



Annual Report
2014-2015

1. Administrative Summary

Eagle Peak Montessori, like all established organizations, can have periods of growth followed by periods of transition brought on by that growth. The 2014-15 school year was definitely a year of transition. We hired and worked to build an entirely new Upper Elementary Program, the Adolescent Program officially completed its first year with 7th grade students, we added a building to the campus and we created a new administrative position for additional support for teachers.

The State of California was able to begin their new funding model which was the Local Control Funding Formula. The design of this new model, is intended to give schools with sizable populations of “at risk” students more funding for materials and teachers. While this is a wonderful addition to those schools, Eagle Peak, with our population serving only 9-12 % of our student population who qualify as English Language Learners, Free/Reduced Lunch or foster children, would not see a great increase in our per student funding. The funding sent out to other districts allowed them to offer much higher salaries than Eagle Peak. This resulted in the loss of several teachers. In order to attempt to prevent further teacher turnover, the Eagle Peak Board of Directors formed a compensation committee.

The Eagle Peak Montessori Board of Directors was also very busy during the 2014-15 school year. They started out their year with a 2 day board retreat held at the Concord Hilton. During these two days they received training from Eric Premack and the Charter School Development Center. Mr. Premack worked with the board to create committees with a specific purpose and goals. The board was also committed to working on strategic planning and evaluating the board structure. These meetings helped the board moving forward with the creation of not only the compensation committee but also the marketing committee. These committees both produced results for the board and the school. The board continued to meet monthly but added special meetings as necessary throughout the year in order to accomplish their goals. In May they held a second board retreat to have the time to delve deeper into the strategic planning and other goals.

The marketing committee worked to find a webpage designer who would help to create a new look for both the website and the school logo. These plans and proposed changes were brought to the board and were approved. The launching for the new website and the logo will be the Fall of 2015.

The compensation committee brought to the board a recommendation for increases in the teacher pay scale, as well as a more defined step type of salary increase. There was also a great need to recognize longevity at the school. The compensation committee’s recommendation, which was approved by the board, was a series of longevity stipends to be paid at 5, 10, 15 and 20 year

employment anniversaries. Teachers would also now be compensated with a heavier weight placed on Montessori training as opposed to simply the state and Montessori credential. We replaced the Upper/Lower Elementary scales with one scale based on the higher salaries being paid to teachers with multiple Montessori credentials.

Another level of support for the teaching staff is the creation of the Curriculum Advisor position. Sibyl Buckner, one of the founding teachers for Eagle Peak was the only staff member who applied for the position, but was also the highest qualified for this new role. The design behind creating this position was to give further support to staff in working with the new Common Core Standards and incorporating them into the Montessori classrooms. Also, to allow Ms. Buckner the ability to visit and observe in the classrooms in addition to the principal's visits so that teachers were able to have more feedback and assistance if they needed it in their classrooms.

With 5/6th of the Upper Elementary Teaching staff transitioning (2 staff created the Adolescent Program and 2 staff moved to positions at other schools and 1 left the teaching profession), it put us in the position of needing to re-examine some of our campus traditions and in some cases adding a new flair to them. For example, the student government, which had been started by Wendy Citron had passed on to a teacher who transitioned to a different district. We noted a lack of procedural history on campus and created notebooks and files so that this tradition could continue. We also were fortunate to hire a teacher who in addition to Montessori experience, also had several years of experience teaching science. She took on an Upper Elementary Science Fair that included changing our current process of the project being a home assignment to being completed on campus in small groups. This event was a huge success and a great addition to our other school events. As noted above, we will move forward creating procedural manuals for any of the events that we hope to continue in the event that the individuals responsible for these events move on from Eagle Peak.

The Adolescent Program also has brought many changes to the campus. The students in that program ran a number of "micro-businesses" through out the year in order to offset the cost of their trip to the Montessori Model United Nations conference in New York City. This year the AP students took on the Friday Market, ran a recycling business, hosted and served a formal Korean dinner to participants who had purchased \$50 tickets, and even created craft items for both a Holiday Boutique and a Renaissance Market. Through these ventures they raised over \$38, 000. However, their work on campus was not all for profit. They also took over the job of serving lunch to the students on Tuesdays and Fridays. The overall goals and aspects of the curriculum will be discussed later in this report.

The CFEP was able to transition in leadership smoothly from Kris Harwood to Shelly Gillis. Their group without counting the Adolescent Contributions or supply donations was able to raise over \$154,000.

At the state level there were changes also. This was the first year for the state required California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP). This test was the first official time that students were given a computer administered test. In addition to the new testing method, the format of the test was also new. This test was adaptive rather than static, meaning that as the children answered questions the test either got harder or easier. Schools and districts have been instructed to not compare this test or the scores for the students to the STAR test which was last administered in the spring of 2013.

There were many lessons learned in the 2014-15 school year. As with most lessons, some were harder than others. To put it simply, the students were not the only ones who were in school this year. However, the growth was necessary and will lead to Eagle Peak retaining its excellent reputation and successfully serving the children who enter our gate.

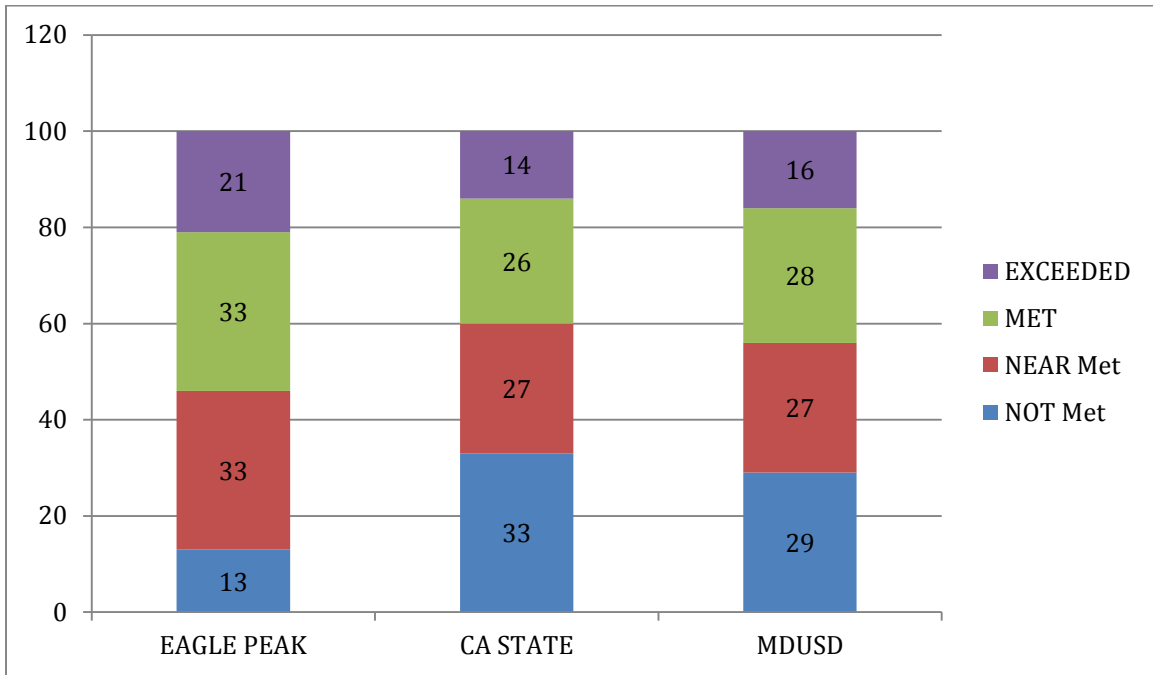
2. Achievement of Academic Goals

As mentioned in the above section, the students at Eagle Peak participated in the first year of the new state standardized testing. The state of California adopted the Common Core Standards in 2010 and ended the STAR test that was more aligned with the state standards which preceded the CCSS in the spring of 2013. The state also joined the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) along with 28 other states. The new state test, the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP), was the California version of the Smarter Balanced Assessment.

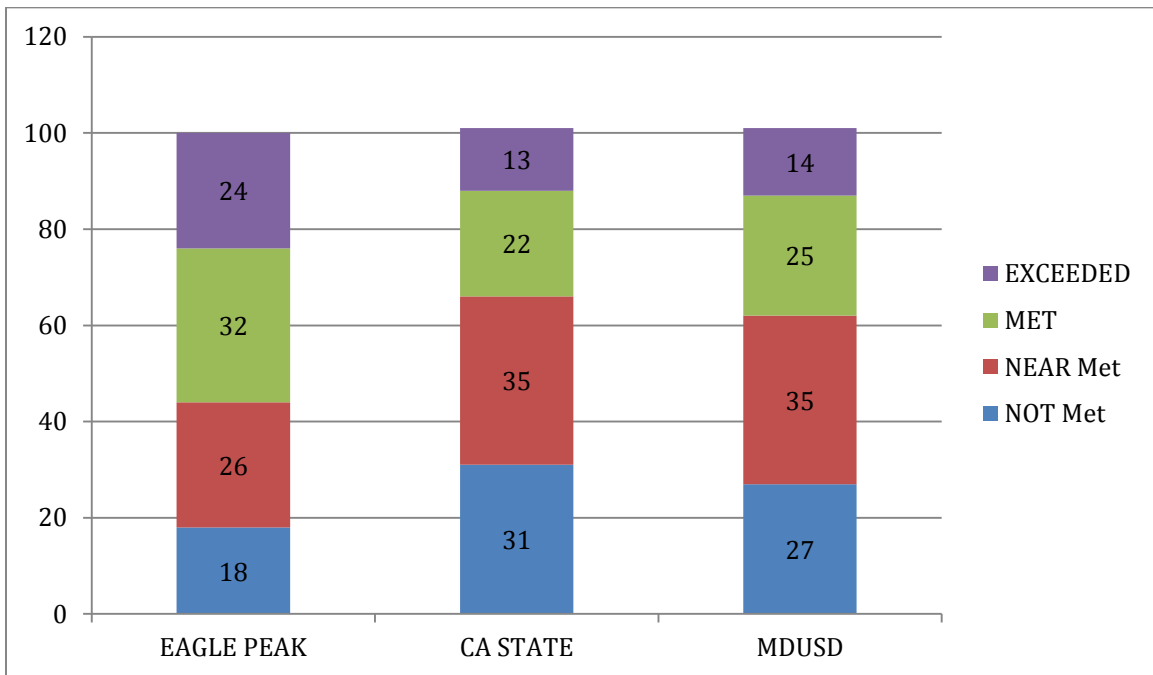
During the 2013-14 school year the students took the pilot version of the test which did not count for state accountability and for which neither parents nor schools received the students' scores. However, it was preparation for the test which did count and which the students took this year. This test was truly about more than simply the traditional academic subjects, but also the ability to use a computer and to be able to think and read from a screen rather than a booklet. This difference may seem to be something simple and something that the children would be proficient at due to how technology is integrated into every day life. We found however, that our students do not have as much exposure to computer use as we had assumed. While we have had computers in the classrooms, there has not been a large emphasis on basic computer skills in the classroom. This past year we purchased over \$30,000 of computers to add technology and the access to technology in the classrooms. Our goal over the next year is to find a Montessori friendly keyboarding and basic skill program as well. Despite this year being the a year of testing that "counts", the state has not yet determined what will replace the API(Academic Performance Index) ranking.

The graphs that follow are a comparison of Eagle Peak's scores with the district and state. The two sections at the top of each column represent the percentage of children whose scores are considered passing the test. For example, in third grade math, 54% of Eagle Peak students passed as opposed to 40% of state and 44% of district students.

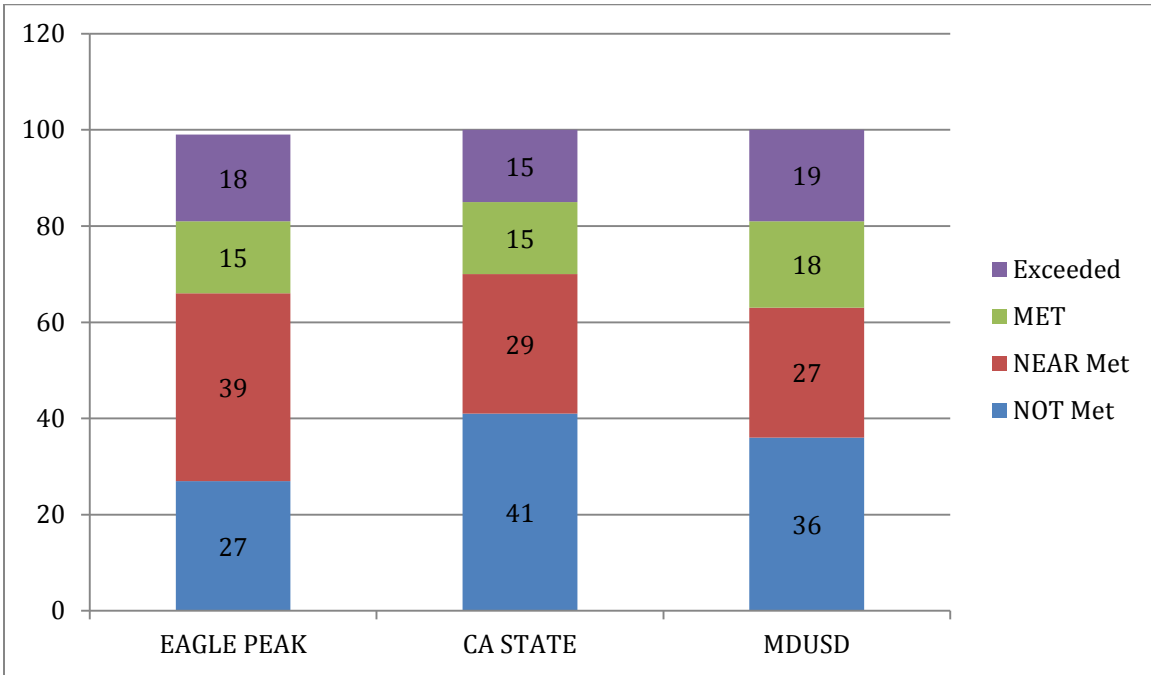
3rd Grade Math



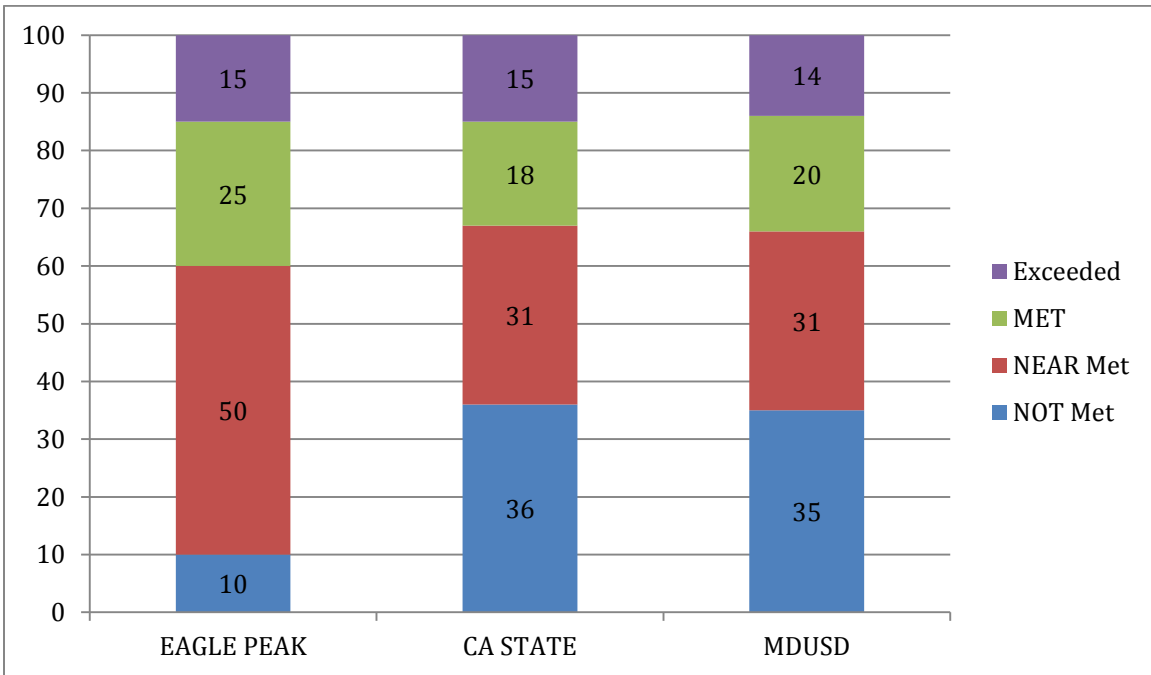
4th Grade Math



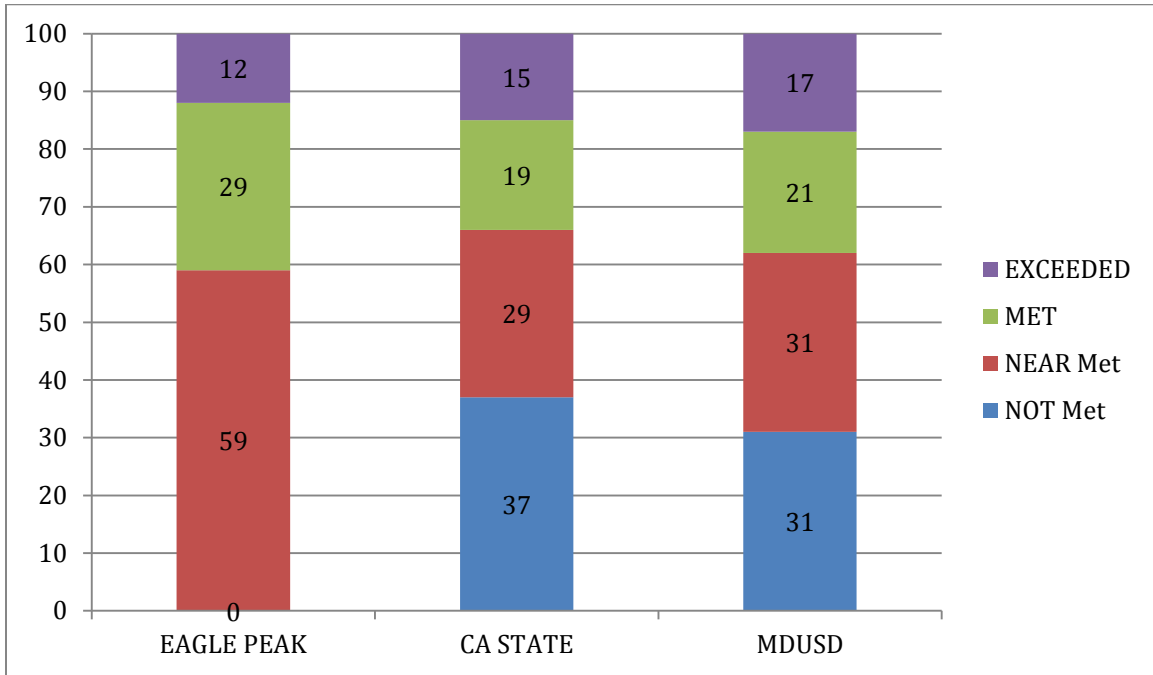
5th Grade Math



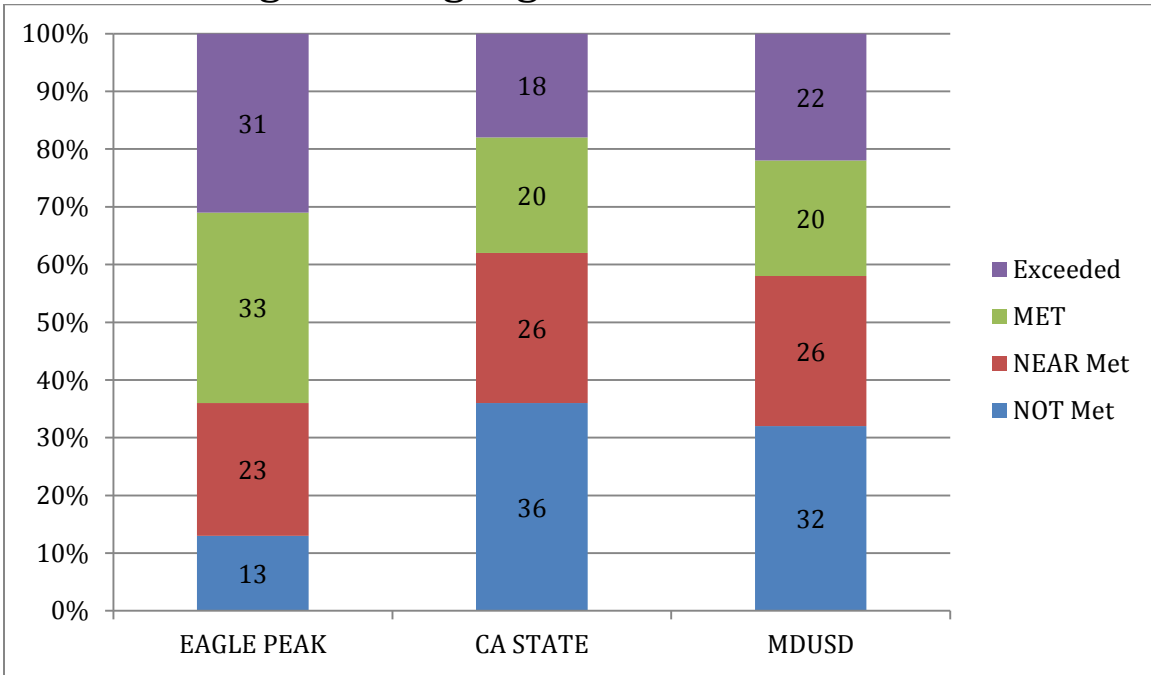
6th Grade Math



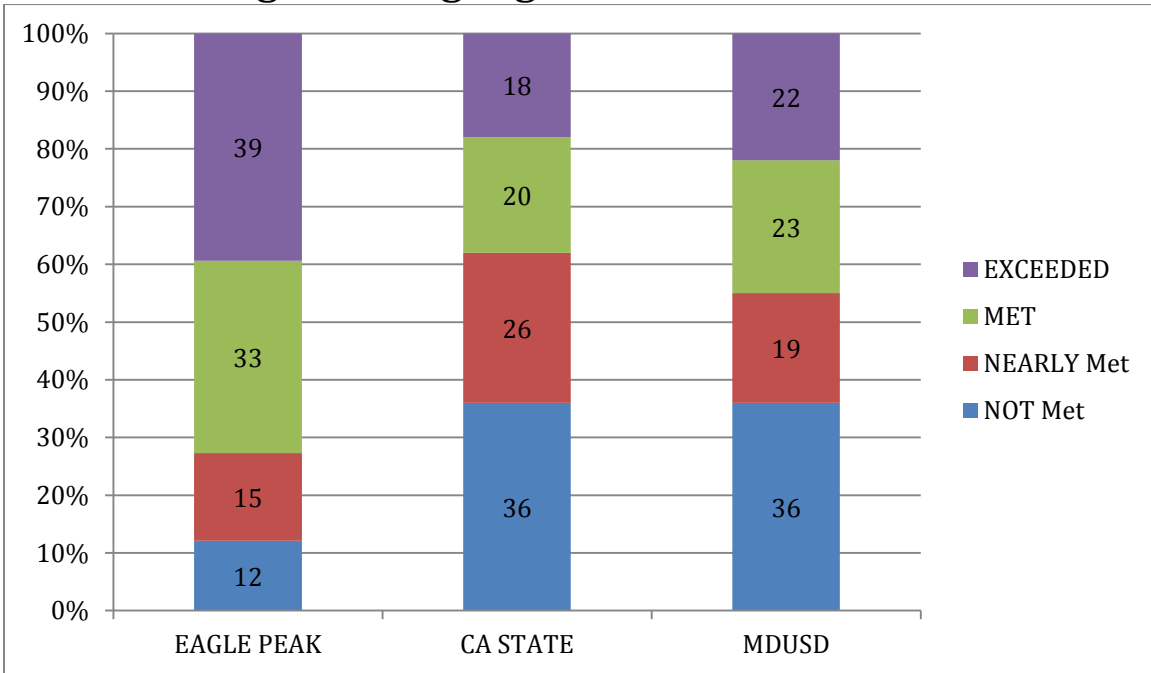
7th Grade Math



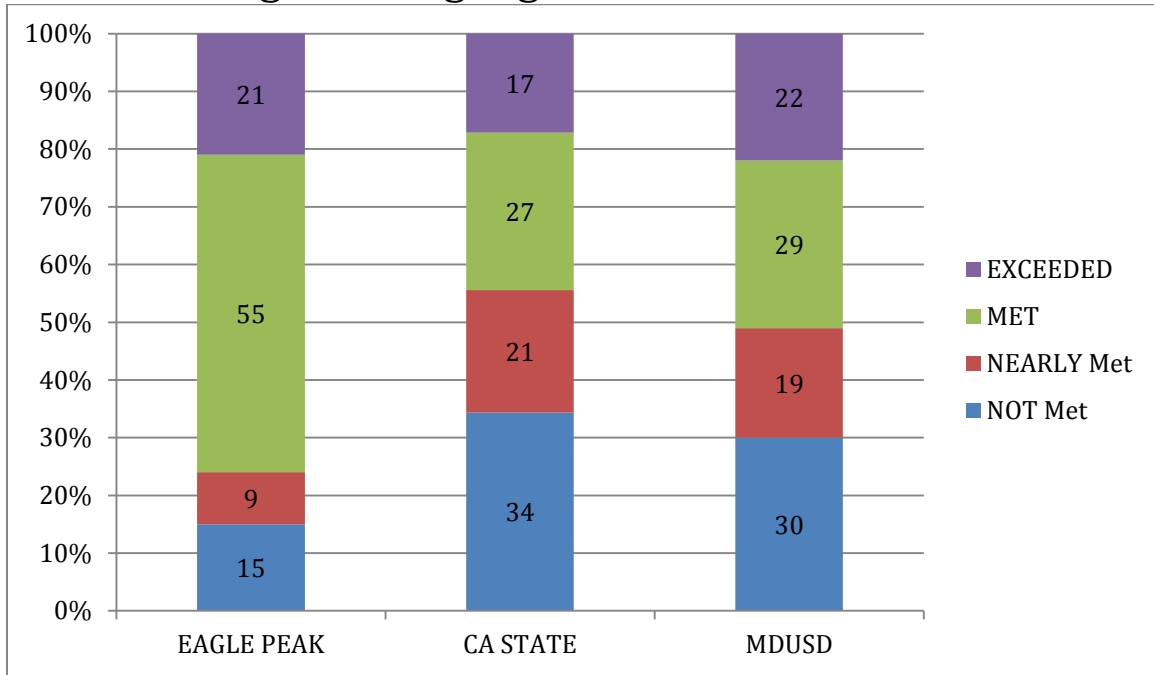
3rd Grade English Language Scores



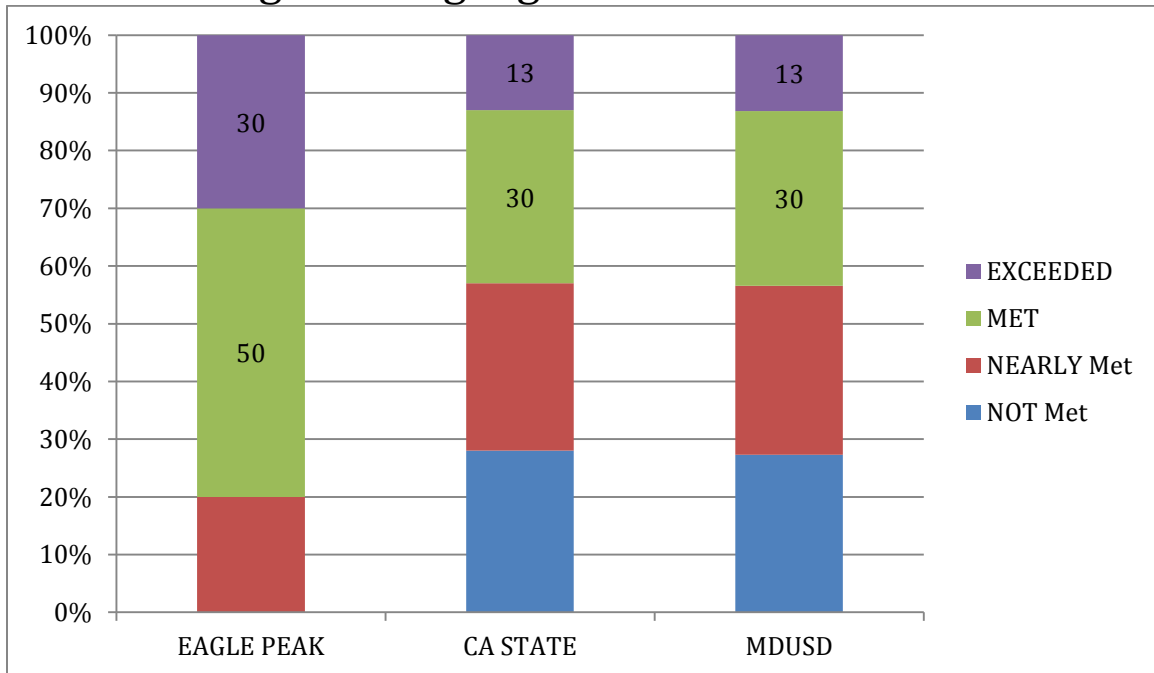
4th Grade English Language Scores



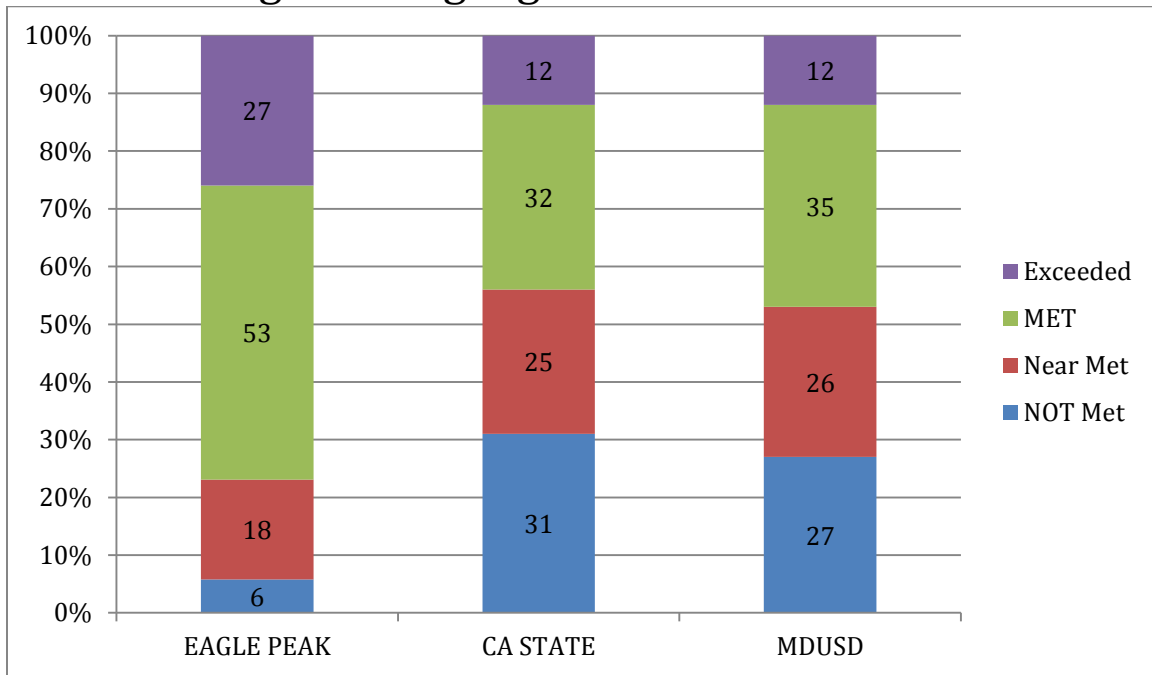
5th Grade English Language Scores



6th Grade English Language Scores



7th Grade English Language Scores



In addition to the state testing, as a Montessori school, Eagle Peak uses formative assessments on a continuous basis to monitor student progress. This type of assessment is characterized by assessing student performance during and immediately after instruction. Montessori teachers are trained to do this type of assessment ongoing. It is built into our lessons and instruction. This is also part of the work plan process. Teachers give a lesson, check for understanding and document when a child has mastered the concept taught. They are then ready for the next lesson in either that specific skill or the next level.

Students at Eagle Peak are allowed to progress at their own pace which is the basis of Montessori instruction. There are students at all times who are on, above or below grade level in almost every academic area. For example, there may be a 3rd year student who is working on 5th grade reading but 3rd grade math, or a 6th year who may be on 4th level math. We take a student where they are and have a goal of a year's growth academically by the end of the academic year. These assessments are perfect for individualization but not for comparative analysis of students to each other or as a group.

At the beginning of each year, students are administered a diagnostic test in both reading and math. Diagnostic tests are designed to allow teachers to know what skills the student has prior to instruction. In an environment such as Eagle Peak, which provides individualized instruction, this is essential. Currently we are administering the DRA-Diagnostic Reading Assessment and the Albanesi Montessori Math Assessment.

Although in the classrooms there is also summative assessments given at defined times of the year, these are not proven to be accurate by testing agencies and would not be valid for purposes of demonstrating our academic progress for renewal or other state requirements. Currently these summative assessments are criterion-referenced tests and are based purely on standards covered per grade level. For example, the lower elementary teachers give a report card assessment twice a year to determine how the students are performing on the standards measured on the report card.

In addition to these assessments, the Lower Elementary teachers provide the Upper Elementary Teachers with a portfolio which includes a summary of the students' assessments and work as they move to Upper EL. This will be provided to the Adolescent Program as well. However, we do recommend that the teachers still administer the diagnostic tests at the start of the year because students' abilities and retention of skills vary and the most updated information is the most valuable in instruction.

We are going to be administering the NWEA (Northwest Evaluation Association), starting in the Fall of 2015. There is a long history of charter schools, as well as traditional schools have used this organization's tests to provide data on their students. While the organization considers their tests formative in nature, we would be using them in more of a diagnostic manner. We would continue to use our ongoing Montessori formative assessments in the classroom. However, the NWEA has created a criterion-referenced test that provides a computer based adaptive format test for students. The data provided through this test, will allow teachers to know where their students are performing in a much closer format to the CAASPP. It will also allow us to see if there are gaps, which we will need to create lessons and curriculum around. The largest benefit to this testing, is that when administered at the very beginning of the school year and at the end, there is a way to determine if our students are consistently making a year of academic progress in our classrooms.

Our focus and goal is not to add additional testing, but to look at this as a tool for teachers and students. As a Montessori school, Eagle Peak does not see tests as the best way to assess where a student is and how successful they are. There are many more factors that go into determining that. We do not want to lose our identity in this age of testing. We simply want to be able to demonstrate that our methods are successful. If we head down a path where the assessments are more important than truly serving the whole child, we will have lost our vision and mission as an organization.

Academic Program Update:

2014-15 was the first year for Eagle Peak to serve 7th grade. Of the original 32 5th graders, 20 of whom stayed for 6th grade, we had 17 remain with us for 7th grade. Most Montessori programs we have observed, begin with about half of that number. It is truly an honor that so many of our parents trust us in a totally new program with the education of their children. Unlike Montessori in ages 18mos-12 years, there is not a set curriculum for the adolescents. The teachers use their training to create a scope and sequence of study. Both the students and the staff were embarking on this unknown path together.

The 7th grade students participated in the Montessori Model United Nations in New York City. This project took the year to prepare for. Students learn about the United Nations and the committees and then take on a country and learn the needs of that country in relation to the global community. They prepare position papers and present them with peers from Montessori schools across the world. They all meet in New York and work together to determine the positions that need to move forward on the floor of the United Nations, in their mock General Council.

The Adolescent Program students also ran microbusinesses throughout the year which helped to fund their trip. These businesses ranged from a recycling group to the Friday Market, to other smaller projects the students took on to help with the cost.

Sibyl Buckner, the Curriculum Advisor worked to create an alignment between the Common Core State Standards and the Montessori Curriculum for the staff. This was a very involved process as it took a working knowledge of both areas in order to combine them into a user friendly document.

Once the alignment was complete, Ms. Buckner worked to update report cards for grades 1-6. The principal, Michelle Hammons, took on the task of the 7th grade report card, with consultation of the Adolescent Program teachers.

3. Development of Learning Attributes

Eagle Peak Montessori is dedicated to creating a learning environment where children work to develop independence, responsibility, self-respect, respect for others, and compassion. We believe that these values lead children to develop a greater self-confidence in all areas. The Montessori philosophy, which is our school's foundation, helps children to develop these attributes through their work in the classroom. Children are given freedom within limits, which is the basis for them becoming responsible and independent. Our classroom environments are also built on the concept of the students helping to develop the "rules" and expectations for each other. This aids the child in developing a true respect for other children, as well as compassion for those who have gifts and challenges different from their own.

Our charter defines the nine attributes that we consider essential for success not only in the academic arena, but in life as a whole. These attributes are addressed through our Individual Learning Plan (See appendix A for an example of this document), which is developed in grades 1-3 in collaboration between parents and teachers. Students in grades 4-7 have input along with their parents and teachers in developing their goals for these attributes.

In addition to developing these skills, we believe that we need to address the needs of the whole child in order to help our students grow into successful adults. This includes working with the psyche or spirit. Eagle Peak has been fortunate to be able to continue all of our fine art and physical education programs, even through the financial crisis over the past few years. Art, music, physical education and environmental education are all components of a well rounded educational experience.

In our charter, we discuss that one of the attributes we consider important for successful learners is that students take personal responsibility in the learning process. We discuss encouraging students to be part of the rule setting and enforcement in the classrooms, etc. In 2005, we started our student government. This group of students is elected by the student body, and holds weekly meetings. The students gather and discuss concerns that have been placed in the classroom suggestion boxes, then brought to the meeting. The students discuss these amongst themselves, and the staff leader intervenes when necessary to provide guidance or background for situations. Each semester, the student government is responsible for organizing a school event. In the fall, that event is International Day, and in the spring it is the "Wacky Week" event. The group also works to find a charity each year to support. (Due to the age range of our students, they are most often relegated to raising money for the groups as opposed to actually working at a center or hands-on experience with the charity.) During 2014-15, there was a slight change in this process as we had all new staff working with the format. We anticipate this returning to the normal two semester format.

As Eagle Peak grows, we are looking for ways to be proactive in assuring that our older students retain the qualities we have helped them develop in the lower grades. During the 2014-15 school year we continued to gather as family groups (see Annual Report for 2012-13) and to hold Friday Gathering. Family Groups were created by dividing the student body into groups of 16-17 students with representatives from each grade level and led by a staff member. Every other Friday, the school meets together in the courtyard and stands with their family group. We have 5th grade students who share quotes based on the 5 virtues, 6th grade students lead the group in either the recitation for Peace or Pledge to the Earth. As we move forward, we hope to have more team building activities within our family groups. An additional aim of these groups is to help the older children form bonds with the younger students. We are also considering changing the timing of these gatherings to provide more consistency.

4. Parent Involvement

Parents who enroll at Eagle Peak Montessori School sign a Parent Involvement Agreement and commit themselves to:

- a) Help their child's potential fully develop.
- b) Develop their potential as a supportive parent.
- c) Help the school community develop.

4a. Support the development of their child's potential

- Ensuring the regular and punctual attendance of their child (being on time shows respect for the learning community as a whole).

Based on the P2 attendance reports to the state, our attendance average for the student body as a whole was 99%, this is back up 1% from 2013-14, and exceeds the district and state average.

- Supporting the teachers and administration in helping their child understand rules and expectations of the school and the community.
- Developing independence in their child. Allow him/her to make choices in the home environment so that he/she is prepared to make choices in the classroom.

4b. Develop their potential as supportive parents:

- Attending all Parent/Teacher conferences.

Each year the teachers and parents use the Individual Learning Plan document as the foundation for their conferences. This is a document called for in our charter that is created by the parent and teachers together. The parents observe their child in the classroom environment. Then parents look at the "Characteristics of Successful Learners" form, which is based on our student outcomes described in the charter. They consider goals for their child in all of the appropriate areas. When the parents meet with the teachers, they bring this form so they can collaborate in creating a student plan for the year.

Montessori Education truly strives to serve the whole child, socially, emotionally, physically, and academically. These conferences allow parents to discuss the complete development of their children.

Eagle Peak teachers send home a modified Mt. Diablo Unified School District report card twice a year. This report has been modified to allow teachers to compose additional narrative responses in each of the core

subjects, in addition to the numerical grading scale. These reports are sent home in January and June. We use these reports to help parents understand how their children are progressing within the state standards.

4c. Help the school community develop

- Reading, supporting, and understanding the goals and Montessori philosophy of the school.
- Participating in Parent Teacher Leadership Group activities, Parent Volunteer opportunities, and Parent Education.
- Completing a minimum of 40 volunteer hours (20 additional hours for additional students). During 2014-15 we have recorded **9857.35** volunteers hours by parents. This averages to **44** hours per student. However, we know that parents do not enter all the hours they work and so we consider this to be an estimate.

Parents served the school in many ways, some of which are listed below.

- Serving on the Board of Directors and committees of the school and foundation
- Improving the school facility (painting, building shelves and gardens bins, maintaining landscaping and clean up days)
- Supervising lunch, recess, and field trips
- Preparing materials for the classrooms
- Assisting students and teachers with learning activities
- Raising funds for the school
- Volunteering in the office

4d. Parent Education and School Social Events

During the 2014-15 school year, we continued to have a parent from the PTLG organize the Parent Education meetings. This year in order to get more parents to PTLG meetings, we combined the meetings with a Parent Education topic. However, this did not really result in the growth we had hoped. We are discussing plans for the 2015-16 school year.

Eagle Peak does not participate in the Parent Teacher Association (PTA). Rather, we opted to create our own parent group entitled the Parent Teacher Leadership Group (PTLG). Rachel Beeler was joined by Karen Annison to be co-leads for the Parent Teacher Leadership Group during the 2014-15 school year. We attempt to have one returning lead and one

new lead so that there is continuity. This group helps to organize the volunteers for the many jobs that need to be completed, and also serves to give a voice to parent questions in a less formal setting than the Board of Directors. While the PTLG does not have any governing responsibilities, it is a monthly opportunity for parents to participate more actively in the school.

5. Parent Satisfaction

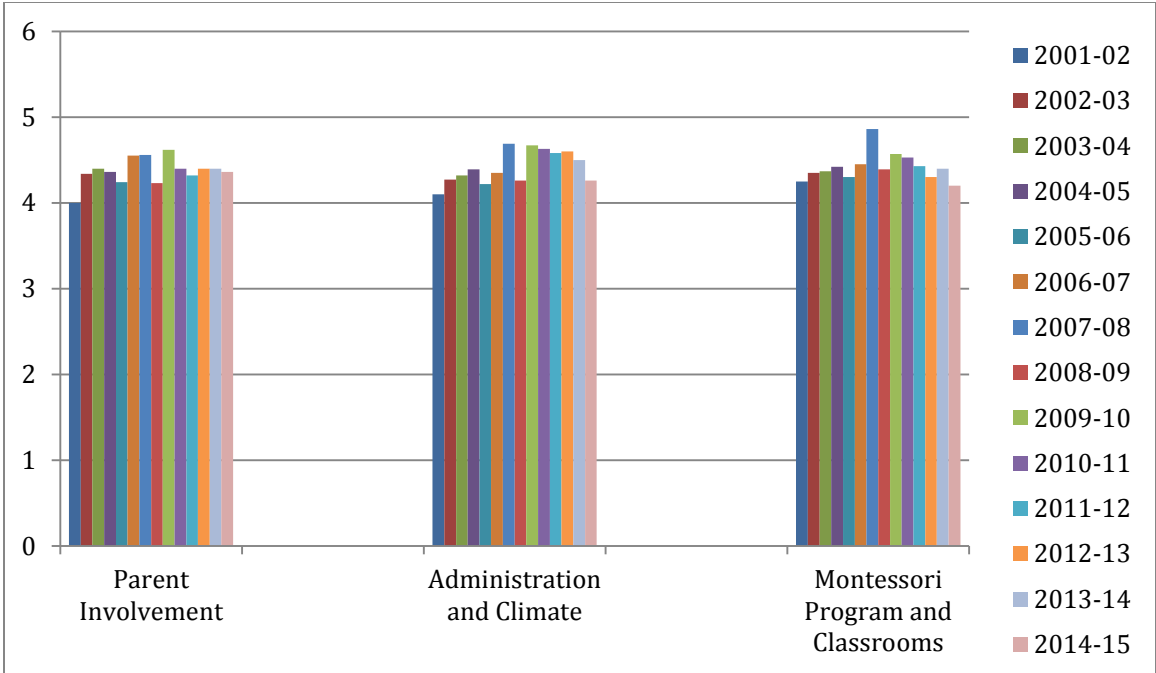
5a. Enrollment Stability

Eagle Peak was fortunate to have a very stable student enrollment for the 2014-15 school year. We began the school year with 225 students enrolled, and ended the year with 224 students enrolled. When we have students in the Upper Elementary classroom leave mid year, we do not always fill those positions. We have found that it is difficult for children without previous Montessori experience to acclimate into an Upper Elementary program.

The lottery process for the 2015-16 school year went well. Each year, the lottery takes place during the previous school year. Through the years, we have added more fail-safes allowing the system to run more smoothly. Starting in the 2013-14 lottery, each parent was given a receipt when they turn in their application packet. For the 2015-16 school year, we had 80 applicants for 36 1st grade openings. There was a total of 189 applicants for all grade levels in the lottery, however, we only had openings in 1st grade at the time of the lottery. The Eagle Peak board of directors voted to freeze enrollment in 5th grade and above, until such a time that we can work with the district on a format which would allow for more information on older students to help determine the appropriateness of the program for the student.

5b. Parent Satisfaction Survey

Below is a comparison of the Parent Survey responses for the thirteen years the school has been in operation. Originally parents were asked to sign their names to the survey in order to assure 100% participation. This was changed in the third year so that parents could complete the survey in anonymity. However, this resulted in a drop in number of surveys sent in to the school. In 2012-13 the number dropped back down to 64 responses. We were very pleased that in the 2013-14 school year we were back up to 94 responses. This is the highest number of responses we have had in the previous years. Because survey is completely anonymous, opinions expressed are assumed to be authentic and representative of the parent body. (See graph below.)



6. Efforts to Become a Model Learning Community

6a. Relations with Organizations

Eagle Peak Montessori School maintains good working relationships with the Mt. Diablo Unified School District and the California Department of Education. The school has complied with all federal, state, and local laws and regulations.

The school maintains membership in the California Charter School Association (CCSA) and the Charter School Development Center (CSDC). Through these organizations, we remain aware of legislation that affects charter schools. Eagle Peak sends representatives from the staff and the Board of directors to the CSDC fall leadership seminar annually. School leaders also collaborate with other charter schools around the state.

Eagle Peak also maintains membership in the American Montessori Society (AMS), and uses it and other Montessori organizations to recruit qualified teachers. Eagle Peak is also closely linked with St. Mary's College and their Montessori Training program.

Sibyl Buckner, one of our founding teachers, continues to be an instructor at St. Mary's College in their Montessori training program. Michelle Hammons, the school administrator, and Allison Lloyd the music instructor are also instructors in the program.

Ms. Hammons continues to work closely with the American Montessori Society and the Charter School Development Center. Ms. Hammons previously served as the Co-Chair of the Public Policy committee for AMS for six years and has been a team leader for the CSDC Leadership Institute during the summer for the past five years.

6b. Relations with Educators

Over the past several years, Eagle Peak has worked with several other schools to help them develop Montessori charter programs. Eagle Peak helped the developers of both Golden Oak Montessori and River Montessori as they started the charter process. Both of those schools just completed their first successful 5 year renewal process. Ms. Hammons also, joined the board of Urban Montessori Charter School in Oakland.

The 2014-15 school year was the third year that Eagle Peak served as an intern placement site for Northgate High School students enrolled in their Careers in Teaching Program. These students worked with the teachers in the classrooms each morning.

7. Staff Development

7a. Teacher Evaluation Process

In the fall, teachers meet with Michelle to set goals for their individual growth. This helped them set a strategy for their year. At the end of the year, they meet again to evaluate how they have progressed in accordance with those goals.

7b. Conferences and In-Service Opportunities

Each year the staff is given \$500 towards any conference they feel will best meet their needs. In addition to that amount, teachers who need to complete either their Montessori credential or their state teaching credential are given up to \$10,000, to help towards that credential. The EPMS Board of Directors increased this amount from \$4000 during the 2013-14 school year.

Denise May and Annie Rodriguez completed the coursework section of the Cincinnati Montessori Secondary Teacher Education Program. The board had previously voted to cover the expenses as part of the set up for the Adolescent Program.

Three teachers from the school attended the American Montessori Conference in Philadelphia, Pa. One Eagle Peak staff presented a session for the conference participants. Ellen Rutgers presented on writing in the Upper Elementary classroom. Several of our teachers also attended the Contra Costa Office of Education Common Core training in the fall. This training was designed for traditional schools but allowed our teachers insight as to the upcoming changes and challenges of Common Core. For the first time, MDUSD offered training during the summer on subjects from technology to Common Core to STEM. Eagle Peak teachers participated in some of these trainings.

7c. Certification and Credentialing Support

We continue to have teachers participate in the Cal State program. Once the teacher has completed their state teaching credential, their pay is increased moving forward. As mentioned previously, teachers receive a stipend to help with the cost of the program.

Eagle Peak supports any of the teaching staff who are required to participate in the county BTSA program.

7d. Future Plans

Next year, 2015-16 Eagle Peak will start serving grades 7 and 8. This will grow naturally, one grade level at a time. Each year in our parent survey, we ask questions that directly concern Eagle Peak's relationship with our granting agency (MDUSD) and what the parents' choices would be if Eagle Peak did not exist. We also inquire as to how our parents feel about Eagle Peak growing to middle school.

The parents were overwhelmingly supportive of Eagle Peak's continued partnership with MDUSD with over 96% saying that it was important to them that this option was available and over 73% saying they plan to have their child attend Eagle Peak for 6th grade and 61% staying for 8th grade.