 78% passage rate on

the ELA portion of the test. A total of 60 students did not pass the test on the first attempt.

Figure 4.2 English Only

EO	10/60	17%
SPED	7/10	70%
Dropped	4/10	40%
Since Passed	3/10	30%

Ten out of the sixty students who didn't pass the CAHSEE the first time were English Only (EO) students. These are students that speak only English and the parents speak only English. This would be 17% of the 60 students. Out of the ten EO students who did not pass, seven of them are Special Education students. As of May 8, 2006, four of these students have since dropped out of our school or school district to either our Community High School or they have moved elsewhere. Three of the ten students have now passed the exit exam on a more recent exam.

The next sub-group (Figure 4.3) consists of the Fluent English Proficient (FEP) students. To be determined FEP, a student has a Home Language Survey (HLS) which indicates one of the following criteria: The student first learned to speak another language besides English; the parents use another language besides English to speak to their child at home; or the child speaks another language

besides English more frequently at home. If any of these are true, the student is immediately tested using a school placement test and the California English Language Development Test (CELDT). If the student performs in the Early Advanced or Advanced level, they are considered to be Fluent English Proficient (FEP) per the state of California.

Figure 4.3 Fluent English Proficient (FEP) Students

FEP Students	3/60	5%
SPED	1/3	33%
Since dropped	0	0
Since passed	3/3	100%

There were only three out of the sixty (5%) students who took the CAHSEE in the Spring of 2005 who did not pass on the first attempt. Out of those three, only one or 33% was a SPED student. We have had more tests since the first execution and all three have passed.

The next category is the English Learner category (Figure 4.4). An English Learner is first identified by their responses on the Home Language Survey (ILLS) upon entry into the school/school district. If a student learned to

speak a language other than English, speaks another language besides English more frequently at home or if the adults use another language besides English to speak to their children they are give the school placement test or CELDT test. If the student did not score in the Early Advanced or Advanced level, they are considered to be an English Language Learner (ELL). This means that they are placed in the appropriate level ELD class based on their scores. ELD 1 and ELD 2 are two periods with a third after school intervention period. In addition, they are placed in Sheltered Social Studies, Science and Math classes. ELD 3 is placed in a two period block and depending on their scores they are most likely in the Sheltered Social Studies, Science and Math classes. In addition, they are all placed in a Reading class unless they score high enough to not have to attend. They are monitored every quarter to ensure that they are being successful in their four core areas. If they are not being successful, they are placed in intervention classes to help them succeed. This is part of the continual revamping of the data that we obtain on the success of our EL students. We re-evaluate our ELD curriculum every year to identify weaknesses and to strengthen our program.

Figure 4.4 English Language Learners (ELL's)

EL Students	41/60	68%
In country 5 yrs or less	14/41	34%
SPED	11/41	27%
Since dropped	16/41	39%
Since passed	7/41	17%
Total needing to still pass	18/41	44%

This is the largest subgroup of students who did not pass the exam the first time that they took it. There were forty-one ELL's out of sixty students who did not pass the CAHSEE-ELA portion the first time that they took it in the spring. There were a total of 270 students who took the CAHSEE in the spring. Approximately 68% of the students who failed were ELL students. Out of the forty-one ELL's, fourteen have been in the United States less than five years. That is 34% of this group. In addition, eleven out of the forty-one or 27% are classified as SPED students in addition to being English Learners. Since they took the test over a year ago, sixteen out of forty-one or 39% have dropped from our schools and they have either gone to our Community High School or transferred out of our district. Bonita Community High School is our continuation school for students who are behind on credits. Seven out of the

forty-one students have since passed the CAHSEE ELA portion on a more recent exam. There are still 18 ELL students that need to pass the CAHSEE ELA portion and six of these are SPED students so they may still have a waiver and be exempt.

The last subgroup is the one that I specifically wanted to concentrate on as it is the Re-designated (RFEP) subgroup. These students were first identified as ELL's but they have since met the requirements to re-designate. Unfortunately, the requirements have constantly been evolving in an attempt to make them more accurate. The current requirement to be re-designated in high school is you must have passed the ELA portion of the CST at midpoint of BASIC (325 or higher); you must score in the Early Advanced or Advanced level on the CST; you must score at an 80% or higher on the quarterly assessments on the Visions test; and if you are older than tenth grade, you must have passed the ELA portion of the CAHSEE. Visions' is the district adopted core curriculum that is used in the ELD classes. None of these students were re-designated in high school since they have not passed the CAHSEE.

Figure 4.5 Re-designated Students

Re-designated Students	6/60	10%
RFEP 1998-1999	3/6	50%
RFEP 1999-2000	3/6	50%
Since dropped	2/6	33%
Since passed	3/6	50%
SPED	1/6	17%
Needing to pass	1/6	17%

This subgroup is very surprising because it ended up being one of the smaller subgroups. Only six of the sixty students who did not pass the CAHSEE on the first attempt were RFEP students. Upon looking at the information, one of the six was a SPED student. Upon reviewing the files, three out of the six or 50% were re-designated at the end of the 1998-1999 school year, which would have been at the end of fourth grade. The other three out of six or 50% were re-designated at the end of the 1999-2000 school year, which put them in fifth grade. This is the same correlation that I noticed last year. I believe that the reason that we are seeing this group of students has a direct relationship to the fact that Proposition 227 was passed in 1998. This would be the first and second

school years following the passage of the Proposition so school districts would be trying to adhere to the Proposition. It would take awhile to identify that it wasn't working or that they needed to tighten up their re-designation requirements. In addition, this is a time period where students have usually acquired their oral language and their academic language hasn't fully developed. Our district has worked really hard to establish stricter re-designation guidelines to ensure that the students have acquired the academic language necessary to be successful. Since they first took the test last year, two of the six have now transferred to our Community High School or moved out of the district. In addition, three of the six have since passed the ELA portion of the CAHSEE. That leaves only one RFEP student still needing to pass the CAHSEE and this student is also a SPED student.

Basically, our students performed rather well on the ELA portion of the CAHSEE and there are only 26 total students who are entering their senior year without passing the exam. Nine of these students are also SPED and they may end up being exempt from the exam.

Upon reviewing my research question "What is the difference in the passage rate on state exams such as the CAHSEE between students that were re-designated in elementary, middle school and high school?" all of the data points to the elementary level of re-designation as being the most difficult to identify students who are ready for re-designation. It is more difficult to identify the success of a student's academic language in elementary school because there

weren't as many indicators to use as criteria to ensure that they will be successfully mainstreamed. They use the benchmark assessments, CELDT and CST scores to determine eligibility for re-designation at the elementary level. I believe that this has to do with the fact that they are still learning many of the basic skills so a lot of the emphasis is on verbal skills. The middle school also uses the benchmark scores for ELA and Math, the CELDT and CST scores. The high school has the added benefit of using the CAHSEE, CST, in addition to the quarter assessments from Math, ELA, Social Science and Science. It isn't until middle school and high school that you have the opportunity to utilize the skills learned from elementary school at a more advanced level. Once they get closer to high school, the requirements to re-designate are more rigorous which makes it easier to identify those who are ready to be re-designated. Since all six of the re-designated students were re-designated in 1999 and 2000, one could assume that part of the problem was most school districts were scrambling to abide by the rules of Proposition 227 but may not have had guidelines set in place to make sure that the students had the academic language necessary to be successful.

There were only six students who did not pass the CAHSEE on the first attempt during the 2005 Spring administration, three were re-designated at the end of 4th grade and three were re-designated at the end of 5th grade. Per the data collected, it appears that with the exception of these six students, Bonita School District has been re-designating students based on their fluency in English not by trying to meet a number set by the state. Upon looking at the students who have

been re-designated in the district, many of them were classified as English Learners for at least four years or more.

The second question, "Does the added time spent in classes identified as an ELD student versus an R-FEP student have a significant impact on whether they pass the CAHSEE the first time?" Forty-One of the sixty students who did not pass the CAHSEE on the first attempt were current EL students at the time of the exam. Out of those forty-one students, only fourteen of them have been in the country less than five years. That means that the rest have been in the ELD program over five years with many of them having been in the program since kindergarten. Eleven of the forty-one have been identified as Special Education students in addition to being an EL student. The question that needs to be asked now is why are there so many of the EL students who have been in the ELD program over five years not meeting the criteria for re-designation? What else is going on with these students? Have they been tested for Special Education? Many of these students have been identified for additional interventions both in the school day and after school. During the school day we have several sections of Reading classes to help all levels of students learn how to read. After school we have an ELD support intervention class for students who are not being successful in their ELD classes.

Chapter Five

CONCLUSION AND REFLECTION

Upon reviewing the data, it is evident that overall Bonita Unified School district is doing a good job re-designating our students. Prior to Proposition 227, there weren't any set guidelines as to how to re-designate students at all levels. It was more of an educated guess as to whether the student would be successful if re-designated. Different school sites within the same district had different methods of re-designating and it was inconsistent. Once Proposition 227 passed there was a sense of urgency to hurry and re-designate as soon as possible. A lot of districts wanted to abide by the law and they didn't question the reality of re-designating someone too early. Once many of the districts started monitoring their students who had been re-designated, they realized that they had done a disservice to their students and revised their guidelines. I know in the time that I was the ELD Site Coordinator at the high school; we revised our criteria every year in an effort to make educated decisions regarding re-designation. Every time we attended a CAFE conference we would revisit our re-designation criteria because we had compared information with another school district. In fact many of the neighboring districts adopted our re-designation criteria as their own. At one time a teacher could say "Johnny is ready to re-designate," and he was re-designated. Or a student could get an A in a class and be re-designated. It took a while to realize that the reason they created standardized testing was to ensure that all students were receiving the same education and that grades weren't always an accurate means of determining this. As standards based

instruction became the norm, it made it easier for schools to develop appropriate re-designation criteria. In our district at the high school level, we look at the passage on the CAHSEE, whether or not they are midpoint of BASIC (325) or above on the ELA portion of the exam, their CELDT score must be Early Advanced or Advanced and their scores on their ELA quarter assessment. The quarter assessments are all departmental so that all teachers are giving the same exam. The middle school uses all of these except for the passage on the CAHSEE since it is only given in high school. As the student gets younger, it is easier to misidentify someone as being ready to re-designate because there are not as many indicators to follow. We have worked hard in our district to increase the number of identifiers for all grade levels K-12 so that we make accurate decisions. In addition, if we question someone's skills, we may hold off re-designating them until the next review to give us time to really look at work samples and evaluate test scores. Teachers and administrators are constantly reviewing this process in an attempt to give our students the best opportunity possible. Once a student has been re-designated, districts are required to monitor them every quarter. It used to be for one year but it has been changed to two years of monitoring. At the high school level, we look at their quarter assessment scores in the four core areas; Social Studies, English, Math and Science. We also compare their scores to English Only students to ensure that they are being successful in comparison to English Only students. The monitoring is very insightful because it shapes our curriculum development along with assist us in identifying areas of weakness. We have been able to go back and realize that re-

designating too soon is not always successful. Sometimes students need a little more English Language Development support than what is recommend in Proposition 227.

As a future administrator, I realize that our EL students should be one of the top priorities in the school. Many times it is this sub-group that does not meet the adequate yearly progress needed to move up bands on the California Standards Tests. That means that they need extra attention focused on them. Mainly, they are trying to learn subject matter at the same time that they are learning how to read, write and speak in English. If our English Only students are barely meeting the required gains on testing and they know the language, then we need to be more aggressive on ensuring that our EL students are receiving enough ELD support in the classroom so that they too may be successful. It is an administrator's job to closely monitor the progress of the ELL's each quarter to make sure that they are receiving the correct and appropriate ELD support in all of their classes. If they are monitored frequently, it is easier to make immediate modifications to curriculum rather than waiting for the next year to begin. Once a student re-designates, they still need to be monitored for two years to make sure that they are successful in mainstream classes. If they are not being successful, it is the administrator's responsibility to provide interventions for them.

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