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L E G I S L A T I V E A N A L Y S T ' S O F F I C E

LAO 
75
YEARS OF
SERVICE

School Accountability: Changes to State and Federal Systems

Presented to:
Senate Education Committee
Hon. Carol Liu, Chair





State Academic Performance Index (API)



API Measures Performance on Standardized Tests

- Includes subject-matter summative assessments and the California High School Exit Exam.
- Calculated for schools and districts in aggregate and for each numerically significant subgroup.



State Set API of 800 as Goal for All Schools and Districts

- Scores can range from 200 to 1,000. A score of 800 reflects student achievement between the “basic” and “proficient” levels.
- For schools and districts below 800, state sets growth targets equal to closing 5 percent of gap to 800 or an increase of 5 points (whichever is greater).



API Not Intended to Only Include Test Scores

- Initial law required at least 60 percent of API score to be based on test scores, but authorized Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) and State Board of Education (SBE) to include other measures, such as attendance and graduation rates.
- Chapter 577 of 2012 (SB 1458, Steinberg) authorized SPI and SBE to add measures of college and career readiness to API for secondary schools.



SBE Suspended API in March 2015

- Signaled intent to move away from API and instead develop a district-level accountability system based on multiple measures.



State Programs to Support Low-Performing Schools



State Had Several Voluntary Programs to Support Low-Performing Schools

- Funded Immediate Intervention for Underperforming Schools Program (II/USP) from 1999-00 to 2005-06, High Priority Schools Grant Program (HPSGP) from 2002-03 to 2008-09, and Quality Education Investment Act from 2007-08 through 2014-15.
- State provided schools with limited-term funding for planning, technical assistance, and support. Schools agreed to greater oversight and possible sanctions if they did not meet performance targets.



Programs Had Limited Effectiveness

- Evaluations of II/USP and HPSGP found no substantial difference between participating schools and similar non-participating schools.
- Evaluations of II/USP and HPSGP suggested districts should play greater role in support programs, as districts make important funding and management decisions that affect ability of schools to improve.



State School Accountability Report Card (SARC)



SARCs Adopted in 1988 as Part of Proposition 98

- Intended to help parents make meaningful comparisons when making enrollment decisions for their children.



SARCs Must Include Variety of Information on Student Outcomes and Programs

- Must include information on student achievement, dropout rates, suspension and expulsion rates, career technical education programs, enrollment in college preparatory coursework, class sizes, teacher qualifications, instructional materials, counseling, and per-pupil spending.
- The California Department of Education (CDE) provides template for schools to use. CDE recently modified template to reflect the eight state priority areas adopted in 2013.



New State Components in 2013



Eight State Priority Areas

- Statute specifies eight priority areas for districts: student achievement, student engagement, school climate, basic services, implementation of state standards, course access, parental involvement, and other student outcomes.



Many Associated Performance Measures

- Statute specifies 23 performance measures linked to the eight priority areas.



Annual Local Control and Accountability Plans (LCAPs)

- Districts must set goals and specify actions they will take to improve in the eight state priority areas. Goals are set using the 23 related performance measures.
- In developing LCAPs, districts must seek feedback from school employees, students, and parents.



Evaluation Rubrics

- Use as a self-assessment tool for districts and as a way for county offices of education to determine if certain districts need assistance.
- Two levels of assistance: (1) support for districts not improving in some areas and (2) intervention for persistently low-achieving districts.
- SBE must adopt evaluation rubrics by October 2016.



California Collaborative on Educational Excellence (CCEE)

- New state agency that will help support schools and districts in improving outcomes.



Key Accountability Provisions of Federal No Child Left Behind Act



Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) Targets for Each School and District.

- Law sets specific AYP targets for schools and districts related to test participation, performance on standardized tests, graduation rates, and another state-determined measure (for California, the API). Performance expectations increased steeply over time.



Program Improvement for Schools and Districts Not Meeting AYP

- If AYP not met in the same content area for two consecutive years, schools and districts enter Program Improvement. Schools and districts stay in Program Improvement until all AYP requirements are met for two consecutive years.
- In first two years, schools and districts must develop an improvement plan and dedicate federal funding for professional development. Schools must provide tutoring and after school programs. Schools also must give students option to transfer to any school in district and pay transportation costs.



After Two Years in Program Improvement, Corrective Action

- For districts, SBE imposes one of seven possible sanctions on district. Sanctions include new curriculum, replacing district personnel, and authorizing students to transfer to other school districts.
- For schools, district can take one of five corrective actions. After third year, school must be restructured using one of four options: reopening as a charter, replacing most of staff, hiring a private management company, or having CDE operate.



Federal Every Student Succeeds Act Enacted December 2015



No Uniform Accountability Model

- States develop own systems, but they must receive approval from federal government.



Required Components of a State Accountability System

- At a minimum, system must measure academic achievement, four-year graduation rates (for high schools), academic growth (for elementary and middle schools), progress in proficiency of English learners, and one additional indicator of school quality (such as school climate).



Two Levels of Support for Schools

- Targeted support for schools in which any student subgroup is persistently underperforming, with increasing state involvement if improvement does not occur moving forward.
- Comprehensive support for the lowest 5 percent of schools, high schools graduating less than two-thirds of students, and schools in which any student subgroup scores low enough to be in the lowest 5 percent of schools.



State Determines Consequences for Schools That Do Not Improve

- States must take more rigorous action within four years if schools do not improve. Specific actions not specified in law.



Opportunity for Creating One Unified Accountability System



Benefits of One Accountability System

- One coherent set of expectations for schools and districts.
- Opportunity to create one streamlined structure for providing support to school districts.



Major Issues to Be Resolved

- Evaluation rubrics not yet developed. Questions remain about how frequently rubrics will be used, structure for supporting school districts, and role of CCEE.
- State system in progress appears to be based on district outcomes. Federal system based on school outcomes.
- State system in progress appears to have no summary measure for ranking schools or districts. Federal system requires ranking schools to determine schools that must receive comprehensive support.