At Parkside Elementary School in Pittsburg, tutor Stella Orona urged Maria Consuelo Sanchez (right) to spell the name of her daughter, Stephanie, 6.

English for Parents

Literacy programs help immigrants tutor their kids

By Christopher Heredia
Chronicle Staff Writer

In a sunlit teachers’ lounge at Heights Elementary School in Pittsburg, five Spanish-speaking mothers have workbooks cracked open, their notebooks and pencils ready.

These moms, many of whom did not graduate from high school in their native Mexico, are going back to school, but not for themselves.

In schools and adult education centers across California, mothers — and some fathers — are setting household chores aside, putting children in day care or bringing sleeping babies to class so they can learn how to help their children with homework and study for tests.

Welcome to family literacy in the era of Proposition 227, which ended bilingual education in California’s public schools.

“I want to learn more so I can help my kids,” Pittsburg mother Maria Duenas said in a mixture of Spanish and broken English, while attending a class one recent afternoon. Duenas busily took notes and asked questions as the teacher went over the ABCs, how to write an address and how to give the name of your child’s teacher and room number in English.

Besides doing away with decades of bilingual education — which was seen as holding children back more than helping — Proposition 227, which passed with 61 percent of the vote in November, generated $10 million a year for 10 years for school districts to provide after-school family literacy programs.

With few exceptions, school districts across the state have been required under the law to teach children in English or to provide alternative programs, at parents’ request, in which students are gradually moved to English only.

Three Bay Area districts — Berkeley, Hayward and Oakland — challenged Proposition 227 in court in September.
Parents Crowd English Classes in Post-Proposition 227 Era

saying they should be granted waivers from the law. If the Alameda County Superior Court judge concurred, but the law remains in effect while the ruling is under appeal by the state.

Only San Jose, which is under a federal consent decree to provide bilingual instruction, and a few other districts with dual-language immersion programs have been granted exemptions to Proposition 227, said Rae Belisle, chief counsel for the state Board of Education.

"The bottom line is things have to work," Belisle said. "If there is a child who would benefit from primary-language instruction, if a district comes to the educational conclusion that there is no other way, then parents have a way to request that."

"If the parent can acquire the skills to help their children, everybody benefits."

SAL BELLEMT
Pittsburg school board

In Proposition 227's family literacy program, the amount of money each district received for adult tutoring was based on a formula using the number of limited English-speaking students per district.

In exchange for the free tutoring, the parents must sign a pledge card stating they will tutor their children in English several hours per week. Pittsburg Unified is one of dozens of districts in the Bay Area and one of hundreds statewide that have received funding for community-based English instruction from Proposition 227.

Some Bay Area districts, including San Francisco, have implemented programs, where others such as Oakland and Redwood City are now assembling teachers and materials, and recruiting parents.

"It seems to be working well," said Ron Uraz, Silicon Valley software executive who wrote Proposition 227. "A lot of parents are saying that with the passage of 227, they're able help their children with homework while learning English themselves, which is the whole intent."

But Pittsburg's strict interpretation of Proposition 227 is being challenged by a parents group that claims its children are falling behind because the district lacks an alternative to the bilingual program.

A team from the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights will visit Pittsburg this month to review the district's implementation of the law. The parents group, the Pro Committee for Education—which is made up mostly of Latinos—said the district is violating Proposition 227 by not providing an English immersion program.

"We really think the parent classes are a good step in helping improve the education of our children," said parent Carlos Munoz. "But what we're asking for is equal access to education for our children. We need bilingual education back the way it was. We want the district to provide an alternative."

District officials said they are in compliance with Proposition 227 and are developing an English immersion program while providing support in students' native language when necessary.

The after-school English tutoring classes for parents, including those at Heights and Parkside elementary schools in Pittsburg, have day care and transportation to and from class as well as evening and daytime schedules.

"The ultimate goal is to teach English language skills to non-English speaking parents, so they can be part of the education process," said Pittsburg school board member Sal Bellenty. "We want to see all our students do their best. If the parent can acquire the skills to help their children, everybody benefits."

In San Francisco, the school district received $716,000 for its 18,800 students with limited English profi-
LEARNING ENGLISH TOGETHER

EDUCATION: Spanish-speaking parents say ESL classes help communication with their bilingual kids.

By RACHANEE SRIKAVASdi/The Orange County Register
From Lake Forest

Maria Rosales usually cleans two houses a day. But on Mondays and Wednesdays, the Spanish speaker cleans only one home so she can get to her English class at Gates Elementary School.

"I couldn't speak in complete sentences," Rosales said. "But more than that, I couldn't help my kids with their English homework."

The mother of three is among a growing number of Spanish-speaking parents who are tired of turning to their bilingual children to translate everything from newspapers to report cards.

The state is accommodating parents like Rosales. While schools cannot offer bilingual education in the classroom, they are opening up more ESL classes geared toward parents.

Proposition 227, which mandates that virtually

Please see ENGLISH Page 2

LANGUAGE LESSONS: Omar Dominguex, 6, seeks comfort from his mother, Claudia, while she learns English in her ESL class. In the background is Maria Rosales.
All instruction for children be in English, also allocated about $50 million for schools statewide to create more adult language courses.

One catch — parents and others who take the free classes have to pledge to tutor one limited-English student.

In Orange County, 21 school districts received about $5 million in Prop. 227 money in January. Santa Ana Unified received the most: $1.4 million. Saddle-Valley Unified, which pays for the courses at Gates, received $80,000.

Judy Lambert of the California Board of Education said the majority of the state’s 105 English immersion programs now offer the classes.

Most of the adults who are taking English classes have children in the school’s dual-language immersion program. Under a waiver from Prop. 227, about 350 Spanish-speaking and English-speaking students in the program are taught in Spanish in the early grades, with increasing amounts of English added in later years.

Many parents at Gates Elementary say they want to become bilingual like their children. Learning the language, they say, has made them a part of their children’s education.

Parents become students in class. They squeeze into child-size desks and wear nametags.

No Spanish is spoken here.

Parents chat in English. They also read out loud from daily journals, in which they record when they speak English.

Next door, their kids wait, passing the two hours with homework. “They’re becoming role models for their kids,” teacher Deanna Malek said. “By being here, they show they care about learning too.”

Nacir Dominguez agrees. The third-grade immersion student smiles when talking about his mother understanding him speak English.

“My mom knows what I’m saying now,” Dominguez said. “We speak two languages at home.”

Claudia Dominguez recalls asking neighbors to help Nacir with homework. Now, Nacir’s mother does more than just learn English — she talks about it. Last month, she and a few other Gates parents spoke to hundreds at the California Association of Bilingual Education in Los Angeles.

“I went from having my son translate TV shows for me to speaking to hundreds of people about learning English,” Dominguez said.

Gates’ classes, offered for the past two years, have grown in popularity. Attendance is full, with a handful of parents waiting until summer to take the next class.

Rosales says she’ll keep plugging away at her English until she earns a high school equivalency diploma. Then, she plans to quit cleaning houses and teach elementary school.

“There’s more to learn here than English,” Rosales said. “Even though I’m older, I know that if I want to do it, I can do it.”

Register news researcher Sally Doyle contributed to this report.
More than just English lessons

Prop. 227 funds are paying for English classes that help parents to tutor children, and teach them parenting skills.

By Jennifer Lauer
The Press-Enterprise

Maria Castillo struggled nightly to help her second-grader study spelling and tackle fractions — skills she never learned.

As a child, Castillo was allowed to complete the first grade in Mexico, but then her father said no more school. As a parent, with basic skills she could decipher worksheet directions in Spanish and check to make sure her children completed assignments.

But reading even simple directions became impossible in September when homework came home all in English, as required by Prop. 227. California voters passed the proposition in June, ending bilingual education and requiring that all students be taught overwhelmingly in English.

"By now you'd think I'd know it (English)," Castillo said through an interpreter. She said she was embarrassed she hadn't learned English despite two decades of living in the United States and earning citizenship 12 years ago.

Please see LESSONS, B-3
Several Inland area school districts, like Corona-Norco and Redlands, are working community-based English tutoring programs into an existing schedule of English-as-a-second-language classes. Officials plan to offer classes at various times to accommodate working parents and at several elementary schools so families do not have to travel far.

Educators have praised the adult English classes as the good part of Prop. 227, but also have criticized the requirement that parents pledge to serve as community tutors because it is tough to regulate.

At West Riverside, parents sign blue cards promising to tutor local children. Some parents have been moved by their experience with the program, saying it has taught them the value of education. One parent said, "It helps me to answer more difficult questions since I started the class." She said.

Barcelo said she looks forward to taking home a small game-like computer that has math and reading games on it. The school recently used Prop. 227 money to purchase the units, which look like video game hardware and hook up to television sets.

Like many parents, she said she wished the classes were longer and more often. The take-home games lengthen her learning time.

Teachers at both schools said the best advertisement for the classes has been the parents. They talk with neighbors and show off their English skills. Soon, another mother comes to class looking for a safe place to learn.

"A lot of times you're embarrassed to try and practice," said Carolina Muro, who attends the West Riverside class. She said her husband reads English, but doesn't like to speak it. So, she makes her mistakes with a roomful of other English learners and gets help on her homework from her two boys, ages 9 and 10.

When she started the class in November, she did not know the English alphabet or numbers. Now, she can hold simple conversations in English. She helps her sons with their homework and English skills.

"I can speak with the kids in English and they understand better," she said.
English class paves way for parents, kids

It's a lousy time to think about Silicon Valley's future.

With the economy slipping, it's all so uncertain.

One thing we're sure of is that there is going to be a future. And we know people like Pedro and Gabriela Campos, Julio Arroyo, Kenneth and Jorge Magana Jr. and the other children running through the Edenvale Elementary School multipurpose room are the ones who will be steering it.

Their parents and relatives know that too, which is why for months they've been studying English as a second language in the Oak Grove district's adult program. They need to speak English in order to help their kids with school and life.

"We need to speak very well to understand," says the elder Jorge Magana. "When they go to college or university, we need to be there with them."

Back to the running in the multipurpose room last week: It was graduation night at the San Jose school. Not for the kids, but for the adults in their lives. About 65 students of Katrina Zafiro and Hoa Wong gathered for a blowout that told the story of Silicon Valley's ethnic quilt better than any stack of census reports.

More than 300 enrolled in the district's program this year. Most spoke Spanish, but others spoke Vietnamese, Korean, Japanese, Punjabi, Mandarin and Cantonese.

They came from the hardworking class, says Zafiro. Many would arrive at class tired from the day's grind.

"I'm very proud of my wife," says Carlos Arroyo, whose wife Marilyn, 54, is a housekeeper.

"Sometimes she was very exhausted working, but..."
Family members participate in graduation night festivities at Edenvale Elementary School in San Jose. About 65 parents earned diplomas for learning English as a second language.

**DISPATCHES**  |  Hardworking parents learn English to help kids lead

*Continued from Page 1B*

but she was there no matter what.

The Arroyos, who have two sons, moved from Michoacán in 1990.

“When we first came, I didn’t know, not even a word,” says Carlos, 32, who does auto body work.

He studied English while Maria held down the home front. The couple bought a house, then another, which they rent out. Carlos has just taken the test for his real estate license. Now it’s Maria’s turn to master English.

“I feel happy for her,” says 8-year-old son, Julio. “I just feel very happy.”

It was a happy night. The graduates took the stage and sang and danced to pop tunes. The fans hooted, cheered and laughed so hard they almost cried.

And then, the whole group gathered to sing “God Bless America.” One by one they held up letters that spelled: “Thank You America. Good-night Everybody.”

It was off-key, out of sync, and beautiful.

Hey! Have an only-in-Silicon-Valley story? Contact Mike Cassidy at mcassidy@sjmercury.com or (408) 920-5596.
Maderans press for adult English program

Crowd urges Madera Unified trustees to apply for state funds.

BY MATT LEEDY
THE FRESNO BEE

MADERA — Parents asked trustees of the Madera Unified School District on Tuesday night for classes to help the city's adults learn English.

Dozens of residents urged the board to apply for money from the state Department of Education so the district can offer the Community Based English Tutoring Program.

"All of us are here to represent the need of parents to learn English. We want to learn English," Andrea Perez said through an interpreter. "Please go and apply for this money. Our Spanish-speaking community that is growing should be educated in English so we can help our children."

Parents also presented a petition with about 1,000 signatures of residents in favor of resurrecting the CBET program. A crowd that packed the school board meeting listened to the proceed-ings through a radio so interpreters could translate into Spanish.

The program, which was born with Proposition 227, offers free English lessons to adults. Prop. 227 eliminated bilingual education in the state's public schools for students labeled Limited English Proficient.

The program aims to teach parents English so they can pass the lesson on to their children.

"They want to learn English. They want to help their children in school," said Christina Esparza, a second-grade teacher in Madera Unified, who has many Spanish-speaking students in her class. "I encourage you to bring us the funds so we can educate our parents in English."

Representatives from the Madera Coalition for Community Justice also pledged their support if the district offers the program.

About 500 school districts receive state funds for the program each year. Madera Unified earned $200,000 for the program in 1998 but has not applied for funds again since.

California Rural Legal Assistance, a law firm, estimates the school district could receive about $220,000 for next school year if it applied for the program.

"This is not just a program for [limited English proficient] students. This is a program for the entire district," said Baldwin Moy, a law firm representative. "We are respectfully requesting the board schedule a special meeting so it can apply for this program."

► The reporter can be reached at mleedy@fresnobee.com or 675-6805.
Legislator visits as families study

EDUCATION: San Jacinto parents enter the bilingual skill-boosting program and reciprocate by tutoring.

BY KATIE ORLOFF
THE PRESS-ENTERPRISE

SAN JACINTO—A program to bring adult bilingual education into neighborhood schools while helping parents take part in their children's education drew a visit from Assemblyman Russ Bogh on Friday.

The Hyatt Elementary School program started last year as a way to help parents who don't have transportation to reach separate adult schools. Classes include lessons in English and computer skills.

Parents learn basic language skills. They are encouraged to continue their studies toward high school equivalency degrees, college or citizenship. They enter the program under an agreement that they will reciprocate by tutoring children at the school.

Many parents opt to fulfill the obligation by tutoring their own children.

The adult students are often shy or insecure about their ability to help with schoolwork, teacher Bertha Alvarado said. But the tutoring can be as simple as helping children use flash cards. It can be in math or science as well as English.

And it gets them involved.

"This is a system they chose for their children, and we just need to make them a part of it," Principal Marina Brubaker said.

Bogh, R-Cherry Valley, visited two classrooms at the school, as well as a day-care center set up in the multipurpose room for young children of the adult students. He also visited Mountain View Adult School, where the San Jacinto Unified School District's other adult-education classes meet.

He said he plans to talk to colleagues in Sacramento to find out if similar programs exist — and possibly discuss using the Hyatt program as a model for other schools.

"I think that the best way to help kids is to get their parents involved," Bogh said. "It's a phenomenal concept."
Adults who know the language help students succeed

Children benefit when parents learn English

My child, Jessica Sanchez, stay home March 10 and 11 because she was sick. Please give her the homework for those days. I appreciate it.

Jessica’s mother is learning English. She’s also learning how to write a note to a teacher, and the importance of attendance and homework.

Proposition 227, passed in 1998, required that immigrant students be taught in English in most cases. It also provided money to help their parents and other adults learn English. Immigrants who sign up for CBET (Community Based English Tutors) must promise to use the training to help a student who’s learning English.

During the campaign, opponents of 227 said the idea was crazy. How could parents just learning English be turned into English tutors? Of course, CBET isn’t creating school-based tutors. It’s doing something far more important: Teaching immigrant parents what U.S. schools want them to do at home to help their kids succeed. It’s creating “education parents.”

Is that worthwhile? You bet.

CBET gets $50 million annually for 10 years under 227. Gov. Gray Davis wants an additional $500 million to fund after-school, Saturday and vacation English instruction for immigrant parents and children.

“Parents need the classes,” says Bell. Those with younger children are taught how to read books aloud and talk about the story, play word games and practice writing. They pledge to take their children to the library.

Parents of high school students learn to set up a place for the student to do homework and a time to get it done, to help the student plan ahead for tests and projects. They’re taught about grades, report cards, graduation and college requirements and how to communicate with teachers and counselors.

East Side’s James Lick High has a CBET class made up of parents on the bilingual advisory council. All the council members decided they needed English fluency.

In East Side, CBET students take homework books, activities, audio and video tapes to use with their children, and report back on how they’re working with their children.

Distance learning is popular for those who can’t make an evening class. They check out videos and books, keep an activities log and meet with a tutor once a week.


The most advanced video is “Crosswords Cafe,” a TV-style show featuring a multi-ethnic cast of characters using sophisticated English. “They watch it over and over again with the whole family till they get it,” says Dilling.

East Side’s center and Lincoln High in San Jose Unified also have computers with language-learning software. Both are training parents to use the computers, so they can check out a portable to use at home with their children.

At a class at Grall Community Center, in the mostly Latino Mayfair district, Maria Davila listens to teacher Zenaida Ramirez Bosman preview a book called “Mouse TV.”

Davila has lived in San Jose for 23 years. She doesn’t need much English in her neighborhood or in her cafeteria job. Her four children, who range from eight to 16, were taught in Spanish and English, and mostly speak Spanish. But Davila thinks she could do more for her kids if she improved her English.

The teacher reads the book out loud. It’s about a family of mice who love TV but learn to amuse themselves when their set breaks down.

Bosman explains the vocabulary. One mouse likes comedy. “You know Cantinflas?” says the teacher. About half of East Side’s students are from Vietnam or other Asian countries, but this class is all Mexican. They know Cantinflas.

Bosman reads the book again, with the class repeating the words. Then the students read to a partner.

Bosman tries to spark a discussion. “What would you do if your TV broke?” asks a woman.

The woman answers in Spanish, cracking up the class. Davila translates for me. “Turn it off.”

The CBET students will take “Mouse TV” home and read it with their family. They’ll ask a child to draw a picture inspired by the story, and to write a few sentences about the picture.

Educated parents do this sort of thing routinely. Immigrant parents — even with minimal schooling and English — can do it too, if they know it matters.

It does.

Joanne Jacobs is a member of the Mercury News editorial board. Her column appears on Mondays and Thursdays. Write to her at 450 Reider Park Dr., San Jose, CA 95129, or e-mail to JJacobs@sjmercury.com.
OCEANSIDE — Carlos Perez isn't learning English just for himself. His education ended 30 years ago in a sixth-grade classroom in the Mexican state of Morelos, so he never learned English.

He and his co-workers on the 1 a.m. shift at an Oceanside bakery communicate entirely in Spanish. But by 9 a.m. on a recent Wednesday, he was outside Room D-28 at Garrison Elementary School, freshly showered, his salt-and-pepper hair neatly coiffed, his white pants gleamingly bleached, waiting for his English class to start.

"It benefits me and it benefits my daughters when I help them with their homework," Perez said. His girls, sixth-grader Alisanet and third-grader Larra, already speak more English than Spanish, so he's playing catch-up to be able to tutor them.

A seldom-discussed clause of Proposition 227 provides $50 million a year for the next decade for English instruction for adults. Perez and the other adult students receive free or subsidized English classes in exchange for a pledge to tutor children learning English as their second language.

"The logic behind it is if we are to instruct children in English it is helpful if a parent or an adult in the house also knows English so that they can eventually help their kid with homework or at least understand what's going on in the child's classroom," said Sheri Annis, spokeswoman for English for the Children, the organization that promoted the passage of Proposition 227. The voter-approved ballot measure mandated the elimination of most bilingual education programs in the state.

This year, 32 San Diego County school districts will re-
Parents head to school to assist with education

Continued from B-1

Parents sign contracts committing them to helping their kids with homework and attending school meetings as a condition for enrolling their children in public schools.

"Some of them (parents) don’t feel adequate to help. We want to make them feel like they are adequate to help,” Martinez said.

Rudy Kastelic, director of adult education for the Sweetwater Union High School District, predicted the new classes will draw many people who have not enrolled in the English as a second language courses that the district has offered for years.

"We will be able to offer these (new) courses in locations and at times where we have not been able to offer English instruction in the past because we didn’t have enough students,” Kastelic said.

Having the classes in neighborhood elementary schools throughout the South Bay will give parents easier access to them, too, Kastelic said. Parents without cars who may have been unable to get to adult education classes at the high schools may find the new classes more accommodating.

Kastelic predicted a new crop of adult students whose awareness of the importance of their children’s education was raised by the high-profile campaign debate over Proposition 227.

San Diego, ahead of most local districts in starting the new classes, already has half a dozen of its adult students fulfilling their pledges by volunteering in kindergarten classes at Central Elementary School in City Heights. They read to students, discuss picture books with students and drill them on letters and sounds — all in English.

There’s an added dimension to the new classes beyond traditional English as a second language. The Proposition 227 programs are geared toward family literacy. San Diego’s program exposes adults to children’s literature, gives them vocabulary and technique tips for working with picture books and helps them understand the nonfiction books on dinosaurs and other children’s fascinations.

Some programs have parents work directly with their children in class to learn English together.

Even though the kids aren’t part of the lesson, several toddlers accompany their mothers to Garrison in Oceanside. Homemaker Rafaela Velasco fought a cold and kept an eye on 3-year-old Isaac while she tried to distinguish “ate” from “eight.” Velasco said she wants to help Isaac and her kindergartner, Azucena, and she needs to learn English to do that.

"When they see their parents learning English, that adds more credibility to the children learning English and having success in English,” said Sophia Bouvier, director of federal and state projects for the San Ysidro School District.
SETTING AN EXAMPLE

EDUCATION: Passage of Prop. 227 has brought $5 million to Orange County to help adults learn English and take that skill back to their communities.

By ELIZABETH CHEY
The Orange County Register

Teresa Garcia holds up a card — a cartoon of a bearded man — to a room full of Spanish-speaking mothers like herself.

“What is this?” Garcia asks.

“Be-ar-d,” the mothers utter in discord.

Garcia and about 25 other mothers are using picture charts and word cards to practice the English they have been learning at their children’s school, Esther Walter Elementary in Anaheim.

The classes are part of Proposition 227, the state initiative passed last year that eliminated bilingual education and placed most limited-English students in English-immersion classes. The initiative also promised to provide schools with tutor adults in English — if those adults promised to take new language skills back into the community.

This year, Orange County schools received about $5 million of the $50 million in state tutoring money, which has been used to teach English to these mothers and grandmothers at Walter.

Every Monday and Tuesday morning, they park their baby strollers in the multipurpose room near their seats on a lunchroom bench. There they write “airport,” “hospital” and “school” underneath the corresponding pictures on a work sheet.

Some mothers carry sleeping babies on their backs while scribbling notes into three-ring binders. Others bring extra toys for the toddlers, as the adults are drilled on English for 2½ hours.

“I’m doing this for my children,” said Garcia, a mother of two Walter students. “The more English I learn, the more I can help with their homework.”

These adults learn to answer simple questions such as: “What is your name?” “They learn life skills.” “Where is the hospital?” “They learn about people: mae-stro is ‘teacher’ in English.”

And in smaller groups, they learn tips on how to help their kids learn English by using things around the house. A box of crayons can be a tool to practice the colors in English. Rolling dice or pulling cards out of a deck can help children memorize numbers in English.

This effort to teach adults is supposed to help foster English in communities often isolated by language, but some say the idea of making these parents and grandparents real teachers isn’t so simple.

“How do we know that what these adults are learning is getting passed on to the kids?” said Anaida Colon-Muniz, Santa Ana Unified’s director of elementary curriculum. “It’s not that easy to measure.”

GETTING A LATE START

Most schools went to English-only instruction by October. But money for adult programs was allocated only last month, leaving schools scrambling to piece programs together and costing parents seven months of English learning because the initiative passed at the end of the fiscal year, in June, nearly a year elapsed before the money could be pulled out of the general fund.

“We started so late it will be hard to assess how much this will help kids under Prop. 227 this year,” said Marlene Smith, manager of Placentia-Yorba Linda Unified School District’s second-language program. “But we’re trying very hard to piggyback on (adult) programs that we’ve already had in place.”

School districts received money for adult tutoring through a simple formula: The state divvied up the $50 million the law set aside among those districts that promised to create adult programs.

California’s 988 school districts, about 430 are creating adult programs for their limited-English students this year. In Orange County, 91 of 27 districts asked for state money to create adult programs. Districts that didn’t, or that dropped on the money, such as Buena Park School District, say their limited-English populations are not large enough to warrant the creation of adult classes.

Santa Ana received $1.4 million. Garden Grove Unified received about $30,000. Magnolia School District received about $9,000. Basically, districts are getting about $8 per limited-English student this year. Schools will continue to receive funds for adult programs for the next eight years under the law, which has set aside $50 million annually for 10 years.

School districts say the task of educating adults in English has long been left to local community colleges and social-service programs.

“We’ve never really done anything like this before, so we’re incredibly excited,” Smith said. “This could be something wonderful.”

INVOVING PARENTS

Districts say attracting a steady flow of participants is a major first step.

“The biggest concern is: If we build it, will they come?” said Beverly de Nicola, principal of Capistrano Unified’s adult school. “Our target population has major disruptions in their lives — poverty being one of them.”

“It’s hard for them to find the time to make a commitment to come to our schools. Between jobs and taking care of the little ones, parents are busy just trying to get by from day to day.”

Administrators say they can’t estimate how many parents in Orange County will take English classes, as it is with many parent programs. But they hope to open the door to foreign-born parents who are often intimidated by schools because of cultural or language barriers.

Many districts plan to couple their English classes with family literacy programs, in which parents and their children go to school together and read.

Beyond learning how to ask for directions or find a job in English, these parents will learn about phonics, decoding and different techniques to help their children read.

Some districts also will offer night, morning and afternoon classes, and provide child-care services while parents get tutoring and English lessons.

Also, a few districts offer individualized programs in which parents who hold more than one job, or are unable to commit to classes, can learn through video and audio tapes in an independent-learning program.

Some elementary districts have contracted out to local community colleges so parents can get English training in a more traditional English as a Second Language setting.

In creating these programs, schools face logistical concerns of finding child care and transportation for parents and providing classroom space. Also, it’s hard to find teachers — California has a shortage of about 9,000 certified teachers to teach limited-English students.

Districts such as Capistrano Unified are trying a combination of strategies, such as getting many parents to tutor kids as possible.

But as with Walter Elementary’s experience, parent turnover is a fact of life.

“Many of our mothers work night in factories, clean houses, baby-sit kids,” said Waleska Hernandez, Walter’s parent co-
But both parents and school officials know it will be a while before parents can confidently use the skills they learn in English class to tutor students.

“We’re going to take time,” said Trudy Cunningham, principal of Walter Elementary. “These parents come to us with different learning levels just as their children do. It will be a while before they will be up to speed and be able to tutor.”

Many Spanish-speaking parents expressed concern about relying on parents to teach students.

“We’re asking parents who are not experienced teachers to teach our children,” said Maria Torres, a Santa Ana parent. “Many of us are struggling with the language ourselves.”

Teresa Garcia, who struggles with some of her first-grade daughter’s English lessons, agrees.

“My daughter is teaching me things she learns: sentences and words. And we find ourselves teaching each other,” said Garcia. “It’s intimidating for the both of us sometimes.”

### AT A GLANCE

#### THE LAW

- Requires public-school instruction to be conducted overwhelmingly in English.
- Allows the requirement to be waived if parents or guardians show that a child already knows English, has special needs or would learn English faster through alternate instructional techniques.
- Provides initial short-term placement, not normally exceeding one year, in intensive English-immersion programs for children not fluent in English.
- Appropriates $50 million a year for 10 years to fund English instruction for adults seeking to provide English tutoring to children in their communities.
- Permits lawsuits by parents and guardians to enforce the law’s implementation.

### PROPOSITION 227 FUNDS RECEIVED

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<td>Anaheim City</td>
<td>12,186</td>
<td>$462,234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anaheim Union High</td>
<td>8,444</td>
<td>320,294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brea-Olinda Unified</td>
<td>675</td>
<td>25,604</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capistrano Unified</td>
<td>5,117</td>
<td>194,096</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fountain Valley Elementary</td>
<td>553</td>
<td>20,976</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fullerton Elementary</td>
<td>3,708</td>
<td>140,550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fullerton Joint Union High</td>
<td>3,618</td>
<td>137,236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garden Grove Unified</td>
<td>22,013</td>
<td>834,988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huntington Beach City</td>
<td>2,325</td>
<td>88,191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irvine Unified</td>
<td>2,344</td>
<td>88,912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laguna Beach Unified</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>4,135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Habra City</td>
<td>2,341</td>
<td>88,798</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magnolia</td>
<td>2,526</td>
<td>95,815</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newport-Mesa Unified</td>
<td>5,417</td>
<td>205,475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ocean View</td>
<td>1,790</td>
<td>67,898</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange Unified</td>
<td>7,217</td>
<td>273,752</td>
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<td>Placentia-Yorba Linda Unified</td>
<td>3,868</td>
<td>146,719</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saddleback Valley Unified</td>
<td>2,133</td>
<td>80,908</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Ana Unified</td>
<td>38,051</td>
<td>1,443,334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tustin Unified</td>
<td>4,468</td>
<td>169,478</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westminster</td>
<td>4,200</td>
<td>159,313</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange County total</td>
<td>133,103</td>
<td>$5,048,806</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Districts not shown did not request state money to create adult programs.

Source: California Department of Education

### THE IMPACT OF PROP. 227

The bilingual-education battle ended at the ballot box in June 1998, when California voters backed Proposition 227, the law requiring children learning English to be taught in English.

Now come big questions: How well are children learning English, and how is the law being applied in the classroom?

During the 1998-99 school year, The Orange County Register is chronicling the law’s impact at schools throughout the county. Upcoming articles include:

- Are students becoming fluent in English faster this year?
- Are test scores for limited-English students rising?

Previous articles:

- Parents, teachers and administrators make their progress in English midyear.
- How outside influences in the community and home affect language learning.
- Teacher struggles to implement Prop. 227.

To offer your comments or suggest topics for future coverage, call Register InfoLine at (714) 550-4636, category 7231.
FOR CHILDREN NEW TO THE
UNITED STATES, TEACHERS
FIND THAT EVERYONE
BENEFITS WHEN PARENTS
COME TO CLASS TOO.

BY DANIEL YI
TIMES STAFF WRITER

You will have to excuse Tomas Galena if she sticks out among
her classmates at Aranella's
Thomas Edison Elementary
School. After all, she's 39 years old.
The Mexican native has been at
school for only a month, but she
is already a talented student. She
was recently promoted from
fifth grade to sixth grade.

Parents are encouraged to
attend school events, and
Tomas Galena is one of their
favorite attendees. She
usually comes to school early,
ready to learn and make new
games. She often brings snacks
for her classmates to share.

Her favorite subject is
mathematics, and she
always asks challenging
questions in class. She
has made great progress
since she started school.

But there are challenges.
She struggles with
pronunciation, and
sometimes she
finds it difficult
to understand
the instructions in
teacher talk. However,
she never gives up,
and she always
tries her best.

Tomas Galena and her 3-year-old
son, Brian, sit in her older son's class as part of a program in which
immigrant children's parents learn with them. For Galena, the program
has been a godsend too, she said. "I've learned some simple words I can use
when I go to the market," she said. "Like turkey sandwich."