

NCLB Making a Difference in California



- Between 2003 and 2005 (latest data available):
 - Fourth-grade reading proficiency increased by eight percentage points
 - Fourth-grade mathematics proficiency increased by five percentage points
(*California Report Card*)
- “Every one of the 700 students at John F. Kennedy Middle School, 10 miles from the Mexican border, receives free or discounted lunches because of their families’ low incomes, and two-thirds have limited English skills. The El Centro campus offers after-school and Saturday classes for students falling behind and evening computer lab hours for students and parents. The school holds evening workshops so parents can learn about homework expectations and the college application process. These and other efforts persuaded a national organization focused on middle school education to honor Kennedy as one of a handful of Schools to Watch.... Kennedy is one of four California middle schools – there are 15 across the nation – to be so honored by the National Forum this year.” (*Los Angeles Times*, 5/11/05)
- “Education is a group effort at Monroe Elementary School. Teachers work together and share techniques. They meet regularly to analyze test data not just for their classes but for the entire grade level. And, they get parents involved through monthly newsletters and training conferences. ‘Everyone is responsible for all the kids at the school,’ Principal Rob Murphy said. ... The school’s progress earned it in May the state’s 2004-05 Title I Academic Achievement Award because its ranking on the statewide Academic Performance Index improved at twice the expected rate. The state sets an API goal of 800 on a scale of 200 to 1,000 for each school. The index is based on student performance on standardized tests and testing participation rates. The school started with a base 711 API score and was expected to grow to 715. Instead, it reached 735 in two years. But what caught the state’s attention was the academic growth among poor students at Monroe, which receives federal Title I dollars based on the high percentage of low-income students. The goal for the low-income students was 684. Instead, they hit 712. ‘That’s what we want to see. It means the achievement gap is narrowing,’ said Betsy Sample, Riverside Unified’s director of special projects.” (*Riverside Press-Enterprise*, 7/6/05)
- “A year before No Child Left Behind passed, North Tamarind Elementary School was honored for its students’ successes. But when the federal law went into effect, the barometer to measure success changed. North Tamarind became labeled a Program Improvement (PI) school.... North Tamarind is in year four of program improvement because some of its Spanish-speaking students are not scoring high enough on the state’s standardized language test, which is written in English. Fifty percent of the school’s students speak Spanish. ... North Tamarind Principal Jason Angle said the staff didn’t consider any option except restructuring how they provide education. ... Teachers began implementing [new strategies] a few weeks ago by dividing the children into groups based on their language abilities to work on listening, speaking, reading and singing. ‘They feel more successful already,’ [fifth grade teacher, John] Johnson said. ... ‘We are going to meet these goals one kid at a time,’ Angle said.” (*Riverside Press-Enterprise*, 5/30/05)