

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is part of a series of reports from a comprehensive, ongoing evaluation of the Quality Education Investment Act (QEIA) funded by the California Teachers Association and conducted by Vital Research, LLC. This report includes a comparative analysis of Academic Performance Index data for QEIA schools and non-QEIA schools as well as findings from an action research project in 22 QEIA schools statewide that was intended to uncover lessons learned from the first three years of the reform.

Overall, QEIA schools had greater gains in API than did their non-QEIA counterparts. On average, for 2009/10, QEIA schools experienced a growth of 21.2 points on the API, 6.8 more points (47.2% higher) than the comparison group of non-QEIA schools. Since QEIA began in 2007/08, QEIA schools have experienced a growth of 62.7 points, compared to 49.3 points in non-QEIA schools. Additionally, API growth score data suggest, that on average, QEIA schools are making greater gains in API with African-American and Hispanic students, English Language Learners, and socioeconomically disadvantaged students than similar, non-QEIA schools.

The action research project revealed ten key lessons learned from QEIA schools regarding QEIA implementation:

LESSON 1	<i>School goals for QEIA were consistent with the purpose and intent of the legislation.</i>
LESSON 2	<i>School implementation plans were largely focused on class size reduction (CSR), professional development, collaboration time, and the adoption of curricular interventions.</i>
LESSON 3	<i>Although somewhat challenging to implement and maintain, class size reduction enabled teachers to focus on classroom instruction.</i>
LESSON 4	<i>Professional development decisions in higher API growth schools were made in collaborative teams with teacher input, leading to greater satisfaction among stakeholders.</i>
LESSON 5	<i>Higher API growth schools had more focused professional development in core content areas.</i>
LESSON 6	<i>Higher API growth schools used student data to guide professional development decisions.</i>

LESSON 7 *Higher API growth schools engaged in more teacher collaboration to develop lesson plans, create common assessments, and analyze student data.*

LESSON 8 *School site councils in QEIA schools are approving school budgets; influence on other decisions and stakeholder involvement varies considerably by school.*

LESSON 9 *The exemplary administrator requirement has not been fully realized in QEIA schools.*

LESSON 10 *QEIA has provided valuable resources during the state budget crisis, but schools are still facing financial challenges.*

These early lessons from the field are promising and suggest that QEIA has been a catalyst for increasing teacher collaboration, improving instruction, and strengthening the quality of professional development in several schools.