

Responses to 2011-2012 Grand Jury Report

Every year, when the annual Santa Cruz County Grand Jury Report is published, designated agencies are requested to respond to the findings and recommendations of the report. These responses may agree or disagree with the findings, and may indicate that recommendations have already been implemented, will be in the future, or will not be implemented, or that further analysis is required.

Comments may also be added to the responses. When a response agrees with a recommendation, further comments are optional. In case of complete or partial disagreement, or in response to recommendations for action, comments should be provided as part of the response.

For each report, the collected responses are published in a separate file on the [grand jury's section of the county's public website](#). Note: The responses are provided as received, and have not been edited, except for minimal formatting to make them appear correctly on this web page.

Report: [Pathways for English Learners](#)

This report requested responses from the following:

1. Superintendent, Live Oak School District (LOSD): findings 1-5 and 7; recommendations 1-3
 2. Superintendent, Pajaro Valley Unified School District (PVUSD): findings 1-7; recommendations 1-6
 3. Superintendent, Santa Cruz City Schools (SCCS): findings 1-5 and 7; recommendations 1-4 and 6
- **Finding 1: The Title III Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAOs) for English Learner progress are complex, give little indication of how long it takes English Learners to become reclassified as fluent, and do not measure the effectiveness of individual English Learner programs.**

- Response from Superintendent, LOSD: **AGREE**
Live Oak School District is in agreement with this statement with the exception that the AMAOs do help us compare program effectiveness in the same way CST scores can help us make inferences about the effectiveness of programs we are using. The Title III AMAOs are not intuitively understood by parents. It is agreed that one of their shortcomings is that they do not give strong evidence of how long it takes ELs to move to RFEP status. As the data is currently devised, once a student is re-designated as RFEP they are no longer factored into the AMAOs 1 and 2. This is unfortunate in that once a success is achieved it no longer is counted as evidence of effective practice. It is important

to note that some research indicates that it takes 5-7 years to become fluent, and other research argues that it takes 7-10 years.

Live Oak School District does make the AMAO data accessible to parents by converting the numerical data into visual tables and graphs that are used in presentations where knowledgeable staff thoroughly explains the data at ELAC, DELAC, SSC, and at the Annual Data Night held at each of the schools.

In terms of AMAOs being inadequate for determining the length of time it takes ELs to RFEP, all the county School Districts consistently advocate to the state for more meaningful, timely, useful and feasible compliance measures. That said, as a result of this report we will attempt to synthesize the data and report to parents the time it takes for students in Live Oak School District to attain RFEP status.

- Response from Superintendent, PVUSD: **AGREE**
[No further comment]

- Response from Superintendent, SCCS: **AGREE**
It is true that the Title III AMAOs are complex, give little indication of how long it takes ELs to RFEP, and do not measure the effectiveness of different programmatic options for ELs.

In terms of addressing the complexity of AMAOs, SCCS makes a deliberate effort to make this data accessible to parents by converting the numerical data into visual tables and graphs that are used in presentations where knowledgeable staff thoroughly explain the data at ELAC, DELAC, MEP PAC, DAC, and SSC meetings for parents.

Towards the end of publicizing multiple measures of student progress beyond the AMAOs, SCCS is pleased to share that in June 2012, SCCS awarded 35 12th graders the Seal of Biliteracy. We also recognized 16 8th graders and 34 5th graders with Pathway Awards for being “on-track” to achieve the Seal when they reach 12th grade.

In terms of AMAOs being inadequate for determining the length of time it takes ELs to RFEP, SCCS consistently advocates to the state (though opportunities for authentic feedback are rare) for more meaningful, timely, useful and feasible compliance measures.

- **Finding 2: Many parents and community members do not understand the various English Learner programs.**

- Response from Superintendent, LOSD: **PARTIALLY AGREE**
 LOSD staff and faculty explain EL programs to EL parents upon registration of their children before the first day of kindergarten. After starting school, parents are then informed on a regular basis about how their child is doing until their children reach RFEP status. Also, the topic is addressed in many parent forums (ELAC, DELAC, SSC). Additionally, school site personnel, as well as district office personnel, are always available to answer questions about EL programs. The LOSD will continue to supply parents with concise summaries of pertinent research and local data to ensure they understand our programs.

- Response from Superintendent, PVUSD: **PARTIALLY DISAGREE**
 Parents receive information about EL programs before their children begin their first day of kindergarten. District and site staff attend all Kindergarten Roundup sessions to explain program options and answer parent questions. Additionally, all sites distribute information regarding EL programs on an annual basis and hold multiple meetings to explain program options and answer questions. At the district level, information regarding EL programs are shared annually with the District English Learner Advisory Committee. We agree that there is likely a lack of understanding of EL programs among community members.

- Response from Superintendent, SCCS: **PARTIALLY AGREE**
 Lack of understanding or misunderstanding of EL programs is likely much more common among members of the general public than it is among the parents of EL students. SCCS staff & faculty explain EL programs to EL parents upon registration of their children before the first day of kindergarten. After starting school, parents are then informed on a regular basis about how their child is doing in whichever program they are enrolled until their children RFEP. Also, the topic is addressed in many parent forums (ELAC, DELAC, PAC, SAC, SSC). Additionally, school site personnel as well as district office personnel are always available to answer questions about EL programs. Furthermore, SCCS has fliers explaining the programs that are handed out to EL parents.

One obstacle that has proven difficult to surmount is the misinformation that is spread about EL programs by various misinformed individuals. SCCS will continue to supply parents with concise summaries of pertinent research and local data to help correct myths and misconceptions.

- **Finding 3: The English Learner program information is not readily accessible on district websites.**
 - Response from Superintendent, LOSD: **AGREE**

The LOSD will be updating our English Learner program information. We will also improve accessibility and increase the amount of relevant information by January 2013. We will also have this information posted in Spanish to increase parent access.

- Response from Superintendent, PVUSD: **PARTIALLY AGREE**
Although some information is available, this is an area of needed improvement. We have been in the process of transitioning information from our previous website to the current website and still have many documents to be uploaded. We intend to increase the number of parent resources and program information by February 2013.
- Response from Superintendent, SCCS: **PARTIALLY AGREE**
While SCCS's website has provided information about EL programs for some time, we also intend to improve accessibility and increase the amount of relevant information by February 2013.
- **Finding 4: Two-Way Immersion programs are not widely available in Santa Cruz County.**
 - Response from Superintendent, LOSD: **AGREE**
The LOSD has examined the possibility of having a Two-Way Immersion program for several years. Due to our small size, the number of students needed within a cohort and the staff required are prohibitive. We have not been able to move forward due to the current fiscal crisis California faces.

We do inform parents who are interested in alternative programs that exist within the county. Our inter district transfer policy grants transfer to students who wish to participate in a program which is not offered by our district. As a result of this policy, we currently have several students enrolled in Santa Cruz City Schools Two -Way Immersion program.
 - Response from Superintendent, PVUSD: **AGREE**
[No further comment]
 - Response from Superintendent, Santa Cruz City Schools: **AGREE**
SCCS is pleased to offer a TWI option at DeLaveaga Elementary School, which continues into Branciforte Middle School, and will begin at Harbor High School this school year.
- **Finding 5: Two-Way Immersion programs are beneficial to native English speakers who want to become fluent in multiple languages.**
 - Response from Superintendent, LOSD: **AGREE**

We agree. The bulk of the research on TWI programs examines the achievement of English learners -- not native English speakers. However, to the extent that it exists, it does suggest that TWI programs are beneficial to native English speakers; however we serve a high percentage of English speaking low socio-economic level students who have serious achievement gaps in English and the research does not uniformly support a TWI program for this particular population of learners.

There is a fair amount of research that suggests that learning an additional language - whether through a TWI program or by some other means -- is beneficial. Indeed, TWI programs tend to be quite popular among parents of native English speakers both locally and generally.

We will continue to keep this possibility alive for students in our District, though we will not be opening a TWI program in the 2012-13 school year, nor will this be likely in the 2013-14 school year.

- Response from Superintendent, PVUSD: **AGREE**
[No further comment]
- Response from Superintendent, SCCS: **AGREE**
True. The bulk of the research on TWI programs examines the achievement of English learners -- not native English speakers. However to the extent that it is exists, it does suggest that TWI programs are beneficial to native English speakers. Furthermore, there is a fair amount of research that suggests that learning an additional language -- whether through a TWI program or by some other means -- is beneficial. Indeed, TWI programs tend to be quite popular among parents of native English speakers both locally and generally.
- **Finding 6: Portions of the descriptive material made available by the Pajaro Valley Unified School District describing the Dual-Language Immersion program are inconsistent or incomplete, which could be misleading to parents trying to decide on the best program for their children.**
 - Response from Superintendent, PVUSD: **AGREE**
The inconsistencies mentioned in this finding will be corrected by February 2013.
- **Finding 7: Collaboration and communication between Head Start and the elementary schools would be beneficial to English Learners making the transition to kindergarten.**
 - Response from Superintendent, LOSD: **AGREE**

The LOSD does not have a Head Start program, though we do have a State Preschool Program that is widely attended. We have very strong outreach to parents in our preschool program. This outreach serves as a powerful transition bridge for ELL students. We have an ELL parent night in the spring with staff from preschool and kindergarten attending. Teachers from each program come together in the spring to articulate the development of each child and discuss placement issues.

- Response from Superintendent, PVUSD: **AGREE**
[No further comment]
- Response from Superintendent, SCCS: **AGREE**
Agreed. Attempts by SCCS staff have been made in the past. SCCS staff will make an effort to reach out to Head Start staff in hopes of establishing a productive ongoing relationship.
- **Recommendation 1: Even though it is not mandated by the state, in order to monitor historical trends and validate improvements made to programs, districts should consider tracking long term English Learner results by program and make the information available on district websites for review by parents, the Board of Trustees, and the community. The data should track all English Learners and follow them until they leave the district. This longitudinal data would allow the following information to be published by instructional program:**
 - Time to Reclassification (RFEP)
 - Long term achievement levels (from STAR testing)
 - Long term achievement level “gap” between English Learners, RFEPs, and English Only
 - High school graduation and dropout rates
- Response from Superintendent, LOSD: **HAS NOT BEEN IMPLEMENTED BUT WILL BE IMPLEMENTED IN THE FUTURE**
TIME TO RECLASSIFICATION (RFEP)
Our current database system is relatively new. It will be easier to track RFEP reclassification now that is is computerized. Also, the same CALPADS system has been put in place in order to more effectively track this and other types of data. As a result of being new, our current database system is incapable of delivering this longitudinal data. We will continue to collaborate with our contracted service provider to request this functionality.

We will continue to track RFEP data as we have in the past. We will in the future; however, beginning this school year, demonstrate this data using a bar graph similar to the one created by the Grand Jury Team. Despite the outcome of our attempt to improve the reporting limitation, LOSD

does conduct ongoing analysis of RFEP data each year.

LONG TERM ACHIEVEMENT LEVELS (FROM STAR TESTING)

Unfortunately our current database system is incapable of delivering this longitudinal data. We will continue to collaborate with our contracted service provider to request this functionality. Despite this limitation, LOSD does conduct ongoing analysis of STAR data. This will be in place by the end of this school year.

LONG TERM ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL "GAP" BETWEEN ENGLISH LEARNERS, RFEPs, AND ENGLISH ONLY

Unfortunately our current database system is incapable of delivering this longitudinal data. We will continue to collaborate with our contracted service provider to request this functionality. Despite this limitation, SCCS does conduct ongoing analysis of achievement gap data. This will be in place by the end of this school year.

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION AND DROPOUT RATES

N/A - High school is a charter with insufficient numbers.

- Response from Superintendent, PVUSD: **WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED**
Although we do conduct an ongoing analysis of our data, including STAR, CELDT, RFEP data, and high school graduation and dropout rates, our current database system does not have the capacity to provide this type of longitudinal analysis.
- Response from Superintendent, SCCS: **HAS NOT BEEN IMPLEMENTED BUT WILL BE IMPLEMENTED IN THE FUTURE**
Unfortunately our current database system is incapable of delivering this longitudinal data. We will continue to collaborate with our contracted service provider to request this functionality. Despite this limitation, SCCS does conduct ongoing analysis of RFEP, STAR, & achievement gap data. SCCS shares this data in numerous open parent meetings (SSC, ELAC, DELAC, PAC, DAC, Board). Board minutes are already posted on the website.
- **Recommendation 2: Districts should make the following information available on their English Learner web pages:**
 - **An easy-to-understand description of the programs offered by the district, with references to more in-depth information**
 - **A matrix showing availability of programs by school site**
 - **Title III Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAOs), or links to them on the California Department of Education website**
 - **The district English Learner Master Plan**

A bilingual packet containing the above information (except the Master Plan) should be provided to all parents and teachers of English Learners.

- Response from Superintendent, LOSD: **HAS NOT BEEN IMPLEMENTED BUT WILL BE IMPLEMENTED IN THE FUTURE**

AN EASY-TO-UNDERSTAND DESCRIPTIONS THE PROGRAMS OFFERED BY THE DISTRICT, WITH REFERENCES TO MORE IN-DEPTH INFORMATION

An existing document which describes EL programs will be posted as a .pdf on the district website by January 2013.

TITLE III ANNUAL MEASURABLE ACHIEVEMENT OBJECTIVES (AMAOS), OR LINKS TO THEM ON THE CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION WEBSITE

A link to the CDE page for AMAOs will be posted by January 2013.

THE DISTRICT ENGLISH LEARNER MASTER PLAN

We are currently revising this extensive document. Given our limited (and shrinking) staff and other crucial priorities, we will have this completed by the end of the 2012-13 school year.

A BILINGUAL PACKET CONTAINING THE ABOVE INFORMATION (EXCEPT THE MASTER PLAN) SHOULD BE PROVIDED TO ALL PARENTS AND TEACHERS OF ENGLISH LEARNERS.

A bilingual packet is already sent to parents at the beginning of each school year. Information about AMAOs, EL programs, and the topics included in the Master Plan are covered in many open parent meetings (ELAC, DELAC, SSC, DAC, PAC, Board), as well as in monthly principals' newsletters. We will include these materials in our beginning school packet for the 2013-14 school year.

- Response from Superintendent, PVUSD: **HAS NOT BEEN IMPLEMENTED BUT WILL BE IMPLEMENTED IN THE FUTURE**

The following will be posted on our website by February 2013:

- A description of the various program options in parent-friendly terms
- A matrix showing the availability of programs by school site
- A link to the Title III AMAO's on the CDE website

The English Learner Master Plan is already posted on our website and sites already receive bilingual packets containing information regarding English Learner programs to be distributed to teachers and parents.

- Response from Superintendent, SCCS: **HAS NOT BEEN IMPLEMENTED BUT WILL BE IMPLEMENTED IN THE FUTURE**

An existing pamphlet which describes EL programs will be posted as a .pdf on the district website by February 2013.

A matrix showing EL programs by school site is currently being created and will be posted by February 2013.

A link to the CDE page for AMAOs will be posted on the district website before February 2013.

We are currently about halfway through writing this extensive document. Given our limited (and shrinking) staff and other crucial priorities, we hope to have this completed by the end of the 2012-13 school year.

An extensive bilingual packet is already sent to parents at the beginning of each school year, including the pamphlet that explains programs. Information about AMAOs, EL programs, and the topics included in the Master Plan are covered in many open parent meetings (ELAC, DELAC, SSC, DAC, PAC, Board), as well as in monthly principals' newsletters.

- **Recommendation 3: Districts should consider starting or expanding Two-Way Bilingual Immersion programs.**

- Response from Superintendent, LOSD: **REQUIRES FURTHER ANALYSIS**
The LOSD has examined the possibility of having a Two-Way Immersion program for several years. Due to our small size, the number of students needed within a cohort, the staff required, and the current fiscal crisis in California, we have not been able to move forward. As the fiscal crisis lessens we will continue to explore this as a possible positive option within our district.
- Response from Superintendent, PVUSD: **WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED**
The PVUSD EL Master Plan specifies that proposals for program models are to be initiated at the site level with full involvement of the school's principal, staff and English Learner Advisory Committee. Changes in program models will not be initiated at the district level.
- Response from Superintendent, SCCS: **HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED**
The 2012-2013 school year marks the start of the 10th year of the TWI program in SCCS (the inaugural class will enter 9th grade this fall). It will continue to expand "vertically" for the next 3 years until it is a complete K-12th program. While our focus is currently on expanding the program to the high school level, we may at some point in the future expand "horizontally" to add more students either by adding a class at each grade level or by becoming a school-wide program. There are no

plans to do either at this point in time.

- **Recommendation 4: Information on Two-Way Bilingual Immersion programs should be made available to parents of English speakers.**
 - Response from Superintendent, PVUSD: **HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED**
Information about the Two-Way Immersion program has been advertised in "Growing up in Santa Cruz" and "La Ganga" magazines.
 - Response from Superintendent, SCCS: **HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED**
SCCS will continue to make information about the TWI program available to parents of both English speakers and English learners in several different ways: posting it on the website, sending fliers home with current students, phone calls to existing parents, posting fliers in public places, holding orientation/informational meetings, including information in school newsletters, addressing the topic at ELAC and DELAC meetings, and in numerous informal conversations.

- **Recommendation 5: The next version of Pajaro Valley Unified School District's pamphlets, slide sets, video, and websites should revise the Dual-Language Immersion information to:**
 - **Use consistent terminology throughout the district. For example, the district refers to a "Dual-Language Immersion" program, and Alianza (which provides the program) calls it "Two-Way Bilingual Immersion."**
 - **Update the description of how the waiver process works, as applied to Alianza, to clarify that neither the annual waiver, nor the need for at least 20 approved waivers by parents, is applicable because of Alianza's status as a charter school.**
 - **The "English Learner Programs" pamphlet should more clearly distinguish the differences between Late-Exit "Developmental" Bilingual, and Two-Way Bilingual Immersion.**

- Response from Superintendent, PVUSD: **HAS NOT BEEN IMPLEMENTED BUT WILL BE IMPLEMENTED IN THE FUTURE**
The parent information brochure, accompanying power point and video presentations will be modified to address this recommendation by February 2013.

- **Recommendation 6: The districts should develop agreements for collaboration with the appropriate Head Start agencies to better align and take advantage of the school readiness efforts of Head Start.**
 - Response from Superintendent, PVUSD: **HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED**

Collaboration related to transition to kindergarten between Head Start, other early learning programs and elementary schools is an excellent goal and one that has been worked on in a variety of ways over the past several years. Some of the efforts made to this end have been; county wide child snapshot student assessment pages that share student progress data from early childhood to elementary sites, county wide annual Transition to Kindergarten Forum, articulation groups with head start, early childhood and selected elementary sites. PVUSD has shared EL program model information with Head Start. Additional opportunities for elementary staff to communicate and collaborate with Head Start will be explored in 2012-13.

- Response from Superintendent, SCCS: **REQUIRES FURTHER ANALYSIS**
SCCS staff will renew efforts to establish a collaborative relationship with Head Start during the fall semester of the 2012-13 school year.