



Paramount Unified School District

Educational Services

March 2013

PUSD and the California Common Core Standards

PUSD's Common Core Lead Teachers Pilot Common Core Math and Language Arts Lessons

In order to develop awareness of the new Common Core Standards, Common Core Lead Teachers from every K-12 school meet monthly to learn about the Common Core Standards and apply what they've learned to their classrooms. In January, Lead Teachers met in grade or subject alike teams to plan a Common Core aligned lesson to teach in March. Language Arts teachers taught a lesson using the "Close Read" process, in which students respond to questions that require they use evidence from the text to support their thinking, write daily, and complete a culminating writing assignment at the end of the unit. Middle and high school math teachers taught lessons that required students to apply Math Practice Standards to solve open ended math problems and justify their thinking. After teaching these lessons, teachers met to debrief their experiences and share how students responded. Some of their comments were:

"My kids were very motivated to participate. They were more focused and accountable for showing what they learned."

"Students were very enthusiastic. Every student wrote daily and used the text to support their answers."

"My students kept talking about the lesson—even after it ended!"

Keppel Elementary and Zamboni Middle School Pilot State Technology Based Assessment

Have you heard that California is piloting a new technology-based assessment in school districts throughout the State? This assessment, created by the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) will take effect when the Common Core Standards are fully implemented in 2014-15. Selected schools are piloting the assessment and two PUSD schools were selected to participate—Keppel Elementary School and Zamboni Middle School. Students will take a sample test that assesses their understanding of math or Language Arts concepts with questions that are open-ended as well as multiple choice. In addition, students will need to know how to use technology to respond to questions. To preview sample questions, go to www.smarterbalanced.org

PUSD Collaborates with Long Beach Unified School District on the Common Core

Collaboration is important at every level of our school system! PUSD is collaborating with Long Beach Unified School District (LBUSD) to learn more about the Common Core Standards. LBUSD was one of the early pioneer districts to move toward the Common Core and they have reached out to PUSD to share their work. Educational Services staff and school academic coaches are attending professional development sessions in LBUSD and are applying what we learn to our work with teachers and administrators.



Great things are happening in Paramount schools!

PUSD's Plan to Provide Upgraded Computer Labs at Every Campus

Did you know that technology skills are embedded in the Common Core Standards? In light of the new role that technology will play PUSD has a three year plan to upgrade computer labs at every school. This plan will be phased in, beginning with schools with the greatest technology need. The objective is for every school to have an open technology lab where students can conduct research and word process essays and reports. This year new labs have been purchased from categorical funds for Wirtz and Tanner Elementary Schools and Paramount Park Middle School. Four additional schools will have new labs in 2013-14.

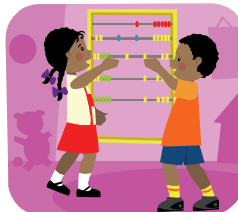
Write from the Beginning...An Articulated K-8 Writing Program Aligned to the Common Core

The Common Core Standards emphasize the importance of writing, with greater emphasis on informational (expository) writing. In order to prepare students to write well, K-8 schools will implement a writing program that is aligned to the Common Core Standards and based on Thinking Maps. In summer, 2013, teachers representing every K-8 school will attend three days of professional development on Thinking Maps aligned to the Common Core. Thinking Maps teach students how to apply higher order thinking skills to writing. During the 2013-14 school year, Thinking Maps Lead Teachers will provide professional development to all K-8 teachers so students apply these important tools to daily writing. In 2014-15, professional development on *Write from the Beginning...and Beyond*, will be provided to all K-8 teachers.

Common Core Shifts in

Language Arts/Literacy in the Content Areas

- ◆ *Evidence-based reading and writing.* Reading and writing are grounded in evidence from text. Students are required to cite evidence and factual information to support their thinking.
- ◆ *Greater emphasis on informational text.* Students build knowledge through non-fiction with emphasis on history and science.
- ◆ *Increased text complexity.* Students are assigned text that is more demanding



Common Core Shifts in Mathematics

- ◆ *Focus:* Students acquire foundational knowledge and deep conceptual understanding of mathematical skills.
- ◆ *Coherence:* Major topics are linked across grade levels, so skills are layered upon one another as students progress through school.
- ◆ *Rigor:* Students are taught to be fluent in math concepts and apply learning to real-world scenarios.

Resources

Interested in learning more about California's plan to implement the Common Core Standards? The following websites are useful resources:

Achievethecore.org
Smarterbalanced.org
YouTube
PUSD website

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