

Friday Memo
June 5, 2015

Upcoming Events – Bruce Harter

June 6: Pinole Valley High Graduation, Richmond Convention Center, 9:00 AM
June 6: El Cerrito High Graduation, Richmond Convention Center, 12:30 PM
June 6: Alternative Education Graduation, Richmond Convention Center, 3:30 PM
June 6: Hercules High Graduation, Hercules High Football Field, 6:00 PM
June 8: Technology Subcommittee, IT Center, 4:00 PM
June 9: Summer Food Service Program Kickoff, Nutrition Center, 11:00 AM
June 9: Facilities Subcommittee, FOC, 4:00 PM
June 10: Board of Education, DeJean, 6:30 PM
June 13: BBK Bike Festival, Lincoln, 10:00 AM

Closed Session for June 10 – Bruce Harter

Closed session for Wednesday’s meeting will begin at 5:00 PM.

WCCUSD Mathematics Highlighted in New Best Practices Report by Ed Trust-West – Nia Rashidchi

In a newly released report titled “Changing the Equation: Ensuring the Common Core Math Standards Enable All Students to Excel in California Schools,” The Education Trust—West calls for more support to ensure the new state standards are implemented in ways that improve learning opportunities for students of color and low-income students. The report also highlights several best practices from districts around the state and offers a list of 10 equity-related questions districts can ask themselves when seeking to make Common Core accessible to all students.

West Contra Costa is highlighted in the report specifically for 2 best practices in our mathematics support programs:

Best Practice #2 = Providing Robust Educator Support and Continuous Learning Opportunities through the Mathematics Coaching Consortium, a multi-district partnership (founded and based in our district).

Best Practice #5 = Engaging Parents and Caregivers which highlights our work to provide timely, relevant, and engaging information and content to our parent stakeholders about the new standards.

We have included the whole report in this Friday memo.

New Interactive Data Including LCAP and Staff Survey Now Available - Nicole Joyner

The Accountability and Assessment Department is pleased to announce a series of new dashboards added to [WCCUSD’s interactive data dashboards](#).

The **After School Programs** dashboard (Figure 1 below) displays information on the After School Programs operated in 28 schools throughout WCCUSD, including 24 elementary schools and 4 middle schools.

West Contra Costa Unified School District
Office of the Superintendent

LCAP At-a-Glance (Figure 2 below) shows the district’s progress towards the five LCAP goals through data snapshots on each goal’s measures or indicators. The **LCAP Staff Survey** dashboard (Figure 3 below) shares the results of the 2013-14 staff survey administered to all certificated and classified staff in the district.

Figure 1: After School Programs

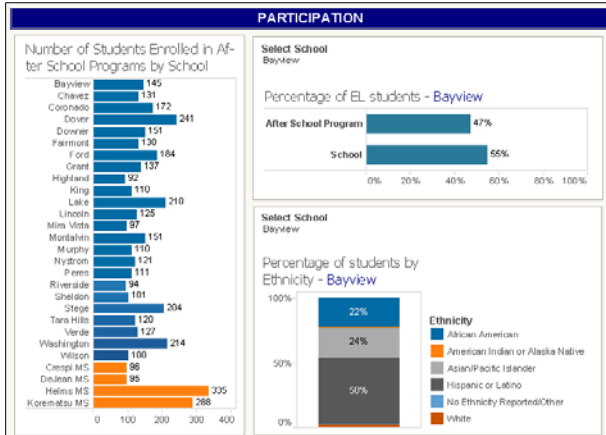
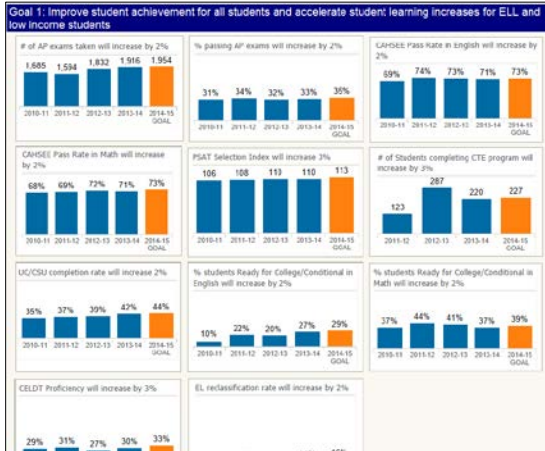


Figure 2: LCAP At-a-Glance Dashboard



Response to Healthy Richmond Coalition – Bruce Harter

Board members have received two letters from a group of community based organizations called the Healthy Richmond Steering Committee including Eric Aaholm at YES Families, Diane Aranda at the California Endowment, Lilly Chen at Public Counsel, Cristina Hernandez at CCISCO, Rigel Massaro at Public Advocates, Antonia Medrano at the ACLU, and Miriam Wong at the Latina Center. The letters were referenced in June 4 email from Katherine Rife to the Board members. Attached is a response that our staff compiled that was sent in response on June 2, 2015.

Educational Services Department Retirements, Position Changes, and Hiring to Fill Positions-Nia Rashidchi

The Educational Services Department will see some changes for the 2015-16 school year. Liz Torio (Director, Academic Intervention) and Cheryl Broomall (Coordinator, State and Federal Programs) are retiring from the department after multiple years of committed service to WCCUSD. Mimi Melodia (Coordinator, EL Services) is choosing to return to a principal position.

We have gone through our hiring process of posting the jobs, screening candidates, and interviewing. At the June 10, 2015 board meeting, we will bring candidate recommendations to the Board for the positions of Director, Academic Intervention, Coordinator (State and Federal Programs), and Coordinator (EL Services).

Korematsu MS Parents' Emails – E. Keith Holtslander

Two (2) parent emails have been received requesting that Korematsu MS be opened for use no later than after the 2016 Presidents' Week Break, with a Grand Opening on 01/30/16 in conjunction with what would have been Fred Korematsu's 97th birthday. We have responded as follows – The District is constantly monitoring the progress of the construction of this new school. Knowing that the current anticipated completion date is in late December of this year the District will be making an assessment, on a monthly basis, of the relationship between the construction progress and the move-in schedule. The District will look for every opportunity to schedule the move-in as soon as possible after the full completion of the construction work.

Change Order: Action Item (> than 10% OR >\$250,000) – Luis Freese

There is one change order action item on the June 10, 2015 Board agenda. Change order #3 is a stand-alone action item because it will cause the project contract cost to increase to 12.16%. Change order #3 is the final change order for the project and is valued at \$58,221.03. This change order is the result of delayed contract work due to the timing of PG&E's relocation of a transformer and is being reviewed at the June 9, 2015 Facilities Subcommittee meeting.

Ratification of Negotiated Change Orders – Luis Freese

There are several change orders on the June 10, 2015 consent agenda meeting that are of significant value. Coronado Elementary School Change Order #40 in the amount of \$242,046 is for installation of a moisture vapor barrier to the interior concrete slab prior to the flooring installation. The sealer was required to meet the flooring manufactures installation requirements for installing the final flooring material. Sylvester Greenwood Academy & LPS Change Order #75 in the amount of \$159,603 resulted from the removal of the existing sidewalk at Bissell, 9th street and Chanslor which uncovered unforeseen soil conditions requiring removal of unsuitable soils and installation of engineered fill prior to placement of the sidewalks. Nystrom Elementary School change order #3 is \$193,444 resulted from unforeseen dry rot discovered after removal of the exterior siding. Predetermined unit pricing provided at the time of bid was used to determine the value of the needed framing replacement. These change orders are being reviewed more fully at the June 9, 2015 Facilities Subcommittee meeting.

Summer Bid Climate - Ohlone ES Parking and Landscape Project – Luis Freese

Typically, the District receives multiple bids for each project; however, summer projects are always influenced by the high demand on the skilled labor force, as well as the timing of other regional projects being bid at the same time. This can yield low bid turnout and a large spread in bid results. This year, the District publically opened and reviewed bids for 11 summer projects during April and May. An example of the summer bid climate is demonstrated by Ohlone ES parking and landscape bid which staff is requesting rejection of the one bid and authorization to rebid. On May 26, 2015, bids were received for Ohlone Elementary School parking and landscape completion and there was only one bidder. The bidder was deemed non-responsive for two reasons: the designated subcontractors list was not signed and the bid contained a mathematical error that created an unfair economic advantage. A rebid will provide another opportunity to complete the project in a timely manner.



WEST CONTRA COSTA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

1108 Bissell Avenue
Richmond, CA 94801-3135

Bruce Harter, Ph.D.
Superintendent

Telephone: (510) 231-1101
FAX: (510) 236-6784

June 2, 2015

Eric Aaholm, Executive Director
YES Families
3029 Macdonald Ave.
Richmond, CA 94804

Diane Aranda
Program Manager, Richmond
The California Endowment
1111 Broadway, 7th Floor
Oakland, CA 94607

Lilly Chen
Statewide Education Rights Office
Public Counsel
2001 Center St.
Berkeley, CA 94707

Cristina Hernandez, Executive Director
CCISCO
1000-B Macdonald Ave.
Richmond, CA 94801

Rigel S. Massaro, Staff Attorney
Public Advocates Inc.
131 Steuart St., Suite 300
San Francisco, CA 94105

Antonio Medrano, Chair
ACLU - Berkeley/North East Bay Chapter
406 Linda Dr.
San Pablo, CA 94806

Miriam Wong, Executive Director
The Latina Center
3701 Barrett Ave.
Richmond, CA 94805

Dear Colleagues:

I'm writing in response to letters that you sent to me regarding the West Contra Costa Unified School District's draft Local Control Accountability Plan on May 11, 2015 and May 20, 2015. While the intent of our work is to always be in compliance with applicable laws and regulations, our mission is to serve our children, our students and our families by providing educational programs and a variety of services that will help our students be college and career ready. The enactment of the Local Control Funding Formula (as well as the clarifying statutes and State Board of Education regulations) has brought significant changes to California school districts. But there is considerable room for interpretation around the requirements of the statutes and regulations that the Legislature and the State Board of Education will clarify in the future.

Your May 20 letter includes several suggestions for improvement for our LCAP plan. Some of these we're going to be able to include in the plan for 2015-16 and others will require reprioritizing the funding available through the LCFF. I've included preliminary responses to each of those suggestions and could meet with you at the following dates / times: Friday, June 5 at 1:00 PM; Thursday, June 11 at 9:00 AM; or Tuesday, June 16 at 4:00 PM. Please let me know which date works best for you and I'll then identify a suitable location.

May 11 – Letter 1

1. Include at least all LCFF funds, including all base grant dollars, in the LCAP.

The Local Control Funding Formula consists of all dollars received through various sources of funding including local taxes and state revenue. The Supplemental Concentration funding is a subset of those dollars specifically derived from the students who fall into the subgroups of socioeconomically disadvantaged students, foster youth and English learners. The Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) is a document that is required to be submitted in concert with the entire budget of the district. At this time, the State Board has not issued direction to counties or districts that the two be combined. Education Code 52062 requires that the public hearings for the LCAP and district budget be held on the same day. The regulations for approving the LCAP, Education Code 52070 (2), indicate that the budget adopted by the district includes the expenditures based upon the projections provided in the plan. The district budget adoption itself is subject to a separate Education Code (42122-42130) with specific forms and procedures prescribed by the Superintendent of Public Instruction. This helps us understand that the entire district budget is not to be included in the LCAP at this time. In addition two separate public hearings are required.

In WCCUSD, we believe that the funding reflected within the entire budget for the district, and not just in the LCAP, serves to further the priorities of the School Board as well as the State. The entire district operation serves to provide the educational environment and resources for all students. It is also important to note that there are multiple plans that help guide the district such as the Local Education Agency Plan, the English Language Learner Master Plan and the Special Education Annual Service Plan – these are examples of plans that have budget implications as well as operational significance but do not encompass the entire budget, much like the LCAP.

The State Board of Education, the California Department of Education nor the Contra Costa County Office of Education has issued directives regarding the concept of working the entire district budget

and the other multiple plans into the LCAP format. It may be that in the future the State Board of Education will review the many plans required by districts and will move districts toward a single plan.

2. Include goals, outcomes, actions/services and expenditures that align to the metrics required by each of the eight state priorities.

The WCCUSD LCAP Goals address all eight State Priority areas. Below is table listing WCCUSD LCAP Goals and the State Priority areas addressed:

LCAP Goal	State Priority
Goal 1	4, 7, 8
Goal 2	2
Goal 3	3
Goal 4	5, 6
Goal 5	1

The public town hall meetings as well as the entire LCAP development process are examples of how the District includes and involves parents in the decision-making of the school district. These initiatives as well as the ones described in Goal 3 of the LCAP plan in conjunction with numerous others through various district and school-site committees meet the LCAP requirements. WCCUSD administers the California School Climate, Health, and Learning Survey System (Cal-SCHLS) to students in grades 5, 7, 9-12; all staff; and all parents.

Specifically, to measure parent involvement, engagement, and satisfaction, WCCUSD is administering the California School Parent Survey. All parents may complete the survey, which is available online and on paper in various languages. The surveys provide data on questions concerning parent involvement, engagement, and satisfaction. Specifically, the survey assesses how welcoming the school is to parents and the scope and nature of parent involvement.

In addition, the following Action & Service addresses Priority 3:

Increase services in schools for parent liaison/school community worker, coordination of full services community schools & volunteers & lower barriers for parent volunteers & participation (LCAP page 15).

WCCUSD's LCAP Goal 4 addresses Priority 5 and 6 (LCAP page 15). The California Healthy Kids Survey provides data on school climate including: perceived school safety, violence, and bullying; school connectedness; and student development supports. The supplementary school climate module provides additional data on academic supports, discipline, social and emotional supports, and respect for diversity. The same questions are included in the staff survey. For more information on how the Cal-SCHLS addresses Priorities 3 and 6, visit the following website:

https://chks.wested.org/resources/LCAP_Cal_SCHLS.pdf.

3. Ensure all "expected measurable annual outcomes" are clear and measurable.

Goal 1, outcome (a) has been revised to match the reporting measures and is now listed as "Maintain course access at 100%."

The district is committed to supporting students with safe learning environments and positive school climates. In order to maintain safe campuses, the Board of Education needs to have the authority to expel students who commit serious crimes. These offenses include bringing weapons to school, physically assaulting others, or any of the other serious offenses listed included in Ed Code 48900. The expulsion process is extensive and is used as a last resort. The District will continue to work with high-needs students and maintain low expulsion rates. However, assigning a specific number to this goal is ill-advised because it incentivizes administrators to not act on serious offenses. By undermining the authority of school leaders, we are at risk of putting our students in dangerous situations and depriving them of the positive and safe school climates they deserve. In years past, expulsions were common in WCCUSD. With improvements in school climate and support for students there have been only three students expelled in the last three years or an average of one per year. This is indeed a low level of expulsions.

Classroom observational tools were developed in 2014-15 and will be administered in 2015-16. Therefore, 2015-16 will be the baseline year. Once data is collected and analyzed, goals will be identified for 2016-17.

Though not a state-mandated priority, the WCCUSD LCAP also addresses community engagement through Goal 3. Community partner surveys are being developed by the district and will be administered during the 2015-16 school year. Once baseline results are established, goals will be set.

4. Ensure all actions and services are specific and describe how funds will be spent.

In developing the LCAP plan, the District summarized the actions and services to be performed and does not provide the details of each which would require project plans that would make the LCAP unreasonably lengthy. Responses to the concerns enumerated under this topic follow.

In 2014-15, the District originally budgeted \$3,263,995 of Supplemental/Concentration funds to provide basic student safety and social-emotional support services for our students. Since the adoption of the 2014-15 budget, the budget for this action/service has increased to \$3.5million. These funds are broken down as follows:

- 1) \$600,000: \$100,000 has been allocated to each of our six comprehensive high schools. To date, the high schools have spent a majority of the funds on contracted services with BACR, YMCA and the Bay Area Peacekeepers.

Expenditures to date: \$494,000

- 2) \$2,400,000: These funds help support the School Resource Officers (SRO) and Campus Safety Officers (CSO) contracts. The Supplemental/Concentration funds pay for:
 - a. Half of the SRO Contracts ($\$3,000,000 \times 50\%$) = \$1.5million
 - b. Half of the difference between the CSO Budget less \$70,000 per site
 - i. CSO Budget is \$2,800,000.
Less: $\$70,000 \times 15$ sites = \$1,050,000
Difference = $\$1,800,000 \times 50\%$ = \$900,000

Expenditures to date: \$2,400,000

- 3) \$535,000: These funds are being used to fund 4.45 full-time-equivalent psychologists.

Expenditures to date: \$531,000

For the 2015-16 fiscal year, the District has projected a budget of \$3,389,265 for these services.

May 20 – Letter 2

1. Align Specific LCAP Actions with the District’s English Learner Master Plan

After an extensive community engagement process the WCCUSD Board of Education adopted a new Master Plan for English language learners in August 2014. The description for the 2014-2015 implementation work that falls under the six components of the WCCUSD Master Plan for English Learners (MPEL) <http://www.wccusd.net/Page/5238> are reflected below.

A. Identification, Assessment, and Program Placement

District staff are now building a new English Learner Operations Manual that will detail out many of the process and procedures around identification, assessment and program placement. This manual will be used in the 2015-16 school year.

B. Instructional Programs – WCCUSD has the following programs for the 2014-15 school year.

Elementary Programs		
Structured English Immersion		
All Elementary Classrooms		
Transitional Bilingual Education		
School	Number of Classrooms	Grade Levels
Bayview	6	K-3
Chavez	5	K-3
Coronado	3	1-3
Dover	8	K-3
Downer	6	K-3
Ford	4	K-3
Grant	4	K-3
Lake	4	K-3
Lincoln	4	K-3
Verde	4	K-3
Dual Language Immersion		
School	Number of Classrooms	Grade levels
Washington	11	K-6
Stewart	1	K
Korematsu	2	7&8

Secondary Programs		
Structured English Immersion		
Sheltered Content Classes at all Secondary Sites		
Secondary English Language Development (ELD) Classes		
School	Number of Teachers	Number of sections
Crespi	3	4
DeJean	4	10
Helms	3	18
Hercules Middle	1	3
Korematsu	1	5
PMS	3	4
DeAnza	2	6
ECHS	2	6
Gompers	1	1
Hercules High	1	5
Kennedy	3	13
North Campus	1	1
Pinole Valley	2	5
Richmond High	7	17

Another component of the plan is the elementary after school newcomer support pilot. The objective of this program is to develop basic English vocabulary through everyday themes. The District is also piloting and purchasing new secondary English Language Development curriculum. The new ELD standards and common core aligned ELD curriculum, Inside (middle) and Edge (high school) has been piloted and purchased for middle and secondary ELD classes.

C. Monitoring of Student Progress and Reclassification – The District uses the following assessments to assess progress for our English Learner students:

Elementary

CELDT

ELD Benchmark Assessments Three times per year

ELD Placement Test (Grades transitioning to Secondary)

TBE and DLI (in addition to all of the above)

-ELA Benchmark (in Spanish) Three times per year

- ELA Writing Benchmark (in Spanish) Three times per year
- Math Benchmark (in Spanish) Three times per year
- IDEL (K-1) Three times per year
- STAR Reading Assessment (in Spanish) Three times per year

Secondary

CELDT

ELD Benchmark Assessments (Three times per year)

ELD Placement Test

The Board of Education approved a revised reclassification criteria in December 2014 that includes an updated reclassification criteria. The number of students reclassified during the 2014-15 schools was 824 in the District's elementary, middle and high schools.

D. Staffing and Professional Growth

The District offers 19 areas of professional development in areas ranging from Elementary ELD - Implementing Instructional Routines for ELD and Working with Newcomers to Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English and WRITE Professional Development. These 19 areas are provided as a series of PD opportunities or offered multiple times, depending on the needs of students and staff.

2. Fund each of the six School Based Health Centers (SBHC) by providing \$200,000 to each school per school year and support coordinated health services

Current base coordination funding is \$60,000/site at DeAnza, El Cerrito, Hercules, Kennedy, Pinole, and Richmond High School. In addition, the District will be adding two sites in Fall 2015 at Greenwood Academy High School and Coronado Elementary School. The District is developing a matrix of mental health programming and funding information. In the current LCAP, each high school site providing school-based health services was given \$100,000 for addressing school climate after the Safe & Supportive Schools grant ended. Sites were given the discretion, through their SSC process to use the funding to best meet student needs. Most of the SBHC's leveraged additional dollars from this process and are therefore funded by WCCUSD well above the existing \$60,000 base funding.

In collaboration with Contra Costa Health services and Community Partner organizations, the District has a comprehensive support services program in the communities where these services are most needed. The support services programs are matched with student and community need, with the County being the lead convener and funder of these programs. Providers meet every other month to share best practices and address needs. The District has compiled the current matrix of the collaborative programming staffing. While not every site has providers identified, there is a comprehensive plan to meet needs given the current level of resources available. District staff are working with providers to best align services through school families to better support continuity of care.

An inventory of services can be found at www.westcountyfscs.org/searchschools. The updates to this inventory have been ongoing throughout this school year. To address the constant updates, the District has developed a new partnership process system that allows the information and services to be live, rather than requiring staff to do continual updates. In addition, with the streamlined process of having

a live inventory, the District has greater capacity to be able to provide multi-lingual site based infographics with service provider information.

3. Full Implementation of Restorative Justice in All Middle and High Schools .

The Health & Wellness Subcommittee is currently working on making proposed modifications to our existing Health & Wellness policy so that it will also include positive, restorative, and trauma-informed approaches. Current Board Policy 5137 addresses Positive School Climate and Board Policy 5138 addresses Conflict Resolution/Peer Mediation.

The Full Services Community Schools Culture & Climate Subcommittee was convened in April 2015 and has met twice since that time. Millie Burns who has for the last several years provided training for school staff in Restorative Justice is helping to facilitate this group. The purpose of the subcommittee is to focus on current practice, identify collective need, and to develop a collective comprehensive plan to support students. The initial meetings have focused on an orientation to climate transformation with Full Service Community Schools as the vehicle.

4. Support for African American Student Achievement

In the coming 2015-16 school year the following support for African- American Student Achievement will be in place:

1. Continue with the Rising Scholars program at El Cerrito, Pinole Valley, DeAnza and Hercules High Schools;
2. Implement the African - American Male Pipeline at Pinole Middle School in partnership with Cal/ TRIO program;
3. Extend the third annual African-American Scholars award night all levels, elementary, middle and school;
4. Implement a "Help A Brother Go 2 College" event at De Anza in October;
5. Conduct College Tours in 2015-16;
6. The District will establish quarterly African- American Achievement Task Force meetings to discuss the status on our students starting in September; and
7. Continue Parent University classes for African- American parents/guardians.

5. Increase Parent / Student Engagement

The DLCAP Committee is working to develop bylaws that would address the need to communicate with parents at the various school sites. One way to make this happen would be to add it to the job description of the LCAP members. Another way would be to pool from already elected SSC members. Legally, the District cannot assign existing members to become SSC members, as they have to be elected at the site level, but the Board could require that all LCAP parent committee members be also members of a school site council. Currently, existing LCAP members and SSC member do not want to serve on both committees. To support access at the school site, the District provided LCAP training to School Community Outreach Workers so that they could present information at Coffee Clubs. Lastly, SSC's are deeply connected to LCAP as they are responsible for site level allocation of LCFF funds and support the development of the Single Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA).

The structure for including parent and student evaluations of programs and services exists already through the MDAC, CAC, and DLCAP. The District has the opportunity to strengthen the feedback loop by connecting those evaluations directly to LCAP decision making.

In addition, the District often does program evaluations with existing programs (including Parent University). This information is used to strengthen and modify the program. Many programs and services are provided by community partner organizations. It would be appropriate for partners to implement an evaluation process to their participants and share that information with the District to help inform us if programs and services are meeting needs.

The Youth Commission serves as an evaluative tool for student input. Members do district school-site tours and assess need of students at their schools. The Youth Commission uses this information to inform the Board and make recommendations around LCAP.

Additionally, the District solicits feedback through the Annual LCAP Student and Staff Surveys. Results are posted on the School Climate Dashboard: <http://www.wccusd.net/dashboard>.

There are currently ten students representing their high schools on the DLCAP Parent Committee who are full members of the committee. In addition, the Youth Commission took a lead in helping to create the DLCAP Community Engagement Plan and to engage their peers in understanding and providing feedback on the LCAP.

Currently, the District provides SSC Trainings in the Fall for any existing and all newly elected SSC Members. These trainings are open to community members, parents, students, and staff. During the SSC Trainings, an overview and review of the LCAP is provided. In addition, the District provides LCAP training as part of the MDAC, during coffee clubs and parent meetings at school sites. Parent University was implemented at Dover, Bayview, Lake, Riverside, Chavez, Nystrom, Wilson, Verde, and DeAnza. This seven week program dedicates one week to understanding the LCAP. Nearly 300 parents participated in Parent University this year. In addition, the District provides additional trainings and onsite support for sites throughout the year when requested by parents, community members, or staff.

During the 14-15 year, community partners were invited to present at the April and May DLCAP meetings. No community partners attended the April meeting and the East Bay Center for Performing Arts presented at the final May meeting. Additionally, the Community Engagement department met with representatives from Healthy Richmond, BBK, and CCISCO in April and recommended that they connect directly with their appointed members on the DLCAP committee to be able to share ideas and collaborate on feedback.

6. Establish Unique Supports for Foster Youth

It may be helpful for you to better understanding the current practice when a foster student is identified:

- Option A: foster parent comes with a placement letter stating that caregiver is the foster caregiver/provider. Letter includes name of biological family and whether or not family is related. Letter also includes type of foster case: family maintenance case or family kinship case or general foster case. Names and contact information for Social Workers, Educational Social

Workers/Advocates, and Lawyers are also included. School Sites are instructed to put placement letter in student's cumulative file. School sites are also to tag the student in PowerSchool and list all contacts (Foster Parent/Caregiver, Social Worker, Lawyers, etc).

- Option B: WCCUSD Families in Transition (FIT). The District is notified directly by Social Worker, Foster Parent, CCCOE Foster Liaison that a foster student is enrolling or has enrolled. In this case, WCCUSD FIT liaison works with appropriate school site to support placement and enrollment.
- Once enrollment process is complete, WCCUSD FIT liaison supports school sites in identifying needs, suggests SST process for all foster youth students, and facilitates access to appropriate services. Many foster students come in with clearly identified needs and the FIT liaison and school site (registrar, administration, secretary, counselor, and school community outreach worker) work collaboratively to ensure access.
- WCCUSD FIT liaison also supports foster youth who live/reside in our area but are placed in other Districts. WCCUSD provide transportation for Foster Youth who attend school outside of the District.

Due to state mandated changes in recording foster youth, the District is establishing baseline data for foster youth during the 2014-15 school year. Currently, when a foster student is enrolled, the FIT Liaison works with the site to ensure access to services and site level support. In the Fall of '15-'16 this support will be strengthened. School sites will receive lists of their foster youth and hold CARE team meetings to identify supports needed within 60 days of students enrollment (or the start of school). The WCCUSD FIT Liaison will oversee the general case management of implementation. The 2015-16 plan for foster youth includes:

- Baseline Case Management Files established Summer '15 (FIT/Central Office)
- List of Students Distributed to School Sites
- Within 60 Days Care Team Review and appropriate referrals and case plan developed-
- Quarterly CARE Team Review at site level for all students, and more frequent for those with active needs
- Sites submit documentation to FIT Liaison
- Mid-Year & Year End Case review (FIT/Central Office)

When placement occurs, site does triage (office staff-registrar or school secretary or counselor/psychologist) and will refer to special education, student support team, or the Care Team as appropriate. If the student is already identified as being in special education, then FIT Liaison contacts special education services directly to establish support services. If the student is involved in the juvenile justice system, low in credits, has mental health issue, a Section 504 plan, or above average age for grade placement, the WCCUSD FIT Liaison facilitates meeting with Director of Student Support Services to establish appropriate placement and services. When program services are needed at the site (referrals from social worker, CCCOE, foster family, or school site staff) FIT Liaison works with school site and with available providers to ensure access to tutoring, after school support or health services as appropriate.

This system for connecting outside providers with school staff is currently in place. District staff work to strengthen the relationship with the foster system to increase communication and supports at the school site. All placement letters (generated by the foster system) should include all contact

June 2, 2015

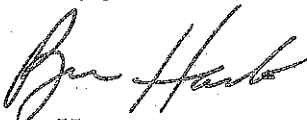
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information for relevant advocates for the foster student. School staff are instructed to place that information in student's cumulative file and to enter the information into PowerSchool. When information is missing, FIT Liaison and school site staff work to gain additional information from foster placing agency. The FIT Liaison also maintains close communication with the state and local foster programs to ensure that we are in compliance with policies and laws for foster students.

Ensuring a system for obtaining prior school records is a challenge that District staff are working to improve. WCCUSD schools receive placements from all over the state. CDE now requires increased information be shared from the foster placement county and District staff struggle to obtain this information. This is a statewide issue that is being improved though building relationships with the foster care system to help them understand the educational system and needs to best support a student. WCCUSD participates in a countywide taskforce that meets to address these needs.

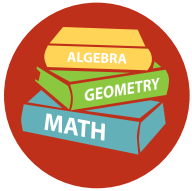
Again, I appreciate you bringing the issues and suggestions to our attention and look forward to meeting with you.

Sincerely yours,



Bruce Harter
Superintendent

cc: Board of Education



CHANGING THE EQUATION:

ENSURING THE COMMON CORE MATH STANDARDS ENABLE ALL STUDENTS TO EXCEL IN CALIFORNIA SCHOOLS

Students and teachers in schools and districts across California, and in 42 other states and the District of Columbia, are adjusting to a new set of expectations for what it means to be successful in math and English language arts. The Common Core State Standards in math (CCSSM) and the Standards for Mathematical Practice demand more from teachers and students. These elevated expectations are especially critical for low-income students, as well as African American and Latino students, whose often limited access to effective teaching and rigorous math curricula has contributed to achievement gaps in math performance between them and their white, Asian, and upper-middle class peers.¹ The new Common Core math standards hold the promise of improving instruction in ways that will support each and every student — regardless of race or class — to graduate prepared for success in college-level math, and to be employable in the workforce, including in our state's expanding science, technology, engineering and math fields. Providing a path to math proficiency for all students is both a critical equity issue, and an economic imperative if California is to remain a leader in STEM-related industries.

The 2014–2015 school year marked the official start of CCSSM implementation in California, and the first

official administration of the full battery of CCSS-aligned tests created by the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium.² Districts and schools have prepared for this transition in different ways, and many are ill-equipped for the task. Students face dire consequences when they miss opportunities to advance their learning, and students of color and low-income students, in particular, bear the brunt of underprepared teachers and schools.³ Fifteen percent of low-income eighth-grade students in California earned proficient or better scores on the 2013 National Assessment of Educational Progress math assessment. By comparison, 45 percent of their non-economically-disadvantaged peers achieved proficiency. And 11 percent of African American and 15 percent of Latino eighth-grade students scored proficient or above on the same assessment, compared to 42 percent of white students and 61 percent of Asian students.⁴ We must utilize all the tools and resources available to ensure students of color and low-income students can both access and master rigorous math knowledge, skills, and practices.

In order to realize the promise of the Common Core and close achievement gaps in math, it is vital that educators engage in coherent, coordinated efforts to implement high-quality math curriculum and instruction. And, it is critical that the California's Department of Education ensures that regional and local efforts are well-supported and sufficiently address the needs of all students — something that many districts and schools struggle to do. Teachers must hold high expectations for all students and have access to professional learning opportunities that build their pedagogical and content knowledge. Students must be provided high-quality, Common Core-aligned curricula, effective and timely supports to address different language proficiency levels

AUTHORS:

Amber Banks, practice associate, and Jeannette LaFors, director of equity initiatives, authored this report with Brentt Brown, project consultant.





WHAT ARE THE STANDARDS FOR MATHEMATICAL PRACTICE?

While the Common Core State Standards outline what students should know and be able to do at a given grade level, the Standards for Mathematical Practice describe the learning behaviors all students are expected to demonstrate.

and other identified learning needs, and demanding math courses, particularly at the high school level. Additionally, educators need to engage families in two-way conversations about the shifts in the new standards and how they can best support their child's learning at home.

In this report, The Education Trust – West shares emerging best practices from districts that are working hard to implement Common Core math in a manner that ensures low-income students and students of color have opportunities to learn relevant, coherent mathematics.

WHAT IS SO DIFFERENT ABOUT THE COMMON CORE?

The Common Core grade-by-grade math standards, and the Standards of Mathematical Practice expected at every grade level (see sidebar) together define what students should understand and be able to do. Specifically, the new standards intentionally shift away from memorization in favor of mathematical reasoning and understanding; and away from math that is disconnected from everyday use to emphasize critical thinking, student communication, and real-world applications. The new Common Core math standards encourage thoughtful questioning, collaborative problem solving, and the application of math in a variety of contexts — all of which are critical for college and career success.⁵

While this type of learning and teaching has been available to upper-income students who are expected and equipped to succeed in college, low-income students have frequently encountered low expectations and rote instruction. The Common Core recognizes that students living in poverty — like all children — can achieve at high levels when they are taught at high levels.

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS FOR MATHEMATICAL PRACTICE

- 1. Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.**
- 2. Reason abstractly and quantitatively.**
- 3. Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others.**
- 4. Model with mathematics.**
- 5. Use appropriate tools strategically.**
- 6. Attend to precision.**
- 7. Look for and makes use of structure.**
- 8. Look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning.**

Source: <http://www.corestandards.org/Math/Practice/>

WHAT IS CHALLENGING ABOUT IMPLEMENTING COMMON CORE STANDARDS?

These shifts in expectations require teachers to become adept at new ways of teaching and assessing student learning. Districts across California have invested time and energy to help teachers and school leaders understand the standards, create or adapt curriculum and formative assessments, restructure their secondary math courses, and communicate these shifts to students and families.

The type, depth, and frequency of professional learning varies widely from district to district, however, and even from site to site within districts.⁶ And these disparities have the potential to create worrisome gaps in students' access to high-quality, standards-aligned instruction from well-prepared teachers. Providing high-quality, meaningful professional learning opportunities for teachers is a necessary prerequisite to ensuring students have access to high-quality curriculum and instruction. Teachers need time to deeply understand the math standards in order to effectively teach math concepts that are challenging and relevant for all students and especially students who have historically struggled in math, including English learners and low-income students. Teacher learning opportunities help educators to engage students in the math content in meaningful and productive ways and to develop as mathematical thinkers. Leaders in state, county office, and district roles need to address differences in teacher capacity to mitigate inequity in quality implementation efforts.

Although the state designated roughly \$200 per student to advance Common Core implementation in 2013,⁷ district leaders have looked for additional funds to support CCSS implementation.⁸

In addition, the state has not generated CCSSM content or curated high-quality professional development and instructional materials the way other states have.⁹ Furthermore, although the state of California released the Math Curriculum Frameworks in 2014 to support the implementation of the standards at each grade level, it is unclear how the frameworks are being used and to what extent they help to support novice or struggling teachers.

And while most new math textbooks are advertised to be "Common Core-aligned," few actually are, differing little from their previous editions.¹⁰ In fact, of the 31

instructional programs formally adopted by the California State Board of Education in January 2014, 10 were reviewed by EdReports, and only one partially met the non-profit organization's expectations for Common Core alignment. (See *Figure 1*.)

Furthermore, teachers are challenged to teach higher standards to students who haven't had the benefit of several years of CCSSM-aligned instruction. For example, fifth-grade teachers are expected to instruct their students to fifth-grade Common Core standards, but the students' previous instruction in K–4 reflect the state's old set of standards, causing gaps in students' understanding of specific Common Core math concepts.

As district leaders restructure secondary math courses to reflect the Common Core Math standards, they often encounter debates about changes in both the nature and sequence of their math courses. The Common Core emphasizes building a strong foundation for algebra in the eighth grade, and ensuring that all students master algebra, geometry, and advanced algebra concepts in high school. Many experts attest that the eighth-grade math course is more rigorous than the previous Algebra I course offered in eighth-grade grade, and that the new Algebra I and Mathematics I courses are more advanced than previous similarly-named courses.¹¹ Nevertheless, many adults – both parents and educators – push to keep the same sequence of math courses they experienced in school, and expect higher achieving students to enroll in accelerated math courses while other students take less demanding coursework.

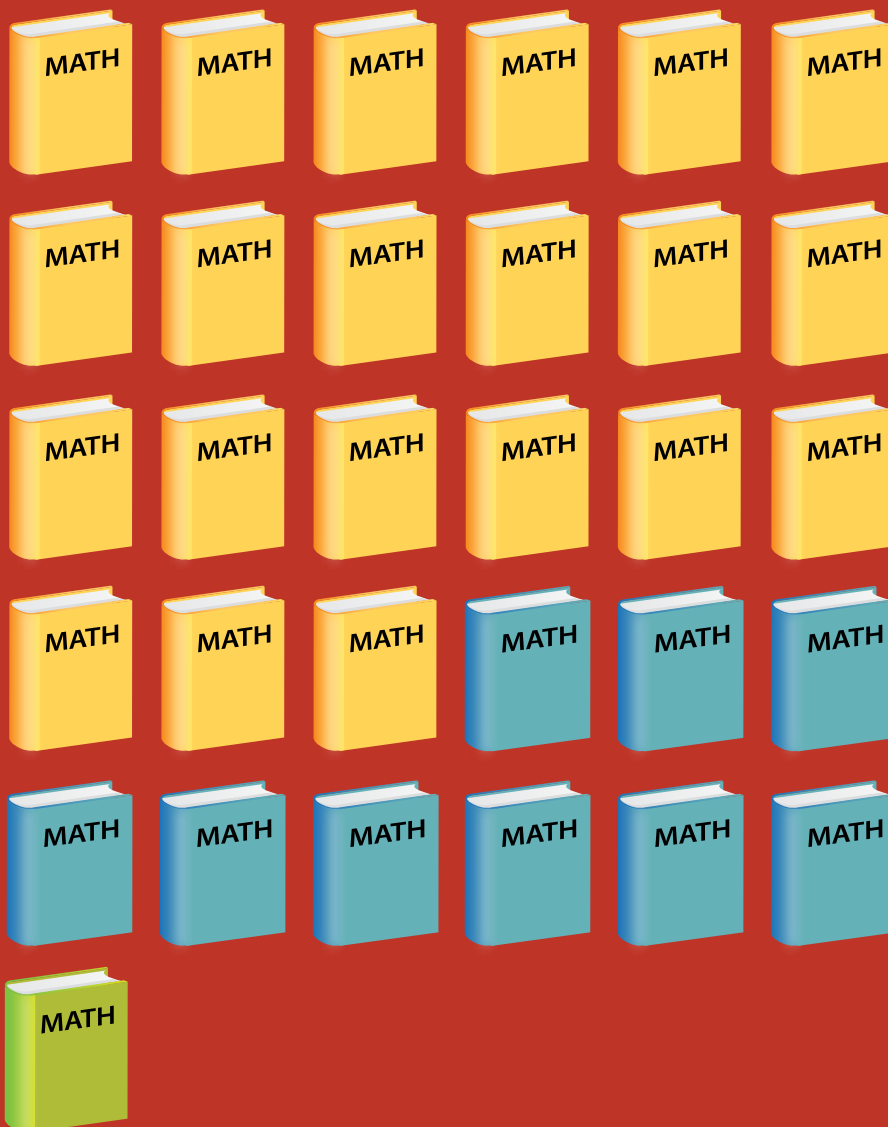
Finally, state and local policy makers have not yet aligned graduation requirements with the demands of the Common Core math standards. For example, California requires students to successfully complete an Algebra I course in order to graduate, but that expectation is lower than what the CCSSM standards, adopted in 2010, expect of all students. If the state does not increase the minimum course requirements for high school graduation to reflect college- and career-ready expectations, we can be sure that not all students will be equipped to meet those demands.¹²



Districts across California have invested time and energy to help teachers and school leaders understand the standards, create or adapt curriculum and formative assessments, restructure their secondary math courses, and communicate these shifts to students and families.

FIGURE 1:

CALIFORNIA K-8 APPROVED MATH INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM SERIES REVIEWED BY EDREPORTS.



31

Math Series Books
Adopted by California
State Board of Education

10

out of 31
Reviewed by EdReports

9

out of 10
Did not meet expectations
for CCSSM alignment

1

out of 10
Partially met expectations
for CCSSM alignment

PROMISING PRACTICES FROM THE FIELD



Promising practices are emerging to give each and every student the opportunity to become mathematically proficient. We spoke with math experts, researchers, county, school and district leaders, and teachers to uncover a few promising strategies for closing math opportunity and achievement gaps.



BEST PRACTICE #1: **CREATING A CULTURE OF HIGH EXPECTATIONS FOR ALL STUDENTS**

One of the greatest opportunities of the Common Core State Standards is providing a demanding and coherent set of expectations for all students to become mathematically proficient. This requires consistent access to a college preparatory sequence of math courses, effective teachers, and rigorous curricula and assessments.

A common feature of schools and districts that are closing math achievement gaps and challenging racial, ethnic, and gender stereotypes about math learners is the high expectations they hold for all students. This means that the curriculum has an appropriate amount of grade-level difficulty, and different types of students not only get access to the curriculum, but also access to supports they may need. In addition, a culture of equity and excellence permeates each school environment.

Aligning course requirements with university

entrance requirements: One thing districts that model a culture of high expectations do is ensure all students are on track to graduate with the foundational mathematical skills to be successful in college and career. This includes making sure students complete the requirements to be eligible for entrance to one of California's public, four-year universities. In order to be eligible for University of California and California State Universities, students must pass a prescribed pattern of courses, called "a-g" courses approved by the University of California Office of the President.¹³ Students are expected to successfully complete three years of math that include algebra and geometry. In 2013-2014 only 42 percent of all California high school graduates had completed their "a-g" requirements.¹⁴ To address this, Tustin Unified School District in Southern California's Orange County automatically enrolls its high school students in "a-g" coursework. Students have to opt out of college-track coursework if they do not want to be enrolled in "a-g" courses. This strategy has dramatically increased the number of students in Tustin who are on track to satisfy

the math requirement for entrance to California public universities.¹⁵

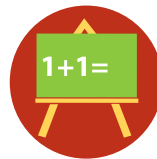
Reducing or eliminating tracking: In addition to requiring their students to complete the “a-g” required course sequence in order to graduate,¹⁶ San Francisco Unified School District recently eliminated honors math courses in ninth and 10th grade to counteract the practice and effects of assigning students to math courses according to perceived ability groups, commonly known as tracking.¹⁷ African American and Latino students are dramatically under-represented in honors and Advanced Placement math courses in districts across the state,¹⁸ which several researchers attribute to the practice of tracking.¹⁹ In addition, the district eliminated the practice of accelerating cohorts of students into math courses beyond the established grade level in middle school and grades nine and 10 (e.g., offering 8th-grade Algebra I or 9th-grade Geometry). Students are eligible to take honors or accelerated math courses after the 10th grade.

Ensuring high expectations are reflected consistently throughout a school system: Rigorous math instruction is essential, but it is just one critical part of ensuring all students, particularly low-income students and students of color, graduate ready for college and career. For Common Core math implementation to be successful, district leaders must have a coherent strategy for aligning Common Core implementation efforts across school sites. Effective alignment strategies include engaging and implementing Common Core work across multiple content areas (e.g., developing academic language or emphasizing writing across the content areas), and ensuring the district Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP),²⁰ along with other district activities, promotes students’ academic success. A district LCAP should, for example, identify specific CCSSM professional development and student support activities with clear funding allocations to address identified needs and goals.

Riverside County’s Corona-Norco Unified School District and San Francisco Unified School District require that all schools use the same math curriculum to ensure coherence between grades and across sites. Math coaches and teacher leaders monitor the implementation of the math curriculum, offering support to teachers and students where needed, and making adjustments when something is not working.

Aligning high school and postsecondary institution

expectations: Aligning expectations for students’ high school math proficiency with those of institutions of higher education is critical. When districts and universities work together to clarify what students need to know and be able to do in order to earn credit-bearing coursework, students can avoid taking remedial coursework that does not advance their academic standing.²¹ In Corona-Norco for example, district leaders are streamlining the continuum between high school math courses and those offered at the local community college.



BEST PRACTICE #2: PROVIDING ROBUST EDUCATOR SUPPORT AND CONTINUOUS LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Reinforcing a culture of high expectations also requires teachers who are well-versed in the new standards and are well-grounded in the content knowledge needed to bring the standards to life. Teachers who are comfortable with the shifts and learning practices outlined in the Common Core are better equipped to deliver instruction that is challenging, differentiated, and focused on what students need to know and be able to do at each grade level. As the assistant superintendent of instruction of Chula Vista Elementary School District John Nelson put it, “The shift requires both deeper understanding of content and strong pedagogical skills to be able to engage students in instructional tasks that will build their conceptual understanding.”

But learning about and implementing the new standards requires meaningful professional development

To meet college admission requirements, students are expected to successfully complete three years of math that include algebra and geometry. In 2013–2014, only 42 percent of all California high school graduates had completed their “a–g” requirements.

opportunities and substantial investments of time and energy, particularly for teachers and school leaders who serve low-income students and students of color. Unfortunately, the data tell us that teachers who teach in schools with large numbers of low-income students and students of color are less experienced, demonstrate weaker content background knowledge, and have more limited access to meaningful professional learning opportunities related to the new standards than their peers in more white and affluent communities.²² Like student learning, teacher learning is a process that requires intentional and frequent occasions for teachers to grapple with the new standards, try out lessons, observe different instructional strategies, and explore curricula and assessments. Additionally, teachers need a strong foundation in the math content they are teaching in order to reach students with different learning needs and to encourage multiple ways of solving problems.

Providing high-quality professional learning and coaching: Several school districts around the state are leading the charge to provide high-quality professional learning and coaching opportunities so teachers are prepared to serve a diverse population of learners in their classrooms.

Math Coaching Consortium

West Contra Costa Unified School District in Northern California, for example, is leading a regional Math Coaching Consortium that provides monthly professional development and technical support for math content coaches in eleven participating districts and charter systems. MCC also provides professional development for teachers through summer institutes, Saturday professional learning sessions, and after school trainings, along with weekly in-classroom support through

demonstration lessons and collaborative planning. All these experiences are designed to simultaneously support teachers' math content knowledge and their use of effective instructional methods for diverse learners. Teachers learn instructional practices to develop students' mathematical thinking. The key to this, according to MCC founder Phil Gonsalves, is showing students multiple methods and approaches to solving mathematical problems in a side-by-side comparison. Early data show that students with teachers who receive formal coaching support and professional development through the MCC perform better in math on state assessments, district benchmarks, and formative assessments than those whose teachers do not have this support.

Lesson Study

Cutler-Orosi Joint Unified School District in rural Tulare County, located in California's Central Valley, grounds its approach to teacher learning in lesson study and student work analysis. After several years of intensive Common Core professional development focused on building awareness and understanding of the standards, Cutler-Orosi teachers have turned their attention to improving the quality of their lessons.

The district has implemented a structured process for lesson studies and a district-wide focus on literacy across content areas, particularly in math. First, teams of teachers work in grade-level teams to develop math lessons, which are designed to be accessible to all students, including English learners. The next day, each teacher teaches the lesson while others observe and take notes. A math coach, who is present during the lesson, facilitates a conversation after the lesson. In that "debrief," teacher teams review student work and discuss both successful components of the lesson and aspects that could be improved. Teachers take what they learned and observed in the lesson study process to inform ongoing instruction in their own classroom. Superintendent Yolanda Valdez says this process is helping to shape "relentless, courageous instructional leaders" in each of COJUSD's schools, and the district has already seen improvements in students' math proficiency at the high school level. Decisions at the district and school levels to provide critical resources (e.g., teacher time, place to meet, facilitators, and structures) made this type of collaborative learning possible.

Teachers need a strong foundation in the math content they are teaching in order to reach students with different learning needs and to encourage multiple ways of solving problems.



Teacher leaders were employed to design, pilot, and scale a curriculum. The teachers were not left to figure things out on their own. They were supported by math experts who crafted yearlong professional development and a math teacher toolkit.



BEST PRACTICE #3: **DESIGNING AND IMPLEMENTING RIGOROUS, CCSS-ALIGNED CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENTS THAT PROVIDE ACCESS TO THE CORE CONTENT FOR ALL STUDENTS**

Perhaps the most time-intensive shift in transitioning to the CCSSM is ensuring that there is a demanding, accessible, and coherent curriculum with high-quality formative and summative assessments in place. Building on previous standards-based reforms and borrowing practices and resources from across the country, several California school districts are addressing this challenge in innovative ways.

Using teacher-designed curriculum: Savvy districts are looking to teachers to design curriculum in order to build in-house capacity for site-level CCSS work. Faced with fewer central office staff and reduced budgets for purchasing instructional materials and assessment solutions, many school districts have decided to “insource” this work. Enlisting teachers to design curriculum creates a cadre of Common Core experts who can help drive other site-level changes. As April Moore, the director of curriculum and instruction at Corona-Norco Unified School District reflects, “It’s really paid off to have those teacher leaders who were involved in redesigning the curriculum leading site- and district-level professional learning on transitioning to the Common Core.”

Both Oakland Unified and San Francisco Unified school districts used a similar strategy by employing teacher leaders across the district to design, pilot, and scale a curriculum. The teachers were not left to figure things out on their own. Rather, they were supported

by math experts who crafted yearlong professional development and a math teacher toolkit that highlights high-leverage pedagogies and teaching strategies for diverse learners. According to Jim Ryan, the STEM executive director for SFUSD, “It is important that our students get the best instruction possible.”

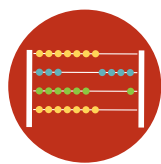
Focusing early on assessments: Many districts have focused their efforts on assessments first because they want something to help drive decision-making about changes to pedagogy and curriculum. High-quality assessments help teachers and administrators know whether new instructional strategies and materials are working, and for whom. Educators in some districts systematically and carefully analyze results from one unit, and using this information to decide which concepts will need continued focus in the following unit. This effort helps them identify which students may benefit most from front-loading or breaking down specific math content so it is more accessible. And it helps them modify curriculum or instructional techniques they plan to use in the future.

Some districts have found that engaging teachers to develop common assessments as part of the curriculum creation process promotes cross-site collaboration and enhances the level of support teachers feel in transitioning to the CCSS. Superintendent Sandy Thorstenson from Whittier Union High School District in Los Angeles County attests that involving teachers to develop common end-of-unit performance assessments is very productive. “We couldn’t think of a better way to get our teachers up to speed on the Common Core than having them design assessments. It’s a performance task for teachers. It focuses them on what students are going to need to know and how they can be successful. ... You end up with a very consistent approach from site to site without mandating it from the top.”

Combining teacher-created and outside resources:

Many districts exhibit a blended approach to curriculum and assessment design, combining teacher-created curriculum and assessments with those they purchase or access for free. Numerous districts, for example, mix assessments from the Math Assessment Resource Service²³ and blend them with teacher-created items. Teachers from Bulldog Tech, a New Tech middle school in the Silicon Valley, often start with a MARS performance task to build longer “problem-based” projects for their students. Teachers appreciate having these high-quality resources and the autonomy to customize them to meet the needs of their students.

While the extent to which districts are standardizing curriculum and assessment varies from district to district, common curricular elements include: (a) identifying the essential standards the unit will address; (b) developing an end-of-unit assessment that involves performance tasks; (c) offering questioning strategies, academic vocabulary, and other tools to support language acquisition and greater depth of knowledge; and (d) providing frequent opportunities to include real-world application of math concepts.



BEST PRACTICE #4:

ENGAGING STUDENTS—INCLUDING ENGLISH LEARNERS—IN HIGHER ORDER THINKING AND CONCEPTUAL UNDERSTANDING THROUGH DISCOURSE AND LITERACY

Traditional math instruction is often characterized by rote memorization of specific “steps” to solving a problem

Teachers are encouraged to think about math and language in tandem, not as two separate entities. They are urged to examine what language skills will be needed to solve a problem as they are planning their lessons.

and frequent practice repeating those steps over and over again. In many cases, the “math” behind a problem is not discussed in depth. Now, however, the CCSSM and mathematical practices are designed to combine memorization with reasoning, literacy, and collaborative discourse. This means math instruction involves more reading, writing, and speaking than it did under the previous standards.

Developing conceptual understanding through language development:

While memorization and procedural fluency (i.e., adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing) remain important skills, the goal is for students to collaborate with others, explain their own thinking and understand each other’s thinking. In order for all students to engage in this type of learning, teachers must be skilled in teaching literacy and language development. This is particularly important for English-learner students. In math, these students may need to learn subject-specific academic language in order to understand a particular concept or topic. Mathematics is full of words and phrases — such as “estimate,” “as the crow flies,” or “quantify” — that are key to solving problems, collaborating with peers, or learning specific math skills. Sometimes direct instruction about the “language of math” can help English learners engage fully in the Common Core math classroom.

Cutler-Orosi Joint Unified School District, where 48 percent of the students are English learners, adopted a districtwide focus on literacy in all subject areas, paying particular attention to literacy in math. Superintendent Yolanda Valdez describes these literacy initiatives as the “cornerstone” of the district’s Common Core implementation strategy, especially in math.

Harold Asturias, director of the Center of Mathematics Excellence and Equity at the Lawrence Hall of Science at UC Berkeley, advises schools and districts on how to support English learners in math classrooms. He encourages teachers to think about math and language in tandem, and not as two separate entities. He also urges them to examine what language skills are needed to solve a problem as they are planning their lessons. He suggests teachers provide students access to bilingual instructional materials, read text out loud, and explicitly teach students strategies for analyzing and

decoding word problems. In addition, he helps teachers consistently challenge students to go simultaneously to the next level of development in both math and language. Collaboration with English-learner coaches and other English-language development experts can support teachers with strategies to develop the reading, writing, and speaking skills of English learners so they will be able to fully participate in rigorous math coursework.

Tustin Unified School District uses technology to help English learners develop the language skills needed to excel in math. As Kathie Nielsen, chief academic officer in Tustin Unified School District, describes, “[Technology] levels the playing field in a lot of ways. For English learners, when the teacher is asking for comment or discussion via a blog, all students have the ability to comment, access all the comments, and play off other kids’ comments. With processing time, kids who were silent before come alive. They have great things to say. When students are deeply engaged by having their voice in discussion, deeper learning takes place. We use a learning management system to actually grade the comments and participation. It’s not how much, it is the quality and the thoughtfulness that goes into the responses. Technology really helps us raise the bar.” Other districts — like Paramount Unified in Los Angeles County, with a third of its students officially identified as English learners — purchased digital CCSSM-aligned content and computing devices, and hired computer lab staff to both teach and assess the new math standards.

Emphasizing real-world application of math

knowledge and skills: To align with Common Core expectations, district leaders are shifting lesson and unit designs to include more elements and time focused on real-world application and student discourse. Tustin’s Kathie Nielsen emphasizes the importance of hardwiring real-world application into daily math instruction: “We ask our teachers to put themselves into their students’ shoes and for every lesson answer this very simple question, ‘When am I going to need to use this in my life?’” Berkeley Unified has established partnerships with nearby Bay Area science museums and research centers to reinforce and expand student engagement and the application of the new math and science standards through workshops such as “Gravity in Motion” and “3-D Geometry.”



For English learners, when the teacher is asking for comment or discussion via a blog, all students have the ability to comment, access all the comments, and play off other kids’ comments. ... With processing time, kids who were silent before come alive. They have great things to say. When students are deeply engaged by having their voice in discussion, deeper learning takes place.

In some settings, school leaders are helping teachers build questioning strategies into units or lessons and providing teachers with rubrics on what constitutes strong mathematical discourse. Kevin Tallon, a principal from Wasco Union High School District in Kern County, stresses the importance of using the curriculum development process to help teachers elevate the discourse in their math lessons: “We had to develop a consistent way for asking questions and having healthy academic discourse around math concepts.”

These emerging practices are only the beginning of what schools and districts can do to support each learner to achieve at high levels in math. The Common Core standards and mathematical practices are designed to make math relevant, rigorous, and part of a coherent curriculum that prepares all students for college and career.



BEST PRACTICE #5: **ENGAGING PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS**

Districts are learning that these changes to curriculum require significant time, expertise, and effective communication with caregivers — some or all of which may be in short supply. Especially for math, most parents and other caregivers expect teachers to sequentially move through a single textbook. Shifting to more complex, teacher-driven curricula that draws on multiple sources of content requires significant outreach to parents. Powerful engagement with parents and other caregivers includes explanations about why the curriculum looks different and provides tools to help them navigate and experience new instructional materials. Clear communication, messaging, and offers of support and training are key to ensuring parents and other caregivers are informed about how best to support their children.

Several districts have dedicated significant resources toward Common Core outreach activities. These efforts most often include caregiver engagement strategies to ensure that parents and guardians are aware of the district's Common Core State Standards implementation plans. Los Angeles County's Paramount Unified, for example, earmarked funding to deliver bilingual workshops designed to inform caregivers about the standards and relevant assessments. And Baldwin Park Unified School District, also in Los Angeles County, has a dedicated set of online Common Core resources in both English and Spanish on its district website in

addition to actively engaging parents and caregivers with Common Core workshops since 2010.

In addition to posting numerous Common Core State Standards resources on their website in multiple languages, Jefferson Elementary School District in Daly City is piloting a CCSS-aligned report card and has brought in outside experts, including Professor Jo Boaler from Stanford University, to talk with parents about the math standards. Another Bay Area district, West Contra Costa Unified, offers parents classes to educate families about grade-level expectations and how they can support their children and their academic success as part of their Parent University. In addition, the district hosted several town hall meetings to discuss the Common Core and the district's investments in technology, professional development and instructional materials to support it. West Contra Costa schools are also hosting Common Core family nights to explain the new standards to parents, and the district is supporting students to create a video designed to help their peers and parents understand what the new standards are and why they are important.²⁴

More often than not, however — and despite requirements from the Local Control Funding Formula law — districts do not adequately engage members of their communities to support their CCSSM implementation efforts.²⁵ Much more could be done.

CONCLUSION

The adoption of the Common Core math standards provides an opportunity to rethink the ways in which all students are afforded access to high-quality math instruction. The shifts in the Common Core math standards require focus, coherence, and rigor in every math classroom, and districts will best achieve this by being strategic and intentional in their implementation activities. It is imperative that we close glaring math achievement gaps in our state and provide a clear path for more students to pursue education and career opportunities that rely on a strong foundation in math. As we continue to bring math Common Core standards to life in classrooms throughout the state, we must ensure that each and every student, and particularly low-income students and students of color, will be able to achieve at high levels in math.

10

EQUITY-RELATED QUESTIONS EVERY DISTRICT AND SCHOOL SHOULD BE ABLE TO ANSWER ABOUT COMMON CORE MATH:

In order to ensure that each and every student in California graduates proficient in math – proficient and ready for a range of postsecondary education options — we must use the Common Core to close math opportunity and achievement gaps. Districts and schools need to ask themselves the following questions and adequately address them:

- 1 Do all our educators believe that each student is capable of achieving at high levels in math? Do each of our district administrators, teachers, principals, and coaches subscribe to and contribute to a culture of high expectations for all students to become mathematically proficient, including expanding access to high-level math courses, providing adequate supports to English learners and students who are struggling academically?
- 2 Does our district provide ample time, coaching, and other supports for teachers to learn, collaborate and plan together, vet and refine curriculum, discuss student work, and approach math instruction with a continuous improvement lens?
- 3 Are there clear and consistent feedback loops among the district central office, the school sites, and the classroom to inform, support, and guide compelling CCSSM implementation efforts?
- 4 Are families routinely informed about and engaged with the instructional shifts embedded in the Common Core, district implementation progress and activities, and opportunities to learn how best to support their child(ren) to succeed in math?
- 5 Is technology being used to supplement the curriculum and provide both review and advancement opportunities tailored to student learning needs?
- 6 Are teachers utilizing teaching strategies and available resources that address the needs of all learners, especially English learners and students with identified special education needs?
- 7 Do the district's Local Control Accountability Plan goals support needed shifts in math instruction and include sufficient investments to make it happen?
- 8 Are there robust assessments and structures in place for measuring progress and holding schools and teachers accountable for helping all students become mathematically proficient?
- 9 Is the district developing partnerships with teacher education programs — either traditional or non-traditional — to provide pathways for effective math teachers to work in high-needs schools?
- 10 Are all students accessing math courses that offer them the content they need to meet and/or exceed the CCSSM standards? Both district and state graduation requirements ought to reflect these expectations.

END NOTES

- 1 According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress, 15 percent of California eighth-grade students who are eligible for free- or reduced-priced lunch earned proficient or advanced scores on the 2013 NAEP math assessment, compared to 58 percent of their non-eligible peers. <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/subject/publications/stt2013/pdf/2014465CA8.pdf>.
- 2 Smarter Balanced testing takes place in grades 2–8, and 11.
- 3 See Jeffrey Max and Steven Glazerman, “Do Disadvantaged Students Get Less Effective Teaching?: Key Findings from Recent Institute of Education Science Studies,” Washington, D.C.: Institute of Education Studies, NCEE Contract number: ED-04-CO-0112/0007, (January, 2014). See also Carrie Hahnel and Orville Jackson, “Learning Denied: The Case for Equitable Access to Effective Teaching in California’s Largest School District,” Oakland, CA: The Education Trust – West, (January, 2012).
- 4 U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Educational Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (2013). The Nation’s Report Card: Mathematics, <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/subject/publications/stt2013/pdf/2014465CA8.pdf>.
- 5 The Howard County Public School System (Maryland) offers recommendations for addressing shifts in mathematical practices in order to align them to the CCSSM. <http://hcpssaccessiblenmathematics.wikispaces.com/home>.
- 6 This variation was documented in a summary report of the statewide Common Core State Standards Implementation Survey conducted by the California County Superintendents Educational Services Association in fall 2013 (available at: <http://ccsesa.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/CCSS-Survey-Results.pdf>). For example, about half of school districts reported having formal, written CCSS implementation plans. Only about half of school districts reported that all their teachers in all grades understand the content, structure, and organization of the CCSS in either English language arts or math. And only about half of school districts reported that their teachers identified strategies or instructional resources to support the transition to the CCSS for English learners and students with disabilities.
- 7 The state allocated \$1.25 billion in a block grant to districts (about \$200 per student based on 2012–2013 student enrollment) to fund CCSS implementation in 2013–2014 and 2014–2015.
- 8 See Hannah Oh, “Common Core Costs: Examining California’s Five Largest School Districts,” State Budget Solutions, September 16, 2014. See also Kathryn Baron, “Proposed Bill Would Provide \$1.5 Billion More for Common Core Implementation,” EdSource, March 5, 2014, http://edsources.org/2014/proposed-bill-would-provide-1-5-billion-more-for-common-core-implementation/8440#.VS4z_nF_xQ. The bill was authored by Assemblywoman Susan Bonilla (AB 2319) to establish an additional block grant for CCSS implementation was unsuccessful in 2014, but her 2015 bill (AB 631) to provide a block grant to CCSS implementation could prove to be successful. Furthermore, the governor’s budget proposal in May 2015 earmarked more money for education, but that proposal allows districts to spend that money in other ways beyond CCSS implementation.
- 9 The New York State Department of Education maintains a comprehensive website, EngageNY (www.engageny.org) to support several aspects of education reform, including CCSS implementation. The website includes thousands of tagged and searchable resources (e.g., curriculum maps, videos, lessons, sample assessments, teacher perspectives) to support K–12 educators and parents. The Massachusetts Department of Education organized a Model Curriculum Project that engaged teachers to develop over 100 model curriculum units aligned to the CCSS and designed with Grant Wiggins and Jim McTighe’s Understanding by Design framework. Model district curriculum maps and the units are available on the state’s website (www.doe.mass.edu/candi/model/default.html). The Ohio Department of Education also offers a model set of curricula for CCSSM, which includes an aligned assessment system, <http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Ohio-s-New-Learning-Standards/Mathematics>.
- 10 EdReports is a non-profit organization that convenes educator review teams to review instructional materials for their alignment to CCSS. Teams reviewed over 80 grade-level curricula series published by nine different publishers and found only two met expectations for CCSS alignment (www.edreports.org). Both Morgan Polikoff and William Schmidt have reviewed an extensive number of math textbooks and find that most of them are not well-aligned to the CCSSM. See Morgan Polikoff, “How Well Aligned Are Textbooks to Common Core Standards Mathematics?” *American Educational Research Journal*, 0002831215584435, first published on May 6, 2015 doi:10.3102/0002831215584435. See also Center for the Study of Curriculum, “The Textbook Navigator/Journal: Development and Background,” East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University, <http://education.msu.edu/csc/pdf/Navigator-Report.pdf>.
- 11 See Appendix A of the California Department of Education Mathematics Framework, <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/ma/cf/documents/aug2013apxacourseplace.pdf>.
- 12 California’s current standards demand that all students achieve proficiency in math to match the minimum math prerequisites for admission to California’s public university systems and most institutions of higher education. But California’s minimum graduation requirements in math and most district graduation requirements do not require students to successfully complete courses that include the Common Core math standards in order to graduate.
- 13 The university systems require students to pass these courses with a “C-” grade or better.
- 14 California Department of Education, Dataquest, 2015.
- 15 In 2013–2014, 55 percent of all students graduating from Tustin Unified were reported to be “a-g” eligible, up from 37 percent in 2002–2003. In that same timeframe, “a-g” rates for student subgroups also substantially improved. The rate for African American students increased from 19 to 50 percent, the rate for Latino students increased from 17 to 38 percent, the rate for white students increased from 48 to 65 percent, and that for Asian students increased from 58 to 80 percent.
- 16 The San Francisco Unified School District board of trustees voted in December 2008 to require students in the Class of 2014 and beyond to complete the “a-g” courses required for UC/CSU eligibility in order to graduate. While the UC/CSU system requires grades of “C-” or better, SFUSD students are able to graduate with “D” grades.
- 17 Jo Boaler and Megan Staples, “Creating Mathematical Futures Through an Equitable Approach: The Case of Railside School,” *Teachers College Record*, 110(3), (March 2008): 608-645. The authors document key practices at a California urban high school that included instruction predating but aligned to CCSSM. Low-income students and underrepresented students of color learned more math, enjoyed learning math more, and took higher levels of math in high school compared to their peers in two comparison schools. Specifically, 41 percent of students took pre-calculus or calculus before the end of their senior year.
- 18 According to the College Board, of the 65,071 students in California who took an AP Calculus exam in 2013, only 2 percent were African American and 23 percent were Latino. Similarly, of the 4,964 Californian students who took the AP Computer Science exam in 2013, only 74 (2 percent) were African American and 392 (8 percent) were Latino. (Source: research.collegeboard.org/programs/ap/data/archived/2013)
- 19 See Jeanne Oakes, *Keeping Track: How Schools Structure Inequality*, 2nd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005). See also Carol Burris, Jay Heubert, and Hank Levin, “Accelerating Mathematics Achievement Using Heterogeneous Grouping,” *American Educational Research Journal*, 43(1), (March 20, 2006): 137-154.
- 20 In 2013, California dramatically reformed the way it funds school districts. The new finance system, called the Local Control Funding Formula, includes increased base funding as well as extra funding intended to support the needs of low-income students, English learners, and foster youth. Each school district, county office of education, and charter school is required to develop a 3-year Local Control Accountability Plan outlining goals reflecting eight priorities outlined by the state, along with activities and resources committed to achieving those goals. For an archive of LCAPs and other resources, visit: <http://www.lcapwatch.com>.
- 21 Complete College America, “Remediation: Higher Education’s Bridge to Nowhere,” Indianapolis, Indiana, (April 2012), <http://www.completecollege.org/docs/CCA-Remediation-final.pdf>. This report documents that nationally more than 50 percent of students entering two-year colleges and nearly 20 percent of students entering four-year universities were placed in remedial classes, and graduation rates for these students are deplorable – 1 in 10 students complete community college degrees within three years and little more than a third of students complete a bachelor’s degree within six years. The study includes information about the California State University system, reporting that more than 60 percent of the students who took remediation are students of color. Data were from the students who entered college in the fall of 2006.
- 22 Frank Adamson and Linda Darling-Hammond, “Funding Disparities and the Inequitable Distribution of Teachers: Evaluating Sources and Solutions,” *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 20(37), (November 19, 2012): 17-24.
- 23 See <http://toolkitforchange.org/> to learn more about MARS, which is funded by the National Science Foundation and staffed by a team of individuals from Michigan State University, the University of California at Berkeley, the Shell Centre at the University of Nottingham in the UK, and Inverness Research Associates.
- 24 Candese Charles, “School District Holds Town Hall Meeting to Discuss Funding, School Services, and Common Core,” *Richmond Confidential*, March 2, 2015, <http://richmondconfidential.org/2015/03/02/schooldistrict-holds-town-hall-meeting-to-discuss-funding-school-services-and-common-core/>.
- 25 When we reviewed LCAPs from the largest 50 districts in California, we found that less than 20 percent of them included plans to engage community members in CCSSM implementation.





OUR MISSION

The Education Trust–West works for the high academic achievement of all students at all levels, pre-k through college. We expose opportunity and achievement gaps that separate students of color and low-income students from other youth, and we identify and advocate for the strategies that will forever close those gaps.

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The Education Trust–West

1814 Franklin Street, Suite 220 | Oakland, California 94612 | 510.465.6444

www.edtrustwest.org