Title I Schools: Are They Meeting the Needs of the Students

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Abstract

Title I
Low Performing Schools
Raising Student Achievement
Elementary Education
Implementation for Improvement

This research examined the positive and negative attributes to schools that are designated Title I and receive federal funding to help raise student achievement. This study was conducted using publicly available CST data from the California Department of Education website. The research looks at a five-year data analysis of language arts and mathematics scores at the elementary school level at three case study schools. The results were analyzed to determine if it was in the district’s best interest to make a school Title I when they met the criteria to receive federal funds.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

A. Purpose of the Case Study Project-

In a school district in Southern California there are four designated Title I schools that receive federal funding. In the last few years there have been two more schools approaching the qualifications of becoming a Title I school. As of the current 2008-2009 school year, three of the four Title I schools are now in different levels of Program Improvement as outlined in the federal guidelines.

The purpose of this case study is to examine the options a school district has to provide support to an under performing school. All schools are focused on raising student achievement especially those that are low performing. If a school site meets the qualifications to receive federal funding, is it in the district’s best interest to make that decision to provide more funds and a higher level of staff support? If not what else can be done to increase student achievement?

B. Problem Statement-

At what point can a district no longer choose to keep an under performing school from being labeled a Title I campus? What assurances and support can a school district put into place to help raise student achievement? Is labeling an under performing school as Title I the best decision?
C. Background of Problem-

Since the beginning of NCLB the achievement requirements for a school to meet its annual Adequate Yearly Progress, (AYP) has increased by 10% each school year. The goal is for all students to reach 100% proficiency by 2014 as measured by the California state standardized test (STAR). This goal of NCLB is unrealistic; however this is the current standard of accountability all Title I schools are judged upon. The assumption of NCLB is that each year a given school’s subgroups will continue to make these necessary gains. If a Title I school does not make these gains then they begin the process of becoming a school in Program Improvement.

When a school is designated Title I it receives federal funds and extra teacher support to facilitate site based intervention classes. The Title teachers are credentialed teachers that work 19.75 hours each week. In the focus district described in this study the intervention classes are in the content area of reading. However, a Title I designation can lead to problems such as:

- Receiving sanctions according to NCLB when the AYP goals are not met.

- The school being labeled as needing improvement within the community.

- The potential loss of students leaving the school to attend a school that is meeting the AYP goals.
D. Significance of the Project-

My primary concern in the purposed case study is to determine if the student’s educational needs are being met. If they are not, what can the district do to help meet their needs? The goal is to become well versed in the provisions of NCLB and the measures a district can take to turn around student achievement at a given school site. If through this project I can be a catalyst for change it would be serving the best interest of all the students in the district in which I teach. I believe close case studies of three schools, one a Title I designated school, will elicit important information for the whole district.

E. Areas/Topics of Investigation-

1. What are the pros and cons of becoming a Title I school?

2. What data is used to make the decision of Title I status?

3. Does the threat of Program Improvement status prevent a district qualifying an elementary school as Title I?

4. Is labeling an under performing elementary school the necessary step in providing support for student achievement?
Part F- Definition of Terms

1. **Title I School**- The first section of the ESEA, Title I refers to programs aimed at America's most disadvantaged students. Title I Part A provides assistance to improve the teaching and learning of children in high-poverty schools to enable those children to meet challenging State academic content and performance standards. Title I reaches about 12.5 million students enrolled in both public and private schools.

2. **NCLB**- No Child Left Behind Act of 2001- Federal Legislation designed to improve student achievement in language arts and math in order to close the achievement gap.

3. **STAR Scores**- Standardized Testing and Reporting

4. **Program Improvement**- A Title I school that has not met their AYP for two consecutive years.

5. **Under Performing School**- Schools that are not meeting their AYP target growth goals.

6. **ELL**- English Language Learner- English is not their primary language

7. **Socio-economically Disadvantaged**- students of low income families

8. **AYP**- An individual state's measure of yearly progress toward achieving state academic standards. "Adequate Yearly Progress" is the minimum
level of improvement that states, school districts and schools must achieve each year.

9. **Accountability System** - Every state sets academic standards for what every child should know and learn at a particular grade level. Student academic achievement is measured for every child, every year. The results of these annual tests are reported to the public.

10. **CST** - California Standards Test - tests are given in grades 2-8 and at least once in high school.

11. **ESEA** - Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965
Chapter 2: Review Of The Literature

A. Purpose

The purpose of this project is to examine the options a school district has to provide support to an under performing school. If a school qualifies to receive federal funding to become a Title I school, is that in the best interest of a child’s education? If not what else can be done to increase student achievement? The following literature review will highlight information that will support conclusions drawn in this research stating actions that districts and school sites can implement to improve student achievement.

B. Review

School reform has been at the forefront of educators’ minds since schools were created. Today in the Twenty-First Century the accountability measures that schools are judged upon are stricter than ever before. Research shows that in the last ten to fifteen years’ education has changed for the better. As educators strive to meet the educational needs of all in order to prepare them for the world that lies before them once graduation has passed.

The historical report, *A Nation at Risk*, (1983) has been reviewed by many educational scholars and poses several perspectives on school reform. It was written to the Secretary of Education for review. It appears that this piece was published as a scare tactic to our nation in order to spark interest of striving for better achievement for our students. In retrospect, it helped set educational reform on the map and got the attention of many. The report states that it is the right of all Americans to have choices in life regardless of
race. “This promise means that all children by virtue of their own efforts, competently
guided, can hope to attain the mature and informed judgment needed to secure gainful
employment, and to manage their own lives, thereby serving not only their own interests
but also the progress of society itself.” (p. 137-138).

*A Nation At Risk* sparked the needed for change to give students, regardless of where they
lived, an equal education. The report continues, “We are confident that America can
address this risk. If the tasks we set forth are initiated now and our recommendations are
fully realized over the next several years, we can expect reform of our Nation’s schools,
colleges, and universities.” (p. 143). The reform that is addressed focuses on the
following areas of teaching:

**Content**- what the students are learning

**Standards and Expectations**- the development of what will be taught at
each grade level to ensure all students are learning the same material.

**Time**- the necessary time that a student needs to meet or exceed the
standards and expectations of the grade level content.

**Teaching**- the teachers guiding the students must also adhere to
expectations in the quality of their teaching and level of their credentials.

**Leadership and Fiscal Support**- strong leadership and goal setting must
start at the district office then be imparted to the individual leaders at the school
sites who will then deliver the message to the teachers. If change happens it does
come at a cost. Educational leaders should do all in their power to support and finance quality programs that will help reform education.

The current measure of accountability for schools is under No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. NCLB is a reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA). ESEA was initiated under the Johnson Administration’s War on Poverty campaign in 1965. “The law’s original goal, which remains today, was to improve education equity for students from lower income families by providing federal funds to school districts serving poor students.” (NCLB Overview, p. 1)

NCLB was implemented under the Bush Administration in 2001. The law requires schools to annually test students on the state standards in language arts and mathematics and science in predetermined grade levels. They must report the scores to the community annually. Each year since the start of NCLB each school must show a predetermined growth target, as outlined in the law, and show raised levels of student achievement in specific student subgroups, including socio economically disadvantaged, students with disabilities, groups of large ethnic proportion, as well as students who are English Language Learners. The goal of the law is to have all students, by the year 2014, be proficient or advanced in language arts and mathematics as outlined in the grade level standards. Each school, based on the state testing results of their student population, receives an AYP, adequate yearly progress, that grades how well the school has performed.
Schools that qualify to be a Title I school receive additional monetary support in the effort to raise student achievement for low-performing schools. Title I funding is set up to support state and local school reform with the largest percentages of children from low-income families. Schools that enroll at least 40% of students from poor families are eligible to use Title I funds for school-wide or “targeted assistance programs.” Title I funding can be used in conjunction with federal, state and local funds to support the needs of the school. When using the funds, the school must design an instructional program that targets the students most at-risk or failing to meet state performance standards. Title I services are used for students from the preschool level to twelfth grade; however most often, the services are utilized in kindergarten through sixth grade.

The summary of proposed regulations for Title I was put forth by the U.S. Department of Education and was published on April 23, 2008. The document has outlined new regulations they would like to put into place that would strengthen the public school choice, supplemental educational services (SES), and the manner in which graduation rates are calculated as currently mandated by No Child Left Behind. This document has comprehensive information geared to the educational professional, however additional information is needed in order to educate community members about the mandates of NCLB.

A study by Marguerite Roza (2008) probes into the controversies of public spending in elementary and secondary education. How much money does a district need to allocate to each school to ensure that the students will meet the standards and how should the
money be spent? Indeed this is a hot topic in most school districts. Does meeting state standards and allocation of school funds go hand-in-hand?

Roza compares the district budget spending in three different areas. The purpose of her research is to discover whether a district with a larger spending capacity makes better decisions than ones with less money. She speculates that there are five key questions a district must ask when allocating funds to support student achievement:

1. What gets allocated?

2. How is spending reported?

3. What are the district’s practices that dictate the flow of resources?

4. What are the restrictions on the use of these resources?

5. What is the dollar value of the allocations?

Each of the answers to the above questions varies from district to district and Roza’s research suggests that a district with a larger budget does not necessarily make better decisions. Past practices, within a district is a determining factor as to how funds are allocated from school to school. Lower performing schools, such as a Title I school, receive more funds than a non Title I school to ensure that the standards will be met by the students in the school. A key element of fiscal responsibility is in the hands of site administrators. They know what resources their school needs to raise student achievement. It is the responsibility of the administrator to advocate for the needed resources. In conclusion, Roza’s research did not come up with a magical dollar amount
needed by a school to meet state standards; however she stresses that money should be allocated fairly based upon school needs.

Granger’s (2008) article sites the work of David Berliner (2005). Berliner suggests that school reform and NCLB have become a “spectacle of fear” as related to teacher quality and testing accountability. The mandates that surround NCLB are high stakes and Berliner suggests that all districts have yet to comply. As of the 2005-2006 school year all teachers were to be ‘highly qualified’ if they were to remain in the classroom. All too often many of the less qualified teachers are teaching the lowest achieving students. He asserts that the most qualified teachers should be serving the lowest performing students. How do you know if your teachers are ‘highly qualified’? Each state has scholastic aptitude tests that teachers must pass to show competence in all subjects.

Roland Barths’ essay, *The World of Wrestling, (1957)*, is also used by Granger to support his theory that school reform has added more problems than it has raised student achievement. Barths’ essay describes the wrestling arena and that spectators are gathered all around to watch the event. The wrestlers are on display and the spectators scrutinize their every move. Judgments are made of only what can be seen. Much like the wrestlers, under NCLB the schools are too scrutinized by the public. Much of the public does not understand what efforts are made to raise student achievement on a daily basis. The schools are merely judged by test scores; did they make any gains or not and does this mean that the school is in Program Improvement?
Many schools are considered low performing; however they are not always designated a Title I school. It is a major decision for a district to want to classify a school as a Title I school if they meet the qualifications. If a district is willing to make that decision for a school that meets the criteria, then they must also be ready for the sanctions that are attached to NCLB if the school does not make their AYP targets of growth each year. Research supports the fact that threat of sanctions under the federal law should not outweigh the educational needs of students. Therefore, a district should seek Title I status even with the threat of federal consequences because at this time research does not suggest other viable options to meet the educational needs of the under performing students.

On the other hand, if a district chooses not to accept Title I status, there are many efforts a low performing school can make to improve student scores. Research outlines a vision of change that must begin with the instructional leader, the principal, and the staff that they lead. The school team should develop short and long-term goals that can be easily measured to show areas of strengths and the areas that require more serious attention. Corallo, Ed.D and McDonald, Ed.D, (January 2002) reviewed this research in, *What Works with Low-Performing Schools: A Review of Research*. Their review defines what a low performing school looks like. “In an environment of standards-based reform, ‘low-performing’ often refers to those schools that do not meet the standards established and monitored by the state board of education, or some other authority external to the school.” (p. 1) They continue to state that many of these schools are in low-income areas; however not all of the schools in such areas are failing. Each school is as unique
as the population they serve and strong leadership plays a large part into how a school performs.

“Research on school reform indicated that it takes an average of three years for an elementary school to implement change that will improve student achievement.” (Fullan, 2002, p. 581) Some of the short-term strategies for change include aligning grade level curriculum to state standards, aligning district and classroom formative assessments to state adopted curriculum, analyze student data, and provide meaningful staff development specific to the schools’ goals in raising achievement. The long-term goals require the ongoing implementation of the short-term goals in addition to the following: assuring that the staff is ready to make the needed change, develop a common vision and mission statement for student achievement and lastly, making time for grade level collaboration and planning to meet the goals of the school’s vision.

Any educator, teacher or principal, needs to be able to read and interpret data in order to make sustainable change in student achievement. “When data are used to ignite change, the effect can be a powerful, immediate initiative as well as a precursor to sustainable reform because educators are learning the skill of planning based on data analysis.” (Aldersebaes, Potter & Hamilton, 2000, p. 7; Sparks 2000, p. 7). Teachers are always assessing their students through formal assessments or with observations. They must use this data to constantly meet the changing needs of their students. No one teacher can do this alone and ideas need to be shared within the grade level. The principal must assure
their staff common planning and articulation time in order to meet their short and long
term goal to raise student achievement.

“A successful face-to-face team is more than just collectively intelligent. It makes
everyone work harder, think smarter and reach better conclusions than they would have
on their own.” (Surowiecki, 2004, p. 105) The current buzzword for teacher
collaboration is ‘professional learning communities (PLC).’ A PLC is an ongoing
meeting that takes place within a school or even the grade level where planning of
curriculum and standards are determined. It is also where teachers can share instructional
practices they have been successful with and review data from student assessments to
drive their instruction for the upcoming weeks.

The efficacy of school reform is dependent on teachers working smarter and knowing
how to make educational decisions while using student data. There is not just one magic
plan schools can follow to improve student achievement. The individual needs of the
school must be accounted for as well as the readiness of the staff to implement change
before change will make a difference. The principal needs to set the tone for change and
impart that message to the staff while being supportive to their needs. Working together
as a school toward a common goal will help them achieve better student achievement.

Conclusions-
The sources I have cited disagree on many points; however they all agree that school
reform under NCLB has taken its toll on the school system. Data collection under NCLB
is invaluable in showing educators what students have learned. “The high-stakes accountability of teachers and students appears to be having mostly negative consequences for teachers’ relationships with students, their classroom practices, and their sense of professional well-being,” Granger (2008, p. 208). Many teachers, as the articles suggest, are merely teaching to the state test and taking the fun out of learning. There has to be a give and take with school reform. In the beginning of the NCLB mandates many educators did not really see the value of this reform. Now that we are nearing the end of the proposed mandates, that all students will be proficient by 2014, many now see its importance.

In the midst of the high measures of school accountability there is a ray of hope for educators. Educational reform takes anywhere from three to five years before growth can be measured. There are a number of things that educators can do to improve the quality of a student’s education. The role of the site administrator is pivotal when it comes to implementing change as referenced by Fullan (2002). The principal needs to be able to lead the change within the school and create a shared vision for student achievement with the staff. Then, as a school team, they need to rely on analyzing and interpreting student assessment data. Beneficial change happens when educators know how to modify their teaching to meet the needs of their students. Once the staff becomes well versed in student data the principal then needs to follow up throughout the year with on going meaningful staff development that directly relates to the school’s vision of change. Educators are held to high standards with the goal of educating all students to the best of
their ability. Research also supports that NCLB has strengthened the way teachers teach and students learn.

The research connected to this study will carefully examine the rate of progress from three similar elementary schools within the same county. NCLB states all students are to be proficient or above by the year 2014. The data from each of the schools will be reviewed to see what progress, and how much, has been made over the span of five years. Recommendations will be made as to how each school can continue its growth in student achievement. Regardless of the amount of money a school is given gains in student achievement can happen. The change begins with the site principal developing a shared vision for change with their staff. Each school site has a wealth of knowledge and principals would be remiss if they did not use the resources available to them. Monetary funds help but money is not always what makes the vision come to life. The staff within the school community makes the implementation of ongoing reform in working toward the school’s vision of increasing student achievement possible.
Chapter 3:

The stakeholders involved in this educational study are many. Parents, students, teachers, and administration at the school site and district office are affected. To carry out this research a mixed methods approach was used. The quantitative data that will be analyzed will be a five-year student achievement trend of CST (California Standards Testing) scores at the school sites that are under performing. I will compare a five-year student achievement trend of CST scores at a similar school, which is a designated Title I school. Interviews that were conducted of principals and staff at the end of the 2008-2009 school year gave insight to intervention programs already in place. Finally, a comparison of the three school sites will be made as well as recommendations for improvement.

Location of Study

The focus of the study is of three elementary schools in Southern California. Each of the schools is located in low-income neighborhoods. The student population at each school is similar to one another and they all have significant subgroups of English Language Learners. The three schools were chosen for this study to compare school data with similar student populations.

Part 1:

Case School 1

This school one is designated a Title I school and receives monetary support from the federal government. This school has more staff, including Title I teachers, to support raising student achievement which facilitates several on-site, research based intervention
programs. The additional Title I staff members are fully credentialed teachers who work on a part-time schedule.

The Title I teachers are lead by the site’s literacy coach, who is a full time teacher that has been released from the classroom. This resource is only available at designated Title I schools. The position of the literacy coach is first and foremost to generate and collect multiple measures of assessments and compile the student data for the entire school. Once the data has been collected it is up to the coach to determine the literacy needs of the students at the kindergarten through sixth grade level. Students are placed in flexible small groups, with no more that six to seven students per group for reading interventions. The programs that are available to the students are all in the content area of language arts.

The younger students, k-2 grades, receive help with phonics and decoding of words. The older students, 3-6 grades, receive help with phonics, if necessary, but typically have additional instruction in reading comprehension. Students that participate in reading intervention class do not miss core language arts instruction from their teacher. Each of the small groups is in addition to the minimum required minutes of core curriculum instruction.

There are four programs the students could be placed in, all targeting specific needs in literacy skills. There is a program for support in phonemic awareness, SIPPS, and the other three support reading comprehension skills, SOAR to Success, Scholastic Read 180, and Voyager Passport. The individual intervention programs are described in detail in the following pages.
The first program is *SIPPS (Systematic Instruction in Phoneme Awareness, Phonics, and Sight Words)* the phonics program. The curriculum is leveled and teaches decoding which gives the learner the prerequisites for developing reading fluency and comprehension. The program can serve students from kindergarten up to the twelfth grade. For the purpose of the research on elementary schools the primary levels will be highlighted. The literacy needs of the student are dependent as to which level they will begin. All students needing extra instruction in phonics will be given a pre-assessment to determining where they need the most help. Once the level is determined the students are placed into a small group setting of four to six students. The duration of the program is for 50 minutes at least four days per week. The students at each level have goals they are working toward. The chart below highlights the instructional content taught and the outcomes expected from each of the learners.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SIPPS Program</th>
<th>Instructional Content</th>
<th>Student Goal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Beginning Level</strong></td>
<td>Phonemic Awareness Short Vowels</td>
<td>Understand and use short vowels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Single Consonants</td>
<td>Know 73 sight words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sight Words</td>
<td>Read and spell new words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Extension Level</strong></td>
<td>Consonant blends and inflections Final e and r-controlled vowels and digraphs High frequency sight words</td>
<td>Read single-syllable words with complex vowels Read +150 high frequency irregular words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Challenge Level</strong></td>
<td>Six syllable types Morphemic roots</td>
<td>Read polysyllabic words with accuracy and increasing reading fluency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prefixes and Suffixes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High frequency academic words</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sight syllables and their meanings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The SIPPS program incorporates systemic explicit teaching and repetition of content material to help accelerate the student’s learning and comprehension.

The second program, SOAR to Success by Houghton Mifflin, emphasizes reading strategies that students are learning in their grade level classroom. This series uses the same approaches as the currently adopted language arts textbook. The reading strategies that are taught are: prediction, questioning, summarizing, and clarifying. Before the intervention groups are created each of the students that are considered for this program are given a pre assessment to determine the best placement. Each one is given a reading inventory where they read passages and answer comprehension questions. The test is continued until the student reaches their frustration point in comprehension. Once all of that data is collected it is given to the literacy coach to form the final groupings of the students. The goal is to put students together that have similar struggles in comprehension therefore the teacher will be able to better meet their needs. The focus of this program is reciprocal teaching, which is an interactive dialogue between the students and the teacher. This instructional strategy is used to help students develop meaning and apply the above reading strategies in their daily reading activities. This program can be used in grades 3-6. Each grade level kit includes twenty-eight books, fiction and non-fiction, sequenced from simple to complex. The recommended time needed to facilitate this program is between 30-45 minutes with groups meeting at least four days per week. This program is for students who can decode words in isolation but not in reading; therefore they can decode but not comprehend. The main goal is to accelerate the students reading quickly.
The third comprehension program, *Scholastic Read 180*, is divided into three parts: a computer self-directed practice at the comprehension level of the learner, a silent reading section, and a small teacher led group. Each of the three stations focuses on reading comprehension. Students rotate through all three activities each class meeting. This program is for students in the 4-6 grades and they build their reading comprehension skills through modeled and independent reading. The teacher can differentiate instruction for the students when they meet in the small group. Each time the student logs on to the computer portion of the program the data management system records their progress. The data system can produce many reports of individual student’s comprehension, reading fluency, and spelling progress. Students that are independent readers and workers best utilize this intervention program and those that may have already participated in another comprehension program. Students that score at the basic level on state standardized testing are ideal candidates for this program to fill in any gaps they may have in their learning.

The final comprehension intervention, *Voyager Passport*, is specifically designed for students still struggling with reading comprehension and that have already been in other intervention programs. This program includes a phonics portion along with comprehension. The number of students in this group is considerably smaller than the other two options, three to five students. Working with fewer students enables the teacher to provide targeted attention to the needs of the students. Students who are best suited for this group are those reading at least one to two years below their current grade level. The curriculum focuses on grade level appropriate instruction in phonics,
vocabulary building, and recognition of sight words. Each skill is explicitly taught with the goal that the students will be able to practice what they have learned when they are reading. There are twelve units per grade level and the passages focus on social studies and science. The recommended time needed to facilitate this program is between 30-40 minutes with groups meeting at least four days per week. A large incentive for the students in this program is the online reading component, Ticket to Read. The students are able to practice reading fluency and comprehension in a fun interactive setting. The passages that the students read are mostly non-fiction. At the end of each passage there is a short quiz to measure their level of comprehension. Students are able to access this via the Internet at school and at home, which is free of charge, as it is a part of the whole program. Students are motivated to practice reading independently while reading at their level of comprehension using this service. Each time the student logs on to the computer portion of the program the data management system records their progress. The data system can produce many individualized reports of the student’s comprehension and reading fluency progress. Currently this program is only used in the fifth grade.

Case Schools 2 and 3

The other two schools are not designated Title I and do not have all of the same services in place to help its students increase their achievement. Last school year, 2008-2009, the district moved one of the Title I teachers to help these schools. This employee spent half of their day at one school then traveled to the next. The teacher was able to facilitate a few intervention groups at each of these schools, but nowhere near the extent as those at a
Title school. The classroom teacher at these two sites implemented the Voyager intervention program only used in the fifth grade.

Every school in the district has access to the adopted curriculum in all of the subject areas including character education and English Language Development. Many schools have added reading fluency practice to their core instruction, especially at the Title I schools. All of the employees are ‘highly qualified’ to teach the core curriculum as outlined in the No Child Left Behind legislation. Under the direction of the site principal the teachers analyze their student data to drive their instruction. Many educators are working collaboratively at their grade levels and using the data from classroom, district, and state testing results to improve their instruction.

Unfortunately, non-Title I schools have limited support and are often frustrated. This past year the other two schools were given a little more support than they had in the past. Gains in student achievement can be made but will enough support given be enough to show up in the student data?

Part 2:

Questionnaire

The employees at the schools in this case study participated in a survey that focused on how they interpret the successes and challenges of their school site. Participation was voluntary and anonymous and each participant was encouraged to answer candidly. Information gleaned from the survey will provide a better-informed picture of available
programs and how they are implemented at each of the schools in this case study as well as the attitudes of school staff members. The survey is as follows:

**Master Thesis Survey**

**Topic: Title I Schools: Are They Meeting the Needs of Our Students**

Please respond to the following questions.

1. **Do you work at a school that receives Title I funding and support?**

2. **What services/resources are in place at your site to meet the needs of your at-risk students? (For non Title I Schools)**

3. **What is your position at your site?**

4. **What resources does your site have in place to meet the needs of your at-risk students? (For Title I Schools)**

5. **How effective are your programs in terms of raising student achievement? How do you measure the success?**

6. **Do you feel that your school needs more support to meet the needs of your at-risk students? Please explain.**

**Respondents of the Survey**

**Case School 1:**

The respondents from case school 1 work at a designated Title I school. The employees that took part in the survey are 8 classroom teachers, 4 Title I teachers, the resource specialist and the school site administrator. The responses from each of these school stakeholders have different perspectives depending on the relationship of the involvement with the services that are provided to at-risk students. The classroom teachers have direct contact with the students who require additional support through the Title I intervention program throughout the school day. Direct results are measured through formative
assessments where the efficacy of the program will show in the student’s data. Title I teachers facilitate the intervention programs to the at-risk population in grades kindergarten through sixth. They meet with these students daily and work in small groups to provide intense remedial instruction based on the literacy needs of the groups. Title I teachers also teach small group reading instruction within the classroom during Universal Access, differentiation of language arts curriculum, for students that are struggling with the grade level standards. The students in these groups can be but are not always the same ones that participate in the pull out intervention classes. These teachers report to the literacy coach and the classroom teachers about the progress and continuing needs of the students in their groups. The school site administrator has the role of overseeing all of the programs that are taught. They rely on classroom observations from grade level classrooms and Title intervention classes, and analysis of data to keep abreast of what is occurring within all of the programs. The principal depends on the literacy coach to inform them of what is happening in the Title I program. Daily meetings occur to discuss various topics such as: the direction of the Title program, how to best meet the needs of the students that are being served, and next level of steps in the implementation of programs to improve student achievement.

**Case School 2 and 3:**

The respondents from case school 2 and 3 work at a non-Title I school. The employees that took part in the survey are 8 classroom teachers and 2 school site administrators and one retired district director. The responses from each of these school stakeholders have different perspectives depending on the relationship of the involvement with the services that are provided to at-risk students. The level of support at case school 2 and 3 are
dramatically different than case school 1. The classroom teachers are the at-risk students primary source for remedial assistance. In the upper grade classrooms the teachers work together where one teaches the necessary intervention program while the other teaches district adopted curriculum. These schools do not have access to Title I intervention teachers because they are not designated as Title I; therefore, it is up to the classroom teachers to provide all of the support to their at-risk students. However, in the 2008-2009 school year the district made the decision to give these schools some additional support. One of the Title I teachers within the district was moved to work with the struggling students at these schools. Although this employee was a Title teacher she became an intervention resource teacher. The intervention teacher is a part-time employee who spends about two hours at each school site five day per week. This employee was paid out of EIA (Economic Impact Aid) funds as you cannot finance an employee from Title I funds if they are not working at a designated Title I school. The school site administrator has the role of overseeing all of the programs that are taught. They rely on grade level classroom observations, observations from intervention classes, and analysis of data to keep abreast of what is occurring within all of the classrooms. The principal relies on feedback from the classroom teachers and the intervention resource teacher in order to monitor the students’ progress. The stakeholders in these case school communities must work creatively with the limited resources available to raise student achievement.
Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion

Introduction

The level of staff support looks dramatically different at a Title I school than at any other. In this study the one objective measure is the student data. The interpretation of the results cannot be skewed because the data does not change. The change comes from those that analyze the results and determine how the level of instruction will be modified to meet the greater needs of the students. Many people have their ideas of what should be changed, but that is subjective. The data does not care about the site or who the stakeholders are that are involved, data reports a clear picture of how each student is responding to the teacher’s teaching with the state adopted curriculum within the limitations of the testing situation.

The data for this study has been collected from CST (California Standards Test) results from the California Department of Education website from three schools located in the same district in Southern California. The data set is a five-year analysis of students scoring at or above the proficient level in language arts and mathematics. Additional information regarding school demographics, AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress) and API (Academic Performance Index) results with significant student subgroups have been acquired from each school’s School Accountability Report Card (SARC). The California Department of Education publishes specific state testing results each year in this document specifically for the school and the community. The information reported from the SARC is for three years ending with the 2007-2008 school year. The SARC is updated each year in February; therefore the current information pertaining to the 2008-
2009 school year will not be published until February 2010. The schools that are highlighted in this research are a designated Title I that is making steady growth and two non-Title I schools that have not been raising student achievement consistently. Each school will be identified by a code of case school 1, 2, or 3. Specific information about each school will be discussed through the analysis of the testing data results.

The STAR standards test given by the state of California is meant to measure how well students are mastering grade level standards in grades 2-6, at the elementary level. Students in grade four take an additional exam to demonstrate their ability in essay writing. The writing portion of the exam is added into the student’s overall language arts score. The individual score is also reported to show how well the student performed on the specific task. Students in the fifth grade are assessed in science. The science exam is a culmination of skills learned in previous grade levels. All results of the tests are reported within five performance levels: advanced, proficient, basic, below basic, and far below basic. Students that score at the proficient and advanced levels are considered to have mastered the grade level standards in the given subjects. Students who score at the basic level are approaching mastery of grade level standards; however they have just missed the cut off. Students who score at the below basic and far below basic levels are far from meeting grade level standards. Often students who score at these levels are not meeting grade level standards in the classroom and require additional differentiation of classroom instruction in order to access the content standards.
The NCLB legislation requires that all schools and districts meet their AYP requirements. In order to comply with the law, California public schools and districts must meet or exceed specific criteria in the following four target areas:

1. Participation rate of students tested on statewide assessments.
2. Percent of students scoring proficient on statewide assessments.
3. Meet API (Academic Performance Index) scores- state accountability system for California schools.
4. Graduation rate for high schools.

The first three criteria areas will be analyzed in each of the case study school performance records as they pertain to an elementary school site.

The API score a school receives is on a scale of 200 to 1,000. The higher the score a school earns shows their ability to increase student achievement and move students to the proficient and advanced levels. The state target API score for all schools is a score of 800. If a school does not meet the criteria mentioned above their school score will decrease. In addition to the API score the state also ranks each school in ten categories. The school rankings range from 1, the lowest, to 10, the highest. These rankings are designed to measure how a particular school is performing in comparison to 100 ‘similar schools’ within the state. The similar school data is statistically matched to schools with similar proportions of student subgroups; therefore making it an equitable comparison.
Part 1- Case School Data
Case School 1
Background

School 1 is an elementary school that serves kindergarten through sixth grade students. It is a Title I school that receives federal funding to facilitate site-based intervention groups in language arts for at-risk students. Its total enrollment in the 2007-2008 school year was 436 students as reported on the school’s SARC. The student population was 55% Hispanic or Latino, 37% White, 3% Asian, 2% African American, 2% Multiple or No Response, 1% Filipino, <1% Pacific Islander, and <1% American Indian or Alaska Native. The significant student subgroups are economically disadvantaged, English Language Learners, Hispanic or Latino, and White. Each year when the students take the STAR standards testing in the spring all of the significant subgroups must meet the minimum percentage of growth as outlined in NCLB in order to meet the AYP goals. The progression of AYP goals as outlined in the NCLB legislation is included in appendix 1.

API and AYP Rankings

The API rankings for school 1 have changed minimally over the past three years. The chart below shows the changes the school has made within the given school years. The desired value a school wants to earn is a 10 as that is the highest rank possible. As the chart shows, school 1 is half way to the highest mark. However, when the school is judged to similar schools within the state it is not as high as the statewide score.
API Ranks- Three Year comparison

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The API growth scores for school 1 is a more in depth view of the gains it is making in raising student achievement. The chart below shows the changes it has made within the last three years as reported by the SARC. The state’s growth goal for all schools is 800. The data indicates that this school has made steady growth in raising student achievement and is nine points away from meeting the state’s recommended goal.

![All Students API Growth]

The AYP criterions that must be met by all schools are the participation rate of students being tested and the percent of students who score proficient in language arts and mathematics. When a school meets each of these targets then they are classified as meeting all of the AYP goals. School 1 has met all of the above criteria for the last five consecutive school years. Title I schools have the most to loose when it comes to state
testing. All schools receive a report on its AYP progress, but non-Title I schools do not have the threat of federal sanctions if they do not meet the goals. Non-Title I schools could receive direction from the district level as to how they will increase its score, but not from the state or federal government.

On the other hand, Title I schools; since they receive federal funds to implement interventions to at-risk students have the most to fear. When a Title I school does not meet all of its AYP goals it then begins the process of being considered a program improvement school. Before the process begins the school has one more year to try to meet its goals. If in that second year they meet all AYP goals then the program improvement process stops. Title I schools that do not meet its AYP goals for two consecutive years then begins the federal sanctions as outlined in the NCLB legislation and is then considered to be a school in program improvement. (See appendix 2) Luckily for this Title I school it has made steady growth in student achievement and is not in danger of incurring the federal sanctions.

Five Year Data Analysis-
Language Arts

School 1 language arts’ results from the CST test show a gradual increase in student performance scores over the last five school years. In 2005 the school made a ten-point percentage increase indicating more students moved to the proficient or advanced level. The next year, 2006, the school’s scores increased by another five-point percentage gain. In the following school year, 2007, its scores dropped but only nine tenths of a
percentage point. The final year of the five-year trend, 2008, its scores increased again with a gain of 3.6 percentage points. Although the school dropped less than one percentage point within the five years of testing the data reveals that the school has managed to increase its scores year after year. When looking at the first year in 2004, 33.8% of the students tested in grades second through sixth scored proficient or advanced. At the end of the data cycle in 2008, 51.5% of the students tested scored proficient or advanced. Within that span of five years the school increased the number of students scoring proficient or advanced by 17.7%. The chart below shows the five year increases the school made in the content area of language arts.

Mathematics

The mathematics’ scores for school 1 also indicate a steady increase of student achievement just as in its language arts scores. In 2005, the school made a 9.7% increase
indicating more students moved to the proficient or advanced level. The next year, 2006, the school’s scores increased by another 4.1% gain. In the following school year, 2007, its scores increased another three-percentage points. The final year of the five-year trend, 2008, it’s scores increased marginally with a gain of eight tenths of a percentage point. When looking at the first year in 2004, 36.2% of the students tested in grades second through sixth scored proficient or advanced. At the end of the data cycle in 2008, 53.8% of the students tested in grades second through sixth scored proficient or advanced. Within the span of five years the school increased the number of students scoring proficient or advanced by 17.6%, which is highlighted, in the following chart.

![CST Mathematics Scores Chart]

**Summary**

Case school 1 has demonstrated steady increments of growth in student achievement in its CST scores in language arts and mathematics over the past five years. Since it is a
designated Title I school it has steered clear of any federal sanctions because it has continued to meet its AYP growth goals. The data indicates that this school continues to increase student achievement and moves more students to the proficient or advanced levels each year. Over 50% of the school’s student population is achieving grade level standards at the proficient or advanced level.

Case School 2
Background

School 2 is an elementary school that serves kindergarten through sixth grade students. Its total enrollment in the 2007-2008 school year was 452 students, as reported on the school’s SARC. The student population was 50% White, 40% Hispanic or Latino, 5% Asian, 2% African American, 2% Multiple or No Response, 1% Filipino, <1% American Indian or Alaska Native, and <1% Pacific Islander. The significant student subgroups are economically disadvantaged, English Language Learners, students with disabilities, Asian, Hispanic or Latino, and White. Each year when the students take the STAR standards testing in the spring all of the significant subgroups must meet the minimum percentage of growth as outlined in NCLB in order to meet the AYP goals. The progression of AYP goals as outlined in the NCLB legislation is included in appendix 1.

API and AYP Rankings

The API rankings for school 2 differ dramatically between the statewide and similar schools ranking. Over the past three years this school’s statewide API ranking has been higher with scores of sevens and sixes as shown in the chart below. The highest a school can attain is a 10, which all schools strive to reach. The similar schools ranking have
continued to drop over the past three years. Each year its scores have dropped one number, which is now nearing a 1, the lowest value that a school can earn.

### API Ranks- Three Year comparison

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The API growth scores for school 2 is a more in depth view of the gains it is making to raise student achievement. The chart below shows the changes it has made within the last three years as reported by the SARC. The state’s growth goal for all schools is 800. The data below indicates that the scores have remained the same with minimal growth the last three years. The school is sixteen points from meeting the state’s target growth goal.

The AYP criterion that must be met by all schools are the participation rate of students being tested and the percent of students who score proficient or above in language arts.
and mathematics. When a school meets each of these targets then they are classified as meeting all of the AYP goals. School 2 has not consistently met its AYP goals over the last five school years. School 2 met all AYP goals in the years 2003-2004, 2005-2006, and 2006-2007. However, it did not meet all goals in 2004-2005, the school did not meet the percent of students scoring proficient in language arts. The subgroups who were deficient were the English Language Learners, socioeconomically disadvantaged, and students with disabilities. The target goal was 24.4% and the English Language Learners scored 19.2%, the socioeconomically disadvantaged scored 20.8%, and students with disabilities scored 13.8%. In the year 2007-2008 the school did not meet the percent of students scoring proficient in language arts again. On a more positive note, the school was able to reduce the number of subgroups that were deficient in this area to only one, the English Language Learners. The target goal was 35.2% and this subgroup scored 27.2%.

School 2 is not a designated Title I school; therefore it will never be in danger of incurring federal sanctions under NCLB if it fails to meet all AYP goals for two consecutive years. The district and or the site administration could oversee and suggest measures for improvement in the subgroups that scored below the minimum target goal. This option is far less intrusive than the state dictation of what reform will take place and the duration of the implementation.
Five Year Data Analysis-
Language Arts

School 2 language arts’ results from the CST test show a gradual increase in student performance scores over the last five school years. In 2005, the school made an eight-percentage point increase indicating more students moved to the proficient or advanced levels. In 2006, the school’s scores increased again by four-percentage points. The last year the school made a gain was in 2007, where the scores increased by just one percentage point. The final year of the five-year trend in 2008 its scores decreased by 1.3%. Although the school dropped less than two percentage points within the five years of testing the data reveals that the school has managed to continue a slow steady pattern of growth. When looking at the first year in 2004, 37% of the students tested in grades second through sixth scored proficient or advanced. Within that span of five years, the data in the following chart shows that the school has an overall increase in student achievement of 11.7% in language arts.

![CST Language Arts Scores](chart.jpg)
Mathematics

The mathematics’ scores for school 2 are not as positive as in language arts. In 2005 the school made a 6.3% increase indicating they moved more students to proficient or advanced. The next three school years the scores continued to decrease keeping the scores within the 50% level of proficiency. When looking at the first year in 2004, 51.4% of the student population tested scored proficient or advanced. At the end of the data cycle in 2008, 54.9% of the students tested scored proficient or advanced. Within the span of five years the school increased the number of students scoring proficient or advanced only by 3.5% in mathematics; which is highlighted in the following chart.

Summary

Case school 2 has demonstrated growth in student achievement in its CST scores over the past five years. The data reflects that students have scored better in language arts than in mathematics. The language arts scores continue to rise with each testing period while the
mathematics scores have decreased. This school is not a designated Title I school; therefore there are no federal penalties for not meeting AYP scores for two consecutive years. The data indicates that this school is making gains in student achievement, but without a steady growth pattern especially in mathematics. Between 48% and 50% of the students are achieving grade level standards at the proficient or advanced levels.

**Case School 3**

**Background**

School 3 is an elementary school that serves kindergarten through sixth grade students. Its total enrollment in the 2007-2008 school year was 410 students, as reported on the school’s SARC. The student population was 46% White, 41% Hispanic or Latino, 4% Asian, 3% African American, 3% Filipino, 2% Multiple or No Response, and <1% American Indian or Alaska Native. The significant student subgroups are economically disadvantaged, English Language Learners, students with disabilities, Asian, Filipino, and White. Each year when the students are administered the STAR standards testing in the spring all of the significant subgroups must meet the minimum percentage of growth as outlined in NCLB in order to meet the AYP goals. The progression of AYP goals as outlined in the NCLB legislation is included in appendix 1.

One of the requirements of NCLB is that all teachers must be classified “highly qualified” to teach content standards at their grade level. To be “highly qualified” one must have a bachelor’s degree, an appropriate teaching credential, in the state in which you teach, and have demonstrated competence for all subjects one teaches. In the 2007-2008 school year school 3 has 94.7% of its staff in compliance. The 5.3% made up one
staff member with a not “highly qualified” for teaching English Language Learners. This one teacher that was not in compliance could have been in the process of finishing their CLAD (Cross-cultural, Language and Academic Development) certification, which would allow him or her to work with English Language Learners. Last year, 2008, all teachers were in compliance and classified as “highly qualified.”

**API and AYP Rankings**

The API rankings for school 3 have changed minimally over the past three years. The chart below shows the changes the school has made within the given school years. The desired score a school is striving for is a 10, the highest possible rank. At the data reveals, school 3 received higher scores in the state wide API ranking. In the last three years it has scored between five and six moving towards the desired 10. However, when school 3 was compared to one hundred similar schools within the state it scored very poorly. All scores were a three or below.

**API Ranks- Three Year comparison**

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The API growth scores for school 3 is a closer look at the gains it has been making to raise student achievement. The chart below shows the changes it has made within the last three years as reported in the SARC. The state’s growth goal for all schools is 800. The data indicates that the scores have been inconsistent over the last three years. The school is twenty-nine points from meeting the state’s target growth goal.
The AYP criterion that must be met by all schools are the participation rate of students being tested and the percent proficient or above in language arts and mathematics. When a school meets each one of these targets then it is classified as meeting all of the AYP goals. School 3 has not consistently met its AYP goals within the last five years. School 3 met all AYP goals in the years 2003-2004, 2004-2005, and 2006-2007. However, it did not meet all goals in 2005-2006 or in 2007-2008. In the school year 2005-2006, the school did not meet the participation rate of students assessed in language arts and mathematics. The subgroup that was deficient was students with disabilities. The school must test at least 90% of the population and this specific subgroup only tested 83%. In 2007-2008, the school did not meet the percent proficient in language arts. The subgroup that was deficient was the English Language Learners. The goal was 35.2%; however this subgroup was close to the goal scoring 30% just 5% short of meeting the goal.
School 3 is not a designated Title I school; therefore it will never be in danger of incurring federal sanctions under NCLB if they fail to meet all AYP goals for two consecutive years. The district and or site administrator could oversee and suggest measures for improvement in the subgroups that scored below the minimum goal. This option is far less intrusive that the state dictating what reform will take place and the duration of the implementation.

Five Year Data Analysis-
Language Arts

School 3 language arts’ results for the CST test show a gradual increase in student achievement scores over the last four school years. In 2005, the school made a nine-percentage point increase indicating more students moved to the proficient or advanced levels. In 2006, the school’s scores increased by 4.2%. Then in 2007, the school increased their score by one-percentage point. Unfortunately, in 2008 its scores decreased by 3.6%. Although the school increased its scores, all by one year, the total number of students scoring at or above the proficient level school-wide was only 45.3%. During the span of five years of testing, the data in the following chart shows that the school has an overall increase in student achievement of 10.5% in language arts.
Mathematics

The mathematics’ scores for school 3 are more positive than its language arts scores. In 2005, the school made a ten-percentage point gains increasing more students to the proficient or advanced levels. The next year, 2006, the scores increased again by 2.6%; however in 2007, the scores dropped 2.5%. The last year in 2008 the scores increased by one-percentage point. When looking at the first year in 2004, only 42.8% of the student population tested scored proficient or advanced. At the end of the data cycle, as the following chart shows, in 2008, 53.9% of the students tested scored proficient or advanced. Within the span of five years the school increased the number of students scoring proficient or advanced by 11.1% in mathematics.
Summary

Case school 3 has demonstrated growth in student achievement in its CST scores over the past five years. The school averaged a ten-percentage point gain in language arts and mathematics over the five years. The data reflects that students have scored slightly higher in mathematics than in language arts. The school’s scores have not increased consistently within the last two years. This school is not a designated Title I school; therefore it is not in danger of federal penalties for not meeting AYP scores for two consecutive years. The data indicates that this school is making gains in student achievement, but without a steady growth pattern especially in language arts. Between 48% and 55% of the students at this school are achieving grade level standards at the proficient or advanced levels.
Part 2- Comparison Analysis of All Case Schools
Language Arts and Mathematics-

Each of the case schools described in the research have made gains in CST scores as the following chart shows indicating that they are raising student achievement in language arts and mathematics. Some schools have made larger gains while others have regressed. Schools 2 and 3 have made consistent growth in language arts until the 2007-2008 school year when their scores fell short of the AYP target growth expectations. School 1 has maintained a steady rate of growth in student scores and continues to meet all AYP target growth requirements.

To what can be attributed this rate of success for school 1? This school has the highest level of staff support of each of the schools, as it is a Title I school. The support at school 1 is in the area of language arts and specifically targets the remedial literacy needs of the
at-risk population. The data supports the position that the additional targeted support the
Title I school receives has had a positive impact on student achievement scores.

The mathematics’ scores at the three schools make an equitable comparison because the
Title I school does not assist students that are at-risk in this subject area. The data
indicates inconsistent growth in school’s 2 and 3 as shown in the following graph.
School 2 for the last three years have endured a decline in its student achievement scores,
while school 3 has had alternating years of success and struggles. School 1, again, has
continued to raise their scores in the last five years.

The question is asked again, to what is attributed the success of school 1? None of the
three schools receive federal funding assistance in the area of mathematics. What each of
these schools has in common is a site administrator. Under the leadership of the principal
the school’s vision is implemented. Each leader is different and has areas of expertise,
which enables them to lead the school community. Research indicates that regardless of
extra financial support a school may receive it is the responsibility of the leader to move the school community to the path of success.

Part 3-
Results of the Questionnaire

Staff members at Case Schools 1, 2, and 3 took part in a survey that examined the specific successes and challenges the schools were facing. Each of the individuals were asked to state the role they have at the school, what was working to help raise student achievement, and finally what they felt the school needed to improve its instructional program to meet the needs of the at-risk student population. The results of the survey were not surprising because schools 2 and 3 receive less support than school 1.

Case School 1

The staff at the school feels that the extra Title I support is making a difference and is raising student achievement. The additional instructional time in the content area of language arts is needed and gives the at-risk student population more opportunities for learning. The intervention programs fill the educational gaps and enable the students the skills they need to be successful and meet or exceed grade level standards. The staff indicated that they would not be able to make the gains and offer individualized time with instruction if they were left to do it themselves. Each of the grade levels does work collaboratively and groups students according to their needs in any given subject, but that support alone is not enough. The overall result is that the staff would like to continue to improve how the at-risk students are serviced in the intervention classes. Each year the
program is enhanced to meet the ever-changing needs of the students. They want to see this continue and they feel a great deal of gratitude to the Title I teaching staff for the support they continue to provide each student.

**Case School 2 and 3**

Each of these schools are not designated Title I and do not receive additional staff support to help service their at-risk population. Prior to the 2008-09 school year each school was responsible to meet the individual needs of its struggling students within the classroom. The staff relied on grade level collaboration and the use of small group instruction to differentiate the learning for the at-risk students within the classrooms. In the 2008-09 school year, the district agreed to offer additional help. The help came in two forms: access to the research based intervention program, *Voyager Passport*, and an intervention teacher who spent half of the time at each of the schools to implement other intervention programs based upon the needs of the students. The support came as the result of the school community and the administrators advocating for additional help in order to raise student achievement.

The CST test results will be one measure the schools can use to see if the additional help given this last year has made an impact. The staff was excited to finally get extra support to help meet the needs of the at-risk population. They indicated that they want to continue to receive the support from this intervention teacher and they hope that the district will continue to provide this support. The staffs are grateful for the additional support in personnel and programs and would be happy to see this support increase.
Chapter 5

The purpose of this case study is to examine the options a school district has to provide support to an under performing school. All schools are focused on raising student achievement especially those that are low performing. If a school site meets the qualifications to receive federal funding, is it in the district’s best interest to make that decision to provide more funds and a higher level of staff support? If not what else can be done to increase student achievement?

Conclusions:

The data for this study has been collected from CST (California Standards Test) results from the California Department of Education website from three schools located in the same district in Southern California. The data set is a five-year analysis of students scoring at or above the proficient level in language arts and mathematics. Additional information regarding school demographics, AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress) and API (Academic Performance Index) results with significant student subgroups have been acquired from each school’s School Accountability Report Card (SARC). The California Department of Education publishes specific state testing results each year in this document specifically for the school and the community. The information reported from the SARC is for three years ending with the 2007-2008 school year. The SARC is updated each year in February; therefore the current information pertaining to the 2008-2009 school year will not be published until February 2010. The schools that are
highlighted in this research are a designated Title I that is making steady growth and two non-Title I schools that have not been raising student achievement consistently.

The analysis of school CST data from each of the three schools clearly shows that the extra support at the Title I school is making a significant impact in raising student achievement from year to year. The additional staff and intervention support offered to the at-risk population is a success. The high stakes accountability system in place under NCLB does come with many negative attributes for schools that do not meet its target growth scores. This particular school has continually met its targets and has not been under the threat of being a school in Program Improvement.

All three schools do have two common resources in place to help raise student achievement. The first is the grade level teams who work collaboratively to best meet the needs of all students especially those who are at-risk. The staffs provide small group differentiated instruction to all students. This individualized time offers all students the access they require to meet or exceed grade level standards. The second resource is the school site administrator. Under their leadership the administrator sets the tone for change and advancement, which can be found in the school’s vision of learning. It is their responsibility to enforce and oversee that changes are taking place in the quality of instruction of the school’s curriculum in order to improve student achievement. The task of the leader should not be taken lightly as it plays an essential role towards making the school the best it can be.
Implications for Practice and/or Policy:

The decision to make a low performing school a designated Title I campus is the sole responsibility of the district. They have the right to choose for or against applying for Title I funds. The threat of a low performing school becoming a Title I school and continuing not to make the AYP target growth goals is of great concern for any district office. If this happens and the school continues to fall short in reaching the goals each year then it would start the process of a school in Program Improvement (see appendix 1). No district office wants more schools than they already have needing improvement. Therefore; if the district makes the decision to let the low performing school continue to run as in previous years it will never be in danger of Program Improvement as that only applies to designated Title I schools.

The district office can utilize other resources and offer them to the low performing schools. The current support offered has been the intervention teacher. The teacher facilitates intervention support for at-risk students at the two low performing schools highlighted in this study. This one teacher is split between the two schools each day and is able to run minimal intervention groups. Although it does not appear to be the desired level of support a school would like to have, nonetheless it is support.

Future Research/Next Steps:

The continuation of this study over the next few years will provide a more in depth understanding of the trend data at each of the schools. The support at the Title I school will hopefully continue to show positive results in its CST testing data. The CST data at
the other two schools hopefully will show that the extra support staff member is better able to target the at-risk student population and will have a positive outcome in the schools’ scores. The one variable in this equation is the movement of site administrators. All educators are committed to raising student achievement and motivating their staff to be the best, but each principal has strengths and weaknesses. When principals are rotated throughout the district it is the hoped that they will be able to continue the momentum of change and bring something new to offer each new school community in the continuing work of raising student achievement.
# Appendix 1
## NCLB Program Improvement School Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
<th>Year 4</th>
<th>Year 5</th>
<th>Year 6</th>
<th>Year 7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did not meet AYP</td>
<td>Did not meet AYP</td>
<td>School Improvement</td>
<td>School Improvement</td>
<td>Corrective Action</td>
<td>Restructuring</td>
<td>Restructuring</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Year 1
- **Local Educational Agency (LEA):**
  - Provides technical assistance to PI school
  - Notifies parents of PI status of school and school choice
  - Sets aside minimum 5% for professional development to meet highly qualified staff requirements
  - Provides choice to

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 2 Year 3 Year 4 Year 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>LEA Continues:</strong> Technical assistance Parent notification of PI status of school, school choice, supplemental services Professional development School choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LEA Continues:</strong> Technical assistance Parent notification of PI status of school, school choice, supplemental services Professional development School choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LEA adds:</strong> Supplemental educational services to all eligible students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LEA adds:</strong> LEA identifies school for corrective action and does at least one of the following: Replaces school staff Implements new</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LEA and school adds:</strong> During Year 4, prepare plan for alternative governance of school. Select one of the following:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LEA and school adds:</strong> Implement alternative governance plan developed in Year 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 4 Year 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>LEA Continues:</strong> Technical assistance Parent notification of PI status of school, school choice, supplemental services Professional development School choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LEA and school adds:</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**School continues in**
| **School:** Revises school plan within 3 months to cover 2-year period. |
| Uses 10% of Title I school funds for staff professional development. |
| Implements plan promptly. |
| **curriculum** |
| Decreases management authority at school level. |
| Appoints outside expert. |
| Extends school year or day. |
| Restructures internal organizational structure of school. |
| LEA informs parents and public of corrective action and allows comment. |
| LEAs may provide direct technical assistance to school site councils in developing school plans. |
| **School** **Continues:** Professional development. |
| Collaboration with district to improve student achievement. |
| **PI, and LEA offers choice and supplemental services until school makes AYP for two consecutive years.** |
| School exits PI after two consecutive years of making AYP. |
| Reopen school as a charter. |
| Replace all or most staff including principal. |
| Contract with outside entity to manage school. |
| State takeover. |
| Any other major restructuring. |
| LEA provides notice to parents and teachers and allows comment. |
| **School** **Continues:** Professional development. |
| Collaboration with district to improve student achievement. |
Appendix 2
AYP Growth Targets

AYP Language Arts Targets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>% Proficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>24.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>24.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>24.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>24.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>35.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>46.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>56.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>67.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>78.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>89.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
References


