

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Press Release

**PASADENA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT HONORED WITH AWARD
FROM SRA/McGRAW-HILL FOR SUCCESS IN ELEMENTARY READING**

PASADENA, Calif. (May 6, 2009) – Pasadena Unified School District has been named a recipient of the [2009 Pride of SRA Academic Recognition Award](#) for its achievement in elementary reading. An awards ceremony will take place Thursday, May 14, from 6 to 10 p.m. at [Castle Green](#), 99 South Raymond Street, Pasadena, California, 91105.

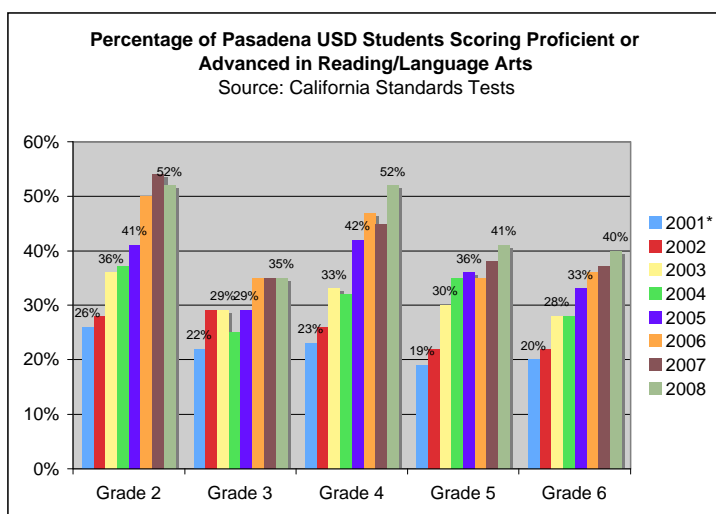
The district is receiving the award because it nearly doubled its English Language Arts scores on the California Standards Test (CST) after implementing SRA/McGraw-Hill's *Open Court Reading* in Grades K–6 at the beginning of 2002.

The percentage of Grade 2 students scoring Proficient or Advanced has risen from 26% in 2001 before the program was used to 52% in 2008. Grade 3 students jumped from 22% to 35%. Grade 4 students improved from 23% to 52%. Grade 5 students went from 19% to 41%, and Grade 6 students doubled from 20% to 40%.

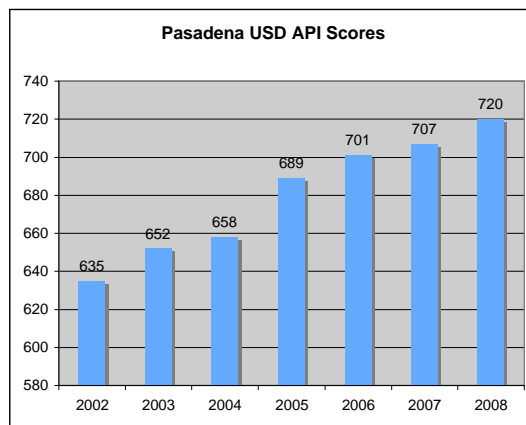
“The SRA reading program has been a vehicle along with quality professional development that has helped teachers in Pasadena Unified provide explicit reading instruction to all students,” said Sandra Mims, curriculum specialist/Reading First coordinator. “The elements of best practices in research-based reading instruction have been integrated across the curriculum and have had a positive influence on our students’ learning and academic behavior.”

In addition to improving CST scores, the district’s Academic Performance Index (API) has increased as well. Beginning in 2002, API was used to measure student academic achievement. It is a numeric index ranging from a low of 200 to a high of 1000. The state set 800 as the score schools and districts should strive to meet.

When API was first measured in 2002, the district scored 635. After six years, that overall score is up to 720. And Pasadena has 6 API 800 elementary schools: Don Benito Fundamental School at 840, Franklin Elementary School at 806, Hamilton Elementary School at 842, Norma Coombs Alternative School at 812, Sierra Madre Elementary School at 870, and Willard Elementary School at 842.



* Before Open Court Reading was implemented.



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Johna Stienstra, a teacher within the district said, “In the years since we have used *Open Court Reading*, I have seen a major shift in the way that our students use their reading skills across the academic areas. They are engaged in the learning and know not only what to do, but how to do it. There has been a huge increase in the skill level of my students, not to mention an increase in language arts assessment scores.”

In addition, the district has a number of awards and recognitions:

- Hamilton Elementary has received a California Distinguished School Award
- 13 Title I Academic Achievement Awards (Willard Elementary received this year’s award)
- America’s Top High Schools Award
- Blue Ribbon Award Nominee
- 21 National Board Certified Teachers

About SRA Reading Programs

[Open Court Reading](#) is a leading Pre-K–6 reading and language arts program published by SRA/McGraw-Hill. Developed from 45 years of intense study and field-testing, *Open Court Reading* incorporates sound teaching practices from scientific research. In the schools and districts where the program has been implemented, not only have students’ reading test scores increased, but teachers and principals also are seeing gains in student achievement overall.

SRA has recently introduced its latest in research-based reading and language arts programs: [Imagine It!](#) The California State Board of Education approved SRA/McGraw-Hill’s *Imagine It!* reading and language arts programs for Grades K–6 for the 2008 Reading/Language Arts–English-Language Development adoption list. For more information, visit [SRAImagineItCA.com](#).

About Pasadena Unified School District

The district serves approximately 20,827 students. The student demographics are 58% Hispanic, 21% African American, 16% Caucasian, 3% Asian American, less than 3% other. Approximately 64% of students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch, and 22% are classified as ELD students. For more information about Pasadena Unified School District, visit [Pasadena.K12.ca.us](#).

The Pride of SRA Academic Recognition Award

The Pride of SRA Academic Recognition Award is an annual awards program, initiated in 2001, to recognize schools and districts nationwide that are models in reading education. Honorees have demonstrated significant improvement and consistently high reading test scores through the implementation of a research-based reading curriculum, such as SRA’s *Open Court Reading* or Direct Instruction reading programs. The awards are presented each spring.

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4400 Easton Commons
Columbus, OH 43219
800 468 5850

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About SRA/McGraw-Hill

SRA/McGraw-Hill is the top provider of specialized research-based educational programs and professional development for the elementary market. Leading programs include SRA *Imagine It!* reading program, Direct Instruction, *SRA Number Worlds*, additional core and supplemental programs. SRA is part of McGraw-Hill Education, a division of The McGraw-Hill Companies (NYSE: MHP). McGraw-Hill Education is a leading global provider of instructional, assessment, and reference solutions that empower professionals and students of all ages. McGraw-Hill Education has offices in 33 countries and publishes in more than 65 languages. Additional information is available at MHEducation.com. For more information on SRA/McGraw-Hill's products, call 1-888-SRA-4543 and visit SRAonline.com.

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Media Contacts:

Amy Tillinghast
SRA/McGraw-Hill
(614) 750-7285
amy_tillinghast@mcgraw-hill.com

Melina Metzger
Paul Werth Associates
(614) 224-8114 Ext. 236
mmetzger@paulwerth.com