Grant Joint Union High School District
California

Superintendent: Dr. Larry Buchanan
Primary contact: Rick Carder, director, state and federal programs*
School studied: Martin Luther King, Jr. Junior High School
13,965 students, 7-12, urban

District and School Descriptions

Grant Joint Union High School District is an urban school district that borders the city of Sacramento in northern California. Within the boundaries of this large secondary district, which enrolls students from grades 7-12, are six independent elementary school districts that have their own schools for grades K-6. The Grant district, which covers 100 square miles, includes some rural areas and suburbs. The McClellan Air Force Base, which was a central part of the Grant district for many years, is closed, but the former base is now being used by private industry. New businesses are moving in, and the school district has offices there. Low-income housing is taking the place of the former military barracks, and a homeless shelter has been established at the site.

The Grant district has some of the highest numbers of low-income families in Sacramento County—68% overall. In several schools the low-income enrollment is as high as 100%. The changing neighborhoods served by Grant and its elementary feeder districts are very diverse, with large populations of Latino, African American, Russian, and Asian students. The district also has a high mobility rate. Overall, about 30% of students move each year, but in higher-poverty schools the rate of transiency is even greater.

Students come to the Grant district from all over the world. The district serves 3,072 English language learners, about 22% of the total enrollment, or one in five students. These students speak 37 different languages. The main languages spoken are Hmong, Spanish, Russian, and Ukrainian, followed by Lao, Romanian, Hindi, and Mien. The most recent arrivals are Hmong-speaking students who came from refugee camps in Thailand during the past year. Most of these students entered school with few or no English skills, but in 2005-06, their second year, many are making great progress.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Junior High School (MLK Jr.) is a schoolwide Title I school in year 5 of school improvement, the restructuring phase of No Child Left Behind. The school has 941 students in grades 7 and 8 and serves diverse families from low-income neighborhoods. More than half of the students are English language learners. Many are newcomers to the United States, and most are in the beginning or intermediate level of English language proficiency.

Key Findings

- The Grant Joint Union High School District has had a record of low student achievement, but there are indications that the trend is changing. One school recently exited school

*Other contacts for this case study include Samuel Harris, principal, Martin Luther King, Jr. Junior High School; Sydney Smith, coordinator of site curriculum and instruction, Martin Luther King, Jr. Junior High School; and Adam Berman, director, professional development, Grant Joint Union High School District.
improvement, and some of the lowest-performing schools have demonstrated growth in achievement, especially in math. Still, most schools have not shown enough improvement to make adequate yearly progress under NCLB—a major challenge because the district has 10 different subgroups large enough to count for AYP, including many low-income students and a sizeable group of English language learners.

- The Grant district and its schools are using a variety of improvement strategies, including many that entail extensive professional development for teachers. School assistance and intervention teams from the state and county have helped schools conduct comprehensive reviews of teaching, curriculum, and student assessment results and to design improvement plans based on the findings. Instructional coaches have been put in place in all schools to observe teachers and provide feedback on the effectiveness of instructional strategies. All teachers and support staff, as well as principals and district administrators, participate extensively in training on subjects ranging from using technology to analyzing student assessment data.

- Over the past three years, the Grant district has resolved most of its past problems in working with outside providers of supplemental educational services. The district has taken an active role by holding supplemental service provider fairs, translating information into other languages, advising parents on written contracts with providers, closely monitoring the specific services being delivered, and arranging payments for providers. The program delivery and parent communication is operating more smoothly in 2005-06, but still, just a small fraction of eligible students participate in these services. District officials point to the high transiency rate of Grant families as one problem affecting participation.

**Overall Impact of NCLB**

Although student achievement has improved in the Grant Joint Union High School District, the district’s greatest challenge remains the generally low levels of student achievement. In the past, the district underwent many leadership changes, and district officials reported that they found it difficult to focus on academic improvement during that period. Over the past six years, the district seems to have achieved greatly needed stability, which has allowed the staff to focus on wide-scale professional development and districtwide interventions to improve student achievement.

District officials attribute much of the district’s progress in raising achievement to efforts they began before NCLB. But they acknowledge that programs undertaken to meet state and federal accountability measures are also responsible. Dr. Larry Buchanan, who has been superintendent for the past six years, expressed pride at what the district has accomplished, while recognizing that much needs to be done before all students reach proficient levels. “We are on the right track,” he said, “and we are doing the best we can. We intend to continue doing what we know is making a difference for our students.” Buchanan’s efforts have not gone unnoticed; in 2005 he was recognized as the superintendent of the year by the Association of California State Administrators.

**NCLB and Student Achievement**

Although the majority of Grant schools have not met AYP targets and have a long way to go before all their students are proficient, there are signs of improved achievement. In 2004, one high school improved enough to exit school improvement. District staff and site principals believe that others will follow in the coming years.

Perhaps the most telling sign of growth is that all Grant schools have shown improvement on the Academic Performance Index (API), a yearly measure of academic growth that forms the basis of California’s state accountability system. The API has been in place since 1999, and
schools are accustomed to using that measure to follow their progress. Although the performance of subgroups is part of API, the system is based on year-to-year growth in achievement, which means that gains on the API do not necessarily mean that AYP targets have been met. However, schools and districts do receive some small credit for growth in the state’s AYP determinations because California uses API scores as an additional factor in calculating AYP.

Between 2004 and 2005 testing, the Grant district gained 28 points on the API (591 to 619), and some schools increased by more than 50 points. These gains are considered very good. All four high schools met their targets on the API and all met the graduation rate requirement. The junior high schools showed similar improvement.

Making AYP has been a greater challenge. The district enrolls a racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse population, and has 10 subgroups that must make AYP at the district level. At the school level, the situation is similar; Grant High School, for example, will have to make AYP for nine subgroups in order to exit year 4 of school improvement, and Martin Luther King, Jr. has seven subgroups that must meet AYP.

Although the Grant district exceeded the state AYP targets for the overall percentage of students scoring at the proficient level or above, many subgroups fell short of the targets, as Table 1 shows.

At the school level, Grant students perform better in math than in English/language arts. For example, none of the four comprehensive high schools missed the AYP target for math, but two

Table 1. Percentage of Grant Students Performing at Proficient Level or Above, 2004-05

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>English/language arts</th>
<th>Math</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State AYP target (high school)</td>
<td>23.0%</td>
<td>23.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State AYP target (junior high)</td>
<td>24.4%</td>
<td>26.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All students, Grant</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filipino</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low-income</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian/Alaskan Native</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English language learners</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Islander</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students with disabilities</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table reads: In 2004-05 testing, 28% of students in the Grant Joint Union High School District scored at the proficient level or above on the state English/language arts test, and 28% scored at this level on the math test. These percentages proficient exceeded the state AYP targets for high school, which were 23.0% in English/language arts and 23.7% in math.

Note: Percentages are ranked from highest-performing subgroup in English/language arts to lowest.

missed the target in English/language arts. However, one of five students in the district is an English language learner, and for these students, reading and writing are more difficult to master than math, explained Rick Carder, director of state and federal programs.

### Adequate Yearly Progress and School Improvement

#### DISTRICT AND SCHOOL AYP STATUS

The Grant Joint Union High School District did not make AYP in 2004-05, the first year it failed to do so. Nine of the sixteen Grant schools are in school improvement in 2005-06, and four of these nine schools are in year 4 or 5 of improvement. When NCLB went into effect, some Grant schools were placed in the later stages of school improvement because they had already failed to demonstrate the required growth in API scores under the state accountability system and the Title I accountability provisions of the Improving America’s Schools Act (IASA). Rio Linda High School, which was in year 3 of improvement in 2003-04, exited school improvement after two consecutive years of meeting all targets.

The improvement status of Grant schools in 2005-06 is as follows:

- **Year 5 of school improvement:** Martin Luther King, Jr. Junior High
  Don Julio Junior High

- **Year 4 of school improvement:** Grant Union High School, Highlands High School

- **Year 3 of school improvement:** Rio Linda Junior High School

- **Year 2 of school improvement:** Foothill Farms Junior High, Rio Tierra Junior High

- **Year 1 of school improvement:** Vista Nueva Career and Technology High School
  Pacific High School (Continuation School)

Rio Linda Junior High is in corrective action, and the four schools in years 4 and 5 have been restructured or are still undergoing restructuring efforts. The Grant district as a whole did not make AYP, having missed the participation rate in math and the AYP proficiency targets for some subgroups in both English/language arts and math. The graduation rate was met, and so was the district API.

#### DISTRICT AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES

The Grant Joint Union district is using a variety of districtwide strategies to improve school and student performance, for both schools in improvement and schools trying to stay out of improvement. Some efforts have been in place for the past three years, and others are still being developed.

One key districtwide improvement strategy that has benefited Grant is the use of School Assistance and Intervention Teams that were initiated by the state of California for schools in improvement. Previously Grant used these teams for its schools in corrective action, and the process worked so well that the district continued to use them for other schools. Supported through a district contract with the Sacramento County Office of Education, these teams meet regularly with individual school staffs and help the principal, teachers, department heads, and others develop specific plans to improve teaching techniques and increase student learning. The teams assist school staff with a complete review of the teaching and learning processes, curricula for all courses of study, and all assessment results. With the results of the review in hand, the team helps the staff determine the most effective instructional strategies to improve student learning. Follow-up to all the training is an important part of the process.

Instructional coaches are part of another improvement strategy being used extensively by the Grant district. These coaches are in place at all schools for math, English, and English language
development. These are full-time positions, but in some instances, additional coaching is provided by full-time teachers who get paid for coaching in their preparation period. Coaches assist regular teachers by doing demonstration lessons, observing teachers as they teach, and providing feedback on the effectiveness of the strategies used.

Coaching and school assistance and intervention teams are just part of the district’s extensive professional development efforts, which are described in the Professional Development section. To ensure that professional development is integrated with the district’s overall improvement efforts, staff training at all schools is based on state grade-level curriculum standards and specifically addresses three elements that district officials feel are essential for systemic change: content, pedagogy, and materials. The district is in its second year of providing this kind of professional development support to schools, said Adam Berman, director of professional development. “We are building a professional learning community, and everyone is involved,” he said.

All district instructional staff members, especially teachers and site administrators, have been trained extensively in the use of technology systems to collect and analyze assessment data. Teachers are taught to use assessment information to identify the academic weaknesses of each student and to differentiate instruction to address these individual needs.

The district also provides monthly training sessions for all school principals and vice principals to make sure that school site leadership is focused on academic change and is consistent across the district. These sessions also provide site administrators with opportunities to learn from each other’s experiences.

Another district improvement strategy is to provide students with expanded opportunities to receive extra help. Two years ago, the district revamped the schedule for all students who were far behind in reading or math to provide them with double and triple blocks of instructional time in those two subjects. In addition, a districtwide program called Anytime School offers after-school tutoring, and hundreds of students attend the program four afternoons each week. Students can also get extra help to prepare for the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE), which the state will require students to pass to graduate in 2006.

**CORRECTIVE ACTION AND RESTRUCTURING STRATEGIES**

Martin Luther King, Jr. Junior High has been in school improvement since NCLB took effect, due to its prior performance under the state accountability system and that of IASA. Corrective action began at the school two years ago, and restructuring efforts are still taking place, entailing massive changes in all areas of curriculum, instruction, and student expectations.

Although student achievement at MLK Jr. remains low (and below that of other schools in the Grant district), the school is showing noticeable improvements. During the past two years, the school’s score on the state Academic Performance Index has increased by 67 points, from 511 in 2003 to 578 in 2005. And as illustrated in table 2, the percentage of proficient and advanced students at MLK Jr. has also increased for most subgroups, especially in math. “When you consider where we were a few years ago,” said Samuel Harris, principal of MLK Jr., “we are looking much better. We are moving to where we want to be. It may be slow, but we will get there.”

Eleven different elementary schools feed into Grant. Most of these elementary schools are administered by elementary districts that are separate from Grant; however, three schools are in the Del Paso Heights Elementary District, which recently came under Grant’s governance because of its lack of achievement and a potential state takeover on the horizon. One priority for MLK Jr. has been to work with its feeder schools, including Del Paso Heights, to align curriculum and expectations for student learning between grades 6 and 7.

The administrators, teachers, and other staff at MLK Jr. worked with a school assistance and intervention team to make major changes in their school, including adjustments and modifications to curriculum, instruction, and staffing. The school counselor position was eliminated and replaced with a full-time psychologist, who works extensively with students having academic and behavioral problems and their families. A triple block of instructional time for reading and a
double block for math were implemented for remedial students. Both are showing results, according to the principal and other staff. “This was one of the big changes we made,” said Sydney Smith, the school’s director of curriculum and instruction, “and it is working very well.” Smith transferred to MLK Jr. from another school in the district because of her expertise in curriculum. Her administrative role is similar to that of a vice principal, but her main responsibility, as part of the school’s restructuring, is to oversee all aspects of teaching and learning, including professional development, coaching, and training for teachers.

MLK Jr. has five teachers who are designated as coaches, three for math and two for English language arts, although not all are full-time. The coaches conduct classroom observations and visitations and meet regularly with the principal. Smith and Principal Harris said that they are very supportive of the coaches. As Harris said, “We want everybody to get better at what they’re doing, and that means all the teachers and the rest of the staff as well as the students. Coaching is a very good way to help teachers.”

MLK Jr. teachers take part in a range of professional development activities that focus on behavior management, department collaboration, explicit direct instruction, technology, data analysis of assessment results, ways to keep students on task, the culture of poverty, medications for special education students, habits of effective educators, and gang recognition and training in how to deal with gang behavior. The school’s content coaches help plan professional development and do follow-up with teachers as they implement new strategies learned in the workshops.

Several of the changes at MLK Jr. have been spearheaded by Harris. When he took on the principal’s job several years ago, academic performance was very low, and the school had many other problems. Turnover of principals, teachers, and other staff was high, and disciplining stu-
dents who misbehaved took up huge amounts of time for everyone, he explained. Many students
were referred to the office for discipline reasons every day, truancy was a problem, suspension
and expulsion rates were very high, and parents did not support the school and its policies. “The
first thing that had to be done was to make this school one that everyone could be proud of, but
we couldn’t just focus on the kids,” he said. “We had to look at everybody, and we had to find
ways that everyone could work together.” Many staff members left the school; some of them
were encouraged to do so. In school year 2005-06, MLK Jr. has a very stable staff, and Harris is
pleased with how well everyone works together.

Many of the strategies being implemented at MLK Jr. are also being used at other Grant dis-
trict schools in improvement, including Grant High School, Highlands High School, and Don
Julio Junior High School. Some interventions, such as the school assistance teams, were consid-
ered by district and school officials to have been key factors in helping Rio Linda High School
improve enough to exit school improvement. Rio Linda Junior High School, in year 3, is devel-
oping its plan for corrective action. All of these schools met the state’s API targets, demonstrat-
ing growth in both math and English/language arts.

Testing Issues
California has tested all students in grades 2-11 for the past 10 years. Since 1999, the Academic
Performance Index has been a major part of school accountability in the state. Four assessments
are used to measure student achievement, and three play a role in AYP calculations:

- The California Standards Test (CST) is administered in grades 2-11 in English/language arts,
  math, history/social science, and science. The English/language arts and math scores for
  grades 2-8 are counted for API and AYP.

- The California Achievement Test, Edition 6 (CAT-6), is given in grades 3 and 7 in reading/
  language arts, math, and spelling. This test is part of the API, but it is not counted for AYP.

- The California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA) is administered to students with
  disabilities who cannot be tested with the statewide assessments. The scores are counted for
  API and AYP.

- The California High School Exit Examination is taken by 10th grade students, with retakes
  available in subsequent years for students who do not pass. The CAHSEE passing rates are
  part of the determination of AYP for high schools. Beginning in spring 2006, all California
  students must pass the CAHSEE to graduate from high school.

Impact of NCLB on Curriculum and Instruction
As noted above, the Grant district has made major changes in scheduling classes for low-performing
students in response to both NCLB and the state accountability system. Students who score signif-
ically below grade level in reading and/or math are required to take two or three classes in either or
both subjects instead of one class for each. The “block” reading classes enroll more students than the
block math classes. This shift to block scheduling, which is now in its second year, meant the elim-
ination of science and history/social science for many remedial students, but in 2005-06, these stu-
dents can take a one-semester class that includes both subjects. English language learners are also
enrolled in block classes until they gain enough English proficiency to be mainstreamed.
Study skills are emphasized for all students, and, as noted above, after-school instruction is available. The high schools have increased the number of Advanced Placement classes they offer to assure that students are preparing for college and beyond.

**English Language Learners**

The California English Language Development Test (CELDT) is used to assess English proficiency in the state, and all ELL students are tested annually for their English proficiency in speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Students who score at level 5 on the CELDT can be re-designated as “fluent English proficient” if there is evidence that they can function well in the classroom—a determination usually made by classroom teachers. ELL students take the same tests for AYP that other students do, but they are counted in the ELL subgroup until they meet grade-level proficiency for three years on the English/language arts test.

Grant students who score at the lower levels on the CELDT are enrolled in English immersion classes, but when they move up into the higher levels of English proficiency, they take English language mainstream classes. All teachers of ELL students must meet the state requirements, which they do through a bilingual designation or a certification for language acquisition, such as the Cross Cultural Language and Academic Development (CLAD) certificate.

English language learners in Grant have made progress in the percentages scoring proficient on state tests. In 2004 only 9% of the ELL students were proficient or advanced in English/language arts, but in 2005, that percentage increased to 14%. The math increase was even greater—from 11% in 2004 to 21% in 2005.

Title III is used in the district for additional materials for students and for coaches who work with the teachers of ELL students.

**NCLB School Choice**

As in past years, very few Grant students chose to attend a different school in 2005-06 due to their school’s improvement status. Parents are notified of the choices available for their children, but most secondary students do not want to leave friends and neighborhood schools, according to Rick Carder, who coordinates the choice program. Only a fraction of a percentage of the students eligible for NCLB choice have actually transferred schools during the past four years, as shown in table 3.

Of the 42 students who transferred to another school in 2004-05, 16 were from Martin Luther King, Jr. Junior High, the largest share of any school. In 2005-06, only 5 students from

| Table 3. Grant Students Eligible for and Transferring Due to NCLB School Choice |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Eligible students | 6,651           | 8,338           | 9,734           | 7,341           |
| Number transferred | 33              | 31              | 42              | 14              |
| Percentage transferred | 0.4%           | 0.4%           | 0.4%           | 0.2%           |

Table reads: In 2005-06, a total of 7,341 students in the Grant Joint Union High School District were eligible to transfer to another school as a result of NCLB choice requirements, but only 14 students, or 0.2% of those eligible, actually transferred schools.

Source: Office of State and Federal Programs, Grant Joint Union High School District.
MLK Jr. changed schools; the decline was due to the growing level of parental support at the school, according to Principal Harris.

**Supplemental Educational Services**

The Grant district has had much experience with supplemental educational services because so many schools have been and continue to be required to offer these services. As in past years, all eligible families were notified of the availability of supplemental services, but even after the district held its traditional provider fair in September 2005, only a tiny percentage of parents chose to have their children participate in tutoring and other supplemental services. The number of participating students dropped in 2005-06; only 98 of the 5,828 students eligible are receiving supplemental services. **Table 4** shows the participation in supplemental educational services for the past four years.

**Table 4. Grant Students Participating in Supplemental Educational Services**

<table>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eligible students</td>
<td>4,403</td>
<td>4,680</td>
<td>6,608</td>
<td>5,828</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participating students</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of eligible participating</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table reads: In 2005-06, a total of 5,828 students in the Grant Joint Union High School District were eligible to receive supplemental educational (tutoring) services under NCLB, but just 98 students, or 1.7% of those eligible, actually participated.

*Source: Office of State and Federal Programs, Grant Joint Union High School District.*

The largest numbers of students participating in supplemental educational services in 2004-05 came from Rio Linda High School (39), Grant High School (38), and Martin Luther King, Jr. Junior High (24). These participant rates are similar in 2005-06, except that Rio Linda students are no longer eligible because the school exited improvement. Of the hundreds of approved supplemental service providers on the California list, 26 providers indicated an interest in working with the Grant school district. Rick Carder, director of state and federal programs, made contact with all of them and invited them to the provider fair, where parents could learn about the services being offered. Only 11 providers attended, as did 30 parents of eligible students. Ten providers were chosen by parents to serve their children; all the providers offer after-school assistance.

Because of some past negative experiences with providers, Carder said he is well prepared to help parents with all aspects of supplemental educational services, including the contracts. He has a system for monitoring the services throughout the year and keeping track of the funds available for each student served. “Even though we know how to do this now,” he said, “it takes an incredible amount of time to do everything that has to be done. Sometimes I just don’t know how we get it all done.” Carder sees to it that parents know who the providers are, what is being offered, and how each student will benefit from the help. He also arranges for all the information for parents to be translated into at least four languages, and his staff finds someone who can communicate with parents who speak other languages. Carder sets up the provider fairs and provides assistance as parents and providers develop Individual Academic Plans for students. He also makes arrangements for funding, sees that the providers are paid, and helps to coordinate space
at district public schools where providers can work with students. “I know how to do all this now, but there was a lot to learn,” he said. “I even have had to settle a lot of problems that came up between the parents and the providers.”

Carder continues to be concerned about the low numbers of students taking advantage of the good services available, such as remedial instruction in reading, writing, and math; preparation for passing assessments, including the state graduation exam; computer-assisted tutorials; literacy tutoring; and even assistance with time management, study skills, problem solving, life skills, and future planning. He and other district staff members are convinced that the high transiency rate of Grant families contributes not only to the lack of student achievement, but to their low participation in programs that could help them. Families of under-achieving students tend to have many problems and to move in and out of district schools, according to Carder and Principal Harris of MLK Jr. “Some students are where they are because they are in juvenile custody,” said Harris, “so there are many things that affect their academic achievement. It’s hard enough to get some of them to come to school, much less to attend after-school programs.”

Teacher Qualifications, Support, and Professional Development

HIGHLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS

One of Grant’s problems with meeting NCLB teacher qualifications was teachers who were teaching out of their major area of study as previously allowed by the California Teacher Credentialing Commission. Although all the district’s teachers have their bachelor’s degree and a California teaching credential, some are teaching in their minor areas of study rather than their majors. Of the 673 teachers in the district, 76 teachers—11%—do not meet NCLB requirements for being “highly qualified,” according to district officials. The percentage of teachers who meet NCLB requirements varies by school and is higher at the high schools than the junior high schools. Alternative schools have increased their number of teachers meeting NCLB criteria to an average of 92%. At four high schools, roughly 90% of teachers meet NCLB criteria, while at the six junior highs, 83% of the teachers meet the requirements.

Various options are open to teachers to become highly qualified. Those who are teaching out of their major degree area but are not new teachers can comply with NCLB by using California’s HOUSSSE (high objective uniform state standard of evaluation) system. Under this option, teachers can accumulate 100 points by getting credit for the following types of prior experience: demonstrating successful teaching experience in the content area or being a school or district leader in the content area; serving as a mentor, academic coach, supervising teacher or university instructor; achieving recognition at the state or national level as an outstanding teacher; successfully completing required coursework; or fulfilling a combination of options. However, the final determination for which classes a teacher can teach is based on the authorizations stipulated on their California Teaching Credential.

Grant’s many teachers of English language learners must also meet an additional requirement, in that they must have a California Language Acquisition and Development (CLAD) certificate. Grant’s newly hired teachers who are also new to the teaching profession have all met this requirement. Rick Carder works closely with staff from the California Department of Education to follow the progress of teachers toward becoming highly qualified. “State department folks have been very useful in helping us get a handle on teacher qualifications,” he said. “We have a very good system of record keeping, and we know what we have to do to help each teacher.”

As it has done for the past three years, the district notifies parents of their right to request information about the qualifications of their children’s teachers.
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Professional development for teachers and other staff is a major part of the Grant plan for academic improvement, both across the district and at individual schools. District staff members, under the direction of Adam Berman, work with school principals to identify the training needed in all aspects of the curriculum and for all courses of study. Major topics of professional development at most schools in 2005-06 include planning effective lessons, working with students with disabilities, using explicit, direct instruction, and effectively using the constant flow of assessment data. In addition to monthly workshops for administrators, counselors, and department chairs, the district provides extensive training for teachers. Schools schedule “late start” or “early dismissal” days when students come to school later or get out earlier, and periods are shortened accordingly. The additional time in the school day is used for regular teacher training.

Teachers across the district are paid to attend training sessions held after school, on Saturday, or during the summer. When training is held on a regular school day, substitutes are provided so the teachers can attend. With these multiple ways to provide training, the district assures that everyone participates.

“Another thing we have to focus on,” said Berman, “is using consistent academic language for instruction. Students get confused when we say the same thing in different ways. What do we mean, for example, when we ask students to analyze a piece of writing, identify the central theme, or write a thesis?” Since so many Grant students are English language learners, teachers must use precise and clear instructional language to help these students understand.

Paraprofessional Qualifications and Support

Because most Grant schools are schoolwide Title I schools, all the paraprofessionals at the schools must meet the NCLB highly qualified requirements, including bilingual assistants and interpreters for English language learners. The district has helped most of its 136 paraprofessionals (98%) pass the district assessment of their ability to assist teachers with instruction. Only three paraprofessionals have not yet done so, and they are expected to meet the requirement in 2005-06.

Funding and Costs

A large amount of the Grant Title I budget, some 26%, must be set aside by law for choice transportation, professional development, supplemental educational services, and parent involvement. As a result of these set-asides, the allocations to individual schools have gotten smaller each year. Although the district had an increase of 9% in Title I funds in 2004-05, its 2005-06 allocation of about $4,943,321 was lower than its allocation for 2004-05, bringing the amount down to what it had been in 2003-04. However, the number of low-income students in the district has increased in both years.

Capacity Issues

Technology has been greatly improved in the Grant schools, and all staff and students benefit from the improvements. Local, state, and federal resources are stretched to their limits, according to district officials, and this has prevented the superintendent from expanding technology use as much as he would like. “I would like to see this entire district set up as a wireless community—in the schools and the neighborhoods and businesses,” he said. “All our families, especially those who have had computers donated to them from businesses, would be able to have the Internet for their students.”
Data File—Grant Joint Union High School District

Location: Sacramento County, northern California
Type: Urban

Number of Schools
Total: 16
Middle/junior high: 6
High schools: 4
Other: 6 (2 continuation schools, 1 independent study school, 1 special education center, 2 charter schools)

Number of Title I schools: 14

Student Enrollment and Demographics
Total enrollment: 13,965

- White: 37%
- Latino: 23%
- African American: 16%
- Asian: 12%
- Other: 12%

- Low-income students: 68%
- English language learners: 22%
- Students with disabilities: 12%

Teachers
Total number of teachers: 673
Percentage meeting NCLB “highly qualified” requirements: 89%

Paraprofessionals
Total number of Title I instructional paraprofessionals: 136
Percentage meeting NCLB “highly qualified” requirements: 98%

Total Number That Did Not Make AYP Based on 2004-05 Testing
Title I and non-Title I schools that did not make AYP, including those in improvement, restructuring, or corrective action: 11

Number of Title I Schools in Improvement, Restructuring, or Corrective Action

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<th>Category</th>
<th>Based on 2003-04 testing</th>
<th>Based on 2004-05 testing</th>
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Number of Schools Offering Choice and/or SES

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