1. Alabama

Calhoun County School District
Superintendent of Schools: H. Jacky Sparks
Contact: Bobby Burns, Deputy Superintendent
Students: 9,480, K-12 – rural

Key Findings

- The implementation of NCLB requirements is very difficult in a district such as Calhoun County that is facing huge reductions in state and local education funds.

- Because Calhoun County has had experience dealing with the changing demographics of its families, staff members feel prepared to continue making the changes necessary to assure that all students achieve at high academic levels.

- In Calhoun County, as in many other districts, the achievement of elementary students surpasses that of secondary students.

Background

Calhoun County School District covers a large portion of the northeastern part of Alabama. The district serves nearly 10,000 students from the rural areas surrounding the cities of Oxford, Piedmont, Jacksonville, and Anniston, the Calhoun county seat and center of educational services.

Anniston is also the home of a major chemical storage site—a reminder of the chemical training school once located at the Anniston Army Depot and the other military activities once headquartered at Fort McClellan. The fort was closed in 1999, striking a devastating financial blow to the community and the school district. Not only did the local economy suffer from the loss of several thousand jobs in the military and related industries, but the Calhoun County school district also lost thousands of dollars in federal Impact Aid (a program that reimburses school districts for tax revenues lost due to the presence of federal lands or federal employees, now authorized as Title VIII of NCLB). The Army has built an incinerator in Anniston that began burning chemical weapons in August 2003, a process scheduled to last at least 10 years and one that may have a negative effect on the community.

The loss of the military facilities was just one of several changes affecting the school district in recent years. In 2002, the city of Oxford annexed a portion of Calhoun County, which meant that several hundred Calhoun County students were transferred into the Oxford school district. Teachers had the choice of staying in Calhoun or transferring to
Oxford, and most of them left Calhoun, as did other staff and a principal. District staff had to handle a host of complex logistical issues related to teacher assignments, funding, facilities, and other areas. State and federal funding followed the students to the new district, which meant a loss of funds for Calhoun. Oxford needed a school, though, so Calhoun sold Oxford the school building the students had been attending, which solved Calhoun’s problem of a vacant school building.

**Progress in Implementing NCLB**

*Professional Development*

Several Calhoun County schools are continuing to implement a new training program for teachers and other staff that was designed to improve the teaching of reading at all grade levels. Called the *Alabama Reading Initiative*, the program is based on research-validated strategies for teaching reading. Teachers and paraprofessionals were paid $50 a day to attend programs where they were trained to be trainers, spending two weeks in research, study, and learning. The costs of the program were covered by a combination of state, local, and federal funds, including Title I funds. Several of Calhoun’s Title I schools implemented this program as part of their NCLB efforts, and results were quickly apparent in classrooms, as teachers put into place a variety of reading interventions. Fundraisers were held to purchase more books for students, and reading was given the highest priority in the schools. The total emphasis was on assuring that every child was learning to read. One of the Calhoun County’s successful graduates, Patty Hobbs, Director of Internal Communications for Secretary of Education Rod Paige, visited the reading program in 2003 and commended the staff for their efforts to improve student achievement.

**Major Issues of Implementing NCLB**

*Fiscal Problems*

The biggest challenge facing Calhoun County is that in the midst of seriously working to implement NCLB, the district has been faced with state budget cuts. As a result of these cuts, Calhoun County initially took steps to eliminate 123 staff positions for the 2003-04 school year. This would have reduced the teaching staff by 10% and would have made severe reductions in administrator, counselor, paraprofessional, and clerical positions. The turmoil created by this huge number of staffing changes took precedence over what should have been a stimulating and exciting time for making changes needed to improve student performance. However, the state legislature passed a bill that would fund lost teaching units only if the school system replaced the teacher units prior to the beginning of the 2003-04 school year. Calhoun County therefore restored most of the teacher positions it had eliminated, but the cuts remained in place for some support positions, and the central office administrative staff that was cut by 60%. These budget reductions mean that changes to improve the schools will have to be with fewer dollars and fewer staff to support and work with the children who need the most help.
As insurmountable as this fiscal crisis was and continues to be, this is not the first time that Calhoun has been hit with devastating reductions in funds. When the military bases vanished from the county, so too did Calhoun’s federal allocations for Impact Aid, which supports districts with large numbers of federally employed parents. Calhoun survived that experience, but in 2003 the district faced a new round of budget cuts and the dismissal of employees, as well as the reality of much heavier cuts for 2004-05.

**Adequate Yearly Progress for Secondary Students**

Calhoun County schools met Alabama’s criteria for making adequate yearly progress for 2003, a critical step under the accountability provisions of NCLB. All subgroups of students tracked for accountability purposes made AYP this year, although the subgroup of students with disabilities has been placed on the priority list for future accountability. Although gains are being made in the academic achievement levels of primary and intermediate students, the biggest challenge faced by Calhoun County School District is the performance of middle and high school students. In 2003, secondary schools made AYP, but the district is concerned about the achievement decline in the transition years between 6th and 9th grades. Staff members at all schools are looking at curriculum and professional development to determine what technical assistance is needed to reverse this trend.

Recognizing that secondary schools are more difficult to change in terms of content delivery and learning expectations, the district implemented a new program of Student Advocates for 2002-03. Student Advocates were staff members with some social work background who worked with teachers, students, and parents. The goal of the program was to reduce behavior problems and apathy among secondary students at risk of dropping out of school and replace their negative influences with goal-oriented strategies. The Advocates provided guidance and encouragement to individual students, helping them to develop positive behaviors that would improve learning and to address attendance and discipline issues that affect achievement. Staff members identified students in danger of dropping out and enrolled them in small group instructional settings. This effort was designed to assist students with getting their high school diplomas by helping them develop realistic plans for finishing high school. This program had to be dropped for the 2003-04 school year due to lack of funding.

**Other Implementation Issues**

In light of Calhoun County’s ample experience in dealing with change, district staff members believe they will find ways to implement the requirements of NCLB, even if it seems very difficult right now. Calhoun found creative solutions to complex problems many times in the past, and staff members are confident they will do so again. District staff point to what they call a local commitment to improve academic achievement for all students as one of the district’s strengths. For example, when the agricultural community diminished, the school district found ways to meet the needs of the military families that
were moving in. The career tech center developed a program with the Army Depot that includes a two-year training program with on-the-job experience. Students within a 40-mile radius are eligible to attend, and while they get their high school education, they also become skilled in technology and other career-related skills. NCLB brings more change to Calhoun County, but plans are in place to do what needs to be done.

Data File — Calhoun County School District

Location: Northeastern Alabama
Type: Rural (Anniston is the county seat)
Number of Schools:
  19 total
  9 elementary schools (K-3, K-4, K-6)
  1 elementary/junior high school (K-9)
  1 middle school (5-7)
  7 high schools
  1 career tech center

Student Enrollment and Demographics
  Total Enrollment: 9,480
  White: 85%
  African American: 13%
  Other: 2%
  English Language Learners: 5% (9 languages)
  Students with Disabilities: 14%
  Low-Income Students: 49% (ranges from 32% to 69% in individual schools)

Number of Teachers
  Total: 570
  Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: 190 (33%)

Number of Paraprofessionals
  Total: 149
  Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: 143 (96%)

Number of Title I Schools: 10 elementary

Number of Schools in School Improvement or Corrective Action

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2. Alaska

Kodiak Island Borough School District
Superintendent: Betty Walters
Contacts: Brian O’Leary, Director of Educational Support Services; Marilyn Davidson, Principal
Students: 2,750, K-12 – rural

Key Findings

- Fluctuations in funding in Alaska have weakened or eliminated programs for districts like Kodiak Island Borough at the very time that districts are trying to comply with the major new demands of NCLB.

- Because of its rural nature, Kodiak has difficulty attracting and retaining highly qualified teachers who are able and willing to adapt to the rigors of life in remote Alaska. With some island schools that serve 20 students of all grade levels with just one teacher and one paraprofessional, the district faces particular challenges in meeting the NCLB requirements for subject matter expertise among high school teachers, but is looking to technology to provide the courses to fill the need.

- Because of high teacher turnover, paraprofessionals are a vital source of continuity and cultural connections for Kodiak students. Meeting the NCLB paraprofessional requirements will require some creative scheduling, because many paraprofessionals must spend the summer hunting, fishing, and cutting wood to prepare their families for the winter and do not have time for training classes.

Background

Kodiak Island Borough School District serves nearly 3,000 students on Kodiak Island in the Gulf of Alaska. Schools are located both in the town of Kodiak and in native villages situated around the island.

The names of the Kodiak Island Borough schools (Danger Bay, Port Lions, Larsen Bay, Akhiok, Old Harbor, Chiniak, Ouzinkie, East, Main, North Star, Peterson, Kodiak Middle School, and Kodiak High School) provide clues to the history and culture of this unique school district in a very distinctive state.

Although half of Kodiak’s students are White, the rest are mainly Alaska Native and Asian/Pacific Islander, with a few Hispanic, African American, and American Indian students. A total of 371 students (14%) are considered English language learners, and these students claim a variety of primary languages: Japanese, Korean, Laotian, Russian, Samoan, Spanish, Tagalog, Aklanon, Cebuano, Chinese, Ilocano, Malay, Pangasinian, Panpango, Visayan and Yupik. The diversity of languages, along with the variety of dialects within a language, provides challenges for Kodiak staff, but instructional services
to all students are focused on helping them become proficient in English as quickly and effectively as possible.

Many aspects of schooling that are taken for granted in the Lower 48 states create incredible challenges in Kodiak Island Borough. For example, the district must constantly recruit replacement teachers in the rural village schools because the average stay of a teacher is short, with a turnover of 30-50% each year. Although the allure of experiencing life in Alaska draws some fine teachers, the cultural change is tremendous even for the adventurous. New teachers must learn to live in simple, subsidized housing, order groceries to last an entire semester, watch out for bear when they go outside, and combat loneliness and isolation. After one or two long, cold winters, most new teachers have usually had enough and head eagerly toward a more familiar type of life, while Kodiak again looks for new teachers.

Because teachers are difficult to retain, paraprofessionals are essential. The district relies on these employees to provide continuity of instruction in the village schools and to maintain cultural and language connections with the students. Yet upgrading the skills and credentials of paraprofessionals presents its own unique challenges: for example, paraprofessionals cannot go to school in the summer because they must use that short time to obtain the deer and fish needed to feed their families during the long, harsh winter. Despite the challenges, the staff members of Kodiak Island Borough seem determined to improve the education of their students and make NCLB work in their district.

**Progress in Implementing NCLB**

*Professional Development for Paraprofessionals*

Almost three-fourths of Kodiak’s paraprofessionals do not meet the NCLB definition of “highly qualified.” The Kodiak district is currently developing a program, in partnership with Kodiak College, a branch campus of the University of Alaska, to help Title I paraprofessionals meet the NCLB requirement of two years of college. The program is also designed to provide training to enable paraprofessionals to first obtain an associate’s degree and then complete a four-year degree and become teachers. Topics covered in a six-credit course taught in the summer of 2003 by a district staff person included classroom management, children as readers, and how to work with special education children. Fifteen paraprofessionals took the class last summer.

The district recognizes, however, that even with some courses being available through distance learning, completing a teaching degree involves a very long time commitment for paraprofessionals who have many family and community demands on their time. For paraprofessionals who cannot spend their summer taking classes, the district is looking at the option of requiring these staff members to pass an examination that demonstrates knowledge equivalent to two years of college.
Adequate Yearly Progress

Kodiak is experimenting with distance learning as a means of improving student performance and meeting other NCLB requirements. The district runs a learning center in cooperation with four other school districts that provides cyber courses for the eight village schools. Students with the lowest test scores at these schools (below the 40th percentile in reading, for example) are targeted for enrollment in the cyber school, which gives them extra instruction in reading skills and other areas on top of their regular class work.

One of the Kodiak Island schools did not make AYP in 2002. Throughout 2002-03, the district focused resources and technical assistance on that school, and the school improved enough to make AYP in 2003, so it was not targeted for school improvement in 2003-04. Because a school’s average test scores may be less reliable, in a statistical sense, when there are small numbers of students in a school, grade, or subgroup, Alaska applies a process called “confidence interval” reporting to determine AYP. Under this measure, the school that did not make AYP in 2002 scored 44% proficient in language arts and 22% proficient in math for its 13 students. These scores were above the state expectation, and no subgroup fell below the target, so the school met AYP requirements.

Five other Kodiak schools, however, did not make AYP in 2003. At one school, the percentages of students overall scoring at proficient levels were 81% in language arts and 73% in math, but the subgroups of English language learners and students with disabilities at the school did not meet state benchmarks, so the school fell short of making AYP. In three other schools, the same two subgroups of English language learner and students with disabilities did not make AYP. District officials are concerned that these two groups will continue to have difficulty making AYP. In the case of English language learners, these students leave the subgroup once they become proficient in English. In the case of students with disabilities, many were referred to special education precisely because they have significant learning or cognitive disabilities that make it difficult for them to master the content likely to appear on state tests.

Major Issues of Implementing NCLB

Fiscal Problems

Kodiak Island Borough has had significant budget cuts in the past two years due to declining enrollment. In addition, state budget cuts have forced the reduction and elimination of many programs at a time when resources are needed to meet all aspects of NCLB. The borough contribution to local education is at its maximum, and cuts in the state budget have affected resources for the district. Since the state has no state income or sales tax, there are no alternatives to fill the gap other than to reduce spending and seek additional sources of funds, such as applying for grants.
Kodiak has also been affected by economic slumps in the logging, fishing, and salmon canning industries. Many workers have been laid off, exacerbating poverty in the district. Poverty is high throughout the Kodiak area, with some schools enrolling 90% of children from low-income families. The learning needs of students at risk are intensified amid economic chaos. For example, subsistence activities like hunting, fishing, and woodcutting take on even greater importance in tough times, leaving less time for homework and school activities. According to Kodiak staff, economic factors can also have a dramatic effect on young people’s dignity, placing them at even greater risk for school failure.

**Qualifications for Teachers**

District officials in Kodiak say their greatest challenge is to find and retain teachers who meet the NCLB requirements for being highly qualified. Of the 178 teachers in the district, 74% do not meet these requirements. Not only must these teachers meet these certification requirements, but to be successful in Kodiak, they must also be able to address the diverse cultural and learning needs of students.

In the town schools, many teachers have not met all the NCLB requirements for specific content areas, especially math. Many endorsements are not available at higher education institutions in the state, so in order to acquire majors and/or credentials in content areas, teachers will have to go out of state or utilize distance learning. Meeting the NCLB requirements is even more difficult in the village schools, where enrollments range from 10-60 students and the staff consists of a small number of teachers. Sometimes a village school may have just one teacher and one paraprofessional for all K-12 students. At these schools, it is virtually impossible for one teacher to meet NCLB requirements for all content areas for the high school students. It is also unlikely that the district will find teachers for these schools who have both elementary and secondary certificates in multiple disciplines. The district makes a concerted effort to find teachers who are certificated in language arts and/or mathematics, but even that is not always possible.

As a solution to the challenge of meeting the NCLB teacher criteria for high school subjects, Kodiak is developing a broadband interactive learning program to provide students with highly qualified teachers in subjects for which their regular teacher does not meet certification. Kodiak has upgraded its computers, and the plan is being implemented in 2003-04. Under the plan, a content-qualified math teacher in one school, for example, will teach a geometry class for her or his students, and at the same time, the lesson will be transmitted to other schools for the students who need the class. The district is in the process of submitting grant applications to fund this program.

**Other Implementation Issues**

**School Choice**
The school choice provisions of NCLB would be extremely difficult to carry out in a district like Kodiak. If a Title I village school were required to offer choice, this would not mean busing children to another school, but rather putting the children on an airplane to get to another school. These special circumstances in the rural areas of Alaska have been recognized by the U. S. Department of Education, and schools in the Alaska will be able to offer supplemental services in their first year if school choice is not an option.

According to Kodiak district officials, the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development works closely with its local districts, and technical assistance is provided on an ongoing basis. The district recognizes the difficulty faced by state officials in providing such services because of the vast distances that exist from district to district. The geography of the state poses immense challenges for people getting together, but communication continues in other forms.

**Data File — Kodiak Island Borough School District**

**Location:** Southern Alaska  
**Type:** Rural  
**Number of Schools:**  
13 total  
7 village schools and 6 town schools (K-10, K-12, K-6, 7-8, 9-12)

**Student Enrollment and Demographics**

- Total Enrollment: 2,750
- White: 47%
- Asian/Pacific Islander: 23%
- Alaska Native: 21%
- Other: 9%
- English Language Learners: 14% (16 languages)
- Students with Disabilities: 15%
- Low-Income Students: 37%

**Number of Teachers**

- Total: 178
- Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: 74%

**Number of Paraprofessionals**

- Total: 7
- Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: 5 (71%)

**Number of Title I Schools:** 6

**Number of Schools in School Improvement or Corrective Action:**

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3. Arkansas

Fayetteville Public Schools
Superintendent: Dr. Bobby C. New
Contact: Michelle Boles, Federal Programs and Assessment Administrator
*Students: 8,164, K-12 – urban*

Key Findings

- Believing that teacher professional development is a key strategy for meeting NCLB’s student achievement goals, the Fayetteville School District has hired literacy and math specialists to help teachers use disaggregated achievement data to improve instruction. The district is also assembling teams of teachers to share effective teaching techniques and strategies for eliminating achievement gaps among subgroups of students.

- Although all but one of Fayetteville’s schools made adequate yearly progress for 2003, the district is taking active steps to raise student achievement in its high-poverty schools, which have consistently performed lower than its low-poverty schools. For example, the district is analyzing reasons for success in high-poverty schools that do perform well, adopting a computer-based instructional program to help students probe or review key concepts, and training teachers to analyze student assessment data to inform their instruction.

Background

The city of Fayetteville in northwestern Arkansas is the home of the University of Arkansas. It is also the center of a large-scale poultry industry. This double focus brings families to Fayetteville School District with a diverse range of cultures, languages, and academic needs.

In recent years, the district has seen a large increase in English language learners, who now total 763 students, nearly 10% of the district’s enrollment, and who speak 43 different languages. The majority of these students are Spanish speakers—primarily from Mexico, but also from Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Central America. Their families were attracted to Fayetteville by the poultry industry. The situation is different for the significant numbers of English language learners who speak other languages, such as Arabic, Cantonese, and Korean. These families have come to Fayetteville because of the university, where their parents are employed or enrolled as students. This dual aspect of Fayetteville’s English language learner program presents challenges, but it also provides a cultural enrichment that benefits everyone.
Progress in Implementing NCLB

Professional Development

Fayetteville district leaders have kept themselves informed about the new NCLB requirements, and they prepared the staff for the changes. District officials held several meetings with teachers during the 2002-03 school year and addressed the definition of highly qualified teachers with the entire district faculty via access television before school opened in 2003-04.

The district emphasizes the importance of involving teachers in academic improvement, especially through teachers analyzing student performance data. The district hired a literacy specialist and a math specialist to work directly with teachers and administrators in 2003-04. These individuals will focus on helping teachers to disaggregate student achievement data and to further align curriculum with state standards and frameworks, as determined by thorough assessments of individual school needs.

The district plans to provide multiple opportunities throughout the 2003-04 school year for teachers in various content areas to use "vertical teaming" as they examine the alignment of curriculum within a school and across grade levels among feeder schools. Three elementary schools are placed into a vertical team, which will meet at least three times a year to share assessment information and effective teaching techniques. The district will provide substitutes for these teacher teams, so they can work together on strategies to improve students’ specific academic skills in the areas of greatest need. The teams will also develop strategies to eliminate achievement gaps among subgroups of students.

For several years, Fayetteville schools have used a state-approved staff development model called Restructuring Days. For three to five days in the year, teachers come to school without the students to work together on curricular issues and develop effective instructional strategies expected to improve academic achievement. To make this process even more effective, the district has made refinements in the model for 2003-04. Instead of having the same restructuring days for all teachers, each of the district’s 15 schools will have its own restructuring days. This approach will allow the central office curriculum staff to be part of the school teams and to provide teams with the technical assistance they need. The professional development program is supported through a combination of federal funds from NCLB Titles I, II, and III and state and district sources. Peer assistance is encouraged at all schools, and various levels of support, including mentoring, are available for teachers.

Major Issues of Implementing NCLB

Teacher Qualifications
Because of its high salary schedule and proximity to the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville does not anticipate difficulties in continuing to find highly qualified teachers in most areas. The exceptions are teachers of special education, math, and science. The district anticipates possible problems meeting the NCLB requirements for content expertise among special education teachers in junior high and high school. These teachers usually teach more than one content area to students with disabilities. Teachers who are fully qualified in special education and also qualified to teach algebra, for example, are difficult to find.

Although teachers qualified in English as a Second Language/English Language Development have been in short supply in the past, the district is now experiencing an increase in that teacher pool. Training for teachers who need to meet the requirements is being provided through NCLB Title II funds. A district committee reviews requests submitted by teachers for assistance in taking and passing the state approved examination and purchasing study books to prepare for the exam.

Adequate Yearly Progress for Economically Disadvantaged Students

Fayetteville has placed a high priority on improving the academic performance of students in its high-poverty schools. Although the average poverty rate in the district is 31%, four schools have as many as 50% of their students from low-income families. One of these schools has an 87% poverty rate and is the lowest performing school in the district.

In 2003, all but one of the district’s schools, including its low-income schools, met state AYP criteria, and none is in school improvement status. District officials are particularly pleased that in Asbell Elementary School, where 58% of the students come from low-income families, 94% of the school’s students scored at the proficient or advanced levels on the state's Grade 4 literacy exam for 2003. Only one school scored higher, and that school enrolls only 7% low-income children. On the state's Grade 4 math exam, Asbell topped all the schools in the district, with 92% of its students scoring at the proficient or advanced levels.

But even with this good news, the district recognizes that more needs to be done. As noted by Michelle Boles, Fayetteville’s federal programs and assessment administrator, “We certainly are not resting on our accomplishments. We have initiated our own self-imposed school improvement plans with high expectations for all students.” Closing the achievement gap between low-poverty and high-poverty schools is a major part of this initiative. With few exceptions, the percentage of students achieving at the proficient or advanced levels is consistently lower in high-poverty schools than in low-poverty schools. The district is taking steps to determine the reasons behind the success of the Asbell School and identify factors that can be incorporated into a district model for improving student performance.

The district has undertaken a variety of efforts to raise student achievement in high-poverty schools. One high-poverty school with low achievement is moving forward with a technology-based program that will provide a computer for every student. Instead of
traditional classroom desks, students in kindergarten through grade 5 will work at glass-topped computer units. According to district staff, the decision to move ahead with this model was made after considerable research on programs that have good success records for high-poverty students. Fayetteville's technology program will have extensive teacher training to assure the integration of technology into all curriculum areas. If this technology program helps high-poverty schools make the academic gains required by NCLB, Fayetteville plans to expand it to all of the elementary schools.

In addition to providing teachers with opportunities to systematically review student mastery of standards and key concepts related to instruction, the technology-based lessons are expected to benefit students in a variety of ways. They will be able to probe lessons in greater depth and breadth, pursue supplementary learning, review what they did not understand the first time, and correct their misconceptions and misunderstandings. Teachers will have greater opportunities to use student feedback as a guide to future teaching. In addition, families will benefit by being able to use the computers after school.

The Arkansas Department of Education rates school districts according to their academic and/or fiscal need, and accountability is an integral part of statewide efforts to improve public schools for all students. The district is reviewing its AYP status for the six secondary schools that are in alert status. These schools did not make AYP because of their subgroups, especially students with disabilities at three of the schools. Fayetteville has never been on the state failure list. District officials believe that their strong approach to academic improvement and their focusing of district resources on the academic needs of students will keep them moving toward AYP for all students.

**Paraprofessional Qualifications**

Fayetteville makes extensive use of paraprofessionals in various capacities. The overwhelming majority of the district’s paraprofessionals, about 72%, do meet the NCLB requirements. Efforts are taking place to help the remaining paraprofessionals, including those who provide bilingual assistance to students, reach the NCLB requirements. In fact, the district has made a commitment to hold all of its paraprofessionals, not just those in Title I schools, to the same high requirements. The district includes paraprofessionals in all district professional development opportunities. They are provided with test-prep materials designed to prepare them for the state-adopted paraprofessional test, and they are sent to conferences designed specifically for the student populations with which they work. For example, in the fall of 2003, all paraprofessionals working with migrant children are invited, at district expense, to attend an out-of-town, two-day workshop dealing with multicultural education, teaching strategies, and health issues.

**Data File — Fayetteville Public Schools**

**Location:** Northwestern Arkansas  
**Type:** City of 60,000  
**Number of Schools:**
Total: 15
9 elementary schools (K-5)
2 middle schools (6-7)
2 junior high schools (8-9)
2 high schools (10-12)

Student Enrollment and Demographics
Total Enrollment: 8,164
White 80%
African American: 9%
Hispanic: 7%
Asian: 3%
American Indian: 1%
English Language Learners: 10% (major languages include Spanish, Chinese, Arabic)
Students with Disabilities: 13%
Low-Income Students: 31% (ranging from 7% to 87% in individual schools)

Number of Teachers
Total: 619
Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: 61 (10%)

Number of Paraprofessionals
Total: 158
Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: 45 (28%)

Number of Title I Schools: 7

Number of Schools in School Improvement or Corrective Action

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4. California

Escondido Union Elementary School District
Superintendent: Dr. Mike Caston
Contact: Pat Peterson, Coordinator, GATE/Title I
Students: 19,229, K-8 – suburban

Key Findings

- Escondido Union is accustomed to disaggregating student achievement data for subgroups because California’s state accountability system has required it for several years; however, the subgroups of English language learners and students with disabilities were not previously required.
• For English language learners, a subgroup that did not make adequate yearly progress for 2003 at some elementary and middle schools, the district is looking at disaggregated test data to decide which types of instructional programs have been most effective for these students.

• The Escondido district has made considerable efforts to identify and serve homeless students under Title I. As a result, the district’s 3,450 homeless students and their families have access to a family support center that provides information, resources, and counseling; a half-time coordinator of homeless services; workshops for parents on supporting their children’s education; and extra academic support classes for students.

• Escondido Union is collaborating with a local university to develop courses for middle school teachers who do not meet the NCLB requirements for subject matter expertise.

Background

Escondido Union Elementary School District is located in the northern portion of San Diego County and is part of the greater suburban area of the city of San Diego. An elementary school district, Escondido Union serves students in grades K-8, while grades 9-12 are under the Escondido High School District. Each of the two districts is separately governed with its own Board of Education, superintendent, and other governance features. Although most California districts are unified K-12 districts, many regions continue to have this unique system of separate districts, a vestige of a time decades ago when small localities developed their own schools. Unification is usually not a goal for districts that have chosen to continue as separate entities.

Located not far from the Mexican border, Escondido (“hidden valley” in Spanish) is steeped in the Spanish/Mexican heritage of California and is home to a large population of Spanish-speaking families. More than half of Escondido’s students are English language learners, most of whom list Spanish as their primary language.

Progress in Implementing NCLB

Adequate Yearly Progress

California’s accountability system, the Academic Performance Index (API), in place for the past four years, has been incorporated into the state definition for adequate yearly progress under NCLB. Two state funded programs, the Immediate Intervention for Underperforming Schools (IIUSP) and the Public Schools Accountability Act, were designed to help schools that were not achieving according to expectations. One advantage for Escondido and other districts in the state is the strong level of understanding that exists among district staff, parents, and the community about school
reform. Another advantage is that schools have become accustomed to reviewing the academic progress of racial, ethnic, and low-income subgroups because these groups were in the state’s previous AYP system.

For the past three years, Escondido received additional state funding to provide a variety of services at three low-performing elementary schools in the district. The schools identified barriers that prevented student learning and made the adjustments that were needed for change. Literacy coaches for English/language arts were hired to provide demonstration lessons and to coach teachers by providing feedback on lessons they observed in classrooms. The coaches facilitated grade-level meetings and assisted teachers in analyzing assessment data to guide instruction. A principal was moved from one school in an attempt to revitalize the reform movement.

Although California has required schools to track progress for specific subgroups in the past, the subgroups of English language learners and students with disabilities are new as result of NCLB. Escondido and other California districts are now following the AYP of students in these two new subgroups.

**Teacher Qualifications**

Finding highly qualified teachers has not been an easy task in Escondido, despite efforts made in this area. The district is working to identify ways that teachers can become fully certified in the content areas they teach. The district’s main concern is with middle school teachers who are required to hold single subject credentials because of the departmentalized curriculum in the schools. The state of California is in the process of finalizing its Highly Objective Uniform State System of Evaluation (HOUSSE) program that will assess the qualifications of existing teachers. Escondido is analyzing the status of all teachers and working with California State University, San Marcos, to develop appropriate programs to assist with credentialing.

To retain teachers, Escondido has taken advantage of California’s Beginning Teacher Support and Assistance (BTSA) program, which pairs new teachers with experienced mentor teachers for one or two years. Training sessions are held during the school year, and the mentors receive small stipends for their additional work. In 2002, a total of 106 Escondido teachers participated in the program along with an equal number of mentor teachers.

**Paraprofessional Qualifications**

Escondido has 123 paraprofessionals in various instructional support positions who are employed in Title I schools and thus required to meet NCLB qualifications. A freeze was placed on new hires at the start of the 2002-03 school year due to state budget cuts, and considerable staff time is now being utilized to identify the status and needs of all paraprofessionals. The district developed and field tested a new proficiency test for paraprofessionals based on the California High School Exit Exam. The skills expected on the high school exit exam are far greater than what was expected in the past on
California’s proficiency tests for paraprofessionals. Escondido used the exit exam as a base and added more to it. The cut score for passing is greater than what is expected for high school students. This test is now in use, and paraprofessionals are being provided with training to help them pass the test. The plan is to use a combination of performance assessments and the proficiency test to meet NCLB requirements for paraprofessionals who do not have two years of college or an associate’s degree.

Major Issues of Implementing NCLB

Choice, Supplemental Services, and School Improvement Strategies

One Escondido middle school was targeted for school improvement in school year 2002-03 and was required to offer school choice, but that determination was not made until late in the year. The district notified parents of their eligibility for choice, and the parents of 180 of the 1,500 eligible students selected a different school in the district for their children to attend. Escondido does not provide busing for students, so students are taking city buses to get to the other schools, a distance of 3-4 miles one way. The cost of transportation for these students is an estimated $25,000 for 2003-04.

Escondido has two schools in school improvement in school year 2003-04: a middle school for the second year and an elementary school for the first year. The elementary school did not make AYP for the English language learner subgroup. The middle school had three subgroups that did not make AYP: English language learners, students with disabilities, and low-income students. In addition to school choice, the middle school is now required to provide supplemental services. The district will be one of the four approved providers of these services for the middle school and will arrange after-school programs for students. Of the 1,245 students who are eligible for supplemental services, only 143 are participating.

The district is providing technical assistance to the school improvement schools focused on the continuous academic achievement of all students. A district developed “roadmap” provides guidance to teachers about placing students in the appropriate reading level group for the core curriculum materials used by the district. Students will be grouped by reading level for core instruction in reading/language arts, and those in grades 4-8 who score two or more years below grade level will be instructed using the new High Point reading curriculum. English language learners in grades K-3 who score two or more years below grade level will receive their reading instruction in specially modified lessons that are aligned to the core materials and were developed by the district.

At the middle school, students who score two or more years below grade level are required to take a math support class in addition to the core math class. A math teacher on special assignment has been hired to provide intense training and coaching for math support teachers and to assist teachers who are working to meet the highly qualified requirements of NCLB.
Adequate Yearly Progress for English Language Learners

California law requires that districts enroll students who are English language learners in structured programs of English language development, but if parents request bilingual education for their students through a formal request process, districts can provide bilingual programs. English language learners in Escondido are served through a variety of programs, including structured English immersion, two-way bilingual programs (English and Spanish), and parallel language development, which is a maintenance bilingual program. By parent request, Spanish instruction programs are offered to 1,263 children at seven schools. The effect of NCLB on these bilingual programs has yet to be determined because the ELL subgroup was not included in previous accountability measures in California. District staff will be looking at the disaggregated data from the 2003 testing to see if there is any difference in academic achievement based on the type of instruction students received.

English language learners are grouped based on their language proficiency levels for explicit and systematic English language development for a minimum of 30 minutes daily. Teachers use the district-developed English Language Development (ELD) Curriculum Guide and benchmarks aligned to the ELD Content Standards. Grade-level teams establish instructional pacing calendars for math and reading that include formative assessment dates, and teachers work together in grouping the students by their achievement levels for instruction across grade levels.

Additional support for Escondido’s bilingual programs is provided by Title III of NCLB. The district was involved in an intensive state compliance and resolution review process known as the Comite de Padres. The district was recently released from this requirement because of its successful completion of the resolution agreement related to services for ELL students.

Other Implementation Issues

Homeless students

Escondido enrolls a large number of homeless students—3,450 children whose families live in temporary shelters, or move continually among the homes of relatives or friends, or otherwise lack a permanent residence. The majority of these families are Hispanic and recent immigrants to the U.S. District staff members report that considerable steps have been taken to meet the educational needs of these students, including employing a half-time coordinator of homeless services, a full-time School Liaison, and a full-time caseworker, and developing a center where families can access help and support. Workshops are provided for parents on such topics as helping students succeed with homework, understanding the school district, improving home/school communication, and participating effectively in their children’s education. Families receive information,
resources, and counseling about community resources and medical and social services. Students are offered before and after-school services and summer academic support classes.

Data File — Escondido Union Elementary School District

Location: Southern California
Type: Suburban – northern San Diego area
Enrollment: 19,229
Number of Schools:
19 total
12 elementary schools serving grades K-5
4 middle schools serving grades 6-8
1 K-8
1 K-2
1 3-5

Student Enrollment and Demographics
Total Enrollment: 19,229
Hispanic: 53%
White: 40%
African American: 3%
Asian: 2%
Other: 2%
English Language Learners: 44% (Spanish is the main primary language, 37 additional languages)
Students with Disabilities: 10%
Low-Income Students: 67% (ranging from 11% to 96% for individual schools)

Number of Teachers
Total: 1,190
Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: 24 (2%)

Number of Paraprofessionals
Total: 123
Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: 86 (70%)

Number of Title I Schools: 11 (10 elementary, 1 middle school)

Number of Schools in School Improvement or Corrective Action

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<th>2003-04</th>
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<tr>
<td>Required to offer supplemental services and choice:</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In corrective action:</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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5. California

Grant Joint Union High School District
Superintendent: Dr. Larry Buchanan
Contact: Rick Carder, Director, Categorical Programs
Students: 12,682, 7-12 – urban

Key Findings

- In preparation for NCLB, Grant Joint Union High School District has aligned its curriculum with state standards, trained teachers in how to use student test data to improve instruction, and expanded its remedial, summer, and after-school programs, among other efforts.

- School choice has been difficult to implement in Grant. At the high school level, there was only one available receiving school that was not in school improvement. Most of the district’s schools were low-performing, and neighboring districts were unwilling to enter into a cooperative agreement to accept choice transfer students.

- As a district with considerable ethnic and language diversity, high poverty, and large numbers of homeless students, Grant Joint Union is concerned about its ability to meet NCLB requirements for adequate yearly progress.

- Implementing supplemental services has been a complicated and time-consuming process in Grant. The district negotiated with approved providers about the specific services available for students and made information available to parents, among other tasks.

Background

Grant Joint Union High School District serves changing urban communities that include a large part of the capital city of Sacramento. The name of the district stems from the 1840s when these acres were part of a huge Mexican Land Grant. The district has served grades 7-12 in five comprehensive high schools, five junior high schools, three alternative schools, and one special education school. The elementary children of the area attend four separate elementary districts. Over the years, there has been continuing discussion to create a different structure of governance for the districts. In August 2003, one of Grant’s feeder K-6 districts, Del Paso, voted to join Grant in a two-year partnership. This means that Grant is now changing its structure and organization to serve a K-12 population.

The establishment of McClellan Air Force Base during World War II brought thousands of families to the area, the first of many changes, but Grant has continued to be a very ethnically and racially diverse district (64% minority). Poverty has increased over the years, and in 2003, more than half (58%) of the district’s students came from low-income families. In two of the district’s schools, nearly all students are poor: the poverty rates
are 99% in Grant Union High School and 91% in Martin Luther King, Jr., High School.

**Progress in Implementing NCLB**

**Adequate Yearly Progress**

District staff and teachers at Grant are familiar with the disaggregation of student performance data on the basis of poverty and major ethnic subgroups because of California’s previous accountability requirements. The 2003 changes to the state accountability system, consistent with NCLB, included the addition of two new subgroups whose achievement must be tracked: English language learners and students with disabilities. Also consistent with NCLB, the state now requires 95% of students to participate in state testing and requires high schools to show improvements in their graduation rate. Although all subgroups of students made gains in achievement in 2003 compared with their performance in 2002, the district still did not make AYP in 2003 in English/language arts or math. As shown in the table below, the specific subgroups that did not make AYP were Hispanic students (math), students with disabilities (math and ELA), and English language learners (ELA). The district also fell somewhat short in the percentage of students participating in testing.

**Percentage of Students Scoring at Proficient Level or Above on California Standards Test**
**Grant Joint Union High School District**

**NOTE:** To make adequate yearly progress for 2003, California requires 12% of students to score at the proficient levels in English/language arts and 12.8% to score at this level in math. NCLB also requires 95% of students to participate in testing in ELA and math.

Scores marked with an asterisk * shows areas for which students did not make AYP.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All students</td>
<td>16.6%</td>
<td>21.9%</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
<td>16.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation rate</td>
<td>94.7%</td>
<td>93.3%*</td>
<td>94.0%</td>
<td>93.7%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>8%*</td>
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<tr>
<td>American Indian</td>
<td>20.2%</td>
<td>23.4%</td>
<td>15.1%</td>
<td>15.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>18.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
<td>11.2%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Islander</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
<td>17.0%</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
<td>24.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>30.1%</td>
<td>16.6%</td>
<td>23.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low-income</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students with disabilities</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
<td>8.8%*</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>6.9%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English language learners</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>10.2%*</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
District leaders and staff recognize that academic performance needs to be improved. Grant Joint Union has already been subject to the school improvement requirements of NCLB and the similar accountability provisions of prior federal and state law. Five Grant schools were in school improvement status in 2002-03 because they did not make AYP for two consecutive years. Four of these schools are now in their third year of school improvement based on testing from 2003, but one school tested out of school improvement this year.

During its first year of implementing NCLB, Grant Joint Union aligned its curriculum with state content standards in English/language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. The district conducted a thorough analysis of student performance data and emphasized the need to differentiate instruction for various groups of students throughout the district. Professional development was focused on helping teachers use student achievement data to improve instruction and develop strategies to teach the state content standards. The district also focused on improving student performance on the state high school exit examination. Remedial instruction was provided for juniors who did not pass the exam as sophomores, and the district established an intensive intervention program in reading/language arts for low-performing students in junior high school. Opportunities were greatly expanded for students to obtain additional assistance in after-school, summer school, and tutoring programs.

**Major Issues in Implementing NCLB**

*School Choice and Supplementary Services*

Four of the five schools in improvement status in 2002-03 were required to offer school choice. One middle school that was in its second year of improvement exited because of meeting AYP for two years. Grant found it difficult to implement the NCLB choice requirement because most of the schools in the district needed improvement, leaving few transfer opportunities within the district. Letters were sent to the districts bordering Grant asking them if they would be willing to accept inter-district transfers at their schools, but these districts either did not have space for more students or chose not to accept out-of-district transfers. Other factors affecting school choice were the desire of families, especially recent immigrants, to keep their youth close to home in safe and familiar neighborhoods and the resistance of teenagers to move to schools that were away from their friends. Parents basically support their home schools and the districts’ school improvement efforts.

In the end, although large numbers of students were eligible for transfer, no students chose that option. Grant therefore moved ahead to offer supplemental services for students. Setting up these services was a time-consuming and complicated process because little information was available about the specific services that providers were offering.

Eleven supplemental providers, from the California Department of Education list of more
than 120 approved providers, agreed to participate in the Grant District. The types of services they offered ranged from online instruction to one-on-one home tutoring. Only nine Grant students took advantage of these supplemental services, and most of these students received assistance in reading/language arts. One of the technical clinicians provided help in building phonemic awareness, and the others assisted students with tutoring. The director of categorical programs for the Grant district negotiated directly with the service providers in order to present parents with a clear understanding of what each provider would be able to do for their children.

The district had concerns about some of the tutors who were employed by the providers because they had little or no knowledge of the neighborhoods or cultures of the families they would be serving or of the high crime reputations of some neighborhoods. Whether a school district would be legally liable if any incidents happened to tutors employed by an outside NCLB supplemental service provider is an issue that has not been put to the test, but Grant officials said they do not want their district to be the test case, so they are taking as many precautions as they can. Another district concern is that NCLB provides no additional funds to cover a district’s costs of managing and overseeing school choice and supplemental services. At a time when fiscal resources are stretched to their limits, this created additional responsibilities for the school district. Rick Carder, Grant’s director of categorical programs calculated that he and his staff spent more than 300 hours making the choice arrangements for the district and another 500 hours on supplemental services.

Technical assistance to schools throughout the district consisted of professional development, including training to help teachers better understand and use disaggregated student assessment data. An “academic audit” was conducted by the county office of education to help the staff look at the effectiveness of their various programs, their delivery of instructional services, and their use of available resources. The district also provided substantial professional development aimed at improving instructional strategies in the classroom, teaching to standards, using assessment data, and effectively using resources.

**Adequate Yearly Progress for English Language Learners**

For the past four years, all English language learners in California are tested annually with the California English Language Development Test (CELDT) to determine their proficiency in English. The English language learner subgroup in California includes those students who meet the federally-approved definition of limited English proficient (LEP) students and those who have been redesignated as fluent in English but have not scored at the proficient level or above for three years on the California Standards Test in English/Language Arts.

Almost one of every four Grant students (23%) are English language learners, a total of 2,976 students in grades 7-12 who speak 69 different languages. This is a significant number of students for secondary schools, especially when poverty and great diversity of languages are also barriers to learning. Learning English can be frustrating for teenagers
who cannot read and write in their native language, as is the case for many Grant students. The most common primary languages of the Grant students are Russian, Hmong, and Spanish, three very different cultural groups. Most of the Spanish-speaking students are from Mexico, although some are recent arrivals and others have been in California for a longer time. Hmong students represent the second generation of refugee families who were resettled from Southeast Asia and eventually came to northern California; even though some of these students were born in the U. S., they are not yet fluent in English. Russian-speaking families continue to come to the Sacramento area from the countries of the former Soviet Union. Among all of these linguistic groups, the secondary school students are often the most proficient English speakers in their families.

Although Grant English language learners increased their academic achievement in 2003 and met their target for AYP in math, they continue to face challenges with the English/language arts test.

**Other Implementation Issues**

*Services for Homeless Youth*

The Grant district also enrolls large numbers of homeless youth, who live in shelters or temporary housing, bounce around among friends’ houses, or live on the streets. Some of these students live with their parents who are also homeless, but some are on their own. These homeless young people need and receive additional resources to assure that they are not deprived of education. These students are served under the Title I program of NCLB.

NCLB includes several new requirements for serving homeless youth, as follows:

1. Homeless students cannot be segregated. In other words, a school district cannot have a school for homeless children that operates out of a homeless shelter.
2. States and districts must adopt policies and practices to ensure that transportation is provided so homeless students can attend their school of origin if that is what parents request.
3. If there is a dispute over which school a homeless student should attend, the student is placed in the school of the parent’s choice until the dispute can be resolved.
4. All school districts must designate someone to serve as a local liaison for homeless students.

Grant staff members believe they make every effort they can to find and serve these students. A coordinator for the Homeless Education Program works closely with school sites in finding and identifying students who meet the homeless criteria. Arrangements are made for school supplies, transportation, and connections to available resources. Family reunification is the goal for runaways and consistently transient students, but this goal is not easily achieved.
Most of the funding for the homeless students in Grant Joint Union is covered by the Title I program. Services such as clothing, transportation, school supplies, and assistance with immunizations were provided for 171 homeless students in 2002-03.

District officials are committed to improving the academic achievement of all students in all schools. The district has a long history of active parental involvement with all schools, and this is being expanded to include churches and other local community groups. The superintendent, district staff, and Board of Education members believe they are making a real effort to improve student performance and that NCLB is helping to reinforce this goal.

Data File — Grant Joint Union High School District

Location: Northern California – Sacramento County
Type: Urban; borders city of Sacramento

Number of Schools:
- 14 total
- 6 middle schools (7-8)
- 4 high schools (9-12)
- 3 alternative schools
- 1 special education school

Student Enrollment and Demographics
- Total Enrollment: 12,682
- White: 36%
- Hispanic: 21%
- African American: 19%
- Asian: 13%
- Other: 11%
- English Language Learners: 23%
- Students with Disabilities: 12%
- Low-Income Students: 58%, with range in individual schools from 35% to 99%

Number of Teachers
- Total: 657
- Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: 50% (middle and high school teachers who teach in their minor area rather than their major; special and alternative school teachers who teach multiple subjects)

Number of Paraprofessionals
- Total: 9
- Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: 9 (100%)

Number of Title I Schools: 12

Number of Schools in School Improvement or Corrective Action

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<td>Required to offer supplemental services and choice:</td>
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6. California

Oakland Unified School District
State Administrator: Dr. Randolph Ward
Contact: Wilhelmina Sims, Director, Department of Accountability
Students: 51,613, K-12 – urban

Key Findings

- Oakland Unified School District had difficulty maintaining fiscal effectiveness and therefore was placed in state receivership in June 2003. Now under the management of a state-appointed administrator, the district is using this opportunity to meet the requirements of NCLB and serve its students and community.

- With 66 Title I schools in need of improvement, the district has implemented a core reading program in elementary schools and an intervention program in secondary schools that is beginning to improve student achievement.

- Participation in supplemental education services in 2002-03 varied considerably from site to site, but district officials report that attendance was higher at sites where teachers and site administrators showed a high level of support for the services.

Background

The Oakland Unified School District has had a varied past as a major port city in a growing area of California, a state that is increasing its population every day. The city borders Berkeley, the home of the University of California, and just across the bay is San Francisco.

In June 2003, the Oakland district was placed in state receivership by the California Legislature, and a special administrator for the district was appointed by the state superintendent of public instruction. The special administrator was given the authority to lead reform efforts designed to bring about improvement in both the fiscal and academic status of the district. Oakland, like many urban school districts, faces many challenges related to low student achievement and high percentages of poverty along with the need to bring about compliance with state and federal requirements. Dramatic reductions were made in the district’s funding from the state in 2003 that caused staff to be laid off.
Oakland must also deal with a declining and changing population. For the past five years, enrollment has decreased by about 2,000 students per year, on average. The district’s enrollment of 51,613 students in the fall of 2003 is significantly lower than the 70,000 students that attended Oakland public schools in 1998. When fewer students are enrolled, that means fewer dollars in state funding for educational services, which in turn means more adjustments that the district must make to balance its budget.

**Progress in Implementing NCLB**

*Parent Involvement*

Oakland Unified has had a long history of involving parents in their children’s education. The annual Title I Parent Seminar includes a full day of workshops with a lunchtime speaker and has an attendance of 300 parents and community members. The district has strong, functioning district advisory committees including one for parents of English language learners. ELLs account for a third of the district’s students—more than 16,000 students who speak many different languages. The advisory committees meet regularly to address specific programmatic issues and review state and federally funded categorical programs.

In addition, all schools have school site councils made up of parents and school staff, and in secondary schools, students are part of these councils. The councils are responsible for preparing and implementing a “single site plan for student achievement” that includes funding for Title I and other categorical programs. The district provides training for the council members, especially the parents, and helps them to monitor the plan and modify its components to better address student needs. A “parenting university,” which consists of workshops for parents on governance and other topics, takes place every two months. Child care is provided to help parents attend training activities.

**Major Issues of Implementing NCLB**

*Adequate Yearly Progress and School Improvement*

Six Oakland schools exited from improvement status as a result of their 2003 test scores, but in the 2003-04 school year, 66 schools—more than half the district’s schools—continue to be in various stages of improvement, restructuring, or corrective action. Thirty-two schools are in their first year of improvement and therefore are offering school choice. Eighteen schools are in their second year and offering both choice and supplemental educational services. Sixteen schools are in corrective action because they have not demonstrated enough improvement in the past three years.

In the fall of 2002, when choice first began under NCLB, parents whose children attended the 34 schools in improvement status that year were notified by mail and by other announcements of their school choice opportunities. Even though the Oakland City
Transit System provided free bus tickets for the children who needed transportation to another school, only 168 of the 20,000 eligible students transferred to other schools. For the 2003-04 school year, the notification took place in August, but only 39 additional students of the 40,000 students that were eligible transferred, even though this option was available to students in 66 schools.

Supplemental services for students in the 10 schools required to offer this assistance to students were available from three providers in 2002-03. The federal program director held parent meetings at each of the schools to help parents understand the offerings that were available. At some schools hardly any parents attended, but at others as many as 100 parents came to the meetings.

A total of 500 students out of the 5,279 who were eligible took advantage of the supplemental service opportunities, which focused on after-school instruction and, in some instances, included parent education classes. Student participation varied considerably from site to site, and according to district staff, where there was a high level of support from teachers and site administration, the number of students who attended regularly was considerably higher.

Nearly 10,000 Oakland students are eligible for supplemental services in 2003-04. With a clear need for these students to improve their academic status, the district set mathematics as the priority for extra help, and 14 approved providers are available to offer the services. A “Supplementary Educational Services Faire” was held, and the district prepared an extensive survey of the providers that was sent to parents to help them with their decisions. More than 1,000 students are expected to participate in 2003-04.

**Other Implementation Issues**

*Fiscal Issues*

The fiscal challenges for Oakland Unified are being addressed simultaneously with the full implementation of NCLB. The reduced funds resulted in the layoff of a large number of classified employees in 2003-04. At some sites, combination grade classes were established due to low enrollments, and where schools were overstaffed, teachers were reassigned to other sites. Most certificated and all classified staff experienced pay cuts of 2-4% along with increased co-payments of benefits. Many employees recognize that everyone has to share in the sacrifice to keep the district solvent, and in general, there appears to be a team effort with the employee organizations and the district searching together for solutions to the severe fiscal problems.

The newly appointed state administrator, who is charged with improving Oakland’s fiscal and academic status, set a clear direction in his “Core Principles for Success,” which are closely aligned with the requirements of NCLB: All students are expected to reach the same standards of achievement; student performance must be improved within established fiscal limits; assessment systems, the curriculum, instructional program,
professional development, accountability, and fiscal responsibility must all be linked to student achievement; students needs to know that school/district staff cares about them; the community, schools and district support staff must support high performance instruction and student learning in customer-friendly work places; and staff must be provided with the training, knowledge, and motivation to make informed decisions and be held accountable for the results of their work.

With more budget cuts looming in California in the fall of 2003, Oakland Unified’s financial situation is likely to be stretched even further. Because of the district’s high poverty level of 70%, schools will at least be able to rely on their Title I funds. At school sites, these funds are used for additional staffing, academic interventions, professional development, parent education, additional materials and supplies, and instructional coaching. Direct services funds cover transportation for school choice and supplemental education services.

Compliance Issues

Oakland has had a long history of noncompliance with its programs for English language learners, and the district has had to change its programs to meet all aspects of the legal requirements. Good progress is being made in this area, according to district staff, and it is expected that this issue will be resolved in 2003-04.

Data File — Oakland Unified School District

Location: Northern California
Type: Urban
Number of Schools:
    109 total
    80 elementary schools K-5
    15 middle schools, grades 6-8
    14 high schools, grades 9-12

Student Enrollment and Demographics
    Total Enrollment: 51,613, K-12
    African American: 43%
    Hispanic: 32%
    Asian: 15%
    White: 5%
    American Indian: 5%
    English Language Learners: 32%
    Students with Disabilities: 11%
    Low-Income Students: 70% (ranging from 2% to 100% in individual schools)

Number of Teachers
    Total: 2,803
    Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: 8.2%

Number of Paraprofessionals
    Total: 400
    Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: 75%
**Number of Title I Schools:**
100 schools – 94 are schoolwide and 6 are targeted assistance

**Number of Schools in School Improvement or Corrective Action**

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2002-03</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Required to offer school choice:</td>
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<td>32</td>
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<tr>
<td>Required to offer supplemental services and choice:</td>
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