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## **The new millennium signals a new beginning for education in California**

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**I**n January elementary, middle, and high schools throughout the state received their first academic performance Index (API) reports. The API is the cornerstone of the Public Schools Accountability Act of 1999 (PSAA), initiated by Governor Gray Davis. This index measures each school's academic performance and sets growth targets for future improvement.

Public schools now will be held accountable for increasing the academic achievement of all students. Schools that reach their annual targets will be rewarded. Schools that do not meet their targets will be eligible for interventions or subject to sanctions.

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# **Parent Guide**

to the  
**Academic  
Performance Index**  
for  
**California Public  
Schools**



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Prepared by the  
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### **What is the API?**

The API measures performance and progress of a school. It is a numeric index or scale that ranges from a low of 200 to a high of 1000. The state has set 800 as the API score that schools should strive to meet. Schools that fall short of the target will be required to meet annual growth targets until their goal is achieved. Schools that already meet or exceed the 800 API should continue working to improve the academic performance of all students.

### **Who developed the API?**

The State Superintendent of Public Instruction named an advisory committee of educators and business leaders to oversee the development of all parts of the Public Schools Accountability Act of 1999. A subcommittee of this advisory group worked with research and evaluation specialists from universities and public schools to create the 1999 API. The State Board of Education approved the 1999 API in November 1999.

### **What was used to calculate the API for 1999?**

Results of the Stanford 9 test, given in spring 1999 as part of the state's Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) program, were used to calculate a school's API for 1999.

Additional information about a school's academic performance will be used for the API in future years. That achievement data may include results of other tests that are aligned to state standards, primary language tests, and attendance and graduation rates.

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### **What does the 1999 API measure?**

In grades 2–8, the API measures performance in four content areas with the amount of emphasis given as follows: mathematics (40%), reading (30%), language (15%), and spelling (15%).

In grades 9–11, the API measures performance in five content areas: mathematics (20%), reading (20%), language (20%), history-social science (20%), and science (20%).

### **Why is an API score of 800 the statewide target for schools?**

A school score of 800 or more on the API, on a scale of 200 to 1,000, indicates students are achieving at a high level of academic performance.

### **What is the incentive for schools to improve their API scores?**

Schools that meet or exceed their growth targets will be eligible for monetary or other types of awards from the state. Schools that do not meet their targets will be eligible for interventions or may ultimately be sanctioned by the state.

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### **What about schools with students who are not proficient in English?**

Currently, students who are not yet proficient in English must take the Stanford 9 test. These scores are included in a school's 1999 API.

### **Will the API affect my student's progress in school?**

No. The API is part of a state accountability system for schools not individual students. As students increase their achievement on the Stanford 9 test, however, the school's score on the API can improve.

### **Where can parents go for more information?**

Parents should direct their questions about the API or the PSAA or plans for improving the school's academic performance to the principal or other school administrators. Schools also will be asking parents to become actively involved in the improvement process. Further information about PSAA and API results can be found on the Internet at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/psaa>.

