Granada Hills Charter scores high in the new Common Core state standards

September 9, 2015 GRANADA HILLS, Calif. – Drumroll, please! The results of the state standardized testing results are in and Granada Hills Charter High School placed in the top seven percent of schools in Mathematics and the top 13 percent in English Language Arts in California¹. The new test, called the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP), evaluates proficiency in English and Mathematics based on the Common Core State Standards. In the spring, Granada Hills Charter’s 11th grade joined 3.2 million students across California in taking the computerized CAASPP tests; 76 percent of GHCHS students met or exceeded the new standards in English Language Arts and 58 percent met or exceeded the standards in Mathematics.

The CAASPP test is administered online and replaces many multiple-choice questions with short, written responses and essays that evaluate the Common Core learning principles of writing competency, critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Based on the student’s answers, this computer-adapted test adjusts the level of questions to better reflect an individual’s mastery of the subject.

“While we recognize that standardized tests are only one way to measure student achievement, we are very pleased with our students’ performance on tests this past year,” says David Bensinger, GHCHS Administrative Director of Instruction. “The adaptive nature of the test provides students and their

¹ Based on California Department of Education data released 9/9/2015. This percentage ranking is based on percentage of students meeting or exceeding state’s Common Core standards. Ranking includes all California schools with reported CAASPP data but excludes schools with insignificant student population (fewer than 11 tested).
families with individualized information about student performance and gives us insight into how our classroom instruction is aligned to the new standards.”

GHCHS faculty meet weekly for professional development seminars to collaborate on Common Core best practices that translates into constantly-improving classroom lessons. This is the first year of the CAASPP test but Granada Hills Charter students are already familiar with computer-adapted tests. In 2012, the school began administering online testing such as the optional Northwest Evaluation Association’s (NWEA) assessments twice per year, even though the paper-based, multiple-choice Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) program was the mandated standardized test.

Granada Hills Charter administered the CAASPP to over one thousand students in just four days compared to many other schools that took up to six weeks. This year, Granada Hills Charter issued personal laptops to every student for use at school and at home, which will further streamline the computerized testing process.

Bensinger states, “Standardized testing is a useful tool in evaluating students and the school but the most important educational effort is, and will always be, inside the classroom.”

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**About Granada Hills Charter High School:** Granada Hills Charter High School, the largest charter school in the nation, is an independent public school in the San Fernando Valley. As a fiscally independent conversion charter school, Granada Hills Charter has a current student enrollment of approximately 4,600 and an annual student wait list of almost 3,000. The School’s student body is considered one of the most diverse, with more than 40 languages other than English spoken at home and over 60 nationalities represented. Over 2,300 students are eligible for the National School Breakfast and Lunch Program. As a 501c3 non-profit benefit corporation, the School’s Governing Board is the legal entity overseeing all school policy and its $50 million operating budget. In 2015, BusinessInsider.com and Niche recognized GHCHS as the #1 public high school in California and #10 public high school in the United States of America.