



# FACT SHEET

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Report: **2005-137**

**The California State Auditor released the following report today:**

California Public Schools  
***Compliance With Translation Requirements Is High for Spanish but  
Significantly Lower for Some Other Languages***

## BACKGROUND

The California Education Code, Section 48985, requires that when 15 percent or more of the students enrolled in a public school that provides instruction in kindergarten through grade 12 speak a primary language other than English at home, all notices sent by the school district or school to the parents of such a student must be provided in that language as well as in English.

About half of California's 10,100 public schools had at least one primary language that required translations in fiscal year 2004–05. This report examines California public schools' compliance with the state translation requirements.

## KEY FINDINGS

- Although finding a high compliance rate of 91 percent for required Spanish translations for the notices for which we received survey responses, compliance rates dropped significantly for other languages. For example, Mandarin and Hmong translations are only 54 percent and 48 percent, respectively.
- Various reasons were found for lower compliance rates of other languages:
  - ✦ Some schools were not aware of state translation requirements.
  - ✦ Some school districts may use incorrect methods to identify the languages requiring translations.
  - ✦ Some schools believe there is little demand for translated notices.
  - ✦ A few schools would need additional funding to meet state translation requirements.
- The California Department of Education (department) created an Internet-based electronic clearinghouse for multilingual documents on which local education agencies and the department can post links to translated parental notices. Despite the department's efforts to promote the clearinghouse, it has not achieved much participation from school districts.
- Recent legislation—Chapter 706, Statutes of 2006—revised state law to require the department to take a larger role in ensuring that public schools comply with the state translation requirements. The department must notify districts by August 1 of each year of the schools within each district, and the primary languages other than English, for which the translation of notices is required under state law.

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