A New Era for Educational Assessment and Accountability Begins

On September 9th, State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson released the results of new online assessments formally known as the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP). These tests were administered last spring to assess student progress in our new academic standards in mathematics and English language arts/literacy, often referred to as the Common Core. This is the first year for the new tests and they are very different from previous assessments used in the state. Subsequently, these results cannot be compared to the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) program, the state’s previous assessments. The results serve as a starting point or baseline data.

In EUSD, the CAASPP assessments for English language arts/literacy and mathematics were given to students in grades three through eight. Students’ scores fall into one of four achievement levels: standard exceeded, standard met, standard nearly met, and standard not met. The table below provides a breakdown of the percentage of students who met or exceeded standards by grade level in each subject area, at each school site.

### CAASPP 2015
Percentage of students who met or exceeded standards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test results for:</th>
<th>English Language Arts (ELA)</th>
<th>Mathematics</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>Columbia</td>
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<td>Gifford C. Cole</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tierra Bonita</td>
<td>22</td>
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</table>

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Project Lead The Way begins in the Eastside Union School District

Gifford C. Cole Middle School is now offering Project Lead The Way (PLTW) Gateway program! PLTW a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that develops science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) curricula for use by elementary, middle, and high schools. PLTW is the nation's leading provider of K-12 STEM programs. The Gateway program at Cole Middle School will educate students in engineering and biomedical science curriculum. Students will have the opportunity to learn about automation and robotics, design and modeling, aeronautics and more. The program is designed to teach students problem solving skills to prepare them for high school curriculum. Additionally, the program provides professional development training for instructors each summer to educate students.

Through world-class K-12 curriculum, high-quality teacher professional development, and outstanding partnerships, PLTW is helping students across the country develop the skills needed to succeed in the global economy. While students at Cole Middle School will reap the benefits of this exciting new program, our goal is to expand the PLTW Launch program to elementary grade levels over the next few years.

Eastside is Leading the Way to End Obesity

The Eastside Union School District (EUSD) has joined districts throughout the nation in fighting childhood obesity. According to the Centers for Disease Control, nationwide, an estimated 32 percent of American kids ages 2 to 19 are overweight, including 17 percent who are obese. In the fight against the childhood obesity epidemic, getting kids moving at an early age is an effective way to address the issue.

The new EUSD elementary PE program is led by two EUSD Physical Education teachers; Jeremy Persson and Melissa Gorrindo. The team scheduled activities around each school’s bell and music schedule. The goal of the initiative is to get students moving and appeal to as many students as possible, regardless of their athletic ability. In closing, while the new physical education program provided in the 4-6 grades of the EUSD cannot be expected to solve the nation's obesity problems, it is definitely a step in the right direction.
California Cadet Corps Program is Marching to Cole Middle School

During the summer, our board of trustees announce the implementation of the California Cadet Corps program at Cole Middle School. Seventh and eight graders now have the opportunity to select the cadet program as an elective class. The program will educate students in leadership development that will prepare them for success in college and the workforce.

“Our goal is to provide students the resources they need to become empowered and feel self assured they can accomplish any task at hand,” said Eastside Union School District Superintendent Dr. Mark Marshall. “The cadet program will aid students to become the next generation of leaders and problem-solvers.”

The overall mission of the California Cadet Corps is to develop our youth into tomorrow’s leaders. The program will enhance students' academic skills, social behavior and physical health as well as provide knowledge of basic military subjects. Those enrolled in the program will gain the privilege of receiving a complimentary military uniform they will wear once a week to school.

Additionally, students are participating in team building exercises that will focus on character development, leadership growth and basic medical training. Throughout the year students will have the opportunity to participate in camping trips, tours to military bases, physical fitness competitions, and community service projects.

“As educators its important to provide a variety of programs to engage all of our youth,” said Dr. Mark Marshall. “Through our community partnerships Cole Middle School is capable to address the needs of each student.”

The California Cadet Corps program is just one of many programs offered at Cole Middle School. Earlier this year the district announced the implementation of Project Lead the Way’s Gateway middle school program. An educational program focused on science, technology, engineering and math.
Implementing Restorative Practices in EUSD

Like other districts in Los Angeles County, the Eastside Union School District (EUSD) has started foundational work with Restorative Practices. Restorative Practices are based on principles that emphasize the importance of positive relationships as central to building community and involve processes that restore relationships when harm has occurred.

Restorative Practices, when broadly and consistently implemented, can promote and strengthen positive school culture and enhance pro-social relationships within the school community.

Now a common practice in many schools across the country, Restorative Practices have been known to promote building respectful and trusting relationships as the foundation for teaching and learning while providing meaningful opportunities for students to develop self-discipline and positive behaviors in a caring, supportive environment. It views conflict primarily through the lens of the harm caused to people and relationships, and emphasizes the priority to meet the needs of those affected by this harm.

A restorative approach sees conflict or misbehavior as an opportunity for students to learn about the consequences of their actions, to develop empathy with others, and experience how to make amends in such a way as to strengthen the community bonds that may have been damaged. Stay tuned for more information about Restorative Practices in EUSD this school year.

Eastside Administrators to Attend the Professional Learning Communities at Work™ Institute

EUSD administrators are attending the Professional Learning Communities at Work™ Institute during the 2015/2016 School-Year. The proper implementation of the Professional Learning Communities (PLC) process can be a powerful strategy for school improvement. Our instructional leaders will be attending an institute that will give them the knowledge and tools to implement this powerful process in our school district.

These local leaders will have the opportunity to network with some of the most insightful minds in education, including the architects of the Professional Learning Communities at Work™ process and to dig deep into the three big concepts of a PLC-building a collaborative culture; focusing on learning, and obtaining a results orientation. The goal of this initiative is to gain specific, practical, and inspiring strategies for transforming your school or district into a place where all students learn at high levels. Given the impending increase in Educational Accountability, this move is both appropriate and timely.
Eastside Union School District Implementation of Suggestion Boxes for Stakeholders

One of our priorities is to ensure stakeholders a comfortable and safe forum to express their opinions and concerns. In light of this, the Eastside Union School District (EUSD) is proud to again announce the implementation of suggestion boxes.

Stakeholders will now have the opportunity to share confidential comments or questions with the EUSD Board of Trustees. The utilization of the suggestion box is featured at each school site beginning the 2015/2016 school year.

The EUSD Board of Trustees encourages stakeholder feedback to continue building our vision of empowering students to become productive citizens. As an added measure, one trustee will be designated to maintain all of the suggestion boxes.

With your feedback we are confident our district will continue to offer a positive environment not only for stakeholders, but our students as well.

Cole Students Attend Malala Field Trip

Cole Middle School teacher, Jessica Simpson recently secured a grant for Cole students to attend a Malala Field Trip to see a screening of HE NAMED ME MALALA. He Named Me Malala is an American documentary film directed by Davis Guggenheim.

The film is about a young Pakistani female activist Malala Yousafzai, who was targeted by Taliban gunmen, shot in the head and left wounded. She was targeted for speaking for the girls' education in Pakistan.

This trip was fully funded including tickets and charter bus transportation for the entire student body in the amount of $14,450 by the Students Stand with Malala Program. Students Stand with Malala screening program, in an effort to inspire thousands of youth advocates across the country to stand up for every girl’s right to receive a quality education. The supporters were thrilled to help fund field trips to see HE NAMED ME MALALA in theaters.
Eastside Students will Study Extraterrestrial Materials of the Moon

Students from Eastside Union School District are thrilled to learn their science labs will include actual pieces from the moon in the near future. Recently two Eastside teachers, Terra Pennsy from Columbia Elementary and Amanda Sullivan from Tierra Bonita Elementary, took part in a NASA Office of Education Lunar and Meteorite Certification workshop for K-12 educators. NASA has now certified Ms. Sullivan and Ms. Pennsy to have actual parts of the Moon in their classrooms for students’ science labs.

“Students will be able to reach new heights by learning hands-on from actual materials of the moon and meteorites,” stated Eastside Union School District Superintendent Dr. Mark Marshall. “We are grateful that our faculty and staff continue to seek new opportunities for our students.”

The NASA workshop featured lunar disks with moon rock and soil samples brought back from the historic Apollo missions. Both Eastside teachers engaged in hands-on, standards-based activities learning about accretion, differentiation, cratering and volcanism. Ms. Sullivan and Ms. Pennsy will now be able to submit a request to obtain lunar and meteorite materials to use within their classrooms. Students will be able to view the portions through educative activities in the science lab.

“What’s most exciting to me is we can pass on next generation science skills to our students and get them excited about STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) projects and future careers,” said Tierra Bonita Elementary Teacher Amanda Sullivan. “The kids we are teaching now will be the generation that makes it to Mars—and, indeed, a number of my kids have come up to me after labs to tell me they want to be astronauts now and be a part of the first Mars Colony.”

The NASA certification process goes hand in hand with EUSD’s goal in implementing more STEM learning activities for students. STEM programs are a top priority for the district since it will provide students the opportunity to learn at the same level as other competing schools.

Ms. Sullivan and Ms. Pennsy will be attending the next NASA workshop this month—‘Earth Right Now: Atmosphere’ in which participants will learn about the GLOBE program, an international science and education program. The program will provide students with the opportunity to contribute meaningfully to our understanding of the Earth as a system and help Eastside educators mold students into connected and empowered custodians of our planet’s future.
EUSD Implements New Report Cards for Grades TK-6

This year the Eastside Union School District is unveiling new report cards for Grades TK-6. The work began last year in an effort to better communicate student progress to both parents and students. Common Core State Standards in English, Language Arts and Mathematics were adopted by the state of California in August of 2010, for grades K-6. Alignment of the report card with the Common Core State Standards helps our educational community become more articulate with and focused on those standards, hence these report cards are commonly referred to Standards-based or Common Core aligned. Our TK program aligns to their early childhood standards.

One of the greatest assets of any organization is the ability to learn and move forward. We are very proud of the efforts of our certificated and classified staff in bringing us up-to-date in this area.