

NCLB Hearing Panel 2006-2007

Final Report of Findings

Pomona Elementary School

No Child Left Behind Law

The Federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law requires Districts to provide assistance to schools that fail to meet their Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) after several successive years and to impose increasingly restrictive sanctions when schools continue not to meet AYP.

Background of Student Performance Data

In 2006, Pomona met 13 of the 17 NCLB/AYP criteria. The four areas in which Pomona did not meet the adequate language arts performance level of 24.4% were: Schoolwide (16.7%), Hispanic Latino subgroup (16%), Socio-Economically Disadvantaged (16.8%), English Learners (14.6%). Pomona was identified as a Program Improvement School Year 3.

In 2005, the state criteria for AYP were 13.6% for language arts and 16% for mathematics. The state report shows that Pomona met 17 of 17 criteria. The law states that Program Improvement schools meet this requirement for two consecutive years.

In 2004, Pomona met 13 of the 17 NCLB/AYP criteria. The four areas in which Pomona did not meet the adequate language arts performance level of 13.6% were: Schoolwide (12.9%), Hispanic Latino subgroup (12.8%), Socio-Economically Disadvantaged (12.4%), English Learners (9.3%). Pomona was identified as a Program Improvement School Year 2.

In 2003, Pomona was identified as a Program Improvement School Year 1.

Pomona Elementary School's progress on the Academic Performance Index (API) during the past four years has been up and down, starting with a 44 point gain in 2003, followed by 8 point decrease, then a 50 point gain, and finally a 13 point decrease in 2006. The net change over the past four years has been an increase of 63 points with a current API of 631.

Test scores of boys are significantly lower in language arts than in mathematics.

The Work of the NCLB Hearing Panel

The NCLB Hearing Panel was convened in October 2006 to investigate Pomona School's situation, consider the sanctions written into the NCLB law, decide what action is necessary to sufficiently improve the education program based on the finding of facts, and write a final report that includes a rationale explaining (a)

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the interventions that will be continued and/or (b) any new recommended interventions (at least one of which must be NCLB sanctioned as described in Article 23.1 of the N-MUSD/N-MFT Collective Bargaining Agreement). The methods used included interviewing parents and staff, viewing records, and visiting classrooms. The findings, sanctions, recommendations, and other interventions are based on the conclusions of the panel from its study of the school.

Findings of School Visitation

- Four long-term substitutes were in place on the visitation day. One classroom had had six different long-term substitutes since last year.
- The Reading Coach effectively works with teachers and has given much support to the long-term substitutes.
- Data review days provide for collaboration and a focus on improved student performance.
- Participation in Reading First has provided important staff development and program improvement opportunities.
- Permanent staff have been trained in AB466 and the principal has attended AB75 (Houghton Mifflin trainings).
- The use of time during early-dismissal staff development days focuses on collaboration while teachers analyze benchmark tests and plan.
- Staff reports that the District-adopted English Language Development (ELD) curriculum is inadequate; they lack appropriate materials to provide a comprehensive ELD program that effectively addresses reading, writing and academic language.
- Most staff has communicated a culture of low expectations.
- Classroom libraries are lacking in quality and quantity.
- The after school program does not include Whatever It Takes support for all students.
- The instructional day in grades 1-3 was extended by eliminating 10 minutes from lunch.
- Kindergarten teachers end their student contact at 1:35 p.m.
- There is an inconsistency in the implementation of the language arts program in some classrooms in kindergarten and third grade.
- As students move from grade 2 to grade 3, there is flat or negative performance in both language arts and mathematics on grade 3 assessments.
- Samples of writing observed in classrooms were consistently below grade level standard, which validated the parents' concerns.
- Parents reported that the communication between teachers and parents was effective.

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- Parents have been provided with quality parent education programs such as Family Literacy through UCI, Parenting Wisely, and the FAST programs.
- Parents have respect for the teachers.
- Parents reported that Pomona has caring teachers and a caring principal who is very visible.
- Parents reported concerns that staff needs to raise its expectations for the children, teach to the top, and view their Spanish primary language as a skill rather than a disadvantage.
- Parents reported that their students were safe.
- Staff attended Culture of Poverty training.
- During the Public Appeal Hearing staff and parents reported that the notification and opportunities to sign up for NCLB tutoring was limited to one time a year.
- It was reported at the Public Appeals Hearing that there were only 16 students participating in the NCLB tutoring program. Further research found that there are 122 students taking advantage of NCLB tutoring program and students may enroll at anytime throughout the year.
- During the Public Appeals Hearing it was reported that there is a lack of articulation to support instruction between the preschool program and the kindergarten program and between all grades and the after-school program. There is a desire on the part of the external programs to support the regular instructional programs.
- Teachers proposed that the solutions come from outside programs (i.e. after school tutoring, Whatever It Takes, parent training, etc.).
- There is discrepancy in the academic performance on the benchmark tests and state tests by some classrooms at the kindergarten and 3rd grade levels.
- Staff communicated that solutions were out of their control.

NCLB Program Improvement (PI) Year 3 Interventions

- X Replaces school staff
- X Implements new curriculum
 - Decreases the management authority at the school level
 - Appoints an outside expert
- X Extends the school year or day
- X Restructures internal organizational structure of school

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After careful consideration, the panel recommends the following actions:

X Replaces school staff:

- The Panel gives the District the authority, in accordance with Article 23.4.5 N-MUSD/N-MFT Collective Bargaining Agreement, to replace school staff as deemed necessary.

X Implements new curriculum:

- Implement and monitor an aggressive, consistent, and sequential English Language Development (ELD) program, supported by staff development that assures student progress in the four areas of language development and in academic language.

X Extends the school year or day:

- Daily and yearly minutes need to be increased to match the highest number of minutes currently in practice within the District's elementary schools at each grade level.

X Restructures internal organizational structure of school:

- Provide support for the daily operation of the school in order that the principal can focus her time on instructional leadership.

The principal will:

- Focus on raising expectations and building a culture where all teachers and staff believe that all students can and will succeed.
- Monitor and direct the instructional program for effective program implementation and student performance on a daily basis.
- Immediately begin an aggressive process of observation, supervision, and evaluation of teachers.

The Administrative Support Person will provide support for the remainder of the 2006-2007 school year and be responsible for:

- daily operations, including, but not limited to, plant management, daily scheduling, parent meetings, discipline, Individual Education Plan (IEP) meetings, student supervision (i.e. recess/bus duty,

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after-school programs), disaster plans, assemblies, transportation, principal-delegated reports.

- and will collaborate with principal, providing for consistency in staffing when long-term substitutes are needed.

Other Recommended Interventions

(Please note: recommendations are not listed in order of importance.)

1. Staff was trained in the Culture of Poverty Program. Extend the staff's learning from the Culture of Poverty Program and develop an instructional response within the instructional day that will override the effects of poverty that impact student learning within the instructional day.
2. Provide classroom libraries that include quality, current, grade-level appropriate, high-interest books for independent reading.
3. Provide Whatever It Takes support for all students enrolled in Project Success.
4. Implement a school-wide writing program.
5. Develop strategies that address the learning styles and interests of boys to assure their academic progress.
6. Provide principal with a reflective colleague for support and encouragement.
7. Work with the District to provide consistent substitutes, who are Houghton Mifflin trained, when a teacher is absent.
8. Work with the District to accelerate the improvement of the physical site (i.e.: irrigation, landscaping, blacktop, playground equipment, etc).
9. Work with the District to provide more comprehensive communication regarding NCLB tutoring.
10. Implement a formalized articulation plan with the preschool and after-school programs to improve student learning.

Rationale for Recommended Interventions

The Panel noted a need for a more aggressive sequential ELD program to develop academic language and support student learning through interviews, classroom observations and analysis of student work. Students at low-performing schools need as much opportunity as possible for academic instruction. We believe that if the principal is freed up to focus on the instructional program, more attention and focus will be put on what is

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happening within the classrooms. Ultimately, these changes will lead to increased student achievement.

Fiscal Impact

- Additional administrative support person.
- Transportation.
- Cost of ELD materials.

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