

**Response from San Rafael City Schools
To
“Every Child Counts: English Learners in Marin County Schools”
Marin Civil Grand Jury**

INTRODUCTION

The San Rafael City Schools (SRCS) Board of Education, together with Dr. Michael Watenpaugh, Superintendent, acknowledge the efforts of the Marin County Civil Grand Jury for highlighting selective data related to the needs of English Learners in the greater Marin community, outlined in its report dated June 10, 2015, titled “*Every Child Counts: English Learners in Marin County Schools.*”

We believe the report contains some incorrect assumptions with flawed conclusions. It is inaccurate to conclude that the District has done little to advance English Learners and lacks programs and support for them to progress towards graduation.

We believe that the Grand Jury would have benefited from conversations with the San Rafael City Schools’ Superintendent of Schools. Given the Superintendent’s eight-year tenure, he could have provided a more comprehensive overview and understanding of the District’s deliberate actions, strategies and engagements that are in place to support English Learners, resulting in increasing levels of success. The Superintendent could have also provided the names of individuals and/or community based partnerships who are deeply engaged and aware of the District’s actions to serve English Learners, with whom the Grand Jury could validate and learn more about this community effort.

For more than a decade, in collaboration with our public school colleagues and our community partners, SRCS has placed a high priority on providing for the needs of all students and all student sub-groups, including English Learners. Included in the District’s response are illustrations and examples of the programmatic and individual actions taken to address the needs of English Learners, including:

- District initiatives
- Partnerships with Community Based Organizations
- Data analysis
- Professional development for teachers and staff
- Family engagement and support
- Support for first generation students to college
- Early intervention (Preschool to Grade 3) for academic success
- Dedicated resources – fiscal, human capital, time
- Communication and collaboration

San Rafael City Schools reflects the greatest ethnic, socio-economic and linguistic diversity of any school district in Marin County. This diversity is among the District's greatest strengths and challenges.

In 2007, the District completed an inclusive strategic planning process, which involved stakeholders reflective of the greater school community. ***"Roadmap to the Future"*** outlined the District's 2007 – 2012 Strategic Plan. The greater San Rafael community was engaged in the development of the strategic plan, and the approved plan was widely distributed and communicated to residents, business leaders, community partners, school and district staff, parents and students. The Roadmap outlined both Areas of Strengths and Areas of Concern based upon student performance trends, and the themes that emerged from the greater school community. The Board of Education's introduction to the strategic plan included the following statement:

"To be a truly great school system, we know we must significantly reduce the disparity in achievement among socioeconomic and ethnic groups in our schools. Diversity is a rich opportunity and a considerable challenge that needs more attention from leadership."

Outlined Areas of Concern and proposed actions included:

- There is a substantial achievement gap between subgroups of students
 - Develop strong educational programs that supports the success of all students
 - Ongoing improvement of curricula for English Learners: math, science and writing
 - Engage all parents, particularly diverse parents or English Learners
 - Initiate improvements at the middle school specific to school culture, English Learner programs and academic supports

English Learners are an important part of our student population. As Grand Jury members learned, it is simplistic to believe that there is a quick and easy process to move a child to proficiency not only in the English language, but also in the core content areas that comprise a school district curricula. Supporting children to acquire fluency in English takes time, resources, multiple methods, patience and is fraught with complexities. As California educators, we have continually worked to advance student progress in English Language acquisition. We continue to seek out and implement best practices to help all students achieve and to graduate. It's our mission, our vision and our focus.

While the bar to advance English Learners towards graduation is moving in the right direction, it's never fast enough, and school districts throughout California will concur. That's why English language acquisition is, and has been, a District priority for many years and is, and has been, a top priority of both the Board of Education and Superintendent as evidenced by programming, budgeting, staffing and receptivity to best practices that show the most promise to help the most children.

For several years, the SRCS administration has allocated additional staffing resources well beyond basic requirements to ensure that all English Learners have sufficient, quality instructional support for English language development and core content instruction. The District investment in these extra resources is approximately \$450,000 in the high school for just 2014-15.

SRCS has long been targeting this specific subgroup while meeting the needs of all other students and to claim that we do not target this subgroup is inaccurate. In this response we will outline the elements of our multi-year efforts to address the needs of all students, particularly English Learners.

RESPONSE TO FINDINGS

Finding 1:

San Rafael High School and Novato High School English Learner students graduate from high school at a lower rate than their peers, potentially creating a substantial disadvantage for the student and a significant burden on society.

Response:

Partially Agree

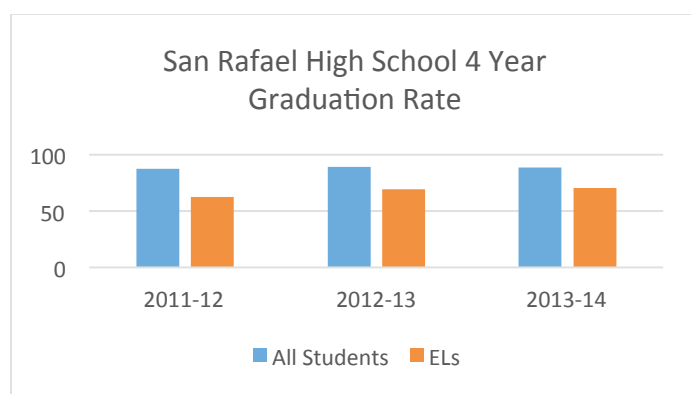
We concur with the Marin County Civil Grand Jury that the academic opportunity gap must be reduced as much as possible. For this specific purpose, and for more than a decade, SRCS has dedicated financial and staffing resources at high levels to address the needs of all underperforming students.

Given San Rafael's 150+ years educating the community's children and youth, the District's Board of Education and leadership recognize and value the contributions our multi-generational alumni are active and contributing members of our community. The Board of Education specifically included "community ready" as an attribute students will have upon graduation. As one of the community's largest employers, we have a significant number of SRCS alumni returned to San Rafael and now work as teachers, principals, administrators and support staff, all supporting the next generations of students attending SRCS.

The factors described above, specifically level of English language fluency and sufficiency of prior education and schooling, impacts the ability of some students. The English Language Learner Standards for Performance mirror those that exist for all students – there is no longer any differentiation in expectation. Establishing and maintaining rigorous academic expectations for all students, there are some "newcomer" students that are unlikely to graduate at the same time as their age level peers. Regardless of level of education and/or English language proficiency, the District provides opportunities for support to help English Learners achieve success in college and career. Our response to Finding 2 speaks to these offerings.

Moving in the Right Direction

The “graduation gap” between “All Students” and “English Learners” in the District has decreased over the last three years of available data. Most recently, the gap has been reduced to 18%, with 70.4% of English Learners in the four-year cohort graduating in 2013-14. In that same year, California’s graduation rate for English Learners was 65.3%. SRCS is outpacing the state graduation rate for English Learners by 5.1%. Naturally we want it to close at a greater rate and more quickly, but our progress is noted.



*Source: CDE, Data Quest, <http://data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/>

It is important for us to articulate and clarify the graduation gap data presented in Grand Jury finding. The data point from the California Department of Education Data Quest website *excludes* any students who were reclassified prior to high school or ninth grade. This is significant because it does not take into account the effectiveness of District K-8 programs that develop English proficiency and mastery of core content areas.

Our internal data analysis concluded that 87.9% of all reclassified English learners graduated from San Rafael High School, which contrasts with the CDE Data Quest information citing a 69.4% 2012-13 graduation rate for English Learners. An accurate measurement of the long-term effectiveness of our English Learner program is the 87.9% English Learner Reclassified Student graduation rate, which is extremely significant as a progress indicator. If a student is “reclassified,” (prior ninth grade) they are no longer considered an English Learner for statistical analysis reporting in the graduation rate.

Early Identification and Allocation of Resources

As noted above, the District’s Strategic Plan, *Roadmap to the Future*, specifically identified, acknowledged and communicated the District’s strategies to close the existing opportunity and achievement gap. Most students attending SRCS enter beginning in Kindergarten, with other children and youth joining the District at various points on their pathway to graduation from high school. Regardless of when students enter our school system, our

shared goal and commitment is to provide students with an educational experience that prepares them to graduate from high school prepared for college, career and community. We know that the learning progression towards graduation begins long before any student crosses the threshold of any of our schools.

At the time of entry, we purposely and intentionally collect data and information that informs class placement, with our certificated teaching staff continuing to determine the instructional level of students, which assists teachers in differentiating teaching and learning based on the identified needs of each student.

As students enter the District, our professional staff works with individual students and families to learn and understand the skills, attributes, characteristics, strengths and approximate level of educational attainment at the time of entry. Information regarding prior school enrollment and grade completion, medical information, free and reduced meals eligibility, education attainment levels of parents, participation in specialized programs and languages spoken in the home are collected at the time of registration.

Specific to English Learners, families that report a language other than English is spoken in the home are assessed using the California English Language Development Test (CELDT) to determine the student's level of English language proficiency in four specific literacy domains: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Each individual area is scored, resulting in an overall CELDT designation.

The District and every K-12 school in SRCS establishes and monitors all significant sub-groups, including English Learners, providing differentiated and supplemental support services intended to support students acquisition of English language fluency, and the attainment of grade level content standards. The **Site English Language Acquisition Committee** (SELAC) and the **District English Language Acquisition Committee** (DELAC) are comprised of parents of English Learner students, teachers, principals and support staff who actively monitor students' acquisition of English, seeking to continuously improve learning outcomes for students.

Defining the Pathway to High School Graduation and College/Career Readiness

In 2009-2010, the District commissioned a research study to learn: "*What happened after students graduate from SRCS?*" Fiscal support to fund this research was provided by the Marin Community Foundation. The District had a wealth of anecdotal data about numbers of students who planned to go to college after high school, but this data had not been collected in any manner that could yield predictive analytic data that would inform potential intervention, actions or services that would enhance students potential to graduate from high school, being ready to move into post-secondary settings.

This study determined that 70% of students graduating from SRCS started college immediately following graduation. Sixty percent of those students returned to college for a second year. Of all high school graduates, 30% of those who started college actually completed a Bachelor's Degree within a six-year period after high school.

The 30% college completion rate was a 10-year trend for SRCS graduates. This percentage is just above the state and national averages for college completion.

This research study also identified eight common milestones that were shared by the 30% of students who completed a Bachelor's Degree, with the first predictive milestone being at the end of second grade. (Scoring Advanced on the state STAR assessment). Students, who scored Advanced in second grade, were scattered throughout the District at every elementary school. Many students who scored Advanced entered Kindergarten not speaking English. Teachers that had students who scored Advanced in second grade provided specific support and assistance to other primary grades teachers, transferring the strategies and supports that led to high levels of student performance of all students.

The milestones predictive of high school graduation and college completion provided yet another formative assessment that teachers, principals and District leaders could use to provide targeted support for all students, including English Learners.

The Factor of Time - 720 Days

The number of instructional days in high school totals 720 days (four years x 180 school days per year), assuming that students attend school every instructional day.

Given this set of circumstances, what is the right strategy to meet the challenge of accelerating both the acquisition of English and the mastery of K-12 content area standards in less than 180 days? The District has a very limited sphere of influence to meet this expectation. The solution to this challenge rests not only with San Rafael High School District, but also with every public school district, State Department of Education and the greater community to determine how best to support these students.

Enrollment of "Newcomer" Students in High School

Across the region, the state and the nation, English Learners do not matriculate at rates of their English-speaking peers. In many cases, we have 17- or 18-year-old students arriving from other countries that cannot speak English, who also arrive to high school having had interruptions in their education. Our staff has long been aware of the changing enrollment trends of English Learners in our schools and can even accurately predict when in the school year they will arrive. Knowing this, special English Language Development classes are added, sometimes with very little or no enrollment, because we know that the class will eventually reach capacity.

The District's systems of support for English Learners have been designed to accelerate students acquisition of English, while also having student attain identified learning progression expected of all students. The Grand Jury accessed selective data believed to represent the difference in high school graduation rates between English Learners and all other students. Individuals and groups can come to specific conclusions based on their interpretation of the data reviewed.

Trend Data and The Impact of Anomalies

Data review can also promote or provoke questions, curiosity and the need to learn more about student performance results – seeking to understand if there are other unknown contributing factors that impact the perception of graduation rates for English Learners. For example, in 2014-15, there was a significant increase in the number of “newcomer” students. (The term newcomer is used to identify students who are enrolling for the first time in a school in the United States.) To highlight the challenge more clearly, of these enrollees, 18 newcomers were age appropriate seniors, that were non-English speaking, having never received English language development or instruction. These same students arrived at SRHS, having a high degree of interrupted schooling. The definition of interrupted schooling in this sense refers to not only missing high school credits but also not attending middle school and, in some cases, not attending elementary school.

FINDING 2:

When the Grand Jury investigation began, there was no urgent, focused approach taken by school district leadership to address this graduation gap (sic) and the graduation gap was either invisible or unknown to many educators.

Response:

Wholly Disagree

It is unfortunate that the Grand Jury does not appear to have accessed and/or interviewed individuals aware of and/or familiar with the very targeted, specific and deliberate actions taken by teachers, schools and the District for more than 10 years to specifically and directly support each student identified as an English Learner to successfully graduate from high school.

SRCS has very much had an urgent, focused need to close the graduation gap or Opportunity Gap. The need to ensure all students are prepared not only to graduate from high school, but to graduate prepared for college and career has been a District area of focus.

The District’s deliberate decisions and actions to support all students, including English Learners, are initiated long before students assemble for the high school graduation ceremony. For many years, initiatives driven by District leadership and the Board of Education have aimed at providing multiple resources to ensure equitable resources are provided to meet the needs of all of our students. Nevertheless, to focus exclusively on an end-of-program figure like graduation rates, wouldn’t be a proactive, comprehensive approach, which is how SRCS has steered resources, recognizing that interventions for English Learners must begin in preschool or as early as we receive new students.

The District refutes the Grand Jury's specific finding regarding *the "graduation gap" being invisible or unknown to many of our educators.*

The differential performance and educational outcomes between designated sub-groups has been framed using the term "achievement gap." Most recently, the term "opportunity gap" is being used as it is more descriptive – many students experience a gap in achievement only because they were never provided the opportunity to participate in rigorous courses with high expectations.

The term opportunity gap includes a range of data points that may contribute to a student's success or lack thereof in successfully graduating from high school. Data points we monitor include: grade point average, attendance, credit completion, assessment results, D/F rate, discipline rates, Advanced Placement class enrollment, UC/CSU A-G completion, promotion rates, literacy rates, numeracy rates, reclassification rates, and more. In fact, all of these are metrics by which the effectiveness of our Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) will be evaluated each year.

Building Cultural Proficiency and Competence

Over the past eight years, The **National Equity Project** (NEP) has worked in collaboration with the District to address expected outcomes identified in the District's strategic plan, "Roadmap to the Future," through the collection, organization and analysis of student outcome and experience data.

NEP's work is focused on helping teachers and administrators develop an "equity lens," as well as systems for distributed leadership. NEP coaches work directly with administrators, Instructional Leadership Teams (ILTs) and Professional Learning Communities (PLCs).

Our equity analysis identified types of achievement and experience gaps that were occurring. Targeted data varies according to context but often includes outcomes disaggregated by race, gender, socio-economic status and other relevant categories.

With fiscal support from both the **Marin Community Foundation** and the **San Francisco Foundation**, NEP has provided:

- Assistance in shifting the District's culture by identifying how best to shift existing practices and student experiences to an educational system that is fair, with equal opportunity for all children and families, recognizing that educational systems are complex at best, and fixing one aspect of a system often leads to unintended consequences in another.
- Coaching for equity – guiding and training leaders and staff in the practice of listening, teaching, provoking, guiding, and supporting people to achieve mutually agreed upon objectives that interrupt historical patterns of inequity.

- Assistance for District leaders and staff to establish conditions and processes for staff to work productively across differences and to identify, interrupt, and address conditions that perpetuate inequitable racialized outcomes.

Approximately 100 staff members (teachers, support staff, principals, administrators and Board members) have attended and participated in The ***Leading For Equity™ Institute***, where all participants develop their capacity to foster positive change on behalf of historically under-served students and families.

Our work with NEP was documented and provided as a “**Partner Profile**” for the National Equity Project. NEP features and highlights our focused and targeted sense of urgency, describing the work as:

“We’ve worked with district and school leaders in San Rafael, a small city just north of San Francisco since 2008. While generally considered an affluent, largely white community, the district’s demographics have shifted dramatically: today over half of San Rafael students are Latino, economically disadvantaged, and/or English learners. Our support has helped leaders throughout the district make dramatic changes to better serve all students.”

A video specific to the equity work done in SRCS is also included at <http://nationalequityproject.org/resources/video>.

Support for College Readiness- Early College Readiness Partners

The Marin Community Foundation (MCF) continues to provide funding for community based college readiness partners in the San Rafael City High School District to increase access for to college for historically underserved populations, including English Learners.

College readiness partners provide targeted support services to students and families, increasing access to college for low-income students through scholarships, and helping them develop persistence and achieve success in college.

In addition, with support from MCF, we continue to explore models and programs that can effectively assist students after they enter college. Key to this initiative is the promotion of school and community partnerships that provide meaningful supports for families.

Community partners include, but are not limited to: College of Marin, Canal Alliance, Next Generation Scholars, 10,000 Degrees and Huckleberry Youth Programs. Support services include:

- Academic and personalized tutoring services
- Coordinated college/ career access support
- Targeted assessment data and academic support

Strategic Initiatives to Meet Needs of English Learners In High School

Reflective of the urgency to meet the needs of the range of actions and services needed to support English Learners, outlined below are specific examples of the focused approaches we are taking at the high school level.

Our English Learner population reflects students who have been enrolled in our schools for the majority of their educational career, as well as those students who may enroll as age appropriate high school students with little, if any, English language fluency.

We have a committed professional staff that continues to enhance their own skills and abilities to meet the needs of the students they serve. Existing services and actions include, but are not limited to:

- ***Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID)*** – The AVID program is offered at both comprehensive high schools in SRCS. AVID brings best practices and proven methodologies to students in high schools. AVID’s goal is to prepare all students in a school for college, starting with the core elective class and expanding schoolwide.

The AVID class targets students in the academic middle, who have the desire to go to college and are capable of completing rigorous curriculum using the will to work hard. Typically, AVID students will be the first in their families to attend college, and many are from low-income or minority families. Students are routinely required to enroll in their school’s toughest courses, such as honors or Advanced Placement®.

English Learner College Readiness (ELCR) was developed to more fully address the needs of English Learners throughout the AVID System. ELCR furthers the AVID mission of preparing all students—including English Learners—for college readiness and success. AVID supports English Learners students through ELCR, with targeted learning.

- ***Intensive English Language Development Course Offerings*** - In order to help newcomers acquire English more easily and with a depth of understanding, two *Foundations of Language and Skills* classes are provided for support with one additional *Intensive Language* support class. Additionally, both math and physical education classes are required.
- ***Summer Bridge*** – Summer Bridge is a concentrated five-week summer program that focuses on critical thinking and language production. The program is a rigorous writing literacy designed specifically for English Learners modeled after extensive educational research on collaborative, project-based learning.
- ***Credit Recovery in Real Time*** - Steps have been taken for the 2015-16 school year to begin a high school credit recovery program based in the students’ home language.

- ***ELD Placement Protocols/Procedures***, ensuring they are both working correctly to help counselors access and place students using California English Language Development Test scores through a systematic progression
- ***Lead Teacher Coaches*** provide support to core content teachers with an English Language Development integrated focus for teachers as teachers align the Common Core units of instruction
- ***Professional Development*** using Professional Learning Communities with a concentrated approach to integrating English Language Development standards into the core content areas by reviewing and designing instructional units
- ***English Language Development Assessment System*** for Common Core readiness including California English Language Development Test assessments three times a year in order to provide a triangulation of data points and to track progress

These are just a few examples of the multiple steps SRCS has in place at our high schools as both a safety net and an intentional plan towards helping support English Learner success towards graduating.

The focused approach began many years ago with the California Department of Education-approved English Language Development Standards in the early 2000s. More recently, the District has followed the Common Core-based English Language Development Standards using the California English Language Development Test (CELDT) as data points.

Family Engagement Opportunities and Strategies

The District continues to increase and enhance two-way communications between home and school. Bilingual Community Liaisons provide a direct line of communication and support to English Learner families. Our liaisons help with two-way communication between families and school staff for the benefit of the student and the family. Among our three high school campuses, SRCS estimates we invest an additional \$140,000 toward this support.

Additionally, there is a District bilingual community liaison that is centrally located in the Superintendent's Office, providing non-English speaking families with direct access to District leadership.

PIQE - Parents of English Learners is strongly encouraged to participate and complete the Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE). PIQE is a comprehensive and accelerated program to build family awareness and understanding of the requirements for high school graduation, requirements for college readiness. This nine-week program is offered multiple times in a single school year.

Familias Unidas at Venetia Valley is a nine-week training program targeted for English Learners and their families that teaches parents at-home strategies to help their children achieve academic success. Familias Unidas provides families with the tools they need to get

involved in their child's education, teaching strategies such as how to review their child's report card or how to navigate the school district's website to access the information they need to advocate on their child's behalf. Each week, parents and children have an opportunity to learn together, covering topics such as reading comprehension strategies, math and science skills, homework help, study skills, computational skills, technology and effective parent-teacher communication.

FINDING 3:

The San Rafael City Schools and the Novato Unified School District English Learner Master Plans are out of date, do not specifically address how to increase English Learner (sic) graduation rates, and several of the educators interviewed seemed to be barely aware of their existence.

Response:

Wholly Disagree

The San Rafael High School District followed the Local Educational Agency Plan from 2001-2014, which was updated annually (see Appendix E). This Plan, which is monitored by the California Department of Education, features a specific goal addressing English Learner needs. Each school site has its own Single Plan for Student Achievement, which aligns the District Plan with the Single Plans for Student Achievement. Both the School Site Council and the District's Board of Education must approve this. (See Appendix F for San Rafael High School's Single Plan for Student Achievement.)

In addition to these two plans, SRCS has followed a valid District English Learner Master Plan. There are no state or federal laws requiring the development or approval of an English Learner Master Plan. State law describes the English Learner Master Plan (Education Code 52176); however, it ended with the implementation of the Local Control Funding Formula (See Appendix D).

Since their inception, English Learner Master Plans were designed to address state and federal compliance requirements. These plans addressed identification, assessment, required parent notification, program design and placement criteria, program waiver protocol, English Learner Advisory Committees (SELAC and DELAC) parameters, and more. The plans were not intended to be comprehensive to address all elements of program quality and professional development. The English Learner Master Plan is not intended to identify a set of metrics nor achievement targets for English Learners; rather, the focus of the plan is to outline the procedures and criteria for English Learner participation in programs and services.

Since state and federal laws related to these requirements have not changed in several years, it is not necessary for the English Learner Master Plan to be updated regularly, since it is a document that largely addresses processes, not goals nor programs. In fact, the only

program requirement to change in the last 15 years is Education Code 52176, impacting school-level and district-level English Learner advisory committees.

The District Board of Education has repeatedly expressed its commitment to continue to require the annual establishment of school-level English Learner advisory committees at each school site and at the District level. The Director of English Learner Programs has been working with District committee parent leaders to develop new objectives and protocols for the parent committees.

As explained previously, the primary focus at SRCS is not singularly the graduation rate. Our focus as adopted by the Board of Education and directed by the Superintendent is annual achievement growth and opportunity attainment. Graduation rates are an important metric and our entire District family wants all children to earn a high school diploma.

The District has been in the process of revising its own local English Learner Master Plan as a means of monitoring individual student progress towards annual English Learner Development growth targets and core content mastery. Each high school has identified an individual staff member who has primary responsibility for monitoring all English Learners at the site and for coordinating needed academic interventions. The English Learner Programs Director will work closely with these individuals to provide assistance, support, resources and guidance as needed.

Furthermore, just as the state and the nation continue the transition towards full implementation of the Common Core Standards, SRCS has been working diligently to provide teachers and administrators with necessary professional development on new practices, including instructional strategies, assessment rubrics, rigorous units of instruction, and much more.

FINDING 4:

In the fall (sic) of 2014, San Rafael City Schools hired an experienced Director of English Learner Programs, and Novato Unified School District hired a District Administrative Coordinator, English Learner Program (sic), who will begin in the 2014-2015 school year, indicating that both school districts are placing new emphasis on English Learner (sic) education.

Response:

Agreed

SRCS has long focused on addressing the needs of English Learners and the District had invested significant resources towards this end. The recent dramatic gains in English Learner enrollment made it clear that to better serve students and teachers, we needed more resources, coordination and accountability and a Director of English Learner

Programs position was added in July of 2014 with the position being filled in November of 2014.

In November of 2014, San Rafael Elementary School District underwent a compliance review and categorical programs audit. SRCS quickly addressed and resolved the vast majority of findings. In addition, SRCS developed new English Language Development placement criteria, prepared reclassification eligibility lists, managed the annual Supplemental Education Services program focused on English Learners, met with high school staff to plan course changes for 2015-16 and 2016-17, and contributed content on English Learners to the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) for both districts.

RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1:

San Rafael City Schools' and Novato Unified School District's governing boards and Superintendents assume leadership to ensure that English Learners (sic) graduate from high school at the same high rate as their peers by adopting this goal as a district priority and assuming responsibility for that goal.

Response:

Implemented Prior to Grand Jury Report

SRCS agrees with this recommendations, but want to make the important note that we have made this implementation prior to this Grand Jury Report. Please refer to Appendix B, the SRCS 2015-18 LCAP excerpts. Furthermore, SRCS' Mission Statement is:

Lifting student achievement. Every student. Every day.

The San Rafael City Schools community ensures that every student receives an empowering education. High expectations and skillful individualized instruction enable each student to embrace their own learning, think critically, and experience success.

Our welcoming school climate ensures our diverse community of students, families, staff, and community members are treated with dignity and respect, creating opportunities for participation, engagement, and support. Every student graduates college and/or career ready, able to take responsibility for a future that includes lifelong learning.

Emphasis is added to the last sentence for clarity. SRCS takes very seriously its responsibility to educate each and every child to their fullest potential. This commitment is found not only in our mission statement, but also in the Board of Education's goals and impact every decision made on behalf of the children we serve. These five Board goals are

broad in scope and serve as the foundation for the evaluation of every school and District administrator, including the Superintendent.

The District's Board of Education is crystal clear on its responsibilities and obligations for all the children in the District. The policies developed and Board direction given to staff illustrates this clearly over the long history of the District. Children learn most effectively when they feel safe and accepted, and our history in serving the English Learner population is known among our communities and the families we serve. A cursory review of Board meeting minutes would have provided valuable information to the Grand Jury related to our awareness of and devotion of resources and services for English Learner students.

To suggest that the SRCS Board of Education has not demonstrated leadership in English Learner education is grossly inaccurate. The Board has demonstrated its knowledge of and commitment to the English Learner population through support of policies, procedures and financial resources to support our educational leaders. The Board of Education and Superintendent work collaboratively, collegially and with laser focus on achievement for all students.

We are making progress in moving our English Learner population to earn their high school diplomas, and successfully progress on to college, career and other post-secondary options. Language acquisition takes time and the Board of Education will not support awarding diplomas at any cost. Students must be able to demonstrate competency to earn credits and their diplomas.

The Board of Education and the Superintendent are proud of the academic gains demonstrated by our English Learners. We recognize that this is a work in process, and we will continue to provide a model program for English Learners, not just in Marin, but for California.

Every day, great things are happening in our classrooms and schools. SRCS is proud to work with all students and families in our community, recognizing we have the responsibility to provide whatever it takes to meet the needs of our students.

RECOMMENDATION 2:

San Rafael City Schools' and Novato Unified School District's governing boards and Superintendents develop, implement, monitor, and modify as needed a systematic multi-year plan with reasonable annual goals culminating in the elimination of the graduation gap between English Learners (sic) and their peers.

Response:

Implemented Prior to Grand Jury Report

In its report, the Marin County Civil Grand Jury referenced Dr. Laurie Olsen's "*Reparable Harm: Fulfilling the Unkept Promise of Educational Opportunities for California's Long Term English Learners.*"

The District's support of English Learners begins long before entering high school. Intervention and support begins prior to Kindergarten entry.

Davidson Middle School – Turnaround School

The District's commitment to all students, and all student sub-groups is illustrated by the significant and purposeful changes that have taken place at Davidson Middle School in the past six years. In 2007, Davidson had been identified as a Program Improvement Year 6 school. Student performance gains lagged for all significant sub-groups, including English Learners.

Through a very public and inclusive process, students, parents, families and staff developed a multi-year plan intended to increase student achievement for all students. Actions included:

- Disaggregation of student performance data
- Redesign of the school master schedule to meet the needs of all learners
- Implementation of research based instructional strategies for English Learners
- Strategic support provided in class to English Learners
- Heterogeneous grouping – school wide
- Implementation of restorative justice practices (replaced suspension)
- Family engagement opportunities and education
- Reinstated parent conferences

DMS demonstrated an 86-point gain on the state Academic Performance Index (exceeding the state target of 800 for all schools). At this same time, student suspensions were reduced by 84%. Davidson is considered a 'model' for other middle schools in addressing the opportunity and achievement gap.

Partner District -Strategic Funding Priorities - Marin Community Foundation

San Rafael City Schools is one of the four target districts supported by the Marin Community Foundation to close the achievement gap between high-achieving students and those who are falling behind. SRCS is deeply embedded in each of MCF's strategic initiatives focused on closing the achievement gap. Our English Learner sub-group is among those groups who are expected to be positively impacted by these initiatives and actions.

District leaders and site staff are well aware that while educational attainment for white students in Marin and San Rafael is at the highest levels in the nation, low-income students, students of color, and English-learners lag in educational enrollment and attainment. Moreover, African Americans and Latino students face higher school dropout rates than their white counterparts.

MCF goals include:

- Enter kindergarten developmentally and socially ready to learn
- Gain proficiency in core subjects — English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics in the early elementary grades
- Attend high-quality schools with excellent principals and teachers
- Graduate from high school prepared to apply to, enroll in, and complete college or other post-secondary education options

SRCS has identified and implemented evidence based instructional strategies that increase English Language Acquisition.

Guided Language Acquisition Design (GLAD): GLAD introduces a broad collection of strategies that work to promote language acquisition and literacy. These strategies are also designed to promote differentiated learning. All SRCS K-5 teachers receive ongoing GLAD training to increase and enhance student understanding of academic language.

Based on the success of this instructional strategy, Short School was reopened about five years ago as a GLAD Demonstration School. All teachers at Short School fully integrate this instructional strategy to enhance the academic language of all students. The GLAD model includes a two-day training on the research and theory behind GLAD, followed by a four-day on-site demonstration where teachers are able to observe the GLAD strategies in practice and then work with their GLAD coach to plan and prepare instructional materials. Finally, GLAD includes ongoing coaching to support continued implementation of strategies.

Sobrato Early Academic Language (SEAL): Based on much of the same research as GLAD, SEAL was developed by Dr. Laurie Olson to address the specific needs of English Learner students. SEAL is focused on powerful, intentional language development. It emphasizes bi-literacy and teaches academic language in a way that strengthens students' English as well as their home languages. SEAL coaches work intensively with two grade levels at a time to develop standards-based curricula, starting at Pre-K and Kindergarten.

Dr. Olson works directly with teachers and school administrators in SRCS, guiding the site leadership to identify school goals and practices that support the development of literacy by Grade 3. This intensive work has been concentrated at Venetia Valley, Coleman and Sun Valley elementary schools, and will expand to Bahia Vista, San Pedro and Laurel Dell elementary schools in the 2015-2016 school year.

Full implementation of this instructional initiative is a significant investment, and a valuable commitment for the District. The cost of the SEAL program for 2015-16 is approximately \$705,000. Additionally, SRCS is implementing a coaching model to support the implementation of the Common Core State Standards, which will include the integration of the English Language Development standards and effective English Learner-specific strategies.

Based on preliminary results from Dr. Olsen's pilot schools, it is expected that there will be no long-term English Learners when these students reach secondary schools. However, English Learners of all ages still arrive year-round, each with different capabilities and experiences and we are dedicated to serving them in the best way possible.

Local Control Accountability Plans

As part of the Local Control Funding Formula, school districts, county offices of education and charter schools in California are required to develop, adopt and annually update a three-year Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) using a template adopted by the California State Board of Education.

The LCAP is required to identify annual goals, specific actions and measure progress for student subgroups across multiple performance indicators, including student academic achievement, school climate, student access to a broad curriculum and parent engagement. School districts are required to obtain parent and public input in developing, revising and updating LCAPs.

The academic priorities must be aligned to the District's spending plan. The local governing board must first approve the LCAP before adopting the annual district budget. County superintendents must review school district LCAPs and ensure alignment of projected spending, services and goals.

Several months prior to the development of SRCS' Local Control Accountability Plans, SRCS developed a work plan to improve current programs and services for English Learners (Appendix A), which was infused into many of the LCAP actions. The LCAP provides a three-year map for improving programs and services for all students, with a specific focus on English Learners and other under-performing students (Appendix B.) These two documents outline the multi-year plan to improve programs and services for English Learners in our high school district.

A Shared Responsibility – Community Awareness and Commitment

It is our honor and privilege to be entrusted by parents and families to educate their children. We recognize that our efforts are greatly enhanced when we garner community wide support for students and families.

The goal of graduating from high school begins long before students' transition from eighth into ninth grade. It is important to understand the circumstances of many young children as they enter Kindergarten. The successful completion of high school is dependent upon a range of factors that may not be under the control of the school district.

In a study commissioned by the Marin Community Foundation, English Learners entering Kindergarten have significantly lower scores than non-English Learners for Overall Readiness, Social Expression, and Kindergarten Academics, even after controlling for other factors such as income and maternal education.

Children's health and well-being were important factors in readiness. Previous research has also found evidence of a link between hunger and children's behavior, including self-regulation. Being hungry at least "on some days" and appearing tired at least "on some days" were both significantly associated with lower readiness scores. These findings underscore the importance of ensuring that children's basic needs for adequate food, sleep and good health are being met. Programs and services that assist at-risk families in putting food on the table may help parents provide home environments that foster their children's development.

In addition, approximately 50% of incoming Kindergarten students to SRCS have not attended a licensed preschool. As with all readiness studies conducted, evidence demonstrates the lack of a quality preschool education serves as a great disadvantage to students. Ensuring all students have access to quality preschool participation would positively enhance student's transition into Kindergarten. First 5 Marin, Marin Strong Start and Marin Promise are all local groups that recognize and support the needs of all students in Marin. This shared commitment positively enhances our efforts to ensure that all English Learners graduate from high school.