

Achieving to a Higher Standard



A Report to the Community on Progress, Performance, and
Program Improvement in the Rocklin Unified School District



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Students Achieving to High Standards

A proven track record of high achievement

Rocklin Unified School District continues to be one of the highest achieving school districts in the state. Our students consistently rank among the best in Northern California on a wide array of state tests and performance indicators. In 2013, with a district score of 891 on the Academic Performance Index (API), RUSD is ranked number one among the top ten unified school districts in the greater Sacramento area. We can all share a strong sense of community pride in this remarkable accomplishment. Quality education is a shared community value in Rocklin.

Our formula for success is an effective combination of high-quality teachers, supportive staff, visionary leadership, an engaged community, active parents, and students across all grade levels that are success-oriented. This progress report presents an update on the achievement indicators we use to measure our progress and performance.

Consider these measures of success:

- ▶ In Placer County, Rocklin HS and Whitney HS are the top two comprehensive high schools, based on the API.
- ▶ In the greater Sacramento region, Rocklin HS and Whitney HS are ranked in the top ten high schools, based on the API.
- ▶ RUSD students in Grades 2-8 are the second highest performing in Placer County with an overall API of 902.
- ▶ RUSD far outpaces the statewide API which is 790. Every RUSD school has exceeded the state's target goal of reaching 800 on the API.
- ▶ Across California and in our region, most school districts did not see gains in their API scores last year; in fact, most scores went down statewide while RUSD's API remained strong at 891.
- ▶ Students must pass the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) in order to graduate. The exam is first administered in grade 10; 95% of RUSD students passed the English-Language Arts portion and 97% of RUSD students passed the Math portion on their first attempt. This passing rate is higher than most districts in Placer County and in the state.
- ▶ In 2013, 281 students obtained perfect scores on at least one section of the California Standards Test (CST) on which the API is based.
- ▶ Two-thirds of our middle school students completed Algebra I by the end of grade 8 and 87% achieved a score in the proficient or advanced range. All students must pass Algebra I and Geometry in order to graduate.
- ▶ In 2013, our Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) program students scored a phenomenal API score of 990, on an API scale of 1,000.
- ▶ 89% of RUSD seniors enroll in postsecondary education; 44% of those in four-year universities.

Top 10 Unified School Districts in the Greater Sacramento Region 2013 Academic Performance Index (API)

Rocklin Unified (Placer)	891
Davis Unified (Yolo)	882
Folsom-Cordova Unified (Sacramento)	839
Tahoe-Truckee Joint Unified (Placer)	816
Western Placer Unified (Placer)	816
Elk Grove Unified (Sacramento)	805
Center Joint Unified (Sacramento)	795
Natomas Unified (Sacramento)	792
Black Oak Mine Unified (El Dorado)	786
San Juan Unified (Sacramento)	782

Understanding Program Improvement

For the first time since the state and federal accountability laws were enacted over a decade ago, Rocklin Unified School District has been designated as a Program Improvement school district. Given Rocklin's high achievement, this might seem confusing on the surface to parents and community members.

Here is some information to put PI status in context:

The federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) continuously raises the standard for showing adequate yearly progress on test scores. In fact, the simple math indicates that as school districts reach the very top of the rating scale (over 800) it becomes harder to continue to show yearly improvement. Rocklin USD is near the top of the scale.

Under this legislation, all schools must show academic growth each year in English-Language Arts and Mathematics as measured by the California Standards Test (CST). Not only must the overall school demonstrate growth, but every "subgroup" that makes up the school must meet its targeted growth. These subgroups include socially/economically disadvantaged, special needs, and English Language Learners, to name a few.

In 2012 and again in 2013, our District API was an impressive 891. However, we missed the state's 2013 Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) target for our District. Since we did not meet our growth target, we automatically qualified for Program Improvement status. In other words, we did not improve quite enough under the requirements of NCLB.



The District's PI status was caused by a relatively small number of student test takers. The English-Language Arts CST was taken by 6,652 students and the Math CST was taken by 6,657 students. ELA test scores of 325 students and Math test scores of 140 students prevented the District from obtaining "Safe Harbor" status, as it is called under NCLB. The listing above shows that many other high performing school districts have entered into PI status, as well.

Rocklin Elementary and Victory High were in PI for the first time last year. They are joined by Antelope Creek, Cobblestone, and Parker Whitney elementary schools. To exit PI status, a school or district needs to reach its AYP targets two years in a row.

What does PI mean for our school district?

Does this mean that students in Rocklin USD are not doing as well? Absolutely not! It just means that we must ensure that every student is performing to their potential. We will have more flexibility to direct restricted resources toward underperforming students and most parents and students will see very little change in our educational programs. According to state policies, we are sending letters to every family enrolled at a PI school offering the possibility to transfer their student to another school in the District. All families in the past have decided to stay at their neighborhood school.

Program Improvement (PI) Status Placer County School Districts

Year One PI Districts

Placer County Office of Education
Rocklin Unified

Year Two PI Districts

Roseville City Elementary

Year Three PI Districts

Auburn Union Elementary
Dry Creek Elementary
Placer Union High
Roseville Joint High
Tahoe-Truckee Unified
Western Placer Unified

A Commitment to Excellence

Meeting the challenge of a new assessment system under a new instructional model . . . California Common Core State Standards

Measuring how well our students are performing is an essential element of a quality educational program. In Rocklin, we use multiple measures to give us indicators of success and diagnostic tools to shape a top notch academic program for each child. Assessments give parents, teachers, administrators and students valuable benchmarks and useful feedback that help us collaboratively improve the learning experience for every child. How we assess student success is going to change soon.



California's new Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are a game changer for instructional practices and the student learning experience. It is not enough to prepare students to become eligible for college; we need to ensure that they are ready and fully capable of thriving in a 21st Century postsecondary or workforce environment.

This new approach focuses on developing in each student the critical thinking, collaborative problem-solving, writing, communication, leadership initiative, and research skills they will need to be successful in college, careers, and citizenship. With that will come a fundamentally different way to assess student progress. The details of that assessment model are being worked on by the state and will be unveiled this year.

In the meantime, RUSD has been actively working to make the transition seamless and effective. Our District has been devoting articulation days and providing professional development so that teachers can work collaboratively to support this transition. The District will host community forums to build awareness about the changes to come (the next forum is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. on October 8 at Granite Oaks Middle School). Look for additional California Common Core State Standards announcements, updates, resources, and the community forum schedule on District and school websites as this transformational process continues.

