



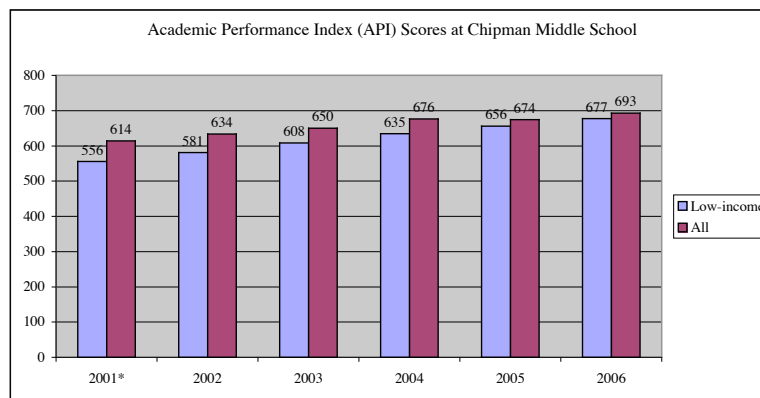
About the School:		About the Students:	
Grades:	6-8	African American:	29%
Number of Students:	602	Caucasian:	14%
Test(s):	API	Hispanic:	17%
Reduced Price Lunch:	63%	Asian:	20%
		Filipino:	15%
		Other:	5%
		ELL	29%



## California Middle School Attracts National Attention for Closing Achievement Gap with The REACH System

The success of Chipman Middle School was so evident that First Lady Laura Bush visited the school to observe the classrooms and learn the story behind their academic improvement. After SRA/McGraw-Hill's *The REACH System* was fully implemented with students reading two or more years below grade level in August 2002, Academic Performance Index (API) scores began to rise and the achievement gap among low-income students began to close.

The API is a numeric index that indicates a school's academic achievement. It ranges from a low of 200 to a high of 1,000 (800 is the goal). By 2006, low-income students achieved their highest API score ever: 677. This was 121 points higher than their 2001 score of 556, before *The REACH System* began.



\*Before *The REACH System* began.

Success was so apparent that the Alameda Unified School District adopted *The REACH System* at the start of the 2004–2005 school year district-wide to help all struggling readers. This system is a California-approved adoption for secondary intensive intervention.

“The Striving Readers program, which is part of Helping America's Youth, helps school districts implement research-based reading programs like *REACH*,” Mrs. Bush said during her visit to the school. “As more schools use programs that are proven to work, more students will have the chance to improve their reading skills. They'll be more likely to stay in school and gain the education and the confidence they need to become successful adults.”



### **Before REACH**

*The REACH System* has become a key element in Chipman Middle School's three-tiered approach to literacy; however, reading success wasn't always the case at this school.

For many years, teachers employed an eclectic approach to literacy instruction. Students were grouped in multi-aged teams, and teachers used a variety of novels and trade books to support their thematic instruction. However, with a yearly student turnover rate of approximately 33%, many children coming into the school were reading far below grade level, and test scores were distressingly low. Just 55% of all students in Grades 6–8 read below grade level. The state of California also labeled the school Underperforming.

Under the leadership of Principal Laurie McLachlan Fry, the school underwent a major reform initiative that included professional development for all teachers, new curricula, and a new emphasis on student assessment. Now assessments are used to place students into one of three groups: benchmark students (reading at or above grade level), strategic students (reading one or two years below grade level), and intensive intervention students (reading more than two years below grade level).

All students in need of intensive intervention experience *The REACH System* because it provides highly effective reading and language arts intervention. *REACH* is designed to close the educational gaps faced by at-risk students and help those in need of specialized, intensive instruction. It includes a compilation of Direct Instruction programs – *Corrective Reading*, *Spelling Through Morphographs*, and *Reasoning and Writing*.

### **Success Begins**

All students experience three periods of reading instruction every day, including students in *The REACH System*. At-risk students are assessed every two weeks, and their teachers meet together weekly to coordinate pacing and data analysis. Teachers also receive frequent and intensive coaching from Chipman's literacy coach, including classroom observations with debriefing and feedback, as well as presentation of model lessons.

Many students have learned to read so well with *The REACH System* that they have moved from the intensive intervention program into the strategic program. In the first year of implementation, there were eight sections of intervention classes. By the third year, there were only five sections.

McLachlan Fry said teachers who teach subjects other than reading have seen a notable difference in students who are in *REACH*. "Their levels of confidence have risen tremendously," she said. Test scores in other subject areas have risen as well."

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McLachlan Fry said that implementing *The REACH System* exactly as it was designed is key to student success. “After fully implementing *REACH*, our success has been extraordinary,” she said. “We feel we have two things going for us at Chipman Middle School: an incredibly committed staff who implements the program exactly as it was designed and a system already in place that sets the tone for a safe, structured learning environment.”

One of the feeder schools to Chipman Middle School is a high-poverty elementary school (98% of its students qualify for free or reduced lunches). Teachers at Woodstock Elementary School use *The REACH System* so successfully that not one student entering Chipman Middle School at the start of the 2005–2006 school year required intensive reading instruction.

**About Chipman Middle School**

Serving more than 600 students in Grades 6–8, this school’s student population is 29% African American, 20% Asian, 17% Hispanic, 15% Filipino, 14% Caucasian, 3% multicultural, 1% Native American, and 1% Pacific Islander. Sixty-three percent of the students qualify for free or reduced-price lunches, and 29% are English Language Learners. For more information about Chipman Middle School, visit [www.alameda.k12.ca.us/education/school/school.php?sectionid=3](http://www.alameda.k12.ca.us/education/school/school.php?sectionid=3).

**For More Information**

If you would like to learn more about success with Direct Instruction programs in your school or district, please contact us today at **1-888-SRA-4543**.