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New Accountability Tool Provides Rich Insight to Help Improve Student Performance

SOUTH WHITTIER – The state has launched a field test of its new accountability system, the California School Dashboard, which evaluates district, school and student performances on a variety of measures, including test scores, English learner progress and parent engagement.

Released on March 15, the Dashboard replaces the Academic Performance Index (API), an accountability system that relied almost entirely on standardized tests and gave schools a single score. It was suspended three years ago.

The tool – which is still under construction and will be finalized in fall 2017 – will provide South Whittier families and community stakeholders data on six state and four local performances and growth measures.

“Over the last several years, we have seen major shifts in public education that have raised the bar on student learning and equity,” South Whittier School District Superintendent Gail Baxter said. “This is just the next step to help us improve the quality of education for our students, tap into their potential and provide them support in their academic and personal pursuits.”

Five color-coded icons – blue, green, yellow, orange, red – represent a school’s success on each state measure by averaging performance and growth data. A blue icon indicates high performance that is steady or improving. Red indicates poor performance that is declining. Local measures will not include icons.

For the field test, four state measures will be available: graduation rate, suspension rate, English learner progress and state test results. Once finalized, the tool will include existing state measures for chronic absenteeism, suspensions, graduations and state test performance, English learner progress and college and career readiness.

The final tool will also feature the four local measures: school climate, parent engagement, implementation of academic standards and adequacy of school facilities. These measures track districtwide performance.

“We look forward to having a system in place that disaggregates several measures of performance and helps us focus our efforts to ensure personal and academic excellence for our students,” Baxter said.

For more information, visit www.caschooldashboard.org or call the District Office at (562) 944-6231.

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