

Annual Report
1998-1999 School Year

RALSTON
MIDDLE SCHOOL

Katie Kaufman, Principal

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(650) 637-4880

Staff, Parents and Students
Emphasizing Excellence

Belmont-Redwood Shores Elementary School District
November, 1999

Belmont-Redwood Shores Elementary School District
2960 Hallmark Drive,
Belmont, CA 94002
(650) 637-4800

1998-1999 Governing Board

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8 - Caitlin Harrington

PREFACE

The Belmont-Redwood Shores School District Board of Trustees is proud to issue the **Annual Report for Ralston Middle School**. This report is designed to communicate to parents and the community the progress of our students and a description of the programs, activities, statistical and fiscal information for Ralston School.

In 1998, the District developed a new Futures Plan that outlined a vision for the future of our schools. This Plan was developed through district-wide town hall meetings involving parents and staff. Our Futures Plan is based on our District's Vision statement.

VISION STATEMENT

Education is more than a direction or a destination; it is a process which recognizes, enhances, and celebrates individual accomplishments.

Belmont-Redwood Shores School District, in the breadth of its curricula and variety of its approaches to facilitate learning, provides an environment which nurtures and stimulates the intelligence, insight, and natural curiosity of all individuals.

Our learning community promotes and advances the intellectual, physical, social, and moral development of students in becoming responsible, contributing citizens. Students learn to work and live together constructively by respecting, honoring, and appreciating the uniqueness in themselves and others.

As we strive to implement our vision to provide a challenging and comprehensive educational program for our students, the foundation of our program is the Belmont-Redwood Shores School District Mission Statement.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Belmont-Redwood Shores School District is to promote and advance the intellectual, social, physical and moral development of all students to become responsible, contributing citizens by:

- teaching basic academic skills and their application
- setting high academic standards that inspire students to excel and succeed
- providing a challenging, comprehensive and integrated curriculum that enhances critical and creative thinking
- developing adaptability, cooperation, honesty, respect and responsibility
- creating a safe and nurturing environment
- building alliances that foster shared responsibility among home, school and community
- valuing each child as a capable and unique individual

Nancy Gisko, President
1999-2000 Board of Trustees

Anne Campbell
Superintendent

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INTRODUCTION

California law requires that each school annually assess various school conditions, which have been organized into the following six categories:

- I. School Profile
- II. Instructional Program
- III. School Operations
- IV. School and Student Achievement
- V. Community and Financial Support
- VI. Planning for the Future

This Annual Report communicates the close cooperation between the home and school that is essential to promote the best learning environment for all children. The focus of the report is to provide you with information about our school, our resources, strengths and the areas in which we are continuing to develop.

We encourage you to read this Annual Report and share it with others. We sincerely hope this report makes you feel proud to have a student at this school. If you desire additional information, please feel free to visit or contact the school office.

Sincerely,

Katie Kaufman, *Principal (as of September, 1999)*

650/637-4880

kkaufman@belmont.k12.ca.us

I. SCHOOL PROFILE

Mission and Goals

Ralston Middle School strives to provide a nurturing environment where all students, parents and staff pursue academic excellence and participate fully in the life of the school.

The Ralston School Mission Statement, developed by staff, parents and student representatives to our School Site Council, serves as a framework for our school's goals and priorities. This spirit of partnership pervades all that we do at Ralston.

Ralston's basic mission is to provide a strong instructional program that focuses on the diverse needs of middle school students. We believe that academic excellence is our most important attribute and our highest priority. We also believe that a program of excellence provides students with enrichment experiences that extend the basic curriculum.

Ralston School is characterized by:

- A safe, orderly, attractive campus
- A rigorous academic core curriculum
- A rich elective program
- A strong student support system
- A wide range of extracurricular activities
- A firm commitment to technology in the classroom
- A dedicated and competent professional staff
- A supportive and involved parent community
- An energetic, enthusiastic, and highly capable student body.
- A deep commitment to community service

The School Community

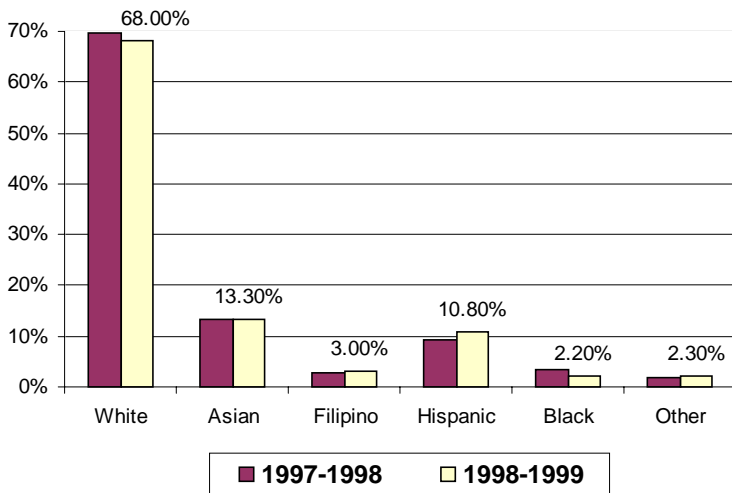
Ralston Middle School, located in the City of Belmont on the peninsula south of San Francisco, is the only middle school in the Belmont-

Redwood Shores School District. Students in 8th grade are promoted to Carmont High School.

The Ralston School community consists of families for whom education is a priority. The school is the hub of the community for many of these parents. Families enthusiastically support the Parent Teacher Association, School Site Council and countless volunteer activities and projects. Pride in Ralston’s distinguished school recognition was reflected from all members of the school community.

Student Profile

The total enrollment is 755 in 1998-1999; it was 716 in 1997-1998. The number of male and female students is approximately equal. The following chart shows the ethnic make-up of the school:



The percent of students receiving special instruction is noted below:

	1997-1998	1998-1999
• Limited English Proficiency	2 %	2%
• Gifted & Talented	18%	18.3%
• Special Education	7.5%	7.5%

Staff Profile

The regular school staff consists of thirty-five full-time classroom teachers, three Resource Specialist Program teachers, one Opportunity/Transition teacher, one Dean of Students, two school secretaries, one library media specialist, one inclusion teacher, six paraeducators who assist in classrooms, three full time and one half time custodians, one assistant principal, and one principal. The support staff includes:

Band/String/Vocal/Music (1 full-time equivalent)	Every day
English Language Development (ELD) Teacher	2 periods per day
Family Counselor	2 days per week
Psychologist	1 day per week
School Nurse (District Nurse)	0.5 day per week
Speech & Language Specialist	2 days per week
Technology Specialist	(on call)

II. INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

The Learning Environment

Ralston School is divided into teams with two teams at each grade level. Students are heterogeneously assigned to the teams. The team structure is designed to assure that students and teachers develop good academic relationships. Since every team has a team planning time, it is convenient for parents and teachers to meet to discuss student needs.

Attendance

Absences are checked daily by phoning parents the first day a child is absent. Unexcused absences are monitored to observe long range trends. Promptness is encouraged in our students: parents are notified when children have been tardy several times.

For several years our attendance rate has ranged between 94% and 96%. The rate for 1998-1999 was 94.9%; for 1997-1998 the rate was 95.4%.

Instructional Staff

School Site Leadership

Ralston's principal and assistant principal regularly confer with teachers and other staff about operational and instructional issues. They use an open and participatory management style. Staff members are involved in planning, reviewing and modifying instructional programs for the coming year. Teachers in department committees design and implement curriculum guides for improving instruction.

The principal and assistant principal have received training from the California School Leadership Academy in leadership strategies for implementing sound instructional practices.

Instructional Staff Qualifications

All teachers are credentialed by the State of California. All Ralston teachers have completed graduate work.

All substitutes used by Ralston School have passed a qualifying examination administered by the State of California. When a teacher is absent from class, a qualified substitute teacher teaches the class. If a substitute is not available, the class is taught by a credentialed district administrator or a teacher without a regular class assignment. Last year, teachers averaged about 1.4 days of absence per month. This included illness, in-service training, and other leaves.

Student/Teacher Ratio

At Ralston, the average class size is 27.5. Music classes range from 30 to 60; Physical Education classes range from 30 to 50 students. Resource Specialist classes are limited to 12. Elective class sizes are appropriate to the content.

Through SIP funds, instructional assistants were provided for some classrooms. They help with small group and individual instruction in various content areas.

Professional Development

Staff development activities are determined through a process which begins with the staff identifying needs that are related to the goals identified in the School Improvement Plan. District-wide needs identified through the “Futures” planning process are also incorporated into the plans for staff development. The calendar and topics for staff development conducted on non-student days are identified in the School Improvement Plan each year. Ralston School’s teachers participate in one day of staff development before the students return to school. Five additional staff development days were conducted during the school year and two non-student days were devoted to parent conferences.

During these staff development days, teachers received training in:

- a. Mathematics
- b. Grade Level Teaming
- c. Curriculum Planning for the Year
- d. Curriculum and Instructional Practices
- e. Family of Schools Standards and Assessment
- f. Writing across the curriculum (PQR focus)
- g. Differentiated instruction
- h. Team evaluation/planning

Individual staff members also participated in additional workshops and training in these areas. Teachers received 3 two-hour sessions of technical training after school.

Evaluation of Staff

Formal evaluations are done at least once each year for new probationary staff and every other year for permanent staff.

Formal evaluations include an initial conference with the administrator, observations of the teacher in the classroom, and a final evaluation conference. Progress towards meeting District standards for teaching is monitored by both the teacher and the principal.

Curriculum and Instruction

Instructional Minutes

The total number of instructional minutes offered in the school year for each grade met or exceeded the state requirements for public schools in California.

Instructional Minutes Chart

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Ralston</u>	<u>District Standard</u>	<u>State Requirements</u>
Grades 6-8	63,729	63,700	62,880

Course of Study

- English/Language Arts
- Mathematics
- Science
- History/Social Science
- Visual and Performing Arts
- Physical Education
- Health

Instruction and Support for Special Needs

Programs for students with specialized needs have been scheduled in order to provide an in-depth program for all students.

Support for special needs of students begins with Student Study Teams who, meeting regularly, develop strategies to help students become more successful in school. They coordinate school resources and services which include:

- Referral for Special Education Assessment
- English Language Development Program
- Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) Program
- Family Counselor services
- State SIP (School Improvement Program) funds
- Special Education programs
- School Psychologist services

Classroom Textbooks and Materials

The District has adopted the following textbooks in accordance with State standards.

- Mathlands (6th grade)
- Dale Seymour Connected Math (7th grade)
- Gateways to Algebra for 7th grade Pre-Algebra
- Prentice Hall Math for 8th grade Pre-Algebra
- Gateways to Algebra for 8th grade Algebra
- Holt Rinehart Winston for English/Language Arts
- Houghton Mifflin for History/Social Science
- PrenticeHall Science Text Series

The State and District provide regular classroom materials to support our program goals. Enrichment and supplemental materials are purchased through SIP funds and with the help of the Parent Teacher Association. Additionally, the PTA and fund-raising activities give money directly to teachers to use for classroom enrichment.

Ralston Middle School has one television set and VCR for every classroom. There are four scanners, six video cameras, and an electronic projection system for the school. An additional electronic projection system is available from the District Office. There is a wide variety of software, encyclopedia and reference CD ROMs at the school site, including Adobe PageMaker®, Adobe PhotoDeluxe®, HyperStudio®, Student Writing Center®, Adobe Premiere®, Microsoft Works®, and Microsoft Office®.

The school continues to acquire more computers for student use. By September 1999, there will be 80 computers; 42 have Internet access.

The school library contains over 6,760 books.

III. SCHOOL OPERATIONS

Facilities

Ralston School has 40 classrooms: 34 classrooms are used for regular instruction. One is used for science, one for a Computer Lab, one for Industrial Tech., one for culinary arts, one for art, and one for music.

Many classrooms have computer banks for up to 10 students. Every classroom has at least two computers connected to the Internet. The library is equipped with 13 computers with Internet access for student use and 5 for teacher use. There is a 30 computer lab for teaching key boarding skills separate from the main computer lab. Three classrooms are equipped as multimedia classrooms.

By September 1998 every teacher in the District received a computer for both instruction and classroom management. Every staff member received mandated technology training. Every staff member was provided a telephone number and voice mailbox.

In the spring of 1998, Ralston Middle School was awarded a Sun Microsystems Java grant for \$100,000 of equipment and technology training. Implementation will continue through the next school year.

Safety

We have a plan for attending to civil defense emergencies, i.e., fire, earthquakes, and handling of toxic substances in the classroom. Drills are held on a regular basis for fire and earthquake safety.

IV. SCHOOL AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Program Effectiveness

Program effectiveness at Ralston is monitored in several ways. The School Site Council looks at the School Improvement Plan and monitors progress toward the goals set in that plan. The staff examines test data, student work, and observes classrooms by grade level as well as school-wide to look for areas that need improvement efforts. The school staff sets goals for increasing the quality of student learning annually. These goals are presented to the Board of Trustees in the fall. The results are reviewed at the end of the school year.

As part of the Belmont-Redwood Shores Futures Plan, the district is developing performance standards to increase student learning and insure a rigorous academic program.

Ralston has been a California Distinguished School since May of 1994. In addition Ralston conducted a Program Quality Review (PQR) process during the 1998-1999 school year. Dorothy Hanlon and Lennie Cruze, English teachers, coordinated our efforts to look at writing across the curriculum. Three writing samples were taken during Team Time. The samples were holistically scored by the English teachers and our English reader. Outside consultants visited Ralston to observe our writing practices and results. They shared their insight with the staff. Staff developed a plan for writing improvement to be implemented in the next school year.

Examination of the learning environment at Ralston Middle School also was done during the Program Review Process. This examination led to the identification of improvement efforts for the next few years, including:

- developing ways to increase collaboration time for teachers
- increasing parent education opportunities
- continuing the advisement program
- improving the physical plant

Student Achievement

Many approaches are used to examine and report on student achievement to parents.

Standardized Tests

The Stanford Achievement Test 9 (SAT9) was administered to students in sixth through eighth grades. The results compare each of our students to a national sample of students in mathematics, reading, and the use of language. See Appendix C. for the latest results shown for each grade level.

Performance Assessment

This method uses work samples of assignments students receive in the classroom to examine achievement. The work sample is compared to a set of guidelines and a set of performance standards that have been developed by teachers and students. In May, 1994, the District began to use the CTB Writing Assessment System to measure writing performance of seventh grade students. A six point scale was used to measure overall writing performance; a four point scale was used to measure content and vocabulary/grammar. The results for 1999 are shown in Appendix D.

Curriculum Based Assessment

Classroom curriculum materials for a given course at each grade level are used to determine the level of achievement for a student. Teacher made tests, homework and classroom assignments as well as projects, are examples of curriculum based assessment. The results of this type of assessment were provided to students on an ongoing basis throughout the year.

Report Cards

The report card summarizes student performance and curriculum based assessments used in the classroom in a letter grade format. Report cards were provided to parents three times during the year. During the first trimester, two parent-teacher conference days are set aside.

English Language Development Program

This program provides services for foreign students who need to learn English.

Student Performance

93% of Non-English Proficient (NEP) and Limited English Proficient (LEP) students receiving services in the English Language Development (ELD) Program during 1998-1999 made adequate growth in English Language acquisition as measured by testing and teacher observation. The goal is 75%.

Program Effectiveness

- The District has an 21% redesignation rate for students in the ELD Program over the past three years. The goal is 20%.
- Seven new district teachers were hired for the 1998-1999 school year who possessed certification for second language instruction. Ten other district teachers were in the process of gaining this certification. There was a total of twenty-seven district teachers with certification for second language instruction.

V. COMMUNITY AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Community Involvement

Number of volunteer hours: 9,299

Faculty/Community Organizations and Programs:

- Parent Teacher Association (PTA)
- School Site Council (SSC) meetings.
- “Challenge 2000”
- Family counseling - FACES
- America Reads

Communications:

- Monthly newsletter: “*RamTracks*”
- Homework Assignments on the Web
- Email
- School web site: www.belmont.gov/educ/ralston/

Parental Involvement:

- Classroom field trips
- After School Clubs
- Technology assistance
- Music Boosters
- Red Ribbon Week
- 8th grade graduation party
- Hot Lunch Program
- Assemblies
- School Dances
- Career Day
- Parent Education
- Magazine Drive
- Monetary gifts
- Wish List
- Program Development
- Spring Fling

Other Local Community Agencies

- Belmont Public Library
- Belmont Rotary
- San Mateo County Arts Council
- Peninsula Humane Society
- Belmont Police Dept. (Dare)
- South County Fire Dept.
- Interdistrict Interaction

Financial Information

The Belmont-Redwood Shores School District had an operating budget of just over \$14.5 million in 1998-1999. It was just under \$12.5 million in 1997-98.

Revenue Sources

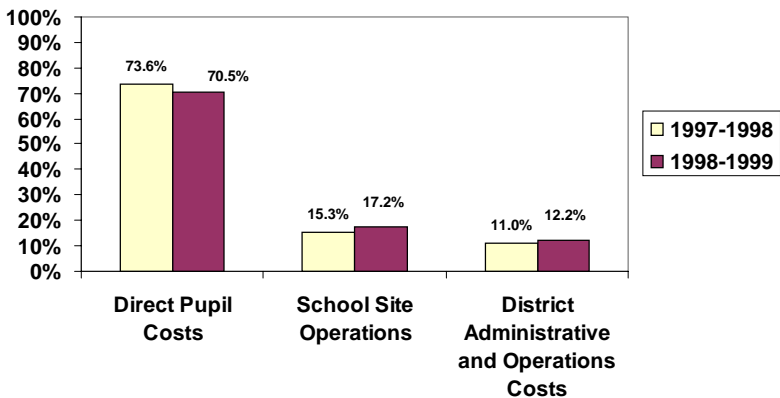
The District is a Basic Aid District, thus our largest source of revenue is from local property taxes.

	1998-1999	1997-1998
• Revenue Limit Sources (property taxes)	\$10,402,326	\$8,984,780
• Federal Revenues	\$169,873	\$138,749
• State Revenues	\$2,869,294	\$2,401,979
• Local Revenues	\$669,983	\$527,827

Breakdown of Per Pupil Costs

Our per pupil costs were **\$5756** for 1998-1999 and \$5,216 for 1997-1998. These costs are illustrated in the chart below as a percentage of the total budget. Three general areas are described in the chart:

- Direct pupil costs include salaries, books, supplies and equipment for the classroom (\$4059 per student);
- School site maintenance and operation costs (\$992); and
- Prorated district administrative costs include technology, instructional support, and retiree benefits (\$704).



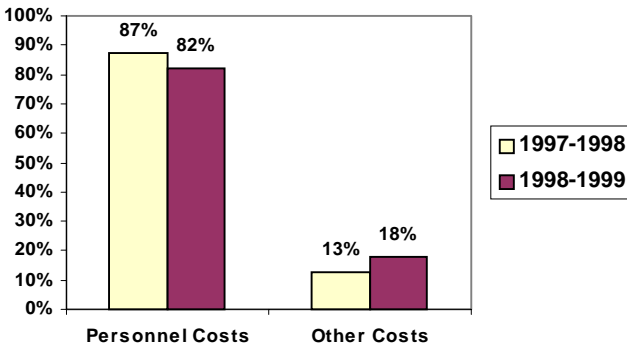
Breakdown of Personnel and Other Costs

The District expenses can be broken down into personnel and other costs:

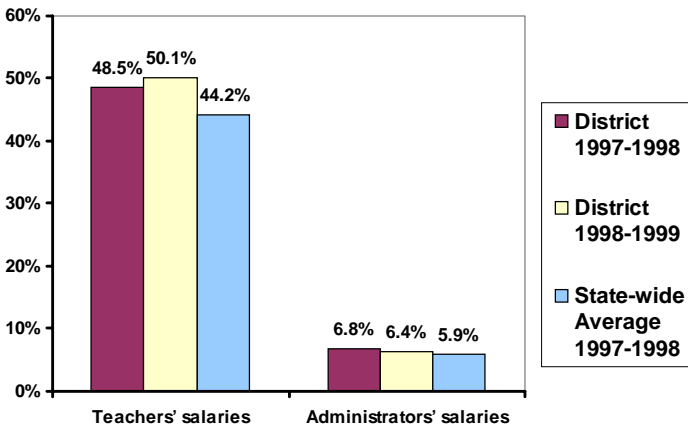
- Personnel costs: teachers, administrators, maintenance workers and custodians, clerical support and classroom assistants.
- Other costs: books, in-service training, instructional and other supplies, equipment, utilities, repairs and transportation.

The District expenses for personnel costs in relation to the total budget are shown in the chart below:

Salary Comparisons



The District salaries for teachers and administrators as a percentage of the total District budget are compared in the chart below to the statewide average percentage for districts of similar size to ours:



Dollar amounts for specific positions in the District are compared to the 1997-1998 statewide average below.

	State Average 1997-1998	District 1997-1998 1998-1999	
Beginning Teacher's			
Salary	\$29,028	\$34,566	\$35,119
Daily Rate	\$157	\$187	\$187
Midrange Teacher's			
Salary	\$44,874	\$50,466	\$51,273
Daily Rate	\$245	\$276	\$276
Highest Teacher's			
Salary	\$54,342	\$62,553	\$63,448
Daily Rate	\$297	\$342	\$341
School Site Principal's			
Salary	\$68,757	\$74,537	\$79,017
Daily Rate	\$334	\$362	\$384
District Superintendent's			
Salary	\$90,654	\$90,000	\$99,000
Daily Rate	\$407	\$404	\$444

VI. PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

Summary of Needs

Within the next few years Ralston sees a need for:

- Increasing technology training for students and staff—through Challenge 2000.
- Continuing to develop teachers on staff as subject matter and technology experts.
- Refining integration of subject matter.
- Increasing higher level thinking and problem solving opportunities.
- Refining the process of mainstreaming of special education students wherein these students achieve success in the least restrictive environment - the regular classroom.
- Studying the changing needs of students and how to adapt the curriculum and instruction to meet these challenges.

Recommendations for Improvement

The recommended focus for the next school year is to concentrate our staff development on three areas: technology, English/writing, evaluation and revision of teaming in order to improve instruction and facilitate learning. Writing across the curriculum will receive the strongest focus as we move forward.

APPENDIX A. RESOURCES FOR PARENTS

Parent education presentations will continue through staff and Parent Teacher Association activities. The relationship with Family and Community Enrichment Services, Inc. to provide family counseling for Ralston families will continue. Communication with parents through a handbook, flyers, newsletters and the school web site will be maintained. Parents are encouraged to visit classrooms, attend assemblies, participate in PTA and fill volunteer positions in order to be involved in the Ralston School Family.

Additional resources available for parents include:

Alateen (& Al-Anon) Mid Peninsula Information 650/592-7935

720 El Camino Real, Belmont, CA 94002

Call for dates and times. Support group for teenage children of alcoholics. Drop-ins welcome.

Catholic Charities 650/579-0277

600 Columbia Drive, San Mateo, CA.

Child Care Coordinating Council 650/696-8787

1838 El Camino Real, Burlingame, CA

Children's Protective Services 650/595-7922

400 Harbor Blvd., Belmont, CA

Family and Community Enrichment Services, Inc. 650/591-9623

210 Industrial Way, Belmont, CA 94402

Serves Belmont area with individual and family counseling services.

Family Stress Service of San Mateo County 650/368-6655

1860 El Camino Real, Burlingame, CA

Offers 24-hour hotline, crisis intervention, drop-in and outreach services for families and individuals within families experiencing violent abuse, communication problems, and difficulties with parent/child relationships.

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren 650/342-5216

Peninsula YMCA, 1710 S. Amphlett Blvd. #216
San Mateo, CA 94403

Family support for grandparents and their grandchildren
(ages 5-13).

Jewish Family and Children's Services 650/591-8991

490 El Camino Real, Belmont, CA

Parental Stress Hotline 650/327-3333

24-hour hotline. Teenagers may also call.

Parents' Educational Resource Center 650/572-9161

1730 Amphlett Blvd., Suite 130 San Mateo, CA.

The Parents' Educational Resource Center (PERC) is a
nonprofit organization that helps parents who have children
with learning disabilities.

Peninsula Resource Center 650/696-1255

520 El Camino Real, San Mateo, CA

Mills-Peninsula Health Services Community Ed. 650/696-5400

1783 El Camino Real, Burlingame, CA

Mental health center has several drop-in groups, including
parent groups for grief and loss counseling and single
parenting.

Poison Control Center 1-800-876-4766; 1-800-972-3323 (TDD)

Suicide Prevention & Crisis Center 650/368-6655

1860 El Camino Real, Burlingame, CA

Teen Helpline/24 hour calls 1-800-877-7675; also 650/327-8336

Toughlove-San Mateo Parents Support Group 650/327-3333

Parent support group practicing the Toughlove Program.
Meets weekly. Contact school for specific details.

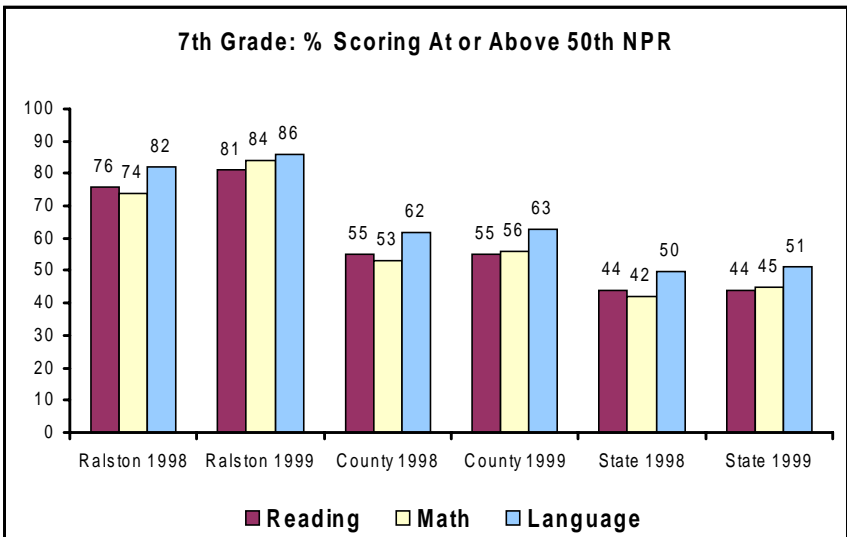
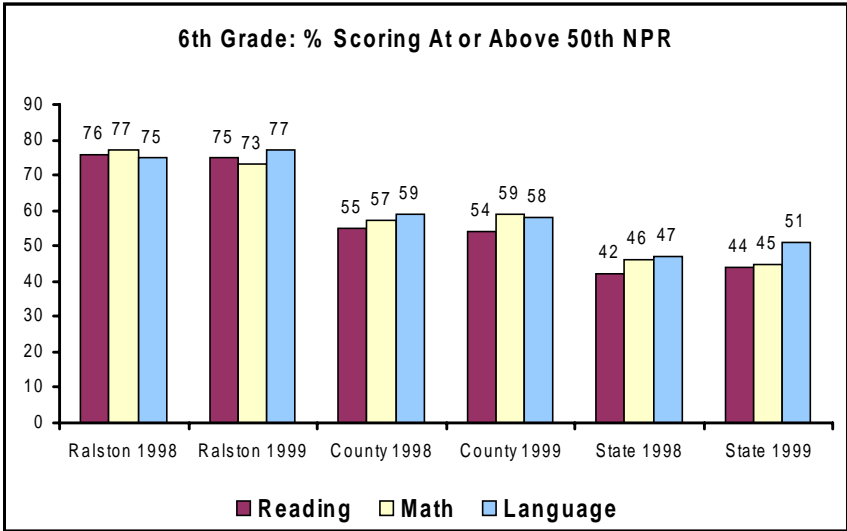
APPENDIX B. EDUCATION ABBREVIATIONS

ADA	Average Daily Attendance
BFA	Belmont Faculty Association
CBEDS	California Basic Education Data System
CBEST	California Basic Education Skills Test
CLAS	California Learning Assessment System
CSBA	California School Boards Association
CSEA	California School Employees Association
CTA	California Teachers Association
ELD	English Language Development
FTE	Full-Time Equivalent
GATE	Gifted and Talented Education
IEP	Individualized Education Program
LEP	Limited English Proficient
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
PQR	Program Quality Review
PL94-142	Public Law 94-142 Education for All Handicapped Children Act
RSP	Resource Specialist Program
SARC	School Accountability Report Card
SIP	School Improvement Program
SDC	Special Day Class
SDE	State Department of Education
SSC	School Site Council
STAR	Standardized Testing and Reporting

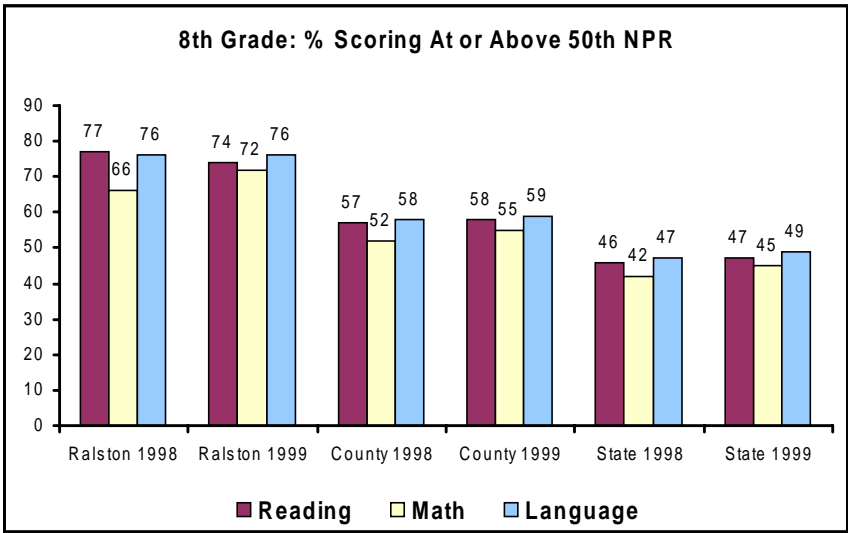
APPENDIX C. STAR REPORT SUMMARY CHARTS

Comparison by Area (School, County, State)

The number of students tested affects changes in test results. **Year-to-year variation is greater for small numbers of students than for large numbers of students**, so small changes at the state level are more likely to be "real" than are the same changes for schools or small districts.

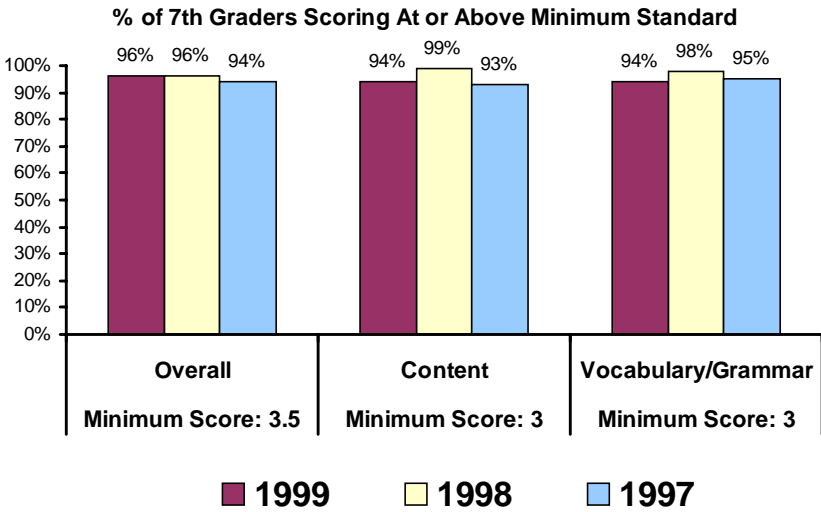


Comparison by Area (School, County, State)



APPENDIX D. CTB WRITING ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Results for different school years are based on scores of different student groups (classes). Results include scores of students enrolled in District for less than one year. These trends cannot be used to conclude the presence or absence of student growth from one year to the next. Students scoring below the minimum level are encouraged to attend summer school and/or are provided with an education plan to help them achieve the minimum level of proficiency.



CTB Writing Assessment: Overall

