



**NAPA VALLEY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
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JOHN P. GLASER, Ed. D.  
Superintendent

January 30, 2007

Dear Staff,

The purpose of this letter is to share with you some of the details of our district program improvement status and the rationale behind our response. If you read no further in this letter than the first paragraph, I want to emphasize how much I appreciate the talent and professionalism of our staff, and the great progress that you have already made in understanding and addressing the achievement gap in this district. This is a great opportunity for us to ensure that we are aligning ourselves around a common purpose, and that we are doing what we can to ensure that our students are successful. We have a window of opportunity not only to move forward on these educational goals, but also to do it in a way that releases us from the sanctions and constraints of high stakes accountability.

As many of you know, Napa Valley Unified School District was notified in early September that we were in "Program Improvement (PI)" status under No Child Left Behind. Consequently, a number of NCLB mandated actions had to be addressed immediately. These included:

1. Notifying all schools and families of PI status, the reason we entered, and what our district would do to improve achievement;
2. Contracting with a state-approved assistance team to guide us through a self-assessment process;
3. Evaluating nine "essential" elements of each school's program using an *Academic Program Survey* to uncover matches and gaps;
4. Rewriting our Local Education Agency Plan (LEA Plan) to identify corrective actions;
5. Submitting our LEA Plan to the state Board of Education by December 7, 2006, and
6. Implementing corrective actions immediately.

#### How Did We Enter PI?

NCLB requires our district to make "Adequate Yearly Progress" (AYP) in 42 indicators each year. A district is identified as PI after two consecutive years of not making AYP in the **same area** (language arts or math) with the **same subgroup at all three levels – elementary, middle and high school**. (If any one of the three levels had met targets, we would not be in PI status.) Our 42 indicators include:

1. The percentage of students scoring "proficient" or "advanced" on the **California Standards Tests** and the **California High School Exit Exam in English language arts and mathematics** (20 indicators)
2. The percentage of **students participating** in those tests (20 indicators)
3. District progress on California's **Academic Performance Index (API - 1 indicator)**
4. District **graduation rate** (1 indicator)

While NVUSD made tremendous growth from the previous year, we did not meet targets in English language arts for two subgroups: English learners (ELs) and students with disabilities (SWD). (Note: Redesignated students are included in the EL subgroup until they score "proficient" three times.) Although your school may not have enough ELs or SWDs to count as a significant subgroup, these students "roll over" into the district total. **All schools and all students contribute to district subgroups**; therefore, under NCLB, all schools are part of program improvement. (NOTE: If the only group not making AYP had been SWDs, the state would have applied a second test that we would have met.)

#### How Can We Exit PI?

To exit PI, we must *meet all ELA targets, including targets for English learners, for two consecutive years at any one of our grade levels – elementary, middle or high*. At the elementary/middle levels, this means the percent scoring "Proficient" or above on the CSTs. At the high school level, this means the number of 10<sup>th</sup> graders scoring a 380 or above on the CAHSEE (350 is passing).

#### Why Must We Implement Immediate Changes – and in the Middle of the School Year?

- We identified hundreds of redesignated students and English learners at "Basic" that have the greatest potential to move into "Proficient" and "Advanced" with some targeted support.
  - Many "Below Basic" and "Far Below Basic" students were not receiving interventions to accelerate learning.
  - Some English learners were not receiving daily mandated English Language Development.
  - Schools identified shortages in instructional minutes and the need to use standards-aligned instructional materials daily.
- To address these gaps and provide interventions, extra sections had to be added to master schedules and standards-aligned materials had to be ordered immediately.

#### Why This Sense of Urgency?

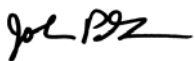
*Our first opportunity to meet targets and begin moving out of PI status will be based on this year's CAHSEE and CST results.* This requires implementing strategic and intensive interventions immediately for *all students* not yet proficient to accelerate learning and positively impact results this spring. This is the *last Springing in which targets will remain at current levels*. In 2007-08 targets will increase by 10%. **The "window of opportunity" to make a significant difference in results is the next ten weeks before STAR testing begins.**

#### What Happens If We Don't Meet Targets?

Currently districts are given only two years to exit PI status. In the third year, intensive sanctions are imposed districtwide that could include external governance, alternative district leadership, implementation of new curriculum, or other major district restructuring. Because we have shown consistent growth in many areas, we were allowed to include exceptions to normal state mandates in our district plan. However, if we do not meet targets, it is likely these exceptions will be removed.

We recognize that strong communication is essential as we move forward with abrupt changes. Since our work began in earnest last October, we have included hundreds of teachers, parents, administrators, and the community in our process. Input from NVEA has been an invaluable and critical part of this effort. We believe the changes you have made and will make to increase opportunities for students will close the achievement gap in our district. We also believe we must work together and with a sense of purpose to make this happen, and that our collaborative efforts will make a significant difference for students.

Sincerely,



John P. Glaser  
Superintendent