



A Glossary of Accountability Terms

API Academic Performance Index

Created as part of the Public Schools Accountability Act, the API is a method of summarizing test score results into one number that can range from 200 to 1000, with 800 being the state-defined goal. That one-number summary—"API score"—is used to rank schools among all others in the state of the same type (elementary, middle, high) and, separately, among the 100 schools most similar in student demographics, teacher qualifications, and other factors. API scores are also used to set annual improvement goals ("growth targets").

AYP Adequate Yearly Progress

A set of indicators used to determine whether schools, districts, and the state are on track to meeting the goal of having 100% of students proficient on certain state academic content standards by 2013–14. In California, the indicators are a 95% participation rate on state tests; specified percentages scoring proficient and above on tests of English and math content standards; API scores; and for high schools, graduation rates.

CSRD Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program

This federal program provided funding for schools to implement whole-school reform models chosen from a federally approved list. A subset of California schools receiving these funds were considered part of the Immediate Intervention/Underperforming Schools Program. Federal officials discontinued CSRD (later renamed Comprehensive School Reform) in 2006.

CSTs California Standards Tests

These tests are part of the state's Standardized Testing and Reporting Program (STAR) and are based on the state's academic content standards—what teachers are expected to teach and what students are expected to learn. They are primarily

multiple choice and cover four subject areas: English language arts (grades 2–11); mathematics (grades 2–11); history/social science (grades 8, 10, and 11); and science (grades 5, 8, 10, and for high school students who are taking specific subjects such as biology). Students are scored as "far below basic, below basic, basic, proficient, or advanced." The state's goal is for every student to score at "proficient" or above.

HPSGP High Priority Schools Grant Program

Created in 2001, this intervention program is similar to II/USP except that it focuses on schools in the bottom 10% of the API rankings (as opposed to the bottom 50%), gives schools more time to improve before the next level of interventions is triggered, and provides more funding per pupil than II/USP (\$400 versus \$200).

II/USP Immediate Intervention/Underperforming Schools Program

An intervention program in which schools received 1) a planning grant of \$50,000 to hire an "external evaluator" to help create an "action plan," and 2) implementation grants of \$200 per pupil to implement the action plan over the subsequent two to three years. Participating schools that did not achieve "significant growth" were subject to takeover by the state or assignment of a School Assistance and Intervention Team (SAIT).

NCLB No Child Left Behind Act

This federal legislation, enacted in January 2002, is the most recent version of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. Among its many provisions, NCLB requires states receiving specified funding to hold schools accountable for the proficiency of their students on state academic content standards. Schools that receive Title I Basic Grants and do not make "adequate yearly progress" (AYP) for two consecutive years enter Program Improvement (PI).

PI Program Improvement

An intervention program for schools and districts that fail to make "adequate yearly progress" (AYP) for two consecutive years. The interventions become more severe if the school/district continues failing to make AYP, to the point where some restructuring can be required.

PSAA Public Schools Accountability Act

This California legislation, enacted in the spring of 1999, created a system of summarizing performance on state standardized tests, a rewards program for schools that made specified levels of improvement, and a school intervention program for lower-scoring schools that did not show sufficient improvement. (See II/USP above.)

SAIT School Assistance and Intervention Team

A group of people knowledgeable in school leadership and curriculum assigned to work with a school that has not made an acceptable level of academic progress while in the Immediate Intervention/Underperforming Schools Program (II/USP) or under the High Priority Schools Grant Program (HPSGP).

STAR Program Standardized Testing and Reporting Program

California's program of standardized testing primarily consists of a battery of California Standards Tests (CSTs). These tests cover state-adopted academic content standards in English, math, science, and history/social science. Students in grades 2–11 take various CSTs. Students in grades 3 and 7 also take a short, norm-referenced test in English and math that compares their scores to a national sample. And certain Spanish-speaking English learners in grades 2–11 take an additional test in Spanish.