

Marin County Public Schools A Community Report

2007/2008



Marin County Office of Education

Mary Jane Burke
Marin County Superintendent of Schools

Marin's Best Kept Secret



Citizens across the nation learned one of Marin County's best kept secrets last summer when Forbes magazine awarded Marin County public schools first place in a new national review of education. The July 2007 issue of Forbes examined 775 counties across the United States that have high property taxes and populations greater than 65,000. Researchers weighed per pupil spending against student performance, and Marin County public schools won the top spot for delivering the highest performance at the lowest cost!

This exciting news is a testament to the dedication shown by teachers, staff members, trustees, parents, and community members who support local schools, which continuously strive to be the best in the nation.

Now that the secret is out, it seems an opportune time for the Marin County Office of Education to bring you this community report that provides a snapshot of local public schools: enrollment and demographic information, achievement data, and a glimpse of the exciting, and challenging, dynamics taking place within Marin County schools.

Those of us who have the privilege of working with Marin County children appreciate the strong support from families and communities. This partnership is the basis of our success as we continuously strive to meet the educational needs of all students and the expectations of the public to deliver high quality educational programs that are student-centered, cost-effective and accountable to the people we serve.

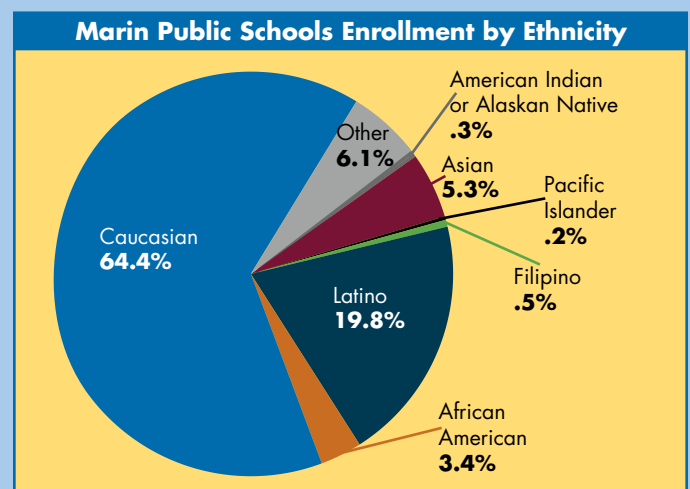
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Marin Schools at a Glance

- 🍏 Highest level of academic achievement of seven San Francisco Bay Area counties
- 🍏 Best education for the dollar nationwide
- 🍏 78 kindergarten through 12th-grade [K-12] schools, the College of Marin, and the Marin County Office of Education
- 🍏 29,081 K-12 students
- 🍏 3,622 English language learner (ELL) students
- 🍏 3,453 staff members, including 1,627 K-12 teachers
- 🍏 Stable enrollment with growing diversity of student population

Marin County schools, like schools throughout California, serve an increasingly diverse population of students. In the past decade, while the student population in Marin County schools has grown by less than 8%, the number of English language learners has increased by more than 34%. This diversity in student population brings both advantages and opportunities. Marin schools offer countless occasions for students to interact with people of different ethnic, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds, leading to a greater understanding of the world in which they live. Marin schools continue to seek new ways to address the challenges of a diverse student population and, as they succeed in doing so, they discover that these challenges are best met through the combined efforts of educators, students, families, businesses, and communities throughout Marin County.

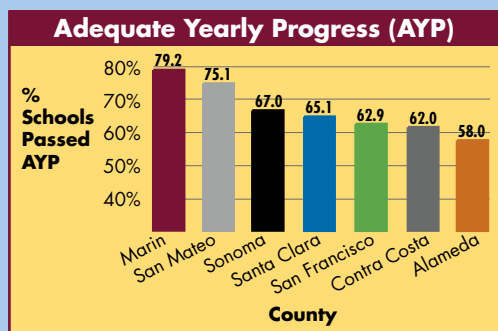
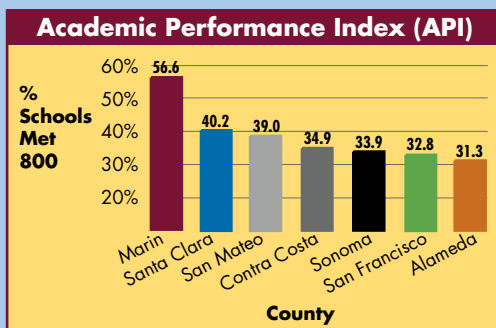


Academic Achievement

Student achievement in Marin County is well above the average for California and the nation, as measured by state and national criteria and norms. In 2006-2007, Marin schools outperformed schools in all seven San Francisco Bay Area counties and continued their track record of annual academic growth.

The Academic Performance Index (API) is California's school measure of annual academic growth. It is a numeric index that ranges

from a low of 200 to a high of 1000, with 800 set as the statewide API performance target for all schools.

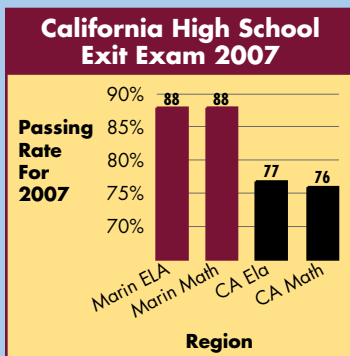


The Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) measures whether a school passes performance criteria established by the federal No

Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001. To pass, specific criteria must be met by the school as a whole and by individual significant subgroups of students.

Students graduating from Marin County high schools are better prepared than ever to attend college and to take their place in the nation's workforce. The graduation rate for high schools in Marin County has risen each year to 95.8%, compared to 83% statewide. Marin

County students also performed well above the state average on both the English language arts (ELA) and mathematics parts of the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE), which students must pass to receive a public high school graduation diploma.



Educator Excellence



Educating Marin's children is an awesome responsibility, but one that Marin County teachers, principals and other school personnel fulfill every day with renewed dedication.

Research shows that ensuring students have well-qualified teachers is the single most important thing a school can do to increase student achievement.* Highly qualified teachers are particularly important for the success of low-performing students.

Marin County has 97.4% fully-credentialed teachers. These teachers are supplemented by university interns and teachers holding special credentials, and supported by counselors, instructional assistants, librarians, special program providers, administrators and support staff.

*The Education Trust, www.edtrust.org

Safe Schools

Marin County schools provide safe, modern, resource-rich learning environments where students can learn and teachers can teach. During the past decade, Marin



County schools have invested millions of dollars in the modernization of school facilities. Much of this money has come from school bond measures approved by voters in communities throughout the county — people who recognize the value that excellent schools bring to their communities.

The safety and well-being of students and staff is further enhanced through programs offered by the Marin County Office of Education and its partner organizations, including the School/Law Enforcement Partnership, Marin Early Childhood Education Partnership, and Marin County School Volunteers. These collaborative efforts provide resources specifically designed to support safe and healthy schools and communities for all Marin County students and their families.

Beyond Classroom Doors

To prepare students for the workforce of tomorrow, Marin County educators are constantly inspired to think outside the box and beyond the classroom.

Programs that have been popular and successful in the past may no longer have the same impact. The Marin County Office of Education remains alert to these changes to provide the best possible support for local students, teachers and schools.

Expanding educational opportunities for all students often begins with the addition of practical experience. In its June 2007 report, the Marin County Civil Grand Jury gave the Marin County Office of Education an "A+" for its Regional Occupational Program (ROP) and School to Career (STC) program, which last year provided more than 3,300 middle and high school students with career awareness opportunities such as workplace field trips, job shadows, and after-school and summer internships.

The Walker Creek Ranch Conference Center provides outdoor opportunities such as Camp Soulajule Arts, Ecology Summer Camp, and the Marin County Outdoor School Program, which was recognized by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction for its outstanding service in outdoor education.

Clearly, the key to success of Marin schools goes well beyond the classroom doors. From helping a child to read or convert fractions to decimals, to providing internship opportunities or sponsoring special programs, committed individuals and organizations are helping to educate Marin children. This partnership is crucial.

Together, with the ongoing support of the public we serve, Marin schools will continue to attract resources and to deliver the best quality education possible for all Marin County students.

Countywide Commitment

Marin County public schools, and the people who support them, are committed to meeting the needs of students throughout this county. Still, many challenges and a great deal of work lie ahead.

One major challenge facing educators today is the "achievement gap." Test scores show large performance disparities between children whose native language is English and those who are learning English, between disadvantaged students and their more affluent classmates. Marin schools must close this achievement gap and ensure that

all students, whatever their background or situation is, are meeting or exceeding academic standards and achieving to their full potential.

Educational funding is also an area where much work is needed. Public schools cannot continue to meet their goals in an environment of dwindling resources and budgetary cutbacks. California continues

a two-decade long pattern of ranking well below the national average in spending per student. More substantial and stable funding is desperately needed.

The list of needs goes on. Sufficient staffing, affordable housing, proper nutrition and health care – these are all issues that impact students, schools, and communities.

Just as a child's education is a long-term effort, moving public schools from "good" to "great" is a task that requires the support and involvement of the entire community. Marin schools offer a myriad of opportunities: Visit a classroom. Attend a school board meeting. Make a donation – of time, money, or supplies. To learn what you can do, please visit www.marinschools.org or call 415.472.4110. Your action can make a difference!



All data in this report is for the 2006-2007 academic year.

Data Sources: California Department of Education, Education Trust, EdSource, Marin County Office of Education, and National Education Association. Forbes cover reprinted by permission of Forbes Magazine © 2007 Forbes LLC.

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Marin County Superintendent of Schools

Mary Jane Burke



Marin County Office of Education

1111 Las Gallinas Avenue, P.O. Box 4925, San Rafael, CA 94913-4925 • 415.472.4110 • www.marinschools.org