California Department of Education

Report to the Legislature and the Governor

Quality Education Investment Act
First Progress Report

Executive Summary

California *Education Code* Section 52055.765 requires the California Department of Education (CDE) to provide a progress report on the implementation of the Quality Education Investment Act (QEIA).

The QEIA is expected to provide approximately $2.7 billion to participating schools and local educational agencies (LEAs) serving students in kindergarten through twelfth grade over the life of the program. Of 1,455 schools eligible for participation, a total of 488 low-performing schools were selected through a semi-random process that allowed LEAs to prioritize their eligible schools. The QEIA funding enables these schools to implement specific school improvement activities.

As required by statute, this report includes Academic Performance Index data, disaggregated by student subgroups, of schools participating in the QEIA program. This report also provides information on the development of specific program requirements guided by stakeholder input, successes and challenges in initial program implementation, and reflections of program participants on the effect of the program to date.

This report, the first in a series of three reports on the QEIA program, focuses on initial program implementation decisions and actions, barriers to program implementation and impact, formal program support efforts and lessons learned in the first phase of the program. The two subsequent reports, to be completed by January 2012 and January 2014 respectively, will address the relative effectiveness of strategies used by participating schools in implementing the program, further explore program challenges and support efforts, and provide a general evaluation of the effectiveness of the program in improving the academic performance of these schools.

You can find this report on the CDE QEIA of 2006 Web page at http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/lp/qe/.

If you have any questions regarding this report, or to order a copy of the report, please contact James Alford, Education Programs Consultant, Regional Coordination and Support Office, by phone at 916-319-0226 or by e-mail at jalford@cde.ca.gov.

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First Progress Report

January 2010

California Department of Education
Curriculum, Learning, and Accountability Branch
District and School Improvement Division
Regional Coordination and Support Office

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Overview

This report fulfills the first requirement of *Education Code (EC)* Section 52055.765 for the California Department of Education (CDE) to provide a progress report on the implementation of the Quality Education Investment Act (QEIA) on or before January 1, 2010.

The QEIA is expected to provide approximately $2.7 billion to participating schools and local educational agencies (LEAs) serving students in kindergarten through grade twelve (K–12) over the life of the program. Of 1,455 schools eligible for participation, a total of 488 schools were selected through a semi-random process that allowed LEAs to prioritize their eligible schools.

Schools participating in QEIA face significantly higher levels of challenging characteristics among their student populations than higher performing schools. Participating schools must implement several improvement measures: including instituting class size reduction (CSR), achieving specific student-to-counselor ratios, bringing teacher experience averages at QEIA schools up to the district average, improving school performance on the Academic Performance Index (API), and others.

Program Development

The QEIA statute established general criteria for participation, program requirements, and funding sources and distribution formulas. QEIA requirements requiring further definition, such as teacher experience and class size calculations, were resolved through consensus of stakeholder advisory groups.

Program development and planning for implementation was supported by several education entities. The two state-funded QEIA Technical Assistance (TA) Centers and their county partners supported program implementation by communicating with participating schools and LEAs, clarifying program requirements, and providing advice to support schools in overcoming implementation barriers. The California County Superintendents Educational Services Association (CCSESA) led a stakeholder-supported process to develop tools to be used consistently throughout the state to monitor the progress of participating schools in implementing program requirements.

Program Implementation

Initial indications from participating LEAs are that their schools are meeting interim program implementation requirements, although they anticipate difficulties in achieving

full implementation of some program elements by the end of 2010–11 as required by statute.

Program Performance

An analysis of the Academic Performance Index (API) performance of participating schools indicates that their average performance exceeded the average performance of schools statewide, as well as an appropriate comparison group of schools (i.e., those eligible but not selected to participate), in the early years of the program.

Results of QEIA highly-qualified teacher monitoring conducted by county superintendents at the end of the 2008–09 school year show that the vast majority of QEIA schools met their program implementation requirements. Only five schools (1 percent) of all those participating in the regular QEIA program were found not to have substantially met the 2008–09 implementation requirements. Performance among schools in the alternative QEIA program was not as strong, as eight alternative program schools (33 percent) were found not to have substantially met their performance goals for the year.

Expenditure reports from participating LEAs indicate that in the first two years of the program the largest portion of QEIA expenditures was for personnel salaries and benefits the majority of which was for salaries for certificated personnel.

The QEIA program is expected to establish conditions at participating schools that allow for developing exemplary instructional practices. A number of QEIA-funded LEAs reported that program participation has resulted in improved collaboration and professional development, thereby improving teaching and learning at their participating schools. Several LEAs cited their participation in the QEIA program as a catalyst for establishing a comprehensive schoolwide improvement plan.

Quality Education Investment Act
First Progress Report to the Legislature and the Governor

Introduction

This report fulfills the first requirement of *Education Code (EC)* Section 52055.765 for the California Department of Education (CDE) to provide a progress report on the implementation of the Quality Education Investment Act (QEIA) on or before January 1, 2010. As required by statute, this report includes API data, disaggregated by student subgroups, of schools participating in the program. This report also provides information on the development of specific program requirements guided by stakeholder input, successes and challenges in initial program implementation, and reflections of program participants on the effect of the program to date.

This report, the first in a series of three reports on the QEIA program, focuses on initial program implementation decisions and actions, barriers to program implementation and impact, formal program support efforts and lessons learned in the first phase of the program. The two subsequent reports, to be completed by January 2012 and January 2014 respectively, will address the relative effectiveness of strategies used by participating schools in implementing the program, explore program challenges and support efforts, and provide a general evaluation of the effectiveness of the program in improving the academic performance of these schools.

Background

I. How QEIA Originated

QEIA resulted from the settlement of a lawsuit between California Teachers Association (CTA) and Governor Schwarzenegger for his suspension of the guaranteed minimum funding level for kindergarten–fourteen schools provided by Proposition 98. Included in the Governor's spending cuts for 2004–05 was a projected $2 billion funding cut to schools below the guaranteed funding level. Revenues for the year were higher than projected raising the Proposition 98 minimum guarantee. Because the Proposition 98 minimum is based on prior years funding level, the 2005–06 guarantee level was also affected. As a result, funding for schools was actually $3.2 billion lower than required by Proposition 98.

In 2006, the Governor and CTA reached a settlement on the suit that would return the reduced Proposition 98 funding to schools, approximately $2.7 billion for kindergarten through grade twelve (K–12) schools and $320 million to community colleges, for a total of $3.2 billion. The specific method for using the K–12 funding was established through Senate Bill (SB) 1133 (Torlakson, 2006), that added Education Code (*EC*) Sections 52055.700 to 52055.770, given the short title "Quality Education Investment Act." Instead of distributing the funding among all public schools receiving Proposition 98 funding, this statute provided substantial funding for a relatively small group of low-performing schools and

required that they implement specific school improvement activities and meet specific reporting deadlines. (The statute also allowed up to 15 percent of available funding to be used to fund a cohort of schools to implement a set of research-based alternative school improvement activities.) The rationale for this targeted funding approach was that only through a substantial injection of funding would schools realize significant improvement and funding spread among all schools receiving Proposition 98 funding would not have any appreciable effect on any of the schools. The funding level the QEIA applied to participating schools allowed 488 low-performing schools to be funded by the program statewide.

A complete analysis of the legal action and legislation leading to QEIA was created by the Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) and can be accessed on the LAO Web site at http://www.lao.ca.gov/analysis_2007/education/ed_10_anl07.aspx (Outside Source).

II. Selection of QEIA Schools

The QEIA established that schools to receive funding be drawn from schools eligible in state API decile ranks 1 and 2 (20 percent of schools with the lowest API scores) in 2005. After excluding very small schools that did not produce reliable API scores, 1,455 schools were eligible for funding. The statute assigned development of the actual school selection process to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction (SSPI) and the State Secretary of Education, and required that the selections reflect a balanced geographic and grade-level distribution.

The SSPI directed CDE staff to organize two stakeholder meetings and invite a broad range of interested organizations and individuals to participate in discussions of QEIA implementation issues. The first meeting, held on October 13, 2006, primarily involved a discussion of the application and school selection process. Both the stakeholders and CDE staff preferred a streamlined process that would allow selection and initial program funding to occur expeditiously. A detailed application process to include a school plan from which a competitive selection could be made was determined to be too unwieldy and required too much time to implement. The stakeholders and CDE staff preferred a more random selection process that would allow for quick implementation but provide a level of fairness in a process likely to select only one-third of eligible schools. Two options were discussed: (1) a fully random process selecting from the set of 1,455 eligible schools, after which the selected schools would consent to participate and complete application documents and (2) a semi-random process requiring schools to request an interest in participation for inclusion in the pool of schools from which random selections would be made. The advantages of the latter option ensured district and school commitment to the program prior to the selection process and required the CDE to backfill in cases in which selected schools elected not to participate. Two key stakeholders recommended the semi-random selection process, and received consensus for that recommendation. The selection process was further refined at the second stakeholder meeting,

held December 15, 2006, and included the following major elements:

1. School districts applied on behalf of their eligible schools and prioritized their various eligible schools for funding. A district with several eligible schools indicated which school should be funded first, which should be funded second, etc. The application included district assurances that they would support their funded schools and comply with program implementation and reporting requirements. Districts applied on behalf of 1,260 of the 1,455 eligible schools.

2. Each district was assigned a random number for each of its eligible schools that applied. If a district had three eligible applying schools, it was assigned three random numbers.

3. Numbers were drawn. When a district's number was selected, its highest priority school was added to the list of schools to be funded.

4. As each school was selected, its projected annual funding amount was identified. The process continued until the sum of projected funding for the selected schools reached the annual funding threshold for the program provided by law.

Included in this process was the selection of alternative schools, which had a more substantial application process due to the requirement that they identify and implement alternative school improvement measures. These schools were pre-screened to qualify, high schools in the group were prioritized (per statute) and that group was selected first until the 15 percent (of total pupils funded) threshold established by statute was reached. The result was that 25 high schools were selected as QEIA alternative program schools.

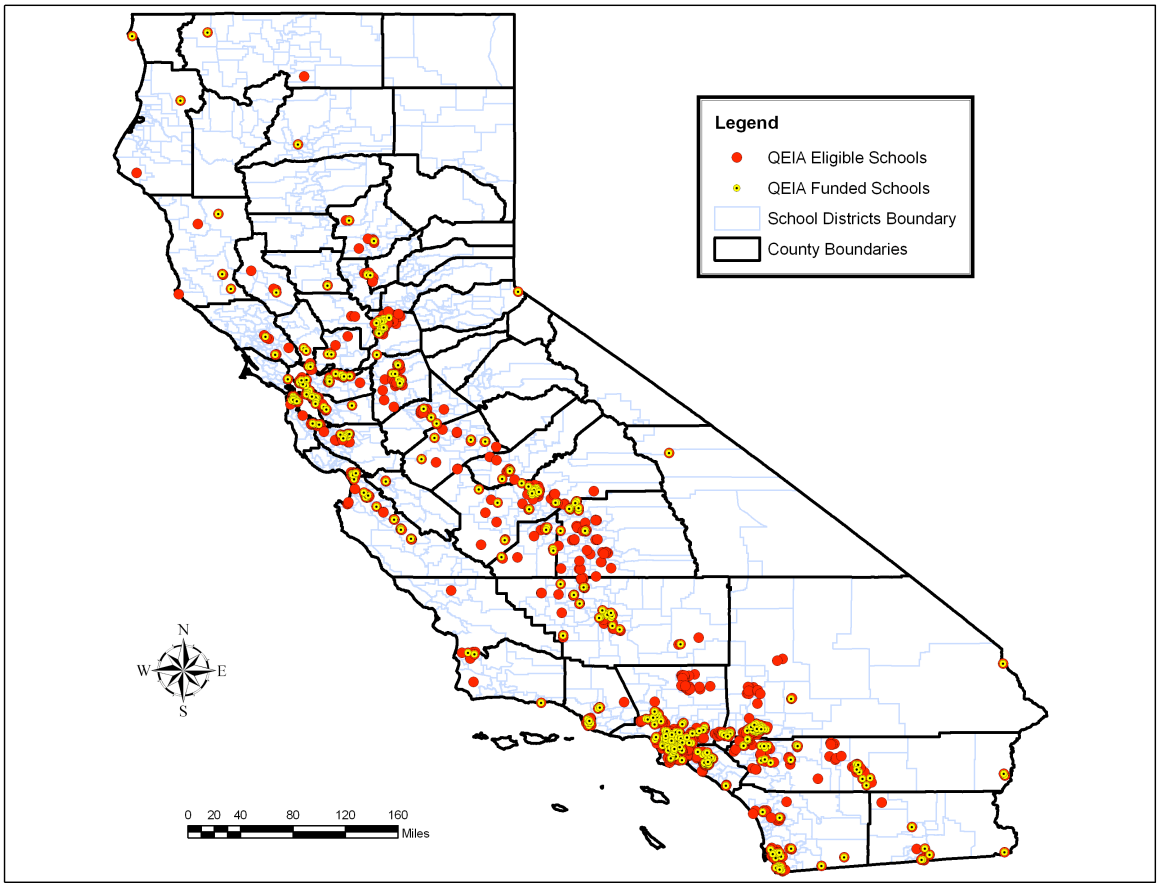
Also included in the semi-random selection process was ensuring that appropriate geographic distribution was obtained. This was achieved by selecting at least one eligible school in each county that had such a school. The alternative program schools were selected first, followed by the county-by-county selection, and then all remaining schools were selected through the random process until the funding threshold was reached.

III. Profile of QEIA Schools

The initial selection process described above resulted in the inclusion of 488 schools, including 463 schools participating in the regular QEIA program, and the 25 schools in the alternative QEIA program. Subsequent to the initial selection process, one school withdrew from participation, reducing the number of participating schools to 487. In the second year of the program (2008–09), the State Board of Education (SBE) heard two separate waiver requests to allow schools to be added to the program. The first waiver requested funds from student's in QEIA schools to follow those students transferring to new schools in the same service area thus ensuring those students continue to receive the

benefits of QEIA participation. The SBE approved the waiver request adding nine new schools to the regular QEIA program. The second waiver requested that the population of a large QEIA funded school be reorganized and be distributed among five smaller schools. The SBE also approved that waiver request technically adding four additional schools to the regular program. The addition of these 13 schools brought the number of schools participating in QEIA to 500, i.e., 475 schools in the regular QEIA program and 25 schools in the alternative program. One school in the regular QEIA program closed at the end of the 2008–09 school year, reducing the total participating QEIA schools to 499.

Figure 1: Distribution of QEIA Funded Schools



Of the 474 schools participating in the regular QEIA program, 302 are elementary schools, 133 are middle schools, and 39 are high schools. Because the QEIA statute established that schools serving students in grades nine through twelve would receive priority for selection into the alternative QEIA program, all of the 25 alternative QEIA schools are high schools.

The following table provides data on various characteristics of students and their parents that have been shown to present challenges to achieving high academic performance in specific groups of California schools. These characteristics include indicators of poverty, language barriers, relative levels of educational achievement among parents, and ethnicities affected by the academic achievement gap.*

The data demonstrate that QEIA-funded schools, along with all schools in the lowest two state decile ranks, face significantly higher levels of challenging characteristics among their student populations than higher performing schools. Comparing the data on QEIA schools to the larger group of decile rank 1 and 2 schools show QEIA schools have slightly higher challenges on some indicators. This may be a reflection of LEA decisions to prioritize those schools most in need when applying for the QEIA selection process. The schools selected for participation in QEIA therefore fulfill the program's stated intent to serve "…schools in which pupils have high levels of poverty and complex educational needs." [*EC* Section 52055.710(e)]

Table 1: Distribution of Challenging Characteristics Among Various Groups of California Schools

Characteristic	QEIA-funded Schools (Selected 2005)	All Schools In Ranks 1–2 (Rank in 2005)	All Schools in Ranks 3–10 (Rank in 2005)
Percentage of Students Participating in the Free or Reduced-Price Lunch Program	84%	82%	44%
Percentage of English Learners	41%	41%	19%
Percentage of Students Whose Parents Did Not Graduate from High School	43%	38%	15%
Percentage of Students Whose Parents Graduated from College	7%	8%	22%
Percentage of African-American Students	10%	10%	6%
Percentage of Hispanic Students	79%	76%	41%

Statistics drawn from CalWORKs and California Basic Educational Data System (CBEDS) for students attending these schools in 2009.

*These characteristics were used by Strategic Education Services in a 2009 report as a means to differentiate the challenges faced by QEIA schools and other historically low-performing schools from higher-performing schools in the state. The statistics were developed independently by CDE staff using the most recent available data on these indicators.

As part of a long-term study on the impact of QEIA program participation on schools' API performance, the Northern QEIA Regional Technical Assistance Center compared API performance at QEIA-funded schools against other schools that were eligible for QEIA but were not selected for participation during the three years preceding the implementation of the QEIA program. In all three years, the schools not selected for QEIA funding had achieved higher API performance at all three levels (elementary, middle, and high school) than the QEIA-funded group. For elementary and middle schools, the difference in API performance was significant with QEIA schools achieving a mean API ten or more points lower than the comparison group. For high schools, QEIA schools also showed lower API performance than the comparison schools, although the difference in mean API did not reach the threshold for statistical significance. However, the QEIA high schools improved in API performance more slowly than the comparison high schools in those years. Generally, schools that subsequently received QEIA funding tended to face greater challenges in terms of API performance in addition to the other challenging characteristics described above.*

Description of Program Requirements

I. Legislative Intent and General Requirements

The QEIA statute's section on legislative intent stated five specific goals of the program. The first two were primarily legal in nature, concerning settlement of the lawsuit from which the statute originated. The other three goals, however, were directly related to improving school performance, in terms of improved teaching and learning, increasing recruitment and retention of well qualified teachers, and focusing resources on improving student academic performance. These goals focus on outcomes, but the actions required by the statute are mostly input oriented, i.e., things schools are required to do that are expected to achieve the desired outcomes. Specifically, schools must demonstrate that they reduced class sizes; brought teacher experience levels up to par with other schools in the LEA; provided professional development to administrators, teachers and paraprofessionals; ensured all teachers are highly-qualified, and met other requirements of the *Williams, et al vs. State of California, et al* settlement. Requirements related to actual student academic performance do not come into play until after the fourth year of program participation and there are no direct requirements for (or measures of) teacher retention and focusing resources on improving student performance. The program design expects requirements such as CSR and improvement of student-counselor ratios to have a direct positive effect on student academic performance and to provide conditions to improve the quality of instruction and general school improvement.

*From *Analysis of the Impacts of QEIA on Student Achievement,* by Paul Tuss, Sacramento County Office of Education, November 16, 2009.

II. Interim and Final Requirements—Nature and Timeline of Benchmarks

Several QEIA program elements must be implemented "by the end of the third year of full funding." In 2007–08 schools were provided partial funding because program funding was reduced for that year by statute. Because of this, the "first year of full funding" was identified as 2008–09. The third year of full funding is 2010–11, the year participating schools are required to meet these program elements. The years 2008–09 and 2009–10 are identified as "interim" years. During these interim years, schools have to meet interim implementation targets on these program elements, i.e., being one-third and two-thirds, respectively, of the way to meeting these program requirements. The requirements to be implemented on this timeline are:

- CSR
- Student-counselor ratio reductions (for high schools only)
- All highly– qualified teachers (per California's Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) definition)
- Average teacher experience equal to district average (per the QEIA Teacher Experience Index (TEI))
- API performance must exceed the school's API growth target (averaged over the first three years)
- Schools funded under the QEIA alternative program must meet interim benchmarks on implementing the major components of their self-selected alternative school improvement activities during the interim years

Other requirements, such as professional growth, administrator qualifications, and compliance with the *Williams* settlement, do not include interim requirements but are reviewed annually to ensure that participating schools are either meeting these requirements or making appropriate progress. After the interim years, all program requirements must be deemed to have been met annually. The QEIA statute provides greater clarity to the definition of program requirements beyond the interim years, and in the remaining program years all monitored requirements carry comparable weight for schools concerning findings of compliance.

County superintendents of schools are charged with annually reviewing the progress of QEIA schools in implementing program requirements and are provided funding to support this activity. In the first two years, 2008–09 and 2009–10, the county superintendents are required to monitor actual progress toward meeting the requirements bulleted above (excluding the API requirement, which will be measured at the end of 2010–11) and determine whether that progress constitutes appropriate progress toward full implementation (one-third in 2008–09, and two-thirds in 2009–10). Given subtle differences in interpretation,

including measuring a school's base-year status and navigating requirement complexities (e.g., instituting class sizes in multiple grades and classrooms with different targets for each), county superintendents are required to make judgments as well as make concrete calculations in determining whether schools are making appropriate progress. Further, the statute calls for county superintendents to determine whether or not schools have "substantially met the requirements", which may allow counties a small degree of additional flexibility in judging whether schools are meeting required benchmarks.

The CCSESA, on behalf of the 42 county superintendents with QEIA monitoring responsibilities, led an effort to develop a common set of monitoring protocols and tools to aid county superintendents in their QEIA monitoring responsibilities and provide consistency statewide in the QEIA monitoring process. These monitoring protocols and tools assist the county superintendents in identifying the information needed to determine the degree to which schools have met annual program requirements, quantifying judgments on a school's annual implementation progress, and concluding whether the level of a school's implementation constitutes "substantially" meeting implementation requirements for the year. These tools are available for review in Appendix E. A key element of the tools is a point system by which the county office of education (COE) assigns schools a progress rating of "0", "1", or "2" on each program requirement based on specific criteria. Generally, a "0" indicates no progress, a "1" indicates progress that does not fully meet the annual requirement, and a "2" indicates showing progress that fully meets the annual requirement. Schools must have no "0" ratings and a low number of "1" ratings in order to be considered to have made "substantial" progress. The QEIA TA Centers supported implementation and calibration of the monitoring process by producing two Webcasts in November 2008 to describe the monitoring process, introduce county monitors to the monitoring tools, and answer questions. Additionally, the QEIA TA Centers designed a pre-monitoring protocol for schools and LEAs that assisted schools in understanding program requirements and options, clarifying how progress would be measured in the monitoring process, and establishing communication between the schools and experts on program requirements. The pre-monitoring visits were intended to reduce unexpected outcomes once actual monitoring occurred, but also to expedite program implementation by clarifying specific program requirements, troubleshooting implementation barriers, and underscoring implementation timelines.

Prior to developing the monitoring tools, providing related technical assistance, and conducting the monitoring process, some clarification of the statutory requirements was necessary. Several program requirements described in the statute required further definition or presented issues concerning appropriate monitoring approaches. A discussion of specific program requirements and their monitoring follows in the next few subsections.

III. CSR

Schools participating in QEIA are required to substantially reduce class sizes in core subjects. For kindergarten through grade three (K–3), the statute requires that QEIA schools have no more than 20 students per class, as established in the rules for the state's K–3 CSR Program. For grades four through twelve (4–12), QEIA requires participating schools to decrease their average class sizes in core classes to 25, or to five fewer than the average in a designated previous year (referred to as the "base year"), whichever is lower. The statute established that average class size is calculated at the grade level, but did not define grade level, nor did it address the fact that class sizes often change over the course of the year. Several issues that were addressed prior to implementing the QEIA CSR requirement, included:

- Determine the grade level of a class that includes students from more than one grade
- Specify the method by which the number of students in a class is to be derived (e.g., based on the class enrollment at a single point in time vs. deriving an average of the enrollment of a class over multiple days in the school year)
- Identify classes to be included in the requirement and those to be excluded

As with other program requirements, CDE staff considered various alternatives for addressing each issue, developed pros and cons for each, and solicited input from stakeholders, particularly the QEIA Statewide Advisory Group. These efforts resulted in the QEIA Class Size Reduction Calculation Instructions, included in this report as Appendix B. The QEIA TA Centers also created several tools to support tracking and implementing of the CSR requirement, including spreadsheets with embedded formulas that assist QEIA schools in calculating interim and final targets, and a training video instructing schools and LEAs in their use. While these instructions and tools clarified formulas for deriving class averages and standardized subsequent monitoring activities, they did not fully resolve a structural issue with the QEIA CSR requirement.

For small schools with a single classroom at each grade level, some grade level targets could be very low. If, for example, a school had a single fourth grade classroom of 15 students in the base year, the school's target QEIA class size for fourth grade is ten students. This target applies to fourth grade for all years in which the school participates in QEIA. The exceptionally small number of students in this grade level could shift up annually, while the target for the fourth grade level remains static, exacerbating the challenge of meeting specific grade level targets. Absent a legislative remedy, the only available solution for such schools was to pursue a waiver of the QEIA CSR requirement through the

SBE. In processing requests from small schools facing these conditions, CDE staff recommended that such waivers be approved with the condition that an alternative CSR target be established for a span of grades (e.g., in a K–8 school, the requirement might be to average 21 students among all classes in grades four through eight). A waiver that allows a school to average its class sizes across a grade span provides more flexibility for the size of individual classes while maintaining the statutory intent to ensure that classes at the school are generally smaller, assuming the required average for the grade range is set below the school's current average for the range. Without the option of a waiver, a school must meet individual targets for each grade level, which can be prohibitively costly and is likely to result in a greater number of combination classes or even withdrawal or termination from the program.

In addition to waiver requests for small schools described above, some larger schools sought QEIA CSR waivers because the size of classes in the base year were artificially small due to measures undertaken locally to reduce class size prior to the school's participation in the QEIA program. Large schools argued that the targets unfairly penalized them for prior school improvement efforts. The SBE initially approved a waiver of this type but expressed concerns that granting QEIA waivers could undermine program requirements and later indicated such waivers would not likely be granted. As a result, the number of schools pursuing QEIA CSR waivers dropped considerably. Nevertheless, the QEIA CSR requirement, clearly the most expensive QEIA requirement to implement, created challenges for many schools. In the first annual QEIA Local Educational Agency Report (2008–09), participating LEAs were asked whether they experienced challenges in meeting the QEIA CSR requirement. Approximately 35 percent of LEAs indicated difficulties with the requirement, most commonly citing insufficient funding to cover the cost of the additional teachers required. While this percentage is not alarming, it is notable that QEIA schools only needed to implement one-third of the CSR in 2008–09 making the requirement increasingly challenging over subsequent years. LEAs were asked whether they anticipated problems in implementing the CSR requirement in 2009–10 and 58 percent (80) of the responding LEAs expected to face challenges (55 responded "yes" and 35 responded "probably"). The most commonly noted anticipated challenge again was insufficient funding to cover the cost of the additional teachers required.

According to the results of QEIA CSR monitoring conducted by county superintendants at the end of the 2008–09 school year, more than 75 percent of the schools received a monitoring rating of "2", indicating that they were found to have met or exceeded the interim requirement for implementing class size reduction for the year. Nearly 25 percent of the schools received a rating of "1"; meaning that they made significant progress in meeting the requirement but did not fully meet their 2008–09 CSR goals. Only five schools were found not to have made significant progress in meeting the CSR requirement for 2008–09.

Given the frequency of QEIA CSR waiver requests, CDE plans to monitor difficulties with program compliance. Early information from participating LEAs

indicates that the QEIA CSR requirement may increasingly cause challenges in program implementation.

IV. Counselor Ratios

QEIA high schools funded under the regular program must achieve a student-counselor ratio of 300:1. Schools funded under the alternative program are excluded from this requirement. The statute requires that each counselor included in the ratio calculation must hold a Pupil Personnel Services Credential. Staff included in the calculation also must actually provide counseling services to students, so both credential status and job description play a factor in whether schools meet this requirement. As with other program requirements, a county office must first determine the student-counselor ratio in the base year (commonly 2007–08), calculate the difference between the base-year ratio and the target ratio (2010–2011), and divide the difference by three to calculate the one-third and two-thirds targets. This process involves a review of staff credential status and assignments to calculate the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) counselors, as well as a review of enrollment data to calculate the number of students to be served. Once known a simple division of student enrollment by counselor FTEs determines whether targets are met. This requirement must be monitored only in schools formally designated high schools.

Given the small number of high schools in the QEIA program, and that high schools funded under the QEIA alternative program requirements are not subject to the program's student-counselor ratio requirement, few schools were monitored on this requirement. However, monitoring results showed that all schools required to make progress on this requirement in 2008–09 were successful. According to the results of QEIA Counselor ratio monitoring conducted at QEIA high schools by county superintendents at the end of the 2008–09 school year, all of the schools received a rating of "2," indicating that they had met or exceeded the interim target for implementation of this requirement.

V. Highly-Qualified Teachers (HQT)

QEIA requires that all teachers at participating schools meet the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) definition for "HQT". This requirement, underscores the importance of HQT to school improvement because it is a requirement of all schools receiving ESEA funding, and schools subject to provisions of the *Williams* settlement. While there may be a few QEIA schools that were not previously subject to ESEA requirements, the vast majority of QEIA schools, given their student demographics and API decile rankings, were subject to the HQT requirements well before they participated in QEIA.

Results of QEIA HQT monitoring conducted by county superintendents at the end of the 2008–09 school year indicated all schools received a rating of "2". All

schools are found to have fully met the interim requirement for ensuring that all of their teachers met the definition of "highly qualified."

VI. *Williams* Settlement Requirements

QEIA schools must meet all requirements of the *Williams* settlement. *Williams* was a lawsuit filed on behalf of low-income students concerning unequal access to education due to the failure of some schools in meeting the minimum requirements for providing education as defined by the California Constitution. The settlement requires the state to ensure that all California public school students have access to qualified teachers, state-approved instructional materials, and safe and well-maintained school facilities regardless of local conditions. With few exceptions, schools in decile ranks one through three are subject to county monitoring of the *Williams* settlement requirements. The vast majority of QEIA schools are therefore subject to the *Williams* settlement requirements based on their decile rank even those schools otherwise excluded from the *Williams* settlement are subject to the requirements by virtue of their participation in QEIA. County superintendents are responsible for monitoring the *Williams* settlement requirements as well as QEIA program requirements. However, monitoring the *Williams* requirements occurs early in the school year whereas QEIA monitoring occurs at the end of the school year; some data used in the monitoring is not available until September of the following year. To avoid redundancy, CCSESA successfully proposed to accept findings in the *Williams* review to document a school's compliance with the *Williams* settlement requirements of the QEIA review. Only in those cases in which the *Williams* settlement review includes findings of non-compliance does the QEIA review address the *Williams* review to confirm that the findings of non-compliance have since been resolved or are being addressed within the timeline specified in the *Williams* settlement provisions. The QEIA TA Centers created a spreadsheet to support collection of pertinent *Williams* settlement information to support COEs in conducting this element of the review process.

Results of the QEIA monitoring activities that county superintendents conducted at the end of the 2008–09 school year indicate that the *Williams* requirements were partially or fully met by all schools in the program. Over 60 percent of QEIA schools received a rating of "2" indicating that they were found to have fully met these requirements. All other schools received a rating of "1" representing a finding that they had made progress in meeting *Williams* requirements but had not fully met all of them.

VII. Professional Development

QEIA established professional development requirements for administrators, teachers, and paraprofessionals identifying responsibilities for both LEAs and schools in ensuring that these requirements were met. These requirements are described briefly below.

School districts with QEIA-funded schools: School districts have three essential roles in ensuring that their funded schools comply with QEIA professional development requirements. First, districts are expected to support QEIA-funded schools in providing professional development opportunities that allow for compliance with the QEIA requirements. Whether individual professional development decisions are made at the school or district level, districts retain the responsibility to ensure that professional development opportunities are available and appropriate for faculty at QEIA schools. Second, school districts are required to ensure that their QEIA-funded schools have established and maintained a system for tracking professional development activities completed by administrators, teachers, and paraprofessionals at QEIA schools. The QEIA TA Centers developed an online tracking system, supported by a video training module, which districts could use to track professional development activities and hours completed by faculty subject to QEIA requirements. Survey results at the end of the 2008–09 school year indicate that 60 districts (44 percent) utilized this option, while 65 districts (47 percent) used a professional development tracking system that they had previously established. Finally, school districts must ensure that their QEIA-funded schools are in fact meeting QEIA professional development requirements, as well as all other compliance and performance requirements for schools participating in QEIA. The QEIA TA Centers created professional development planning tools to support districts in fulfilling this general responsibility.

QEIA-funded schools: Schools participating in QEIA are expected to develop a coherent plan for professional development of their administrators, teachers, and paraprofessionals in collaboration with all interested parties in the school community. While this plan must address requirements concerning participation, hours, type, quality, and rigor of professional development described above, it is essential that the plan considers the general needs of the school's faculty, staff, and students, and addresses these needs along with meeting the more specific requirements described above. A successful plan will first identify the forms of professional development that will best serve the school's needs, and then ensure that specific QEIA professional development requirements are satisfied.

Administrators: Each administrator at a QEIA-funded school must be provided with high-quality professional development through leadership training, coaching, and mentoring. QEIA does not prescribe a specific number of hours of professional development an administrator must complete. There is also flexibility regarding the type of professional development an administrator must complete, but the training is expected to focus on elements of instructional leadership and on assisting the school staff to provide effective, standards-based instruction to all students at the school. This professional development should support and align with the professional development of the teachers and instructional paraprofessionals. QEIA directs, to the extent appropriate, the professional development provided to administrators shall be similar in quality and rigor to the Administrator Training Program (Assembly Bill 430).

Teachers: QEIA established two requirements pertaining to professional development for teachers at QEIA-funded schools. The first requirement is that one-third of all teachers at a QEIA-funded school must complete some professional development each year. This requirement applies to every year in which a school receives QEIA funding, beginning in 2008–09, and is not limited to the first three years of funding. While teachers are encouraged to complete professional development every year, this requirement may allow some teachers not to complete professional development in some years, as long as one-third of the faculty of a QEIA-funded school completes professional development each year. QEIA-funded schools are also expected to create a schoolwide professional development plan that ensures that, at a minimum, every teacher completes some professional development during each three-year period. The second requirement is that each teacher at a QEIA-funded school must complete an average of 40 hours of professional development for every year they are assigned to a QEIA-funded school, beginning with the 2008–09 school year. Activities completed after the last day of school, or after June 30, whichever comes first, accrue to professional development hours in the new school year. All teachers are encouraged to complete at least 40 hours of professional development each year, however, no specific number of professional development hours is required for any year as long as each teacher completes an average of 40 hours per year. For example, a teacher who serves at a QEIA-funded school for all six years of full program funding must complete 240 hours of professional development during that time. For both of these requirements, QEIA defines professional development to include:

- Collaboration time for teachers to develop new instructional lessons or analyze pupil data
- Mentoring projects for new teachers
- Extra support for teachers to improve practice
- Rigorous, in-depth professional development on effective pedagogical practices or to extend knowledge of subject matter the teacher is assigned to teach

All teachers at QEIA-funded schools who teach English-language arts, English language development, reading, mathematics, science, or history and social science as part of their assignment must meet these professional development requirements. Special education teachers whose assignment includes any of these subjects must meet these requirements. All other teachers at QEIA-funded schools are also encouraged to meet these requirements. QEIA teacher professional development is expected to relate to the academic subject(s) to which the teacher is assigned, provide time to meet and work with other teachers, and support and improve instruction and student learning in a manner consistent with state academic content standards. QEIA directs, to the extent appropriate, the professional development provided to teachers shall be similar in quality and rigor to the Mathematics and Reading Professional Development

Program (*EC* Section 99230, et seq.).

Instructional Paraprofessionals: QEIA requires all paraprofessionals assigned instructional duties in academic subjects at QEIA-funded schools to complete some professional development during years in which their school receives QEIA funding. Specifically, one-third of all instructional paraprofessionals at the QEIA-funded school must complete some professional development each year. This requirement applies to every year in which a school receives QEIA funding, beginning in 2008–09, and is not limited to the first three years of funding. While paraprofessionals are encouraged to complete professional development every year, this requirement may allow some paraprofessionals not to complete professional development in some years, as long as one-third of paraprofessionals of a QEIA-funded school complete professional development each year. There are no specific requirements concerning the number of hours of professional development paraprofessionals must complete, and the statute does not prescribe the type of professional development required. However, professional development for paraprofessionals should reflect their current instructional assignment and aim to improve the paraprofessional's performance in serving students.

By statute, county superintendents are responsible for monitoring all schools according to the applicable requirements of *EC* sections 52055.740 and 52055.760. The statute does not specify the entity responsible for monitoring LEA requirements described in *EC* Section 52055.750 so CDE staff assumed the role of monitoring LEAs for requirements in this section through an annual LEA reporting process. Key elements of the QEIA professional development requirements, including the definitions of acceptable types of professional development for teachers and administrators, professional development planning requirements, and the 40-hour per year average for teachers, are contained in *EC* Section 52055.750; therefore it fell to CDE staff to monitor these elements. The requirement that one-third of teachers and paraprofessionals receive professional development annually is contained in *EC* Section 52055.740, and is monitored by the county superintendents. Given that the requirements of these various sections of the statute are discrete, this monitoring approach works as well as expected.

Results of the monitoring activities undertaken by county superintendents indicate that virtually all QEIA schools met the first-year interim requirement for staff professional development. Five schools received a rating of "1" on this requirement, and all other schools received a rating of "2", indicating that they had fully met the requirement to ensure that at least one-third of the teachers and paraprofessionals were provided professional development in 2008–09.

VIII. Academic Performance

Schools participating under both the regular and alternative QEIA program requirements must "exceed the API growth target for the school averaged over the first three years of funding." CDE staff has interpreted this requirement to

apply to the schoolwide API target only, given the statute refers to a single target and measurable only after the end of the third funding year, because the measure is an average. Schoolwide API performance will be averaged over the three-year period as will API growth targets. If a school's performance average exceeds its average growth target to any degree, the school will be determined to have met this requirement.

API performance requirements for regular and alternative program schools differ after the third year of full funding. Schools in the regular program must meet their annual API growth targets from then on and schools in the alternative program must exceed their annual growth targets. The statute established a higher requirement for API performance for schools in the alternative program than those in the regular program. "Exceed annual growth targets" is defined as achieving at least one point more on schoolwide API performance than the annual growth target for the purpose of this program.

The statute provides that schools that do not meet their annual API growth targets "shall continue to receive funding pursuant to this article, but shall be subject to state review, assistance, and timeline requirements pursuant to the High Priority School Grant Program (HPSGP)…" This essentially makes these schools subject to state intervention via the School Assistance and Intervention Team process or some other form of intervention. This language conflicts with language later in the statute that provides that "not meeting annual and final program and academic requirements under this article will result in termination of funding." The QEIA Statewide Advisory Group addressed this issue by proposing that the more specific language concerning continued funding and state intervention would be given authority.

Because in the first three years of the program schools must average API performance that exceeds their growth target, county superintendents will only review the API progress of schools annually to highlight the school's progress toward meeting their target for the fourth year of the program. Beyond the fourth year, county superintendents will assign a performance rating annually based on a direct comparison between actual API performance and schoolwide growth targets.

Although the specific QEIA API performance requirement is not measurable at this point, the actual API performance of QEIA schools in this early phase of implementation can be analyzed and compared with other groups of schools. The results of that analysis are included in this report in Performance of Participating Schools in Early Years. (See page 30.)

IX. Average Teacher Experience

QEIA established a requirement that teachers at participating schools have an average level of teaching experience at or above the average of the entire school district for the same type of school. Further, the statute assigned the SSPI the responsibility to develop the instrument for measuring teacher experience to be used in implementing this requirement. This aspect of QEIA

was initially discussed at the first QEIA stakeholders meeting in October 2006. Dr. Ken Futernick, California State University professor and an expert in developing measures of teacher quality, assisted the CDE in framing initial concepts about the requirement and the instrument to measure it. Concurrently, CDE staff solicited volunteers to serve on a work group to work with Dr. Futernick to develop a proposal for what would be called the Teacher Experience Index (TEI).

The TEI Work Group eventually included representatives from the Office of the Secretary of Education, the California Teacher's Association, school district personnel, and the student advocacy group Public Advocates, along with Dr. Futernick and CDE staff. CDE staff provided information for the work group that described parameters for the index established by law, such as using California Basic Educational Data System (CBEDS) data as a basis for describing experience and capping the experience level for individual teachers at ten years when calculating averages, then organized and facilitated meetings.

There were several elements of the TEI that the work group had to define. First, the requirement was for the school to meet or exceed the district teacher experience average "for this type of school." The work group adopted the "school type" definitions used in CBEDS, (i.e., elementary, middle, and high school) in response to the reference in statute to use CBEDS in developing the index. Second, given that the TEI had to address experience of classroom teachers, individuals in non-teaching positions who were reported in CBEDS needed to be excluded from the calculation. The work group resolved this by identifying assignment codes for individuals in non-teaching positions (such as administrators and counselors) and those in teaching positions who did not have direct classroom responsibilities (such as full-time instructional coaches and support teachers). These assignment codes were excluded in the TEI Calculation Instructions.

Other elements requiring resolution included addressing part-time teachers, including teachers with assignments in multiple schools, and applying the requirement to single-school districts. In all decisions, the work group made an effort to balance feasibility for schools to implement the requirement with the statutory intent of bringing teacher experience at QEIA schools up to par with other schools in the LEA.

By the time the calculation instructions were completed, CDE had formed the ongoing statewide QEIA Advisory Group with representatives from the state's major kindergarten through twelve education organizations. The instructions were presented to this group for consideration. After receiving additional input from these representatives and their constituent groups, CDE staff refined the methodology for the TEI Calculation Instructions and presented it to the SSPI for approval.

The approved Calculation Instructions were disseminated to QEIA-funded schools and districts primarily through the two QEIA TA Centers and their QEIA

Web site at http://www.qeia.org/qeia2/ (Outside Source). The TA Centers also developed an online TEI calculation tool to assist schools and districts in understanding the instructions, completing teacher experience calculations, and developing strategies to address shortcomings. (See Appendix C for the full set of TEI Calculation Instructions.)

Given the fiscal challenges that California LEAs have faced over the last year and related faculty reductions, it has been anticipated that QEIA schools would not face significant difficulty in meeting the QEIA teacher experience requirement. When faculty reductions occur, the least experienced teachers are generally the ones to leave. In fact, the results of county superintendent's monitoring activities conducted at the end of the 2008–09 school year indicate that all QEIA schools fully met implementation requirements for average teaching experience.

X. Requirements for Alternative Program Schools

The 25 high schools selected to participate in the QEIA alternative program were excused by statute from most of the program requirements above (although they must meet professional development, teacher experience, exemplary administrator, attendance, graduation, and reporting requirements) and were instead required to select other school improvement efforts that the school and LEA believed "would provide a higher level of academic achievement among pupils than compliance with the [regular] program requirements or this article." (*EC* Section 52055.760[a]) Alternative program applicants described their planned school improvement efforts as part of their initial QEIA application. Selected improvement efforts varied from school to school based on school needs and locally developed strategies for improvement, so requirements for alternative program schools are best described as 25 different sets of requirements, one for each school based on the school's selected improvement strategies and goals. Beyond identifying the improvement goals it had selected, each school was required to communicate to its monitoring COE specific benchmarks for progress in each of the interim years of the program. If, for example, a school established a goal of improving student proficiency levels on the California Standards Tests (CSTs) in English-language arts and mathematics, the school was required to identify specific proficiency level goals for each subject for each year. These goals were generally patterned similarly to those for regular program schools, so that a goal for 2010–11 was established, then goals for 2008–09 and 2009–10 were derived based on what represented one-third and two-thirds progress, respectively, toward that 2010–11 goal. These specific benchmarks would then serve as the basis for QEIA monitoring that the COE conducts for these schools each year.

Despite the fact that each school in the QEIA alternative program had a unique school improvement plan that defined its QEIA participation, a number of improvement goals commonly appeared on these plans. The performance goal most commonly selected among these schools was to increase the percentage

of students matriculating from grade to grade or meeting annual course completion requirements. Of the 24 schools for which monitoring data were available, 22 had established this goal. Sixteen of the 24 schools (67 percent) had a goal to increase the percentage of students completing a to g requirements, 16 schools established specific goals toward improving performance on the California High School Exit Examination, and 16 schools had goals to improve performance on the CSTs. Other goals addressed English learner reclassification, increased grade-level reading performance, reduction of failing grades, and higher percentages of students applying for college, career, or other advanced training. The alternative program schools generally established between five and seven goals (one school established four), and averaged 5.5 goals per school. Twelve schools established five goals and eight schools established six goals.

Initial Implementation Challenges—State Level

Some elements of the QEIA legislation required interpretation or further development of details in order for the program to be implemented. In addition, as program implementation began, a number of new issues surfaced that required resolution. CDE staff elicited input from parties involved in creating the legislation and other interested stakeholders prior to interpreting legislative intent and clarifying state policy. In addition to the two stakeholder meetings to better understand legislative intent and to generally frame concepts, CDE staff formed stakeholder workgroups to develop the more substantial program elements and the QEIA Statewide Advisory Group, a standing committee that met periodically during the first critical years of program development and implementation.

I. Clarification of Statutory Requirements

A critical part of the work of the stakeholder and advisory groups involved providing greater definition and specification of the program requirements described in basic terms in the QEIA statute. In addition to the work of designing the school selection process and clarifying QEIA CSR and TEI requirements described in earlier sections, stakeholder and advisory groups provided input concerning professional development requirements, attendance and graduation requirements, process and timelines for terminating funding for schools not meeting program requirements, and virtually all other aspects of QEIA implementation that were not specifically defined by the statute. The QEIA program has benefited from an uncommon level of collaboration among organizations engaged in program implementation. The QEIA Statewide Advisory Group, including representatives from CTA, California County Superintendents Educational Services Association (CCSESA), California School Boards Association (CSBA), Association of California School Administrators (ACSA), the QEIA TA Centers, local district representatives, and the CDE, met regularly since early 2008. The Group met bimonthly during the program development phase and continues to meet periodically to address early implementation concerns. The wide range of perspectives represented in the QEIA Statewide Advisory

Group has allowed for balanced resolution of program challenges and more appropriate definition of program requirements.

II. Supporting Schools and LEAs in Implementing QEIA Program Requirements

The statute for QEIA provided $5 million to provide regional support to QEIA schools and LEAs. The SSPI and the Secretary of Education were to "select not more than two COEs to provide regional technical support, document best practices, and provide information regarding those practices and other support information to schools, school districts, and chartering authorities." The Los Angeles COE was selected to provide assistance to QEIA schools and LEAs in Southern California, and the Sacramento COE was selected for Northern California. Among other program development activities, the two centers created the QEIA Web site at http://www.qeia.org/qeia2/ (Outside Source), referred to as "QEIA.org", specifically developed to support the QEIA program and serve as a central point for distributing program information and support resources. QEIA.org is populated with multiple tools used for calculating, implementing, and monitoring QEIA requirements and includes links to various information sources, including archived informational Webcasts created and hosted by the centers.

In addition to serving as an information resource, the QEIA TA Centers serve as a critical communication hub for schools, LEAs, other COEs, and the CDE, the centers convey information on program requirements developed at the state level in conjunction with stakeholders to participating schools and LEAs. The centers also communicate implementation questions and concerns that arise in the field and work with CDE staff and other stakeholders to develop appropriate solutions. This communication has occurred formally through Webinars, Webcasts, videoconferences, and face-to-face meetings conducted by the centers, and informally through telephone and e-mail communications with school, LEA and COE personnel, CDE staff, and other organizations involved in QEIA implementation.

The work of the QEIA TA Centers is supported by other counties in each region. The Southern QEIA TA Center works with each of the other county offices in its region, providing updates on program implementation, program resources and the QEIA monitoring process. The Northern QEIA TA Center has identified four Service Area Centers that in turn provide support and assistance to participating QEIA schools and LEAs in their areas. These two regional support systems ensure expedient distribution of program information and allow for substantial direct assistance to schools and LEAs facing implementation of the several complex and challenging QEIA program requirements. Funding for the Centers was intended to be sufficient to provide support for up to two years (2008–09 and 2009–10) while schools struggled with initial program implementation. By efficiently expending resources, the Centers have been able to extend their support system into the 2010–11 fiscal year. Absent additional funding, this important program resource is unlikely to continue beyond that point.

III. Monitoring QEIA Schools and LEAs and Process for Funding Termination

On behalf of the county superintendents, CCSESA led an effort to develop program protocols and tools and clarify benchmarks indicating appropriate progress so that the monitoring process and its results would be clear to all QEIA participants and undertaken in a consistent manner throughout the state. A number of stakeholders participated in development of the monitoring process and tools, including representatives from several COEs, staff from the two QEIA TA Centers, members of CTA and CDE staff.

The statute established that QEIA schools found not to have met program requirements are subject to having their ongoing QEIA funding terminated, and provided general timelines for the funding termination process. Schools found not to have met program requirements are contacted by the SSPI and provided one year to comply with all program requirements. Schools that subsequently fail to meet program requirements face termination of QEIA funding.

Initial Implementation Challenges—School Level

Once QEIA-funded schools began to implement the program, many stated that they experienced challenges in meeting some program requirements. In the initial QEIA implementation meetings, stakeholders expressed concerns that LEAs and schools would apply for program participation because of the large amount of funding available, but would not anticipate the difficulty and cost in implementing the program. CDE staff addressed these concerns by developing an extensive list of items for LEAs and schools to consider prior to applying for program participation. (See Considerations for Districts with Schools Applying for Funding under the Quality Education Investment Act, Appendix D.) Since that time, the fiscal context has worsened dramatically, and assumptions that LEAs may have made concerning QEIA participation, even when carefully considering the viability of the program in their schools, often have not held true. In addition to reduced funding, QEIA LEAs and schools have described other challenges in implementing some of the program requirements. These challenges are discussed below in the context of some specific requirements.

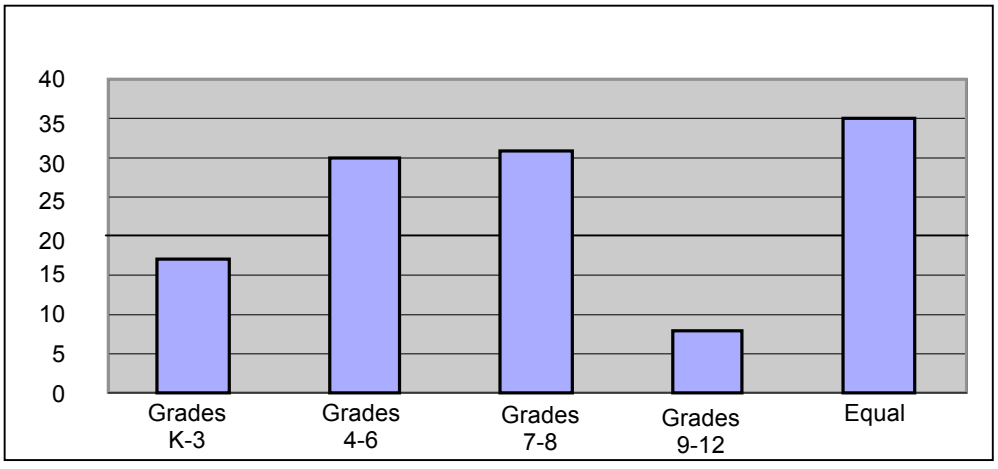
I. CSR—Isolated Challenges for Small Districts

As described earlier, the QEIA statute requires its funded schools to achieve and maintain small class sizes in all core subject areas. Specific class size targets vary by grade and by school. The requirement in primary grades limits classes to 20 students, as is required by the kindergarten-third grade CSR Program. In grades four through twelve, classes in core subject areas must be reduced to an average of 25 students per class, or an average of five fewer students per class at the grade level than existed in the base year, whichever is lower. The base year is normally 2006–07, but schools that averaged fewer than 25 students per class in 2005–06 use that year as their base year rather than 2006–07.

The differing QEIA funding for various grade spans implies that the Legislature anticipated that this requirement would be less costly to implement in some grades than in others. QEIA provides annual funding of $500 per student for kindergarten through third, $900 per student for grades four through eight, and $1000 per student for grades nine through twelve. The limited funding for kindergarten through third students and the alignment of QEIA program requirements with kindergarten through third CSR program requirements suggest that the Legislature expected QEIA schools to be participating in the kindergarten through third CSR Program and receiving funding through that program. The combination of kindergarten through third CSR funding and QEIA funding would bring total available funding for this grade range up to a comparable level as that received for grades four though eight. (Kindergarten through third CSR schools received a minimum of $535 per student in participating classes in 2008–09.) Further, schools already participating in the kindergarten through third CSR program would have achieved the 20:1 requirement and therefore would only be required to sustain the small class sizes rather than having to further reduce them. However, due to the recent budget crisis and the related decision to reduce penalties to schools not able to fully meet their targets for the kindergarten through third CSR Program, many LEAs reported raising their class size targets for primary grades placing more stress on QEIA schools with primary grades attempting to meet their QEIA CSR targets. Instead of being consistent with CSR targets for other primary grade classes in the LEA, the 20:1 ratio requirement for primary grades in QEIA schools now requires a greater resource commitment than other schools. Nevertheless, at the end of the 2008–09 school year, QEIA LEAs expressed difficulties in meeting the QEIA CSR requirement more often in grades four through six grade or seven through eight than in Kindergarten through grade three. (See Figure 2 below.)

Figure 2: 2008–09 QEIA LEA Report Results— CSR Challenges

At which grade span are you finding it most challenging to implement the QEIA CSR requirement?



The CDE asked LEAs to identify specific challenges they are facing in implementing the QEIA CSR requirement. Most LEAs (65 percent) responded that they have not yet experienced difficulty in meeting the requirement, and when asked about specific potential CSR implementation challenges, responses were similarly low. Specifically, concerning staffing issues, only 15 percent stated that they were having difficulty recruiting qualified teachers, and 18 percent responded that their budgets were insufficient to pay for the number of teachers needed to meet the CSR requirement. The majority of LEAs also indicated that they had no challenges in terms of having sufficient classroom space. Only 13 percent of QEIA-funded LEAs noted their QEIA campuses had an insufficient number of classrooms; 12 percent had insufficient campus space to add needed classrooms; In short, as of the end of the first QEIA implementation year, most LEAs reported little or no difficulty meeting the QEIA CSR requirement.

However, a few LEAs reported difficulties and pursued relief from the QEIA CSR requirement. As of the November 2009 SBE meeting, five LEAs submitted requests for waivers of the QEIA CSR requirement. In one case, the LEA held that school improvement efforts implemented prior to QEIA participation had included CSR at grade five in the base year, so that the QEIA CSR target for that grade level was artificially low. The LEA requested an adjustment of the QEIA CSR target for grade five only, requiring the school to maintain the relatively low 22:1 ratio that it had already achieved rather than reducing the ratio by five, down to 17:1, required by the QEIA statute. Given the small scope of the waiver request and the already low class size at the school, the SBE approved the request. The other four waivers concerned small and isolated schools, primarily in single-school LEAs that normally had one classroom at each grade level. As noted previously, for small schools with a single classroom at each grade level, some grade level targets may be very low. If, for example, a school had a single grade four classroom of 15 students in 2005–06, the school's target QEIA class size for grade four is 10 students. CDE staff recognized the challenge that the requirement design presented for small schools and recommended the SBE grant a CSR waiver that would provide an alternate CSR target across a range of grade levels rather than separate targets for each grade level. A waiver that allows a school to average its class sizes across a grade span provides more flexibility for the size of individual classes while maintaining the statutory intent to ensure that classes at the school are generally smaller. CDE staff reviewed current class sizes at each school and recommended a target class average for the concerning grade range that would provide an overall reduction in class sizes in the range but would be reachable. The SBE approved these waivers, but added a condition that no class could be larger than 25 students, rather than the cap of 27 per class provided in the QEIA statute. The need for these waivers is caused by the fact that the design of the QEIA CSR requirement best fits larger schools, or schools in larger districts, wherein anomalous classes have a reduced effect when averaged with numerous other classes, or a significant increase or decrease in enrollment at a QEIA school can be addressed through intra-district transfers or other solutions.

The CDE will continue to request information from QEIA LEAs concerning implementation of the QEIA CSR requirement. If the requirement becomes more difficult to implement in later years of the program, the scope and causes of the difficulty will be provided in the second progress report and/or the final program report.

II. Teacher Experience—Attracting Teachers to Low Performing Schools

After the CDE released the TEI Calculation Instructions, staff in several LEAs expressed concerns that this requirement would be difficult to meet. The statutory intent of the requirement addressed the perception that some low-performing schools had a disproportionately large number of inexperienced teachers. Requiring LEAs to ensure that average teaching experience at QEIA schools is equal to the district average could compel districts to revise policies concerning assignment of new teachers to various district schools. LEAs that expressed concerns about meeting the TEI requirement noted that their teacher assignment options were limited by teacher transfer and placement rules established in their local teacher bargaining unit agreements. Further, because QEIA schools are in the process of implementing expanded CSR rules, they are more likely than other schools to seek new hires, the majority of whom are inexperienced teachers. Some LEAs anticipate that the combination of new hires at QEIA schools and difficulties in transferring experienced teachers to low-performing schools make it challenging to meet the TEI requirement. However, early information on the implementation of the TEI indicates that QEIA-funded schools have not had difficulty meeting this requirement. (See page 21.)

The fiscal situation that LEAs are currently navigating may have actually mitigated the TEI implementation difficulties that some anticipated. Several LEAs reported that they either scaled back or entirely abandoned CSR efforts at non-QEIA schools as a cost savings measure. The result of this action was that some experienced teachers were required to transfer from their current assignments, and a large number of positions to which they could transfer were at QEIA schools. Also, the sudden availability of experienced teachers within the district reduced the need to recruit and hire inexperienced teachers. In short, the fiscal crisis may have effectively expedited transfers of experienced teachers to schools to which they may not have volunteered to transfer while reducing the need for LEAs to hire inexperienced teachers. For many QEIA schools, this may have directly increased the average teaching experience of their faculty and assisted them in meeting the QEIA TEI requirement.

The CDE plans to explore implementation of the QEIA TEI requirement in greater depth through the second annual QEIA LEA Report to be conducted at the end of the 2009–10 school year. Information on the results of that inquiry will be provided in the second progress report and/or the final program report.

III. Exemplary Administrators—Definition, Selection, and Placement

The QEIA statute requires that the LEA "ensure that each school administrator in a QEIA funded school is confirmed to have exemplary qualifications and experience…. Those qualifications shall include the ability to support the success of all pupils by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community as well as the ability to advocate, nurture and sustain a school culture and instructional program that is conducive to pupils learning and staff professional growth." [*EC* Section 52055.750(a)(3)] This definition is drawn from the California Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (CPSEL) that the California School Leadership Academy and the ACSA adapted from a set of national school leadership standards by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium. These standards guided the development of current California standards for administrative services credential programs accredited by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, and thus serve as core expectations of quality for the state's school administrators. However, the characteristics described in this definition are not easily identified or measured; LEAs commonly requested additional clarification concerning how the state would determine whether the exemplary administrator requirement had been met. Possession of a specific type of credential or completion of specified professional development activities are easily confirmed, but in themselves do not appear sufficient to verify that the administrator exhibits the qualities described in the exemplary administrator definition. While the ability to provide effective community and instructional leadership are important characteristics for those assigned to lead school improvement efforts, they are difficult to confirm through objective measures, and therefore difficult to monitor either by the employer or agencies charged with program oversight.

To assist QEIA LEAs and schools in addressing the exemplary administrator requirement, the Integrated Leadership Development Initiative (ILDE), a committee of representatives from agencies involved in administrator development, support, and employment, drafted more detailed guidance for LEAs seeking to meet the QEIA exemplary administrator requirement. QEIA LEAs and schools have access to this guidance on the QEIA.org Web site at http://www.qeia.org/qeia2/ (Outside Source). This document noted that given the complexity and variance in low-performing schools, a strict definition of an "exemplary administrator" for such schools is not appropriate. Instead, the document provides a set of "generalized, observable expectations for principals" that demonstrate their ability to form consensus among the school community to develop a common vision for school improvement and lead efforts to realize that vision. The set of expectations provided in the ILDE document are an adaptation of the CPSEL Standards, and the description of each standard that they provide may assist LEAs in evaluating whether their local school leaders demonstrate the exemplary characteristics sought by the QEIA requirement. Still, these expectations do not reduce reliance on subjective evaluations to determine

whether an administrator is “exemplary” and purposely avoid providing a set of objective measures to define this requirement.

In the 2008–09 QEIA LEA Report, LEAs were asked to describe their criteria for identifying and confirming administrators who meet the QEIA “exemplary administrator” criteria. Responses varied, but some patterns emerged. Most commonly, LEAs identified completion of administrator professional development as an indicator of exemplary qualifications. Sixty-four of 136 LEA respondents (47 percent) cited this criterion. The specific form of professional development noted in these responses was completion of the Administrator Training Program (AB75/AB430, *EC* Section 44510, et seq.), which includes 80 hours of formal training and 80 hours of follow-up individualized support and professional development. This program, which has been supported with state funding and had state oversight, includes training in school and personnel management; core academic standards; curriculum frameworks and instructional materials; the use of assessment data to analyze subgroup performance; the use of instructional technology; organizational leadership; and various aspects of instructional leadership. Of the 64 LEAs citing completion of professional development as a criterion for identifying exemplary administrators, 39 specifically referenced completion of the Administrator Training Program. LEAs noted several other specific professional development activities instead of or in addition to this training, including the Leadership Institute offered by the New Teacher Center; The California School Leadership Academy; and the Principals to Watch Academy, a pilot program for middle school principals in the Los Angeles area. These programs have at least some components similar to those offered in the Principal Training Program.

LEAs noted a number of factors other than professional development they used in defining exemplary administrators. The common criterion identified was administrative experience, in some cases described as “proven ability to improve school performance,” or “demonstrated track record of effectiveness.” A total of 34 respondents (25 percent) cited this criterion. A fairly small number of respondents included possession of certain credentials or certification as a basis for finding administrators to be exemplary. Only 16 (12 percent) noted this criterion, perhaps due to the fact that all administrators in California’s public schools are required to hold administrative services credentials in order to serve in the position. Another factor cited (by 16 respondents, or 12 percent) that administrators receiving administrator coaching or mentoring is better described as support for providing exemplary service than as a criterion for being found to be exemplary. Several LEAs also noted that they provide regular evaluations of their administrators using CPSELs or similar standards, and use these as means to verify that their QEIA principals are exemplary. Seventeen LEAs (13 percent), indicated that they only employ exemplary administrators and that the criteria used to determine placement of principals in QEIA schools do not differ from criteria used to place principals in other schools in the LEA. LEAs were also asked about their progress in assigning exemplary administrators to their QEIA schools. Of the 136 respondents, 107 (78 percent) stated that all administrators at their QEIA schools met their criteria for an exemplary administrator. An

additional 11 (8 percent) stated that most of their QEIA principals met the criteria, 7 (5 percent) indicated that some met the criteria, and 11 (8 percent) stated that they had not yet addressed the exemplary administrator requirement.

IV. Implementing Increasing Program Requirements with Reduced Resources

During initial QEIA program implementation years (2008–09, 2009–10, and 2010–11), the program was designed to allow participating schools to phase-in program requirements. Specifically, concerning CSR requirements, pupil-counselor ratio requirements, and TEI requirements, schools were able to make one-third of needed progress toward the targets for these requirements annually so that at the end of 2008–09 they made one-third progress toward the targets, by 2009–10 they made two-thirds progress, and by 2010–11 they met the targets for these requirements. This allowed schools time to make any necessary site changes or adjust local policies as needed to meet program requirements. It also allowed QEIA LEAs and schools to manage the costs of program participation over a period of years rather than requiring the majority of initial expenditures to be made in the first implementation year. Schools were able to develop multi-year fiscal plans, thereby expending funds more effectively and efficiently. Unfortunately, due to the state budget crisis the fiscal landscape for QEIA LEAs and schools has changed significantly. First, several state-funded programs that support QEIA implementation directly (e.g., the K–3 CSR Program) or indirectly (the High Priority School Grant Program) were either altered significantly or had funding reduced or eliminated. QEIA program guidance had been for QEIA LEAs and schools to coordinate all school resources to support the school improvement plan that included QEIA program elements. Schools following this guidance included these other sources in their plans to support QEIA implementation and had to adjust those plans when these sources were affected. At the end of the 2008–09 fiscal year, the state considered adjusting its method of funding QEIA schools for 2009–10 and introduced a series of bills proposing changes to QEIA funding. The potential for changes to QEIA funding at a time when other resources were being reduced or eliminated presented a significant fiscal concern for QEIA districts. Further, this funding change was scheduled to occur at a time when QEIA implementation requirements were expanding, as schools were moving from the requirement of showing one-third progress on key program requirements to showing two-thirds progress on those requirements. Given the lack of clarity regarding QEIA funding, many QEIA LEAs began to inquire about options and requirements for withdrawal from the QEIA program. To date, the CDE has only received formal notification by one LEA actually electing to withdraw from the program. Given numerous other inquiries about the withdrawal process, it is clear that the state's fiscal situation is having a significant negative impact on the ability of QEIA LEAs and schools to meet QEIA implementation requirements.

Performance of Participating Schools in Early Years

The key priority for QEIA is to improve instructional quality and student academic achievement in this group of low performing schools. The statute requires that QEIA schools improve their performance as measured by the API, the state's primary measure of student performance on the state's student academic content standards. The ability of the program design to positively affect school performance is dependent on effective program implementation by participating LEAs and schools. Progress of program implementation is measured by the QEIA monitoring performed by county superintendents, and documented in the QEIA Annual Monitoring Report that the counties provide to each participating LEA and school after the monitoring review each year. A third indicator of LEA and school performance is how they elected to use QEIA funds. While the use of QEIA funding is restricted in specific ways, the statute provided substantial flexibility in local decisions regarding its use. Annual QEIA expenditure reports provide some insight concerning local priorities for the use of these funds. This section reviews the performance of QEIA schools in terms of these three indicators: API performance, program implementation performance, and the use of QEIA funds.

I. Academic Performance

The CDE identified a total of 1,455 schools that met eligibility requirements for participation in QEIA. These were schools in state decile ranks 1 or 2 on the 2005 API and produced at least 100 valid CST scores. Due to funding limitations, only 488 schools were selected, leaving 967 eligible schools out of program participation. This group of 967 schools, having similar performance characteristics to the selected schools at the initiation of QEIA, serves as an appropriate comparison group for analyzing the effect of the QEIA program on the academic performance of participating schools. Statewide API results are also provided for additional comparison purposes.

Table 2: Comparison of API Scores Among Various Groups of Schools

School Group	Mean Growth API 2008	Mean Growth API 2009	Two-Year Mean API Growth 2008 & 2009
QEIA-funded Schools (N = 488)	**20.6** (N = 476)*	**20.7** (N = 475)*	**41.3**
QEIA African-American	16.7	16.2	32.9
QEIA American Indian	23.0	(-15.0)	8.0
QEIA Asian	22.0	11.8	33.8
QEIA Filipino	43.3	4.3	47.6
QEIA Hispanic	20.9	20.1	41.0
QEIA White	19.3	24.1	43.4
QEIA SocioEc. Disadvantaged	21.0	20.4	41.4
QEIA English Learner	20.9	19.5	40.4
QEIA Students w/ Disabilities	10.1	16.9	27.0
Comparison Group (N = 967)	**19.1** (N = 921)*	**15.5** (N = 908)*	**34.6**
Comp. African-American	12.8	10.9	23.7
Comp. American Indian	(-8.5)	4.0	(-4.5)
Comp. Asian	14.6	16.3	30.9
Comp. Filipino	7.6	19.1	26.7
Comp. Hispanic	20.6	15.8	36.4
Comp. White	19.4	15.0	34.4
Comp SocioEc Disadvantaged	20.3	16.1	36.4
Comp. English Learner	19.1	16.3	35.4
Comp. Students w/ Disabilities	12.2	19.8	32.0
All Schools (N = 9,913)	**11.0** (N = 8,678)*	**14.2** (N = 8,863)*	**25.2**
All African-American	13.5	13.8	27.3
All American Indian	17.9	(-3.6)	14.3
All Asian	10.8	11.1	21.9
All Filipino	10.6	11.1	21.7
All Hispanic	14.2	15.5	29.7
All White	8.1	14.0	22.1
All SocioEc. Disadvantaged	14.6	16.4	31.0
All English Learner	14.2	15.7	29.9
All Students w/ Disabilities	12.5	14.7	27.2

*The number of schools varies annually because some schools did not produce a valid API in some years.

A review of the performance of QEIA-funded schools and the 967 comparison group schools on the API in the first two years of program implementation shows that, overall, QEIA schools outperformed the comparison group in each year, as shown in Table 2 on page 31. As demonstrated by the table, both groups outperformed all California public schools generating a valid API in those years. (The “all schools” group includes both QEIA and Comparison Group schools.) QEIA schools would be expected to outperform the “all schools” group because schools in higher decile ranks naturally face increasing difficulty in raising their API over time. However, the significant difference between QEIA schools and Comparison Group schools (6.7 points) is a fair and clear indicator that QEIA schools outperformed a set of similar schools in terms of API in the first two years of the QEIA program. (The API performance of participating schools in the remaining years of the program will be reviewed to determine whether this initial

improvement in performance is sustained. That information will be provided in the second and third QEIA program progress reports.)

A more general measure of API performance is a school's state decile rank. Schools are grouped annually into deciles based on their API performance. Schools with an API in the top 10 percent statewide receive a state decile ranking of 10; those in the bottom 10 percent receive a state decile ranking of 1, and so on. Currently there are approximately 800 schools in each decile rank, equating to about 10 percent of the state's public schools that annually generate an API score. To qualify for QEIA, schools had to be in decile ranks 1 or 2, the bottom 20 percent in the state in terms of API performance, on the 2005 API. For a school to improve its state decile ranking, its improvement must outpace the performance of a large number of schools with a similar API essentially "leapfrogging" enough schools to move up a decile rank. To improve by more than one decile rank, a school would have to outperform more than 800 comparable schools in terms of API performance.

Of the 487 schools that have been in the program since its outset in 2007–08, 471 have produced a valid API in all years of program participation. Of those 471 schools, 97 (21 percent) have increased by at least one decile rank between 2006–07 and 2008–09, and another 35 schools (7 percent) moved up two decile ranks. Some QEIA schools have dramatically increased their performance in this respect: one school has moved up five state decile ranks (from rank 1 to rank 6); three schools have moved up four ranks; and three schools have moved up three ranks. At the other end of the spectrum, 56 schools (12 percent) have moved down a decile rank during this period, moving from rank 2 to rank 1. It should be noted, however, that only 22 of these schools actually had a lower API in 2009 than in 2007; the majority of these schools have improved their performance, but at a lower rate than other similarly ranked schools.

Most QEIA schools (276) were in the same decile rank in 2008–09 as they were in 2006–07. Still, the actual performance of these schools has improved in most cases—253 schools (91 percent of this group) had a higher API in 2008–09 than in 2006–07, while only 23 schools saw their API decline over that period. The average growth in API schoolwide performance among these 276 schools over the two-year period was 32 points.

Another measure of a school's API performance is whether the school meets its annual API growth target, which is calculated at five percent of the difference between the school's current API and the statewide API goal of 800. Schools receive API growth targets both for the schoolwide population and for each numerically significant subgroup at the school. A total of 351 QEIA-funded schools from the original group (72 percent) met their schoolwide API target in 2008–09, and 254 schools (52 percent) met all of their schoolwide and subgroup API targets. Seven QEIA-funded schools have already exceeded the statewide API target of 800.

II. Performance in Implementing Program Requirements

A review of the results of 2008–09 QEIA monitoring conducted by county superintendents shows that a very small number of schools in the regular QEIA program did not make acceptable progress in initial implementation of QEIA requirements. The QEIA TA Centers completed an analysis of those monitoring results and found that over half (51 percent) of the schools met or exceeded the interim benchmarks for all QEIA program requirements. Another 48 percent of those schools made significant progress in implementing all requirements, and fully met most requirements, meriting a finding that they had substantially met QEIA interim implementation requirements in 2008–09. Only five schools (1 percent) from the regular program were found not to have made sufficient progress in implementing program requirements. Those schools and their LEAs face the potential loss of future QEIA funding if they do not make sufficient progress in QEIA implementation in any remaining year of the program. A complete listing of the ratings each of the QEIA regular program schools received in 2008–09 is available in Appendix F.

Monitoring results from the 25 QEIA alternative program schools indicate that more of these schools failed to meet performance requirements in 2008–09. Final monitoring results for one of these schools are still pending, but of the 24 schools for which results are available, eight (33 percent) were found to have not have met their performance goals, and therefore face the potential loss of continued funding if they fail to meet their performance goals in any subsequent year of program participation. There was some correlation between alternative program schools' API performance and their success in meeting their QEIA goals. Eighteen of the 24 schools had positive schoolwide API performance in 2008–09, and 14 of those schools (78 percent) met their QEIA goals; 13 of those 14 schools met their schoolwide API growth target for 2008–09. Four of the 24 alternative application schools saw their schoolwide API decline, and only one of those schools met their QEIA performance goals for the year.

III. How LEAs and Schools Used QEIA Funding in Early Years

QEIA-funded schools received a total of $645,183,221 in the first two years of the program. The statute made available less funding in the first year of the program than in all subsequent years. The $261 million available in 2007–08 was approximately two-thirds the amount of funding provided in all other years, and funding to individual schools that year was reduced accordingly. The specific funding each school receives is adjusted annually based on prior-year enrollment, so funding for most schools varies slightly from year to year based on enrollment changes. Overall program funding to schools in the first two years was less than actual QEIA funding available due to an overall reduction in enrollment at participating schools. The statute establishes that the priority for the use of undistributed QEIA funding is to provide cost-of-living increases for participating schools and to allow for adjustments due to enrollment growth at those schools.

However, in the first two years of the program, undistributed QEIA funds were swept to address state budget shortfalls.

Of the $645,183,221 the schools have received, the largest category of reported expenditures was in salaries and benefits (S & B) to school personnel. A total of $303,669,873 was reported as expended in this category, 47 percent of the funding distributed. Of these funds, $226,305,827 was expended on certificated salaries (35 percent of all funds distributed, 75 percent of S & B). The remaining expenditures in this category included salaries for classified personnel (4 percent of S & B), and employee benefits (21 percent of S & B).

The statute provided that QEIA funds were to be spent at the school for which they were provided except, in the first year of funding, LEAs could distribute QEIA funding as needed among their QEIA-funded schools in order to address facilities needs for program implementation. LEAs were allowed to establish a QEIA facilities funds pool, and account for those funds separately from the funding that remained at the school sites. Annual reporting of these pooled funds indicates that $66,179,643 of QEIA funding (10 percent of distributed funds) was pooled by LEAs for facilities. Of this funding, $35,215,133 (53 percent) has been expended on facilities in the first two years, $21,059,418 (32 percent) remains unexpended but retained by LEAs for anticipated QEIA facilities needs, and $9,905,092 (15 percent) has been returned to QEIA-funded schools after the LEA determined that facilities needs were lower than original projections.

Other reported expenditures included books and supplies (6 percent of distributed funds), services and operations, capital outlay and indirect costs. Reported expenditures in the latter three categories totaled less than 10 percent of distributed QEIA funding. Table 3 below provides a summary of QEIA expenditures in the first two years of the program.

Table 3: Reported QEIA Expenditures for Two Years, 2007–08 and 2008–09

Item	Amount	Percentage of Distributed Funds
Total Apportionments	645,183,221	-
2007–08 Apportionments	260,503,021	-
2008–09 Apportionments	384,680,200	-
Total Expenditures	461,978,100	72
Certificated Salaries	226,305,827	35
Classified Salaries	13,180,113	2
Benefits	64,183,934	10
Books and Supplies	37,742,240	6
Services and Operations	17,883,183	3
Capital Outlay	21,837,476	3
Indirect Costs	14,665,684	2
Pooled Facilities Funds	66,179,643	10
Total Unexpended	$183,205,121	28

QEIA funding reported by LEAs as unexpended at the end of 2008–09 totaled 28 percent of distributed funding. Given the fact that program requirements, therefore program costs, increased over the first years of the program while program funding was relatively static, QEIA LEAs and schools were advised to adopt a multi-year planning approach concerning the use of QEIA funds. Cost projections for QEIA implementation indicated that program costs would exceed annual funding in later implementation years, requiring QEIA LEAs and schools to retain QEIA funding in early years in order to meet program costs in later years. The reported level of unexpended funding indicates that most QEIA LEAs have adopted this long-term funding plan and increases the likelihood that these LEAs will be able to contend with the increased costs of program implementation in the remaining years of the program without encroaching on their general funding.

New or Improved Practices in Participating Schools

I. Improved Faculty Collaboration and Professional Development

In responses provided in the 2008–09 QEIA Annual LEA Report, several districts reported that their participation in the program has increased and improved the quality of collaboration activities among school personnel. This collaboration was most commonly described as occurring among grade-level partners in planning instruction, curriculum pacing, and differentiating instruction for struggling students. Some schools went further including initiating cross-grade meetings aiming toward vertical articulation and interdisciplinary collaboration to support learning themes across different subjects. On the other hand, one district noted a lack of collaboration opportunities with other QEIA schools and LEAs, which might have the potential to improve overall program implementation by allowing for discussion and resolution of program challenges.

In the same report, most LEAs stated that the frequency and quality of staff professional development at their QEIA-funded schools had increased as a result of their participation in QEIA. Most of the professional development activities described were SB 472 training or similar training concerning the best use of SBE-adopted or aligned instructional materials. (This training was referenced in the statutory description of QEIA professional development requirements.) In some cases, LEAs elected to use a portion of QEIA funds to employ instructional coaches who can not only identify specific professional development needs, but can monitor the level to which teachers apply knowledge and skills gained in professional development activities after they return to the classroom. Also, in their communications with QEIA schools and LEAs, the CDE and the QEIA TA Centers have underscored the fact that the QEIA statute requires schools to develop a coherent schoolwide professional development plan. This may lead to completion of professional development activities that more directly support specific school improvement goals.

II. Student Academic Intervention

Instituting or improving student academic intervention is often included among strategies selected by low performing schools to improve student academic performance. The CDE plans to address this strategy in greater depth in future QEIA legislative reports and it was not included as a specific area of inquiry in the 2008–09 QEIA Annual LEA report. Nevertheless, several LEAs offered information on their efforts to increase academic intervention activities in their general comments citing it as a key factor in improving school performance. The delivery formats described fell into two categories: individualized intervention, led by an intervention specialist working with at-risk students to identify individual needs and providing support in areas of weakness; or a structured intervention program or class that provided additional subject matter or skills support in a specific subject to which identified students would be referred or assigned. In all cases, the described intervention was in the subject areas of reading/language arts and/or mathematics.

III. Comprehensive Plan for School Improvement

Several LEAs cited their participation in the QEIA program as a catalyst for establishing a comprehensive schoolwide improvement plan. While development of a Single Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA) has been encouraged and in some cases required of struggling schools, some LEAs indicated that participation in the QEIA program had motivated their schools to be more reflective, to more honestly identify areas where improvement was needed, and to embrace goals and activities deemed most likely to spur improved teaching and learning. A single-school LEA stated, “QEIA has made us focus, as a staff, on areas of weakness and we follow our improvement plan to bring systemic improvement….Our plan is ambitious, but our staff is motivated to do whatever it takes to make sure our students succeed, and QEIA funds give us the tools to make that happen.” Another LEA described the program as “creating a driving force for our site’s journey to improve the quality of student learning/expectations as well as staff instructional practices.”

Concerns and Considerations for Continued Program Implementation

I. Funding

LEAs participating in the QEIA program most commonly cited funding as their greatest concern about continuing implementation of the program. Legislative action related to 2009–10 QEIA funding, as well as general funding for QEIA LEAs, has created significant confusion about the level of funding that these LEAs will receive. Legislative decisions on 2009–10 QEIA funding were resolved well after LEAs needed to make staffing and budget decisions for the 2009–10 school year.

Other state-funded programs that have also been affected by the state's budget crisis contribute to the fiscal difficulties faced by QEIA-funded schools because they were expected to support those schools' improvement efforts. The elimination of the High Priority Schools Grant Program directly affected the funding base of 109 QEIA-funded schools, because those schools participated in both programs concurrently. Changes to the K–3 CSR Program have caused many LEAs to redirect funding from that program for other purposes, reducing access for QEIA-funded schools to those funds and requiring them to use a greater proportion of QEIA funding for implementation of QEIA CSR requirements than had previously been planned.

There are some indications that QEIA schools have already begun to scale back school improvement efforts due to necessary budget reductions. One larger LEA noted, "The main challenge has been the implementation of each school's QEIA plan given the encroachment of reduced state revenues on the district's general fund. This encroachment has forced schools and site councils to revise student improvement plans." Another stated more bluntly, "The funds from QEIA don't even cover the cost of the increased staffing for CSR, let alone professional development." Several other LEAs made similar comments, indicating that the QEIA CSR requirement alone threatens to exhaust their QEIA funding. If this is the case, other QEIA goals and requirements directly affecting student performance, including faculty professional development and student intervention programs, could not be addressed with QEIA funding. Other LEAs indicated that in order to fulfill QEIA implementation requirements and retain continued funding they are required to redirect funds to QEIA schools at the expense of other schools in the LEA. One stated, "Our LEA has had to severely cut programs and reduced staffing in non-QEIA schools in order to continue to implement QEIA." Another reported, "Due to an overall decrease of district funds there are and will be inequities between QEIA and non-QEIA schools that have similar needs." These statements indicate that the budget crisis may not only reduce the effectiveness of the QEIA program in improving student performance in QEIA schools, but also that QEIA participation may indirectly create hardships for other schools in the LEA.

II. Program Requirements

While not solicited, several comments were provided by LEAs concerning the design of two QEIA program requirements; CSR and the teacher experience requirement. While these comments were only made by a few of the LEAs surveyed and may not reflect the perspective of the majority of participants, they may merit some consideration. It should be noted, however, that research on the benefits of these requirements is not universally consistent with the comments provided by the LEAs and discussed below.

CSR

Despite the difficulties QEIA-funded schools face in implementing CSR that were previously discussed, few responses debated the merits of reduced class sizes

for teachers and students. Concerns instead focused on the design of the QEIA CSR requirement. Specifically, schools required to reduce average class sizes substantially suggested that the requirement to reduce class sizes to five fewer than the base year average is not appropriate in all cases. For example, when the required reduction results in a class size target of fewer than 20 students, some LEAs would argue that the benefits of the reduction may not merit the costs to implement it. For QEIA-funded elementary schools, the solution to addressing small class sizes is often to create combination classes for surplus students at adjacent grade levels (e.g., fourth and fifth grade) wherein the benefits of smaller class sizes could be offset to some degree by the broader range of ability levels or curriculum in the same classroom. Several LEAs suggested that the QEIA CSR requirement could be improved by adding a minimum class size to the requirement, so that in cases in which the normal CSR class size target is exceptionally small, an alternative class size would be substituted. (e.g., reduce average class size to five fewer students than in the base year, or an average of 18 students, whichever is larger.)

Teacher Experience

Unlike reactions to the CSR requirement, comments on the Teacher Experience requirement questioned the actual benefit of the requirement itself. A few LEAs noted that for their QEIA schools a requirement to change the teaching staff to create more consistent teacher experience levels with other schools in the district could result in reduced teacher effectiveness at the school rather than improving it. One LEA noted, “The requirement to maintain a greater amount of experience among teachers is not necessarily conducive to providing the best instructional program. Some of our very best teachers are somewhat new to the profession (3–5 years), yet we cannot assign them to a QEIA school because it will skew the ratio of veteran to new teachers. Veteran does not always equal quality instruction.” Another commented, ”We have had some new teachers who are excellent and have great results with student achievement. Some veteran teachers do not bring the same results.” In addition to questioning the validity of the experience requirement, some smaller districts noted implementation difficulties. For example, an LEA with a single school in a grade range does not have the option of transferring teachers from school to school to balance experience levels. Further, if a school is required to recruit new teachers to meet the CSR requirement, those new teachers are commonly inexperienced, so they negatively affect the school’s teacher experience average. In taking the necessary steps to meet one requirement, a QEIA school may create more difficulties in meeting another requirement.

III. Program Benefits

Despite the several challenges noted by LEAs participating in the QEIA program, comments about the benefits of the program outweighed comments about its challenges. As described earlier, several LEAs noted that program participation has resulted in more clear and comprehensive plans for school improvement, increased academic intervention opportunities for at-risk students, and enhanced

collaboration and professional development opportunities for faculty. The improved student academic performance demonstrated in recent API growth among QEIA schools indicates that these structural changes are beginning to have their intended positive effect on student learning. Continued analysis of the performance of QEIA-funded schools will determine whether the program is achieving the level of improvement sought by the legislation, but initial indications are that the program is providing some benefit for its participants. As one LEA noted, “QEIA does provide the resources and support services that help students in school…. The delivery of instruction has significantly changed to the point that student learning has been positively impacted.”

Appendix A: Quality Education Investment Act
Class Size Reduction Calculation Instructions

Instructions for schools and districts to calculate class size to meet class size reduction (CSR) requirements of the Quality Education Investment Act (QEIA)

CSR Requirements for Kindergarten through Third Grade (K–3)

QEIA applies requirements of the existing K–3 grade CSR Program (*EC* Section 52120, et. al.) to classes in these grades in QEIA-funded schools. Specifically, classes in these grades must not exceed 20 pupils per class. Calculation rules established for the K–3 CSR Program apply for these grades.

Calculating CSR Targets for Fourth through Twelfth Grade

QEIA requires that QEIA-funded schools reduce their class sizes at each grade level by an average of five students per class, or to an average of 25, whichever is lower, by the end of the 2010–11 school year. In addition, no class at the school (in pertinent subject areas) may enroll more than 27 students. The school's required reductions or "targets" are calculated based on the school's enrollment in one of two prior years, depending on specific conditions.

- If the school's average class size in 2005–06 was less than 25, that year will be used to calculate the school's targets.

- If the school's average class size in 2005–06 was 25 or more, 2006–07 will be used to calculate the school's targets.

Step 1. Determine the year to be used in calculating the target.

For schools offering only self-contained classes[1]*:*

a. Use Dataquest http://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/ from 2005–06 to identify total California Basic Educational Data System (CBEDS) enrollment at the school. Exclude students enrolled in classes designated special education for their entire school day.

b. Determine the number of classes offered at the school in 2005–06. Exclude classes designated special education[2].

c. Divide the total enrollment by the total number of classes to calculate the school's average class size. If the school's average class size was less than 25,

[1] Self-contained classes are those in which a variety of subjects are taught to a single group of students (e.g., a typical elementary school classroom).

[2] When excluding special education classes, exclude only entire classes that are specifically designated special education. Do not exclude remediation or intervention classes unless those classes are specifically identified as special education classes. For all classes required to meet class size reduction requirements, include all enrolled students, including special education students, in the calculations.

use 2005–06 data to calculate the target. If the school's average class size was 25 or more, use 2006–07 data to calculate the target.

For schools offering only departmentalized classes[3]*:*

a. Use school and district records to identify enrollment in each class offered on the CBEDS reporting date 2005 in all classes in English language arts, reading, mathematics, science, history, and social science. (See QEIA Core Classes in Departmentalized Settings below for more information.) Exclude classes designated special education[2].

b. Add all of the class enrollments identified above, and divide the sum by the total number of classes identified above to calculate the school's average class size. If the school's average class size was less than 25, use 2005–06 data to calculate the target. If the school's average class size was 25 or more, use 2006–07 data to calculate the target.

For schools offering both self-contained and departmentalized classes:

a. Use school and district records to identify enrollment in each class offered on the CBEDS reporting date 2005 in self-contained classes and departmentalized classes that provided instruction in English language arts, reading, mathematics, science, history, and social science. (See QEIA Core Classes in Departmentalized Settings below for more information.) Exclude classes designated special education[2].

b. Add all of the class enrollments identified above, and divide the sum by the total number of classes identified above to calculate the school's average class size. If the school's average class size was 25 or more, use 2006–07 data to calculate the target. If the school's average class size was less than 25, use 2005–06 data to calculate the target.

Step 2. Determine the base average class size for each grade level to be used in calculating the target average class size for each grade level.

For schools in which only self-contained classes were offered:

a. Use Dataquest http://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/ from the appropriate year to identify total CBEDS enrollment at each grade level. Exclude students enrolled in classes designated special education for their entire school day.

b. Determine the number of classes offered at the grade level in the appropriate year. Exclude classes designated special education.[2] (For combination classes, see the section below on multiple grade classes.)

c. Divide the total enrollment for the grade level by the total number of classes at the grade level to calculate the base average class size.

[3] Departmentalized classes are those in which a single subject is taught, (e.g., a high school math class).

For schools offering only departmentalized classes:

a. Use school and district records to identify enrollment in each class offered on the CBEDS reporting date in the appropriate year in all classes in English language arts, reading, mathematics, science, history and social science. (See QEIA Core Classes in Departmentalized Settings below for more information.) Exclude classes designated special education[2].

b. Identify the grade level of each class. (For classes serving multiple grade levels, see the section below on multiple grade classes.)

c. Separate all of the classes identified in step a into grade levels. For each grade level, add all class enrollments, then divide by the number of classes to calculate the base average class size for the grade level.

For schools offering both self-contained and departmentalized classes:

a. Use school and district records to identify enrollment in each class offered on the CBEDS reporting date in the appropriate year in self-contained classes and departmentalized classes that provided instruction in English language arts, reading, mathematics, science, history and social science. (See QEIA Core Classes in Departmentalized Settings below for more information.) Exclude classes designated special education[2].

b. Identify the grade level of each class. (For classes serving multiple grade levels, see the section below on multiple grade classes.)

c. Separate all of the classes identified in step a into grade levels. For each grade level, add all class enrollments, then divide by the number of classes to calculate the base average class size for the grade level.

Multiple-grade Classes:

All classes are to be identified as a single grade level, even classes that serve multiple grades. Use the following rules to assign a single grade level to a multiple-grade class:

a. The grade level for the class is identified based on the grade level of the largest portion of students in the class. For example, if most students are tenth grade, the class is to be identified as a tenth grade class.

b. If two or more grade levels have equal numbers of students representing the largest portion, identify the grade level as the highest grade involved in the “tie”. For example, if a class serves twelve ninth graders, twelve tenth graders, and seven eleventh graders, the class is to be identified as a tenth grade class.

c. Once the grade level of the class has been identified, include the entire class in the calculation for the identified grade level. For example, for the class described

in “b” above, all of its students are to be included in the calculation for tenth grade.

The grade level for each class will be determined as described above based on the enrollment of the class:

- On the CBEDS date, if the class had an enrollment on that date

- On the tenth day on which instruction was offered, if the class did not have an enrollment on the CBEDS date.

Given the rules for establishing grade levels, classes serving multiple grades may change in their grade level designation from year to year based on the specific mix of students in each class. It is therefore necessary to establish the grade level of each class *each year* in order to accurately calculate average class size for the QEIA CSR requirement.

Step 3. Calculate CSR targets for each grade level.

a. Round the base average class size for each grade level to the nearest tenth (e.g., 29.35 = 29.4.)

b. If the base average class size for the grade level is less than 30, subtract 5 from the base average class size (e.g., 29.7 – 5 = 24.7.) The result is the target average class size for the grade level.

c. If the base average class size for the grade level is 30 or more, the target average class size for the grade level is 25.0.

QEIA Core Classes in Departmentalized Settings

QEIA requires reduction of the class sizes of “…classes in English language arts, reading, mathematics, science, or history and social science courses” in departmentalized classrooms in grades 4 through 12. [*EC* Section 52055.740(a)(1)(C)] Classes in these subjects include any of the following:

- Classes identified in these subject areas by their Professional Assignment Information Form (PAIF) assignment codes as reported in the CBEDS.

  Generally, PAIF codes in these subject areas are:

  - English and reading, including English language development (ELD)–2100s

  - Mathematics–2400s

  - Science–2600s

- Social science and history–2700s

- Courses in other subject areas for which graduation credit is awarded in one of the subject areas noted above. For example, a career technical education class in forensic science for which graduation credit in science is awarded is to be identified as a science class for the purpose of implementing the QEIA CSR requirement.

- Remedial and intervention courses, including CAHSEE intervention courses, if subjects covered in the course include any of the subjects noted above.

Calculating Average Class Sizes During QEIA Implementation Years, K–3

For kindergarten through third grade (K–3), QEIA uses a modified version of the K–3 CSR Program's method for calculating average class sizes, which averages the active daily enrollment of each class from the first day of the class through April 15 each year.

Step 1. Identify all K–3 classes at the school that are required to meet QEIA CSR requirements. These include self-contained classes and departmentalized classes that provide instruction in the subjects of ELA including ELD, reading, mathematics, science, history, and social science. Exclude classes designated special education.

Step 2. For each class identified in Step 1, determine the active daily enrollment in the class on the first day the class was offered and on each subsequent day of the class through April 15. Sum the active daily enrollments of each of these days, then divide the sum by the total number of class days through April 15. Round the result to the nearest tenth (e.g., 29.35 = 29.4). The result is the average class size for the class for the year.

Calculating Average Class Sizes During QEIA Implementation Years, Grades Four through Eight

For grades four through eight, QEIA schools are to use on of the following methods for calculating average class sizes. (For classes serving more than one grade level, see the section above on multiple-grade classes.) Method A below averages the active daily enrollment of each class from the first day of class through April 15 each year. Method B below uses enrollment on the last instructional day of each month a class is in session as a proxy for active monthly enrollment. Schools may select either method for use in calculating class size, but must use the selected method for the entire year.

Method A

Step 1. Identify all classes in grades four through eight at the school that are required to meet QEIA CSR requirements. These include self-contained classes and departmentalized classes that provide instruction in the subjects of ELA (including ELD), reading, mathematics, science, history, and social science. Exclude classes designated special education.

Step 2. For each class identified in Step 1, determine the active daily enrollment in the class on the first day the class was offered and on each subsequent day of the class through April 15. Sum the active daily enrollments of each of these days, then divide the sum by the total number of class days through April 15. Round the result to the nearest tenth (e.g., 29.35 = 29.4). The result is the average class size for the class for the year.

Method B

Step 1. Identify all classes in grades four through eight at the school that are required to meet QEIA CSR requirements. These include self-contained classes and departmentalized classes that provide instruction in the subjects of ELA (including ELD), reading, mathematics, science, history, and social science. Exclude classes designated special education.

Step 2: For each class identified in Step 1, determine the active enrollment in the class on the last instructional day of each month in which classes were held. Sum the enrollments from each of these days, then divide the sum by the number of days included in the calculation. For example, if the class was offered in ten months, the calculation will include ten days. Determine the active enrollment in the class on each of those days, sum them, then divide the sum by ten. Round the result to the nearest tenth (e.g., 29.35 = 29.4). The result is the average class size for the class for the year.

Calculating Average Class Sizes During QEIA Implementation Years, Grades Nine through Twelve.

For grades nine through twelve, QEIA schools are to use one of the following methods for calculating average class sizes. (For classes serving more than one grade level, see the section above on multiple-grade classes.) Method A below uses active daily enrollments to precisely calculate active monthly enrollment. Method B below uses enrollment on the last instructional day of each month a class is in session as a proxy for active monthly enrollment. Schools may select either method for use in calculating class size, but must use the selected method for the entire year.

Method A

Step 1. Identify all classes in grades nine through twelve at the school that are required to meet QEIA CSR requirements. These include self-contained classes and departmentalized classes that provide instruction in the subjects of ELA (including ELD), reading, mathematics, science, history and social science. Exclude classes designated special education.

Step 2. For each class identified in Step 1, determine the active monthly enrollment in the class as follows:

a. Identify the active enrollment of the class for each instructional day the class was in session. (Do not include days when students did not attend, e.g., teacher work days.)

b. Add the active daily enrollments for the month together, and divide the total by the number of instructional days for the class for the month. Round the result to the nearest tenth (e.g., 29.35 = 29.4). The result is the active monthly enrollment for the class.

Step 3. For each class identified in step one, add the active monthly enrollments for all months in which the class was implemented, and divide the total by the number of months the class was implemented. Round the result to the nearest tenth (e.g., 29.35 = 29.4). The result is the average class size for the class for the year.

Method B

Step 1. Identify all classes in grades nine through twelve at the school that are required to meet QEIA CSR requirements. These include self-contained classes and departmentalized classes that provide instruction in the subjects of ELA (including ELD), reading, mathematics, science, history and social science. Exclude classes designated special education.

Step 2: For each class identified in Step 1, determine the active enrollment in the class on the last instructional day of each month in which classes were held. Sum the enrollments from each of these days, then divide the sum by the number of days included in the calculation. For example, if the class was offered in ten months, the calculation will include ten days. Determine the active enrollment in the class on each of those days, sum them, then divide the sum by ten. Round the result to the nearest tenth (e.g., 29.35 = 29.4). The result is the average class size for the class for the year.

Calculating Requirements for CSR During QEIA Interim Years

QEIA requirements include CSR targets that must be met by the end of the 2010–11 school year, and interim requirements for the intervening years 2008–09 and 2009–10. Interim requirements are generally based on making appropriate incremental progress toward the eventual CSR targets. Schools are allowed some flexibility in defining incremental progress. For example, schools may reduce the size of one-third of their classes to the target class size each year, or may reduce all classes by one-third of the required reduction each year; any method must clearly demonstrate that the reduction in each of the interim years constitutes one-third of the progress needed to meet the CSR target required by the end of the 2010–11 school year.

Determining Whether a School has Met QEIA CSR Requirements

QEIA CSR requirements vary to some degree among grades K–3, fourth through twelfth grade (4–12) in a self-contained format, and 4–12 in a departmentalized format.

For K–3:

- All classes must be reduced to an average of 20 pupils per class by the end of school year 2010–11 and each funded year thereafter. Because the QEIA statute applies rules for the K–3 CSR program to this requirement, classes may average

up to 20.44 students per class, but an average of 20.45 exceeds the requirement.

- Interim rules apply. If classes in these grades averaged more than 20 in the appropriate base year (2005–06 or 2006–07) then schools must include these classes in the reductions in each of the interim years constituting one-third of the progress needed to meet the CSR target required by the end of the 2010–11 school year. Classes participating in the K–3 CSR program in the appropriate base year must continue to maintain the class size required by the K–3 CSR program.

For Self-Contained and Departmentalized Classes in 4–12:

- No class may exceed 27 students by the end of school year 2010–2011 or during funded years thereafter.

- QEIA CSR requirements are based on class sizes at each grade level. At each grade level, calculate the average class size for all participating classes. The grade level average class size may not exceed the grade level CSR target by the end of school year 2010–2011, and each funded year thereafter, and the respective grade level interim CSR targets for the years 2008–09 and 2009–10. For example, if the grade level CSR target is 25.0, then the actual grade level class size cannot exceed 25.0 when rounded to the nearest tenth. A rounded grade level class size of 25.1 would not meet the requirement.

All Other Classes

QEIA also requires that participating schools "Not increase any other class sizes in the school above the size used during the 2005–06 school year." [*EC* Section 52055.740(a)(1)(D)] To clarify this requirement, any class not identified as a core class using the definition above is to be included in the group of "all other classes".

To implement the requirement not to increase the class size of all other classes, the following rules are to be applied:

- Year-to-year comparisons of the size of these classes will be based on a calculation of the average size of this group of "non-core" classes in each year.

    1. Identify all classes that do not meet the above definition of a core class that had enrollments on the CBEDS date.

    2. Identify the enrollment of each of these non-core classes on the CBEDS date.

    3. Total the enrollments of these classes. Divide the total enrollment by the number of non-core classes that had enrollments on the CBEDS date. This will generate a school wide average enrollment in the "other classes".

- The average class size of this group of classes must not increase in size above their size in the 2005–06 school year.

    1. Use the process described above to calculate the average class size of non-core classes at the school in 2005–06.

    2. Use the process described above to calculate the average class size of non-core classes at the school in the current year.

    3. Compare the two averages. If the average class size of non-core classes in the current year is equal to or lower than the average size of non-core classes in 2005–06, the school meets this requirement.

- This requirement applies to every year the QEIA school participates in the program, beginning with the 2010–11 school year. County offices of education will include this requirement in their annual QEIA monitoring activities.

Appendix B: Quality Education Investment Act
Teacher Experience Index Calculation Instructions

Instructions for schools and districts to calculate district targets and current school status in meeting the average teaching experience requirement for the Quality Education Investment Act (QEIA).

Actual teaching experience at the school: "Teacher Experience Status"

1. Using Professional Assignment Information Form (PAIF) codes identify all certificated staff with classroom teaching assignments. Individuals with part-time assignments and those with multiple types of assignments, at least one of which is teaching, are included in the calculation. Specifically, the following PAIF assignment codes, which reflect non-classroom assignments, are to be **excluded:**

   Exclude all PAIF assignment codes in which the first of the four digits is "0" (e.g., 0118) and all of the following PAIF assignment codes:

PAIF Assignment Codes 2008–09

2199–2999	3009–3020	4299–5999	6001–6099
2180	3009	4299	6001
2199	3020	4499	6002
2280		5999	6004
2299			6006
2359			6007
2380			6010
2399			6011
2459			6013
2489			6014
2499			6017
2539			6019
2549			6080
2580			6098
2599			6099
2680			
2699			
2749			
2799			
2880			
2897			
2899			
2999			

2. For each individual identified, determine the number of years of experience (total, not just in the current district) as reported in PAIF. For this calculation, the maximum number of years of experience to be counted is ten, so for teachers reporting more than ten years of experience, convert their years of experience to ten. Do not adjust the calculation based on whether experience was full-time or part-time, or whether the individual's assignment was all teaching or a combination teaching/non-teaching assignment. Count each teacher as one teacher for the purposes of this calculation regardless of whether the teaching assignment was part-time or full-time. For teachers with assignments at more than one school, include each teacher in the calculation for the school in which the teacher has the greatest portion of her/his assignment.

3. Add the calculated number of years of experience of all teachers at the school and divide that total by the number of teachers at the school. The result is the average teaching experience of all teachers at the school.

Comparing the school's Teacher Experience Status to the district's "Teacher Experience Target"

1. Calculate the school's Teacher Experience Status using the instructions above.

2. Round each of the results from steps 1 and 2 to the nearest tenth, using normal rounding rules (e.g., 2.44 is rounded to 2.4; 2.45 is rounded to 2.5).

3. In 2008–09 and 2009–10, the school must meet or exceed interim teacher experience targets, which are calculated as one-third, and two-thirds, respectively, of the teacher experience target for the school. For example, if a school's teacher experience target is 6.0, its interim teacher experience for 2008–09 is 2.0, and its interim teacher experience target for 2009–10 is 4.0. In 2010–11 and subsequent years, the district's full teacher experience target applies.

4. Compare the school's Teacher Experience Status to the district's Teacher Experience Target for that school type. If the school's Teacher Experience Status meets or exceeds the district's Teacher Experience Target for that school type, the school satisfies the QEIA teacher experience requirement as of 2010–11.

Special Circumstances:

If during QEIA funding **two districts consolidate**: Do not change the Teacher Experience Target for the QEIA funded school(s). The school will retain the Teacher Experience Target that was calculated for the district of which the school was a part when it was first selected for participation.

If during QEIA funding **a school is reorganized**: if the reorganization includes changing the range of grades served by the school, determine if the school "type" (E, M, H) changes. If so, the school's Teacher Experience Target changes to the Teacher Experience Target for the new school type. For example, if a school was type "E" prior to the reorganization and becomes type "M" as a result of the reorganization, its Teacher Experience Target changes from E to M.

If during QEIA funding **a school is split into smaller schools**: the effect depends on the CDS code designation(s) for the new schools. A school that retains the CDS

code under which QEIA funds were received is required to meet the original Teacher Experience Target for the school and continues to receive funding based on the school's annual enrollment. Any school that splits from the original school and is organized under a new CDS code is no longer eligible for QEIA funding and exempt from QEIA program requirements.

District Teacher Experience Targets

The teacher experience targets have been calculated for each applicable school for districts with schools participating in the QEIA using the following method:

1. Divide all of the district's schools into three groups based on their Academic Performance Index (API) School Type Designation (E = Elementary, M = Middle School, H = High School). The District-Level Teacher Experience Index, the "Teacher Experience Target", is by school type, specifically the designated level E, M, or H.

2. Using PAIF codes, identify all certificated staff with classroom teaching assignments in 2005–06. Individuals with part-time assignments and those with multiple types of assignments, at least one of which was teaching, are included in the calculation. Specifically, the following PAIF assignment codes, which reflect non-classroom assignments, are to be **excluded**:

   Exclude all PAIF assignment codes in which the first of the four digits is "0" (e.g., 0118) and all of the following PAIF assignment codes:

PAIF Assignment Codes 2005

2199–2999	3002–3012	4099–5999	6001–6099
2199	3002	4099	6001
2299	3003	4199	6002
2359	3004	4299	6006
2399	3005	4399	6010
2459	3006	4499	6011
2499	3007	4699	6014
2539	3008	5999	6017
2549	3009		6019
2599	3010		
2699	3011		
2749	3012		
2799			
2897			
2899			
2999			

Individuals with assignments in any other code are **included** in the index.

Individuals reporting under more than one assignment code are included if at least one of their assignment codes is not in the list of codes to be excluded.

3. For each individual identified, determine the number of years of experience (total, not just in the current district) as reported in PAIF in 2005–06. For this calculation, the maximum number of years of experience to be counted is ten, so for teachers reporting more than ten years of experience, convert their years of experience to ten. Do not adjust the calculation based on whether experience was full-time or part-time, or whether the individual's assignment was all teaching or a combination teaching/non-teaching assignment. Count each teacher as one teacher for the purposes of this calculation regardless of whether the teaching assignment was part-time or full-time. For teachers with assignments at more than one school, include each teacher in the calculation for the school in which the teacher has the greatest portion of her/his assignment.

4. Add the calculated number of years of experience of all teachers in each school type and divide that total by the number of teachers in the group. The result is the average teaching experience of the district's teachers for that school type. For teachers with assignments across school types (e.g., a teacher with an assignment in both a middle school and a high school) include the teacher in the school type for which the greatest portion of the teacher's time is assigned.

Appendix C: Considerations for Districts with Schools Applying for Funding under the Quality Education Investment Act

Substantial forethought and consideration of a number of issues are necessary for districts and their schools to be successful in this process. The following are examples of questions districts and schools will need to consider as they contemplate applying for participation in the program.

Implementing or enhancing Class Size Reduction (CSR)

- Does the school have the physical space, facilities, and infrastructure necessary to support additional classrooms needed to implement CSR?

- Does the school have, or can it develop, a sufficient supply of teacher applicants qualified to teach in appropriate subject areas to implement CSR?

- Has the district established relationships with local universities with teacher preparation programs to facilitate recruitment of new teachers?

- Can the school provide an extended school day, such as early/late starts, or implement other measures in order to meet CSR requirements?

- Will the school require additional administrative staff to support the additional faculty?

Ensuring that all teachers are highly qualified per Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) requirements

- Does the district offer professional development opportunities that would allow existing teachers to meet highly qualified teachers' (HQT) requirements?*

- Does the district have both plans and resources to recruit new HQT by June, 2007?

Achieving average teaching experience at or above the district average

- Does the district have accurate information on the experience levels of current teachers and each school's teacher experience average? If not, what process needs to be developed to obtain this information so that teacher experience levels can be balanced among schools by June, 2009?

- Have the district and local bargaining unit consulted to discuss the possibility of allowing transfers of experienced teachers to schools with an insufficient number of those teachers?

- Has the district considered providing various incentives to support voluntary transfers of experienced teachers into schools needing more of them?

- Has the district developed a plan to increase the number of experienced teachers transferring into the district from other districts?

* Quality Education Investment Act (QEIA) requires districts to ensure that all teachers in participating schools meet HQT requirements by the end of the third full year of funding. However, California policy on ESEA implementation, which supersedes QEIA requirements, requires all districts to plan to ensure that all teachers in all schools meet HQT requirements by the end of the 2006–07 school year.

Reducing counselor-to-student ratios in high schools

- Does the school have space and facilities, infrastructure and support necessary to employ additional counselors to address this requirement?

- Does the school have a sufficient number of credentialed counselor applicants to implement the required counselor: student ratio reduction?

- Has the district established relationships with local universities with Pupil Personnel Services preparation programs to facilitate recruitment of new counselors?

Meeting or exceeding API growth targets over the first three years of funding

- Have the school and district conducted a thorough review of conditions and factors affecting student academic performance including existing Academic Performance Index trends, student demographics, use and appropriateness of texts and instructional materials, quality of instruction, teacher qualifications, professional development availability and participation rates, and school culture?

- Have the school and district collaborated on a timeline to develop school improvement plans to improve instruction and the educational environment?

- Have the school and district collaborated on a process for ongoing assessment of school conditions, school plan implementation, and modification of the school plan to respond to changing or emerging conditions affecting student academic performance?

Assigning administrators with exemplary qualifications in funded schools

Districts are required to ensure that administrators in participating schools are confirmed to have exemplary qualifications and experience. These qualifications include “the ability to support the success of all pupils by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community as well as the ability to advocate, nurture, and sustain a school culture and instructional program that is conducive to pupil learning and staff professional growth.” QEIA requires administrator professional development to this end.

- How will the district make plans to address the “exemplary qualifications” requirement through transfer provisions, recruitment, or other options?

- Does the district currently offer its administrators professional development opportunities as required, or does it have plans for expanding professional development options to meet this requirement?

Ongoing Assessment, Data Collection, and Reporting Requirements

The QEIA statute lists several ongoing requirements for districts with funded schools. Some involve assessment, both of current school conditions and changes that result from QEIA participation. Others involve data collection and reporting of results to document that participating schools are meeting program requirements. In addressing these added responsibilities, districts should consider:

- What facilities and other physical resources will be needed to support the program and fiscal assessment and data collection aspects of QEIA implementation? Are they being considered in the district’s projection of QEIA expenditures?

- What additional personnel will be needed to fulfill the district’s responsibilities to assess and collect data on its QEIA-funded schools?

Effective Projection and Implementation of Fiscal Resource Requirements

QEIA participation requirements involve the commitment of substantial district resources to implement changes in funded schools. While QEIA funds significantly augment current district resources, an effective QEIA implementation plan will impact other district fiscal and personnel resources.

- Has the district considered all impacts on existing district resources that QEIA participation will cause?

- Has the district projected the potential increase in implementation costs in future years (e.g., salary increases, maintenance and utility costs)?

- Has the district developed a plan for addressing all fiscal needs in QEIA implementation, and does the plan provide the most efficient and coordinated allocation of district resources to result in effective implementation of QEIA activities?

For Districts with Schools Applying under the Alternative QEIA Option

Initial considerations for districts with schools intending to apply under the alternative option will vary depending on the nature and scope of school improvement strategies proposed in the alternative plan. Districts should consider all resource needs and implementation issues likely to emerge. General considerations should include:

- What alternative program is being considered? Does it align with the district's vision, mission and goals? Will it meet the statutory requirements?

- How will the district support the alternative plan to ensure its successful implementation?

For Charter Schools

Requirements for charter schools participating in QEIA will be the same as those for other schools. Charter schools and their chartering authorities need to consider the issues above concerning the option under which they plan to apply. Beyond those considerations, charter schools may face special issues given their instructional context or their current relationship with their chartering authority:

- Facilities–Charter schools may have more issues related to space and fiscal resources. Do such concerns exist, and if so, can they be satisfactorily addressed within the timeline allowed in this act? Is the chartering authority willing and able to support its funded charter schools in addressing this need?

- Teachers–Certification flexibility in charter schools may have resulted in a greater percentage of teachers in these schools yet to meet HQT requirements; however, these requirements apply to charter school teachers. How will teachers employed at QEIA funded charter schools meet HQT requirements? Does the charter school provide sufficient professional development opportunities to allow all of its teachers to meet HQT requirements by June, 2007?

For schools that also participate in the High Priority Schools Grant Program (HPSGP)

Schools that receive HPSGP funding are subject to requirements of both programs.

- Do schools that participate in both programs have the capacity to meet requirements for both programs and to successfully implement all changes required by both programs?

- Are there elements of QEIA implementation requirements that complicate or interfere with the school's HPSGP action plan? If so, how will these issues be resolved?

Appendix D – Quality Education Investment Act Monitoring Instruments Used by County Offices Of Education for the 2008–09 School Year

1. Suggested Process for the County Office Pre-Monitoring Site Visits and Documentation Review
2. Class Size Reduction Requirement Description
3. Kindergarten Through Sixth Grade Class Size Reduction Monitoring Worksheet Instructions
4. Kindergarten Through Sixth Grade Class Size Reduction Monitoring Worksheet
5. Pupil-to-Counselor Ratio Requirement Description
6. Pupil-to-Counselor Ratio Requirement Worksheet
7. Highly Qualified Teacher Requirement Description
8. Highly Qualified Teacher Personnel Assignment Information Form Report Sample
9. *Williams* Settlement Requirements Description
10. *Williams* Settlement Requirements Ratings Sheet
11. Professional Development Requirements Description
12. Teacher Professional Development Sample School Data
13. Academic Performance Index Growth Requirement Description
14. Academic Performance Index Growth Target Summary Sample School Data
15. Average Teacher Experience Requirement Description
16. Revised Teacher Experience Index Worksheet 2008-09
17. Alternative Application Schools Requirements Description
18. Alternative Application Schools Progress Goals and Benchmarks
19. Alternative Application Goal Summary Sheet
20. Sample Quality Education Investment Act Annual Monitoring Report
21. Substantially Met Determination (Regular Program Schools)
22. Substantially Met Determination (Alternative Program Schools)

Suggested Process for the County Office Pre-Monitoring Site Visits and Documentation Review

OVERVIEW

Education Code (*EC*) sections 52055.700–52055.770 establish the Quality Education Investment Act (QEIA) of 2006. The goals of the program are:

- Improve the quality of academic instruction and the level of pupil achievement
- Develop exemplary school district and school practices that will create the working conditions and classroom learning environments that will attract and retain well qualified teachers, administrators, and other staff
- Focus school resources, including all categorical funds, solely on instructional improvement and services to pupils

EC Section 52055.740(b)(c) adds new oversight responsibilities for county superintendents beginning in the 2008–09 school year and continuing through 2013–14. The statute requires the county superintendent to annually review the school and its data to determine if the school has met requirements of the program for the following areas:

- Academic Performance Index growth (required beginning in 2010–11)
- Average teacher experience
- Class Size Reduction (CSR)
- Highly Qualified Teachers
- Professional development for teachers and paraprofessionals
- Pupil to counselor ratio (high schools only)
- *Williams* Settlement requirements
- Alternative application school student progress goals

Schools funded under the Alternative Application will be monitored based on agreed-upon student progress goals. By November 2008 those county superintendents with schools funded for Alternative Applications will meet with those schools to determine four-eight goals to be monitored.

County superintendents or the county superintendents' designees will conduct pre-monitoring visits during a school year and review documentation after the end of the school year to determine if the requirements have been substantially met. If the county superintendent determines that the school has not substantially met the requirements, he or she notifies the State Superintendent of Public Instruction (SSPI). If all of the requirements are not met by the end of the subsequent year, the SSPI shall terminate funding for that school.

REVIEW PROCESS AND TIMELINE

Presently, the review process has the following steps:

Review Process Steps	Timeline for 2008–09 School Year
• Agree on student progress goals for Alternative Application schools*	November 2008
• Conduct pre-monitoring visit	January–April 2009
• Review documentation	July–September 2009
• Report findings to district/school	September–October 2009
• Report to schools not meeting targets	November 2009

* Applies to a limited number of counties with Alternative Application schools.

1. Alternative Application School Progress Goals (applies to a limited number of counties with these schools)

County superintendents will meet with Alternative Application schools and their districts to identify and agree upon four-eight goals tied to the Single Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA) that will be monitored. The SPSA goals identified are those with a direct correlation to the QEIA funds being expended and tied to student achievement outcomes. Evidence of progress, specific to each monitored goal, will be delineated in a signed statement of agreement. Goals may be revised and new progress benchmarks identified, as needed annually, over the course of QEIA program participation. These goals must be articulated in the school plan and have the concurrence of the school site council.

2. Pre-Monitoring Visit

At the beginning of the process, the county superintendent, or his/her designee, will meet with the school site and district representative to offer support and technical assistance, review the monitored requirements, and emphasize that this is a collaborative process. At this meeting, the county staff may do any or all of the following based on the needs of the school and district:

- Review requirements for program implementation
- Establish agreements on requirements or CSR
- Identify potential areas where requirements are not being addressed
- Clarify any misinterpretations in the requirements
- Demonstrate QEIA tools
- Review student achievement data

- Assist administrators new to their assignments

- Discuss school or district practices or processes that improve teacher practice and student learning

- Discuss school or district practices or processes that organize information in a user-friendly manner

- Inform the school site and district staff about the documentation that will be required for the review

- Provide a timeline of events and an overview of the documentation review process

3. Documentation Review

The county staff will inform the school/district of all documentation required for the review process and the date by which the documentation will be submitted to the county office liaison. The school/district will maintain a copy of the documents for their administrative record. The county superintendent, or designee, will maintain a copy of the documents for preparing a letter of findings to the district/school and for a letter, if needed, to the SSPI if the requirements are not substantially met.

The specific forms and data reviewed for each requirement area are noted in the "Requirements and Resources" section of this document. After reviewing the documentation and determining the progress toward meeting each requirement, the county superintendent will assess if, overall, the requirements were "substantially met" as required by statute.

For the 2008–09 and 2009–10 school year monitoring, county superintendents will determine if QEIA funded schools have substantially met interim requirements. The assessment entails the following tasks:

1) Assign a rating of 0-2 based on the level of progress achieved. A "2" indicates the requirement has been met or exceeded; a "1" indicates significant progress toward meeting the requirement; a "0" means minimal or no progress in meeting the requirement has been made. (Note: A rating of "0" in any requirement automatically triggers an overall finding of "Not Substantially Met".)

2) Determine total points and percentage achieved based on assigned ratings.

3) Determine whether further action is required. If the county superintendent determines that a lack of substantial progress was achieved overall or minimal/ no progress achieved in any area, the SPI is notified that the requirements were not substantially met.

Specific progress benchmarks for each requirement, assigned ratings, and percentage determinations are noted in the “Substantially Met Determination” portion of the “Resources and Requirements” section of this document.

4. Report Findings to District and School

The county superintendent will inform the district/school of the findings of the documentation review. Although reporting to the district or school is not required by statute, a letter sharing the results of the documentation review is recommended.

5. Report to the Superintendent of Public Instruction

If the county superintendent determines that the QEIA school did not “substantially meet” the interim or final requirements for the year under review, he/she notifies the SSPI.

Quality Education Investment Act
Class Size Reduction

WHAT IS REQUIRED?

Education Code Section 52055.740(a)(1) requires in Quality Education Investment Act (QEIA) funded schools by the end of the 2010–11 school year and each year after, to meet all of the class size reduction (CSR) requirements in statute. In addition, QEIA schools must be one-third of the way toward meeting this requirement by the end of the 2008–09 school year, and two-thirds of the way by the end of 2009–10 school year.

CSR requirements are:

- Not exceed 20 pupils per class in kindergarten through third grade (K–3)
- Reduce class sizes at each grade level in fourth through twelfth grade by an average of 5 students per class, or to an average of 25, whichever is lower
- Not increase any other class sizes in the school above the size used during the 2005–06 school year

Interim targets for 2008–09 and 2009–10 are based on making progress toward the CSR target for 2010–11. Schools are allowed some flexibility in defining how the one-third and two-thirds requirements are met. Some examples of how CSR interim targets can be met include:

- Reducing the class size of one-third of their classes to the target class size each year
- Reducing all classes by one-third of the required reduction each year
- Reducing classes for one-third of the school's enrollment
- Reducing classes in one-third of the school's grade levels

QEIA schools must continue to maintain CSR at K–3 in addition to reducing other class sizes.

HOW IS THIS MONITORED?

County Superintendents will request the following information:

- CSR Targets Worksheet– indicates the reduction targets through 2010–11 and how the targets will be met within each QEIA school; these are agreed upon during the pre-monitoring visit

- CSR Worksheet-for the school year under review

- Schoolwide average for non-core classes (beginning in 2010–11)

County superintendents will review the methodology that the school used to define their one-third and two-third targets and the resulting calculations to determine if the CSR requirement for the year under review was met.

Beginning in 2010–11, county superintendents will review the schoolwide average for non-core classes calculated by the school to ensure that the average for the non-core classes did not increase above their size in 2005–06 school year.

HOW DOES A SCHOOL MEET ITS TARGET?

Resources available to assist schools and their districts in meeting requirements for CSR are:

- A school's Single Plan for Student Achievement

- CSR Target and Plan Worksheet–provides CSR Targets by grade level and the plan for how interim targets for 2008–09 and 2009–10 will be met

- CDE's CSR Calculation Instructions–provides instructions for calculating CSR Targets and average class sizes during QEIA implementation years

- CSR Worksheets–designed to assist districts and schools in selecting the appropriate base year, calculating CSR grade level averages and projecting targets for self-contained, departmentalized, or self-contained/departmentalized settings http://www.qeia.org/qeia2 / (Outside Source)

- Fiscal Report Article–Exiting CSR–explains rules and regulations regarding class sizes in general as well as details regarding K–3 and ninth grade CSR programs http://www.qeia.org/qeia2/ (Outside Source)

- QEIA and Budgeting for CSR PowerPoint–created by School Services of California to understand the CSR guidelines and budgeting considerations http://www.qeia.org/qeia2/ (Outside Source)

- QEIA CSR Calculation PowerPoint–instruction for schools and districts to calculate class size to meet CSR requirements of QEIA http://www.qeia.org/qeia2/ (Outside Source)

2008–09 QEIA Class Size Reduction Summary Report Instructions Kindergarten Through Grade Six (K-6)

Step One: Check the box that describes the school's 2008–09 class size reduction (CSR) Implementation Plan. Include specific grade level and/or content area information if applicable. Interim targets for 2008–09 and 2009–10 are based on making progress toward the CSR target for 2010–11. Schools are allowed some flexibility in defining how the one-third and two-third requirements are met. Some examples of how CSR interim targets can be met for the 2008–09 school year are:

- Reducing all core classes/self-contained settings by one-third of the required reduction each year (one-third target).

- Reducing the class size in core classes/self-contained settings of one-third of the school's grade levels to the full 2010–2011 target class size.

- Reducing the class size of one-third of all core classes/self-contained settings to the full 2010–2011 full target class size each year.

***Core Subjects include English Language Arts/English Language Development, math, history/social studies, science, and intervention courses that support the core subjects.**

Quality Education Investment Act (QEIA) schools must continue to maintain CSR at kindergarten through third grade (K–3) in addition to reducing other class sizes.

Step Two: Enter the grade level CSR targets for 2008–09 based on the **Implementation Plan** described in Step One. If the school was fully implementing K–3 CSR during the base year (2005–06 or 2006–07) used to calculate CSR targets, the targets remain at 20.4 for all grades, K–3. If the school was partially implementing K–3 CSR, enter the 2008–09 target described in the Step One for the grade level(s) added during the 2008–09 year.

Enter the number of classes and/or sections for each grade level described in Step One. (Core subjects/self contained settings, do not include special education classes)

Enter the number of classes and/or core sections that met the 2008–09 target based on the Average Daily Enrollment (ADE) for those classes identified in Step One.

Enter the **TOTAL** number of self-contained, and/or core classes/sections at each grade level.

Step Three: Based on the classes described in Step One, enter the ADE for each grade level.

For K–3 classes, enter the ADE for each grade level from the first day of instruction through April 15, 2009. (Method A)

For fourth through sixth grade classes, enter the ADE for each grade level in either the Method A or Method B column depending on the ADE calculation system used by the district. For grade levels not addressed in the Implementation Plan, indicate N/A.

Step Four: Complete and sign the certification information. Include this signed form in the certification packet to be completed and signed by the local education agency superintendent or designee. The completed school/district checklist and certification packet are to be returned to (insert county monitor's name) at the (insert county office of education name) by (insert due date).