

Dear Superintendent Nichols,

I am writing on behalf of The Education Trust – West. We are a policy and advocacy organization that works to expose opportunity and achievement gaps that separate students of color and low-income students from other youth, and we identify and advocate for strategies that will forever close these gaps. I wish to congratulate you and your colleagues on the work Covina-Valley Unified School District has done to achieve positive academic outcomes for students of color and low-income students.

The Education Trust – West will soon be releasing our second annual *District Report Cards*. We have graded and ranked the 147 largest, unified districts in California based on how well they are serving African-American, Latino, and low-income students. These grades and rankings are based on API scores (last year's performance, improvement over five years, and achievement gaps) as well as A-G completion rates.

This year, we are profiling several districts that have done particularly well on these report cards in a short data brief or *Equity Alert*. **Covina-Valley Unified School District is featured because it now ranks in the top ten districts overall (tied for sixth place), having improved from a C in 2010 to a B- in 2011...**

I commend you and your colleagues on all of your hard work on behalf of students and look forward to learning more about your continuing efforts to close opportunity and achievement gaps for low-income students and students of color.

Best regards,

Arun Ramanathan, Ed.D. Executive Director
The Education Trust – West

Please read part of the body of the report...

Just as students receive report cards that measure their performance and progress in school, The Education Trust-West develops annual report cards that grade California school districts on how well they serve their Latino,

*African-American and low-income students. ... Among the 147 districts that receive grades and rankings in 2011, the highest overall grade is a B+, earned by Lake Elsinore....While the unfortunate fact.. that higher wealth districts tend to outperform higher poverty districts...outcome measures, such as the overall API score, we find that students demographics do not significantly matter when we collectively consider the additional indicators of improvement, gaps and college readiness. **Indeed, 4 of the top 10 overall districts serve large numbers of low-income students and students of color.** Lake Elsinore Unified, Corona-Norco Unified, **Covina-Valley Unified** and Baldwin Park Unified...*

*Some districts made dramatic improvements in their overall grades: **Covina-Valley Unified... improved its overall grade from a C to a B-**. Specifically, 4 of the district's 7 grades improved, including their Latino Performance and five-year Improvement among students of color and low-income students. **This is due in large part to the significant improvement seen among Latino and low-income students who posted gains of 24 and 22, respectively, between 2010 and 2011.***