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### **Gaps are Pervasive; Test Scores Alone Mask Growth**

When reviewing and reporting CAASPP results, proceed with caution. While 2016-17 test results show modest improvements, they don't take into account achievement gap trends or student academic growth, significant measures in assessing overall education progress.

"[Our data](#) show an ongoing, urgent need to close the achievement gap," said CORE Districts' executive director Rick Miller. "To change trajectories for traditionally underserved students, greater awareness about gaps and growth is essential.

A CORE Districts' [analysis of statewide data](#) for English Language arts and math shows that since 2010, racial/ethnic gaps remain. Gaps also remain for English learners, socio-economically disadvantaged students and students with disabilities, and for some of these groups, the gaps are widening.

"Acknowledging these gaps, identifying schools that are moving students further, faster toward standards, and sharing our learnings are key components of our work," explained Miller.

The [CORE data system](#) accounts for about one-third of California's schools, and about 2 million students. It includes results from dozens of school districts across the state, as well as the eight CORE Districts situated in Los Angeles, Long Beach, Garden Grove, Santa Ana, San Francisco, Sacramento, Oakland and Fresno.

To close the achievement gap, the CORE Districts take into account [a student growth measure](#) along with test scores to give educators a complete picture of how schools are improving student learning. With this growth measure, schools with high concentrations of youth in poverty, English Learners, and/or African American and Hispanic/Latino youth have an equal chance of being viewed as "high-impact" schools – those having a major impact on students' learning outcomes – as those with mostly well-to-do, non-English learners and white and Asian students.

"For 2016-17, when we look at school level results, in 6 percent of schools, we see a negative change year-to-year in distance to meeting standards, but our school growth model shows that students are actually growing faster than their peers in these schools.

"Conversely, in 5 percent of cases, schools are showing a positive year over year change, but when we look at how individual students are doing relative to their peers, we see below average growth.

"This is important because changes in test scores year-to-year compare last year's students versus this year's students. Sometime an improvement or a backslide is due to a change in the students (e.g., lower or higher achieving relative to the prior year). [Growth takes into account various factors](#) to highlight strengths and weaknesses in local schools.

"Interpreting data through a lens of equity and access is key to closing the achievement gap for all students," said Miller.