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San Francisco Chronicle

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# New API Rankings Mean Money for Schools

## \$677 million to reward improvement

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CHRONICLE STAFF WRITERS

California's second annual public school rankings come out today, comparing each campus against all others in the state and against 100 schools most similar to it.

More than 7,000 schools are ranked from a low of 1 to a high of 10.

The ranking is based on the state's Academic Performance Index — a set of raw numbers between 200

and 1,000 that to many schools have become the most beloved figures after the budget surplus. The reason is schools can win lucrative cash rewards by improving their APIs by 5 percent — achieved by raising their scores on the Stanford 9 achievement test.

Between now and May, nearly two-thirds of California schools will share \$677 million from the state.

The 1-to-10 ranking is intended to simplify that and allow parents, teachers, real estate agents and anyone else to see how well each school

is doing — especially when compared with schools that have similar advantages or disadvantages.

"Everybody ought to worry if they're below a 5," said state Superintendent of Public Instruction Delaine Eastin, who announced the rankings. "A 1 is never good. But if you're a 1 (statewide) and you're a 10 as compared with similar schools, at least there's some hope."

Critics of the rankings and API say they have little meaning because they are based solely on a multiple-choice exam containing few questions related to the state's high academic standards.

Eastin had been among such crit-

ics, who are mainly educators and some state lawmakers. But yesterday she said the state will soon add other measures to the rankings.

This spring, for example, language arts test questions that require writing and match state standards will be included, she said. And in the next few years, California will add attendance rates and results from other exams.

Meanwhile, Eastin said, parents should use the rankings to pressure low-performing schools to improve.

"It's not really fair to compare a school in Beverly Hills to a school in (San Francisco's low-income) Hunters Point," she said. "So we're trying

to say to people, 'Take a good look at your own school.' Parents at schools that rank 1 and 1 (on both lists) really ought to raise a fuss. They should be at the school saying to the principal, 'What are you doing to improve?'"

Statewide, 7,189 schools were ranked. Excluded were 182 schools suspected of cheating or where data are still pending. Nearly 1,200 schools were too small to participate.

Of the 1,340 Bay Area schools ranked, 234 managed to raise their statewide rankings one to three notches since last year. But at the same time, 300 area schools

dropped by about the same amount.

Throughout the Bay Area, just 44 schools performed in the top 10 percent (ranking 10) on both the statewide and "similar schools" lists. The state calls schools similar if they have about the same percentage of credentialed teachers, kids per class, student mobility, ethnicity and economic background.

Such top performers were found mainly in wealthy districts, such as Los Altos Elementary, Orinda and Palo Alto. But other districts — those with changing demographics or pockets of wealth — also produced

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## BAY AREA

# 44 Bay Area Schools in Top 10% of Both Lists

## ► API

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them: Oakland, San Francisco, Fremont, Mount Diablo, Cupertino Union Elementary and San Mateo-Foster City, for example.

By contrast, 39 Bay Area schools performed in the bottom 10 percent, earning a 1 on both lists. Those schools were mainly found in low-income Oakland and West Contra Costa school districts.

Changes in a school's ranking are noticed by parents, said Ken Gallegos, principal of Lu Sutton Elementary in Novato. Lu Sutton's rank jumped from a 7 in 1999 to a 9 in 2000. The school also looks solid compared with those with similar populations, having received an 8.

"Parents who are shopping for a kindergarten definitely look at the scores," Gallegos said. "Next year, Lu Sutton will reap the benefits."

In the bankrupt Emeryville school district in Alameda County, elementary school children made some of the greatest academic gains in the Bay Area.

Anna Yates Elementary, which had a statewide ranking of 4 in 1999, now rates a 6. Compared with similar schools, it posted a 9, which means it was among the top 20 percent.

"We have high expectations of the students, and they know it," said Elizabeth Kelsch, the school's literacy coach. "With all the problems Emeryville has been having with administration, this success has been overshadowed."

To see the full rankings, go to The Chronicle's Web site at [sfgate.com](http://sfgate.com)

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## Bay Area Schools' Changing API Rankings

For the second year in a row, more than 7,000 California schools have been ranked from a low of 1 to a high of 10, based on their achievement test scores from spring 2000. This chart shows Bay Area schools with rankings that have risen or decreased by at least two ranks since 1999. To see the rankings of every California school, visit [sfgate.com](http://sfgate.com).

8 means this school performed in the top 20 percent of California schools on the 1999 Stanford 9 achievement test. The ranking goes from a low of 1 to a high of 10.

10 means this school performed in the top 10 percent of California schools on the 2000 Stanford 9 achievement test.

9 means this school performed in the top 20 percent among 100 schools that are most similar to it by percentage of credentialed teachers, class size, and mobility, ethnicity and economic background of students.

### SCHOOLS THAT HAVE RISEN AT LEAST TWO RANKS SINCE 1999

County	District	Schools	1999 Rank	2000 Rank	Similar Rank
Santa Clara	Oak Grove Elementary	Sakamoto Elementary	8	10	9
San Mateo	Ravenswood City Elementary	Edison-Brentwood Academy	1	3	10
Santa Clara	San Jose Unified	Mann (Horace) Elementary	1	3	5
San Francisco	San Francisco Unified	Bryant Elementary	2	4	5
Santa Clara	San Jose Unified	Erikson Elementary	3	5	5
San Mateo	La Honda-Pescadero Unified	Pescadero Elementary	4	6	9
Santa Clara	Campbell Union High	Del Mar High	4	6	6
Sonoma	Bellevue Union Elementary	Bellevue Elementary	4	6	10
San Mateo	Belmont-Redwood Shores Elementary	Nesbit Elementary	5	7	1
San Mateo	Millbrae Elementary	Lomita Park Elementary	5	7	8
San Mateo	Ravenswood City Elementary	Costano Elementary	5	7	10
San Mateo	San Mateo-Foster City	George Hall Elementary	5	7	7
Santa Clara	Campbell Union High	Prospect High	5	7	3
Santa Clara	Milpitas Unified	Randall (Robert) Elementary	5	7	8
Santa Clara	Milpitas Unified	Spangler (Anthony) Elementary	5	7	2
Sonoma	Cotati-Rohnert Park Unified	Page (Thomas) Elementary	5	7	3
Napa	Napa Valley Unified	El Centro Elementary	6	8	5
Santa Clara	Campbell Union High	Westmont High	6	8	3
Marin	Novato Unified	Lu Sutton Elementary	7	9	8
San Mateo	Laguna Salada Union Elementary	Sharp Park Elementary	7	9	3
Santa Clara	San Jose Unified	Randol (James) Elementary	7	9	9
Sonoma	Petaluma Joint Union High	Kenilworth Junior High	7	9	7

### SCHOOLS THAT HAVE DROPPED AT LEAST TWO RANKS SINCE 1999

County	District	School	1999 Rank	2000 Rank	Similar Rank
San Francisco	San Francisco Unified	Miraloma Elementary	7	4	2
Sonoma	Santa Rosa High	Santa Rosa Middle	9	7	6
Marin	San Rafael City Elementary	Gallinas Elementary	7	5	1
San Francisco	San Francisco Unified	Cobb (William L.) Elementary	7	5	7
Santa Clara	East Side Union High	Oak Grove High	7	5	3
San Mateo	Brisbane Elementary	Panorama Elementary	6	4	1
Santa Clara	East Side Union High	Independence High	6	4	3
San Francisco	San Francisco Unified	Monroe Elementary	5	3	1
Santa Clara	San Jose Unified	Cory (Benjamin) Elementary	5	3	1
San Francisco	San Francisco Unified	El Dorado Elementary	4	2	1

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