



Annual Report
2015-2016

1. Administrative Summary

The 2015-2016 school year was another year of firsts and farewells. The highlights of the years mostly surround the Adolescent Program. It is truly impressive what the long hours and endless weekends of preparation have brought about through those teachers. As with other years, the lowlights of the year were due to those we had to say farewell to, and the ongoing difficulty of teacher shortages in the state.

The Adolescent Program started out their year by planning and embarking on their first true Pedagogy of Place. They left campus on a Monday morning with backpacks full of supplies for the week, and walked to the bus stop in order to travel to BART. Their task for the week was to only use public transit and walking in order to traverse the city of San Francisco. While in the city they stayed at the Ft. Mason hostel, did neighborhood studies, and then walked the eleven miles from Fort Mason to the Marin Headlands which included a hike across the Golden Gate Bridge in one of the few fall rain showers. After spending two days at the Marin Headlands hostel, they hiked up out of the headlands and down into Sausalito, took the ferry back to San Francisco, and BART back to the East Bay. This was truly an opportunity for them to show resourcefulness as well as leadership and independence. I do not believe any of them returned quite the same as when we sent them out.

Because of the AP students, we held our first 8th grade graduation and first dance. At their graduation ceremony, each of the students read from their, "This I Believe" paper which was work they did through their classroom writing assignments.

Hearing these amazing students speak on everything from their experience of having dyslexia, discovering their feminist self, and being bi-racial to topics such as bonding through a handshake with their father each morning, was truly awe inspiring. It was no wonder that when the supervisor for the training program the two teachers are interning in came to visit, she stated clearly that she wished this program was closer and that they could send people from the training program out to visit in order to see what a Montessori Adolescent Program should look like.

The AP program is far from our only star, however. The Lower Elementary team has truly proven to be just that- a team. They consistently give our students the mixture of nurture and guidance that they need to create the foundation for learning. I have seen them work miracles with children who have struggled in a number of other programs and come here to a calm environment and succeed. They are the backbone of the program and support every possibility for Eagle Peak's future.

Certainly it would not be fair to leave out the Upper Elementary team and the work they have done to create community. If you recall, in the fall of 2014, 4 of the 5 teachers in the Upper Elementary program were new to Eagle Peak. They have spent days and weeks learning about each other, the school, and our students. This has definitely not been in vain, as they are truly becoming a strong, cohesive team.

As with other years while there were the highs, there were also the lows. We experienced teacher changes right from the beginning of the school year. One of our Lower Elementary teachers left the week prior to school starting. The silver lining in this was that it provided an opportunity for a former teacher, who had left at the end of the 2014 school year, to return. It was rewarding to hear that despite the difference in monetary benefits, the returning teacher felt being back at Eagle Peak Montessori was worth the change. Regardless of the many non-monetary based incentives for working at EPMS, there is a great need for more Montessori trained public school teachers. This will continue to affect us as we work to grow our school.

In the previous two Annual Reports, I noted how many of our 5th grade students had stayed for 6th grade. We had our highest number of those who stayed for the 2015-2016 school year. Our six-grade class had 24 students this year.

Our Board of Directors held the annual board retreat in August and hired CSDC to come and do continued governance training. This event helps to focus the Board's work for the year ahead. These retreats give us the opportunity to connect and have a more expanded time to work out the issues and the planning we need to do for the school as whole.

One of the goals the Board has had on its plan for the past year, is to work with MDUSD to get a lease that would allow us to stay on our current property as long as we have a charter. In other words, as long as our charter continues to be renewed, that we would have the rights to this property and not merely for the 5 year period of one charter renewal. This would allow us to invest our money into buildings and expansion. These talks are ongoing with the district. We continue to have a positive relationship with MDUSD, however these talks can be difficult to hold at times due to schedules and other interests that the district must consider.

The other barrier to our permanence at our current site is the neighborhood organization, Northgate CAPS (Community Advocacy for our Public Schools). This is a group which has operated under a couple of different names over the years, but is being resurrected once again. Their goal is to separate from MDUSD and create a district from just the schools located in Walnut Creek. They have been turned down to join Walnut Creek USD, so they are seeking to be their own entity. We invited their representatives to address our board in order to understand better what they are hoping to achieve. Through that meeting, Eagle

Peak's Board did not seem inclined to be part of the movement, and we would therefore need to relocate if the Northgate group.

Just another typical year in the life of a Charter Montessori school.

2. Achievement of Academic Goals

We are now in the second year of the CAASPP test (California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress). While our scores are not exceeding expectations, we are holding our own in this new arena of accountability.

While our scores are higher than the district's scores for grades 4-8, math continues to be the lower area of achievement and the question is why. Montessori Math is strong in concepts and practice. We will be providing training this summer on Montessori Math and common core. The desired outcome is a greater understanding of how to blend these two components for greater student success.

The charts below show Eagle Peak's scores in comparison with the district and state overall. It should be noted that we had 100% of our 7th grade students meet or exceed standards for English Language Arts, and 100% of our 8th grade students who met or exceeded standards for Science.

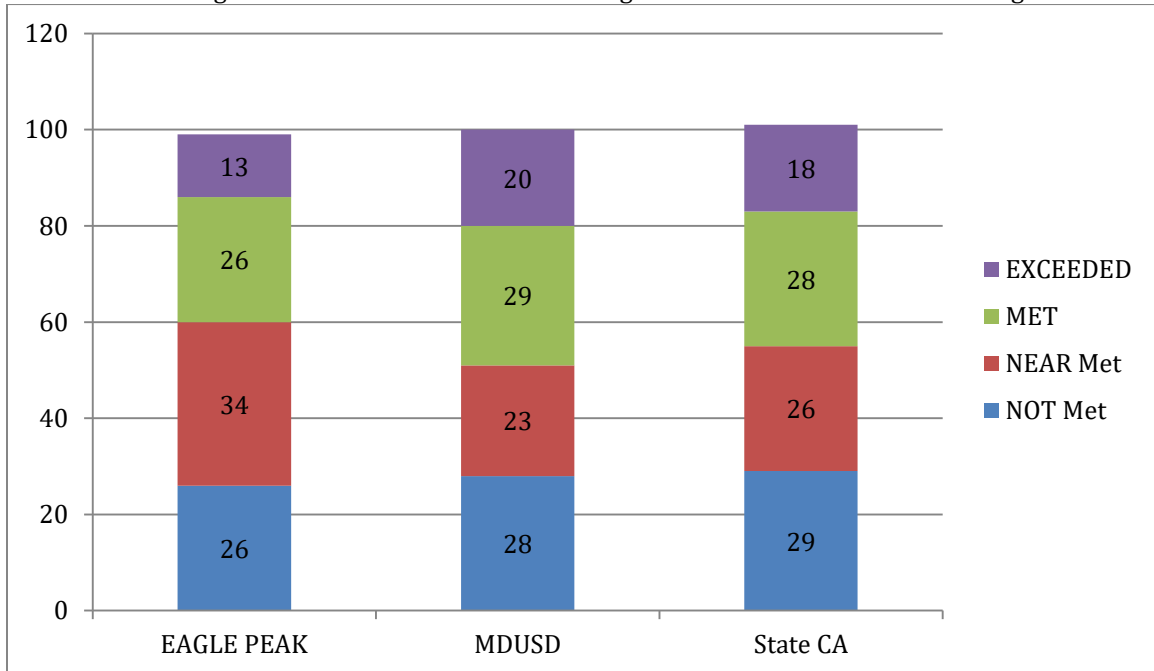
CAASPP MATH COMPARISON

3rd Grade Math

EPMS-39% Passing

MDUSD-49% Passing

CA State-46% Passing

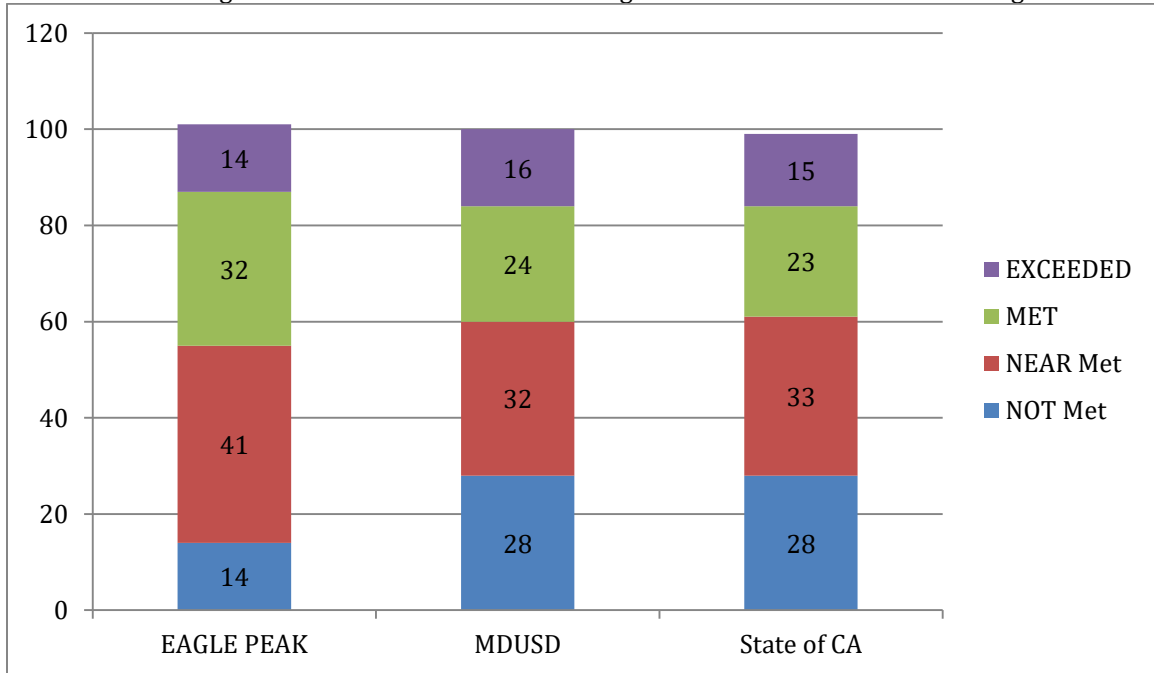


4th Grade Math

EPMS -46% Passing

MDUSD-40% Passing

CA State-38% Passing

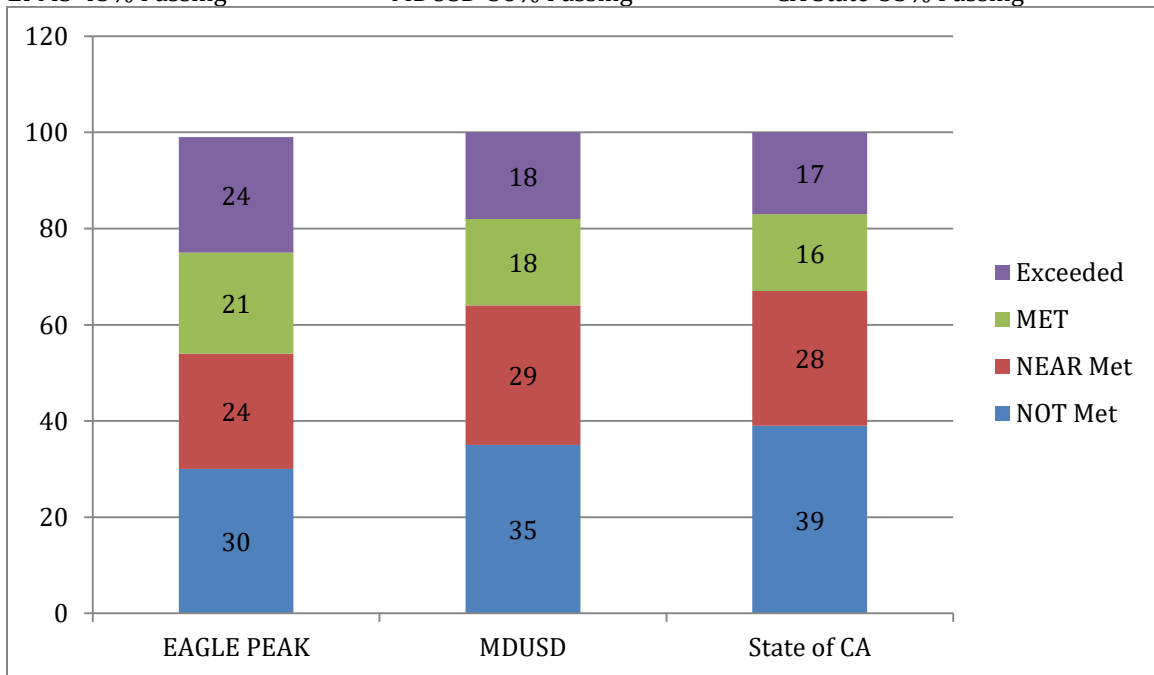


5th Grade Math

EPMS-45% Passing

MDUSD-36% Passing

CA State-33% Passing

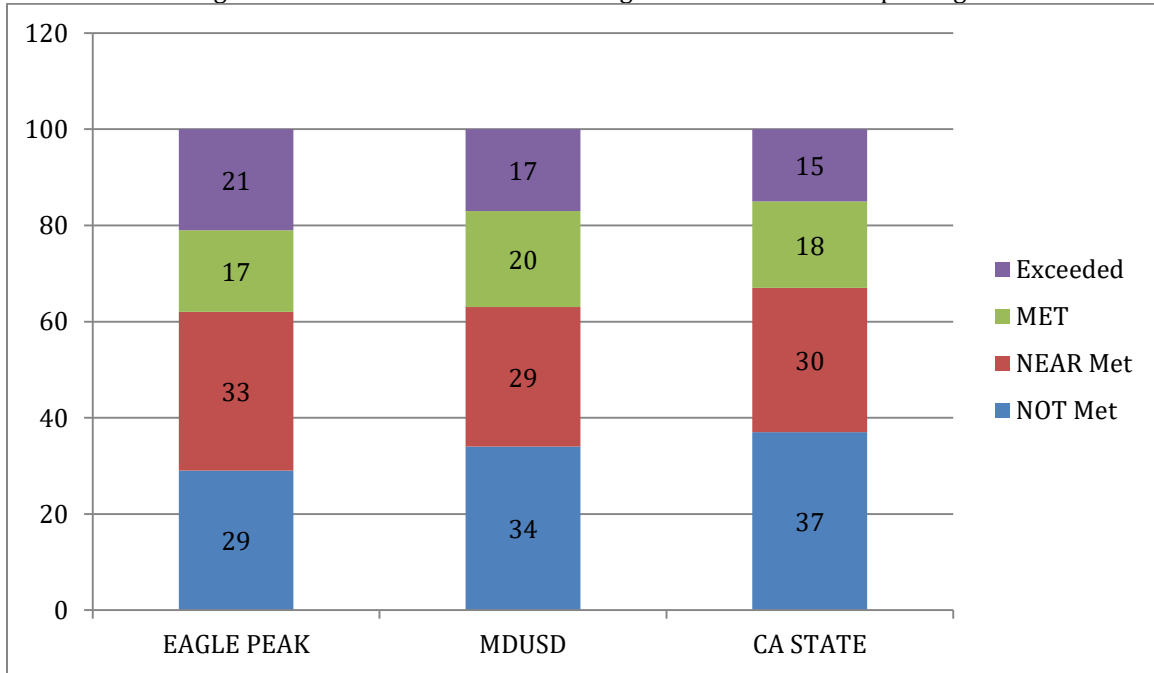


6th Grade Math

EPMS-38% Passing

MDUSD-37% Passing

CA -33% passing

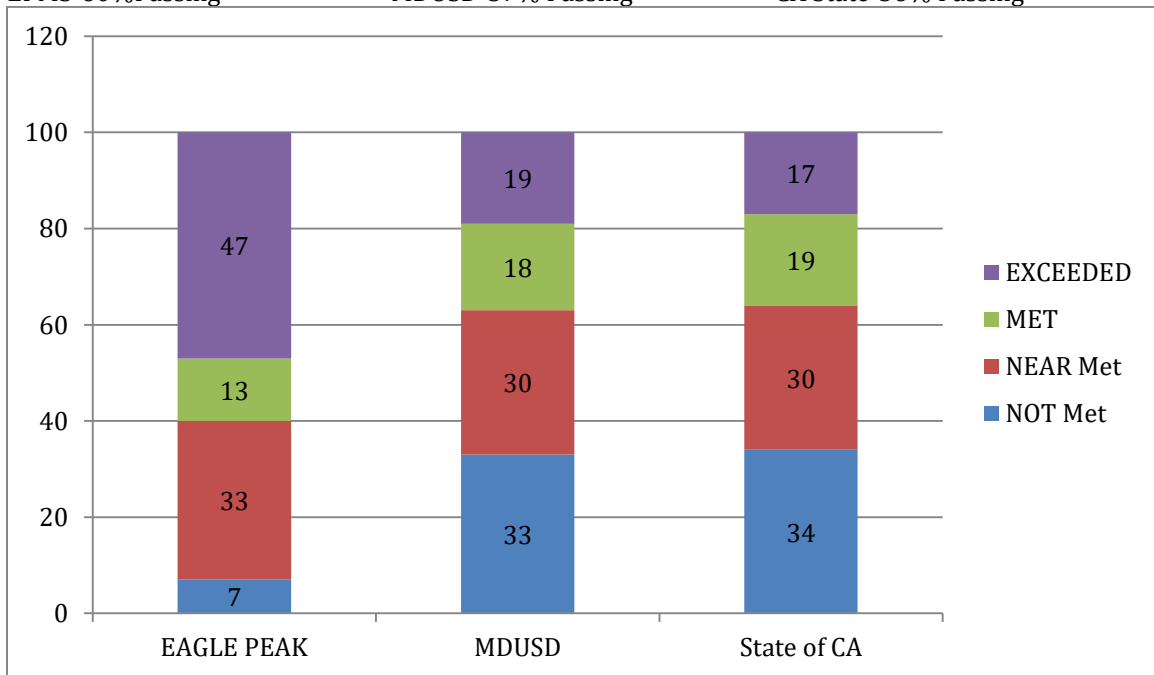


7th Grade Math

EPMS-60% Passing

MDUSD-37% Passing

CA State-36% Passing

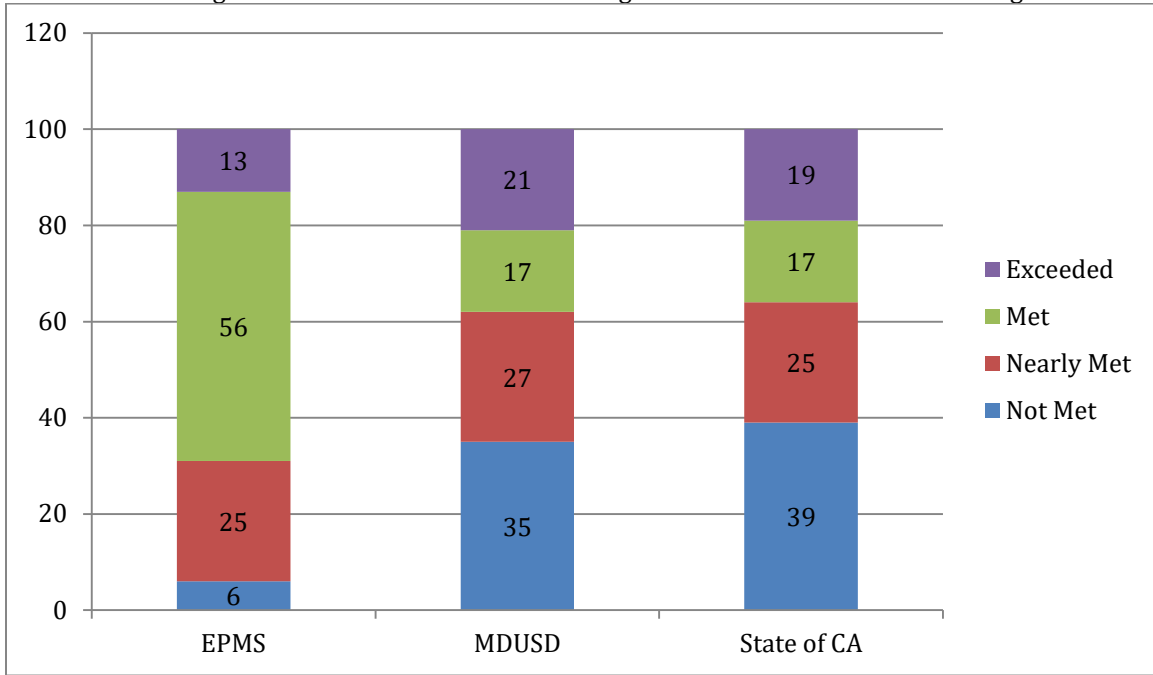


8th Grade Math

EPMS-69% Passing

MDUSD-38% Passing

CA State-36% Passing



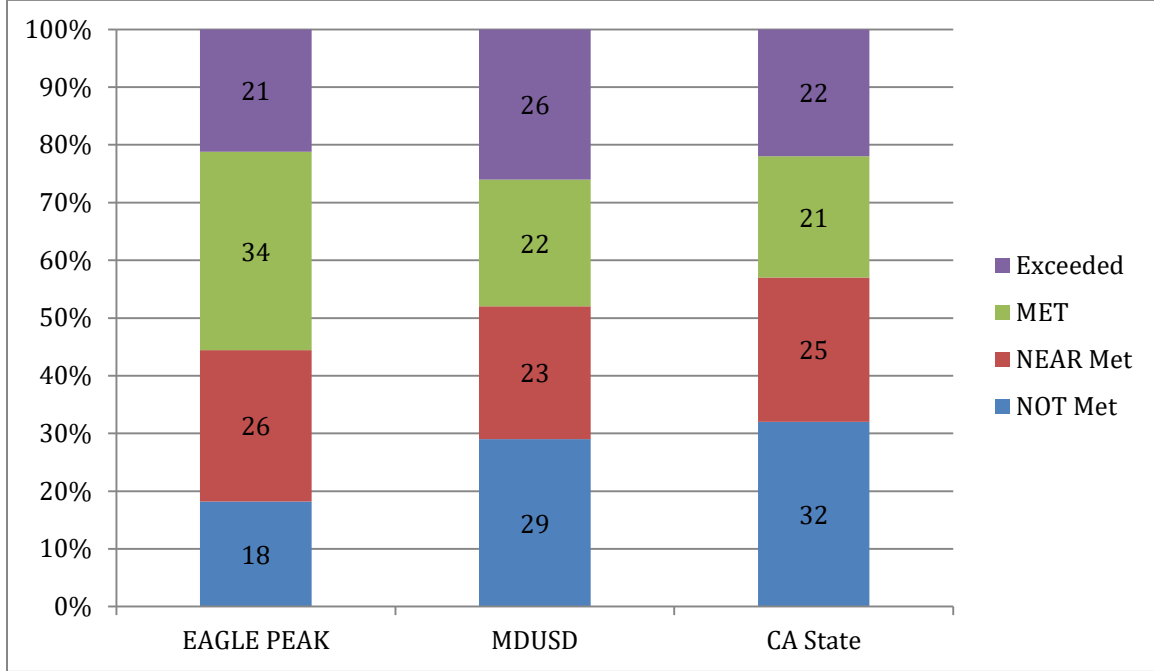
CAASPP ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS COMPARISON

3rd Grade English Language Scores

EPMS- 55% Passing

MDUSD-48% Passing

CA State- 43% Passing

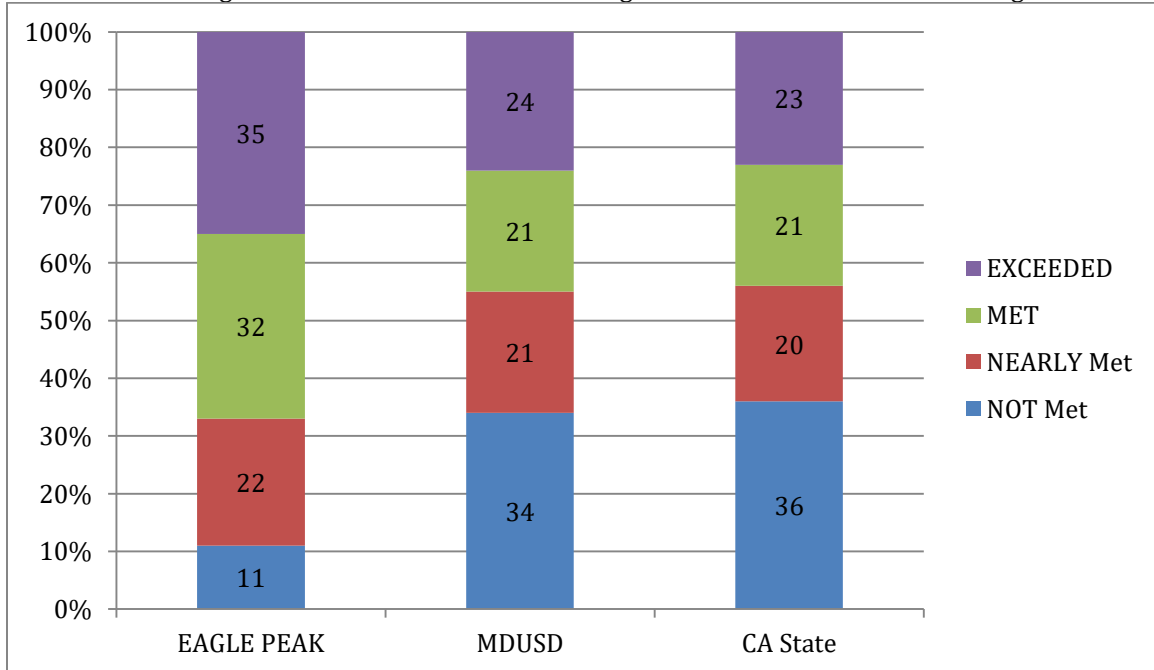


4th Grade English Language Scores

EPMS -67% Passing

MDUSD-45% Passing

CA State-44% Passing

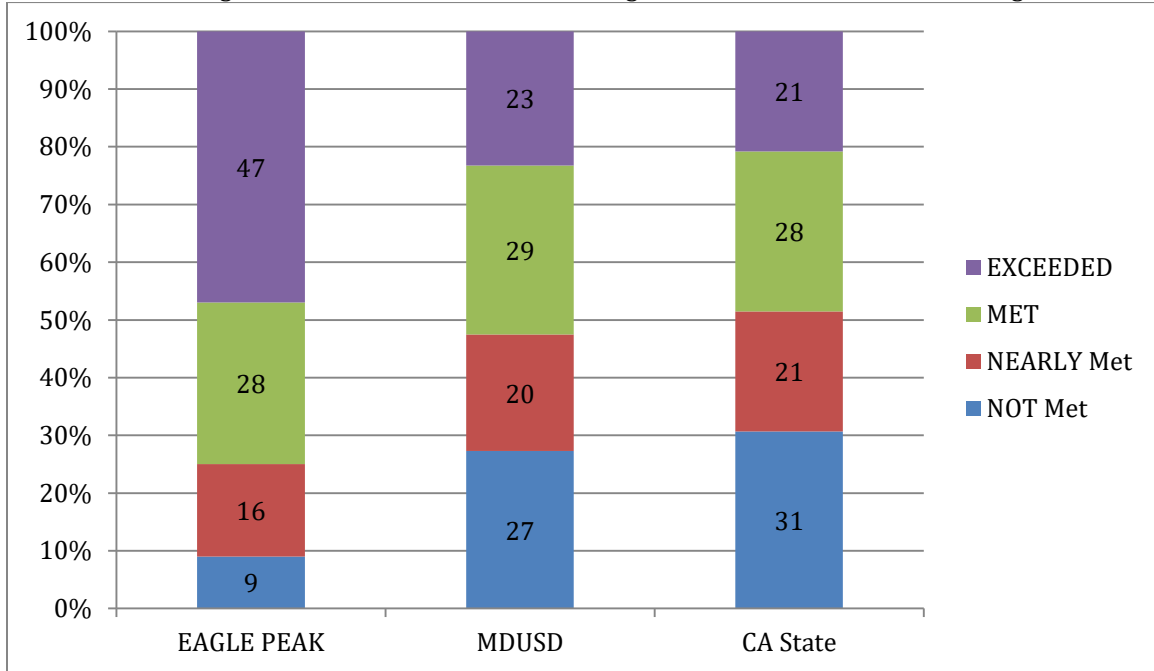


5th Grade English Language Scores

EPMS- 75% Passing

MDUSD- 52% Passing

CA State-49% Passing

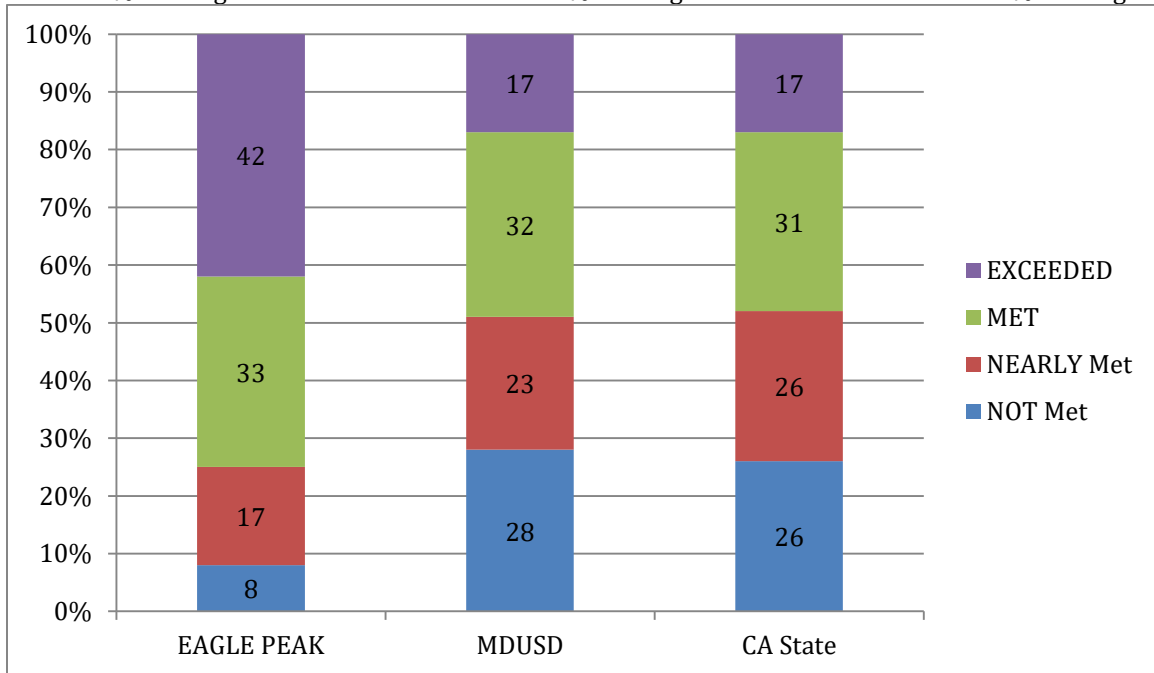


6th Grade English Language Scores

EPMS-75% Passing

MDUSD-49% Passing

CA State- 48% Passing

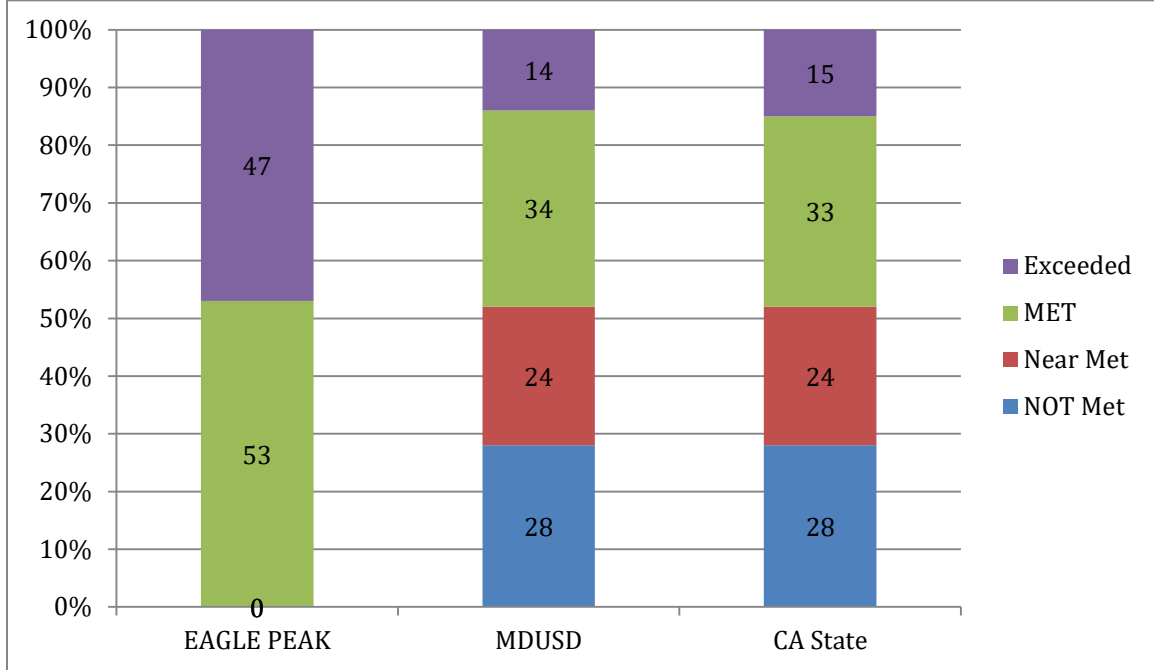


7th Grade English Language Scores

EPMS-100% Passing

MDUSD-48% Passing

CA State-48% Passing

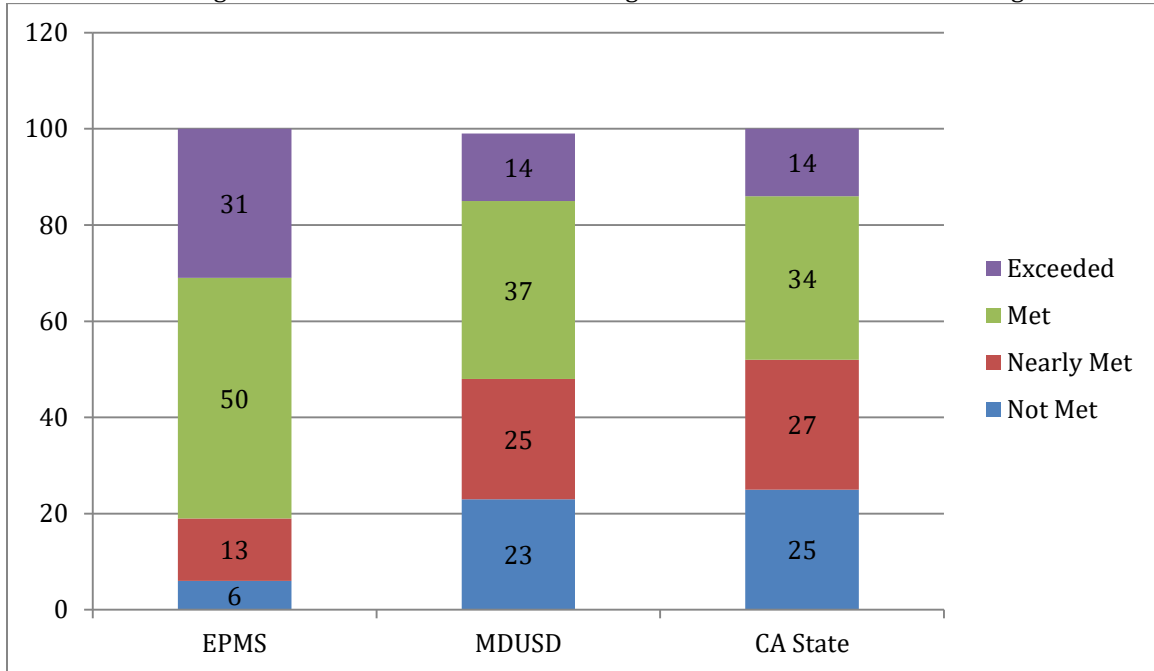


8th Grade English Language Scores

EPMS-81% Passing

MDUSD-51% Passing

CA State-48% Passing



When looking at these test scores, it is obvious that Eagle Peak is performing better in most cases than the state or district. However, we still have higher campus expectations than a 38% passing rate for 3rd grade math. We continue to work in these areas.

As with all Montessori programs, there are ongoing formative assessments which take place as well. These are methods the teachers use to monitor the students' progress on a daily basis. In addition to the formative assessments, we also have standards based testing that we do for our own local purposes. We currently use the DRA (Developmental Reading Assessment), but are in search of a new reading assessment for grades 4-8. The bulk of the DRA at that level requires a written response to the questions and we are concerned that the reading level is not the sole measure on that type of test. We have found other assessments than the DRA that we are working with this year. When a decision is made, we will report back on that. This year we also started using the NWEA (North). This is a computer based test which is reportedly similar to the design of the CAASPP. The hope is that this will serve a dual purpose in preparing the students for the CAASPP and help us to monitor their progress in a way that resembles state accountability. However, in looking at the scores, we saw a large discrepancy in how long the students took on the test in the fall as compared with the spring. Their time to take the test in the fall combined with the scores they received demonstrated a greater sense of attention to the test. The spring results seems skewed as they were administered at the same time as the state test, and perhaps the children were just over tested.

Academic Program Update:

As mentioned in the overview, we had our first group of 8th grade students matriculate. This was a huge milestone. The intern supervisor for AP teacher training program observed Denise May and Annie Rodriguez. She commented that she wished we were closer to their base so that they could send interns to Eagle Peak to see the program that has been created.

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.) After a brief change, we returned in 2015-16 to our original two sessions a year, with voting for a cabinet during each session.

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 2015-16 school year, we continued to come together as Family Groups (see Annual Report for 2012-13) and to hold gatherings. 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. We have 5th grade students share quotes based on the 5 virtues. Sixth 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 98%, which still 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 2015-16, we have recorded 11,865.5 volunteers hours by parents. This was an INCREASE in the volunteer hours by over 2000 hours. This averages to 48 hours per student which is a 4 hour increase over 2014-15. However, since we know that parents do not enter all the hours they work, 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 participating in 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 2015-16 school year, we changed from having a parent organize Parent Education evenings to having the school administration and teaching staff create the parent education opportunities. This year in order to get more parents to PTLG meetings, we combined the meetings with a Parent Education topic.

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 continued to be the PTLG chair for the year, and was joined by a small committee in order to

accomplish all that PTLG oversees. 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 speaking to 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

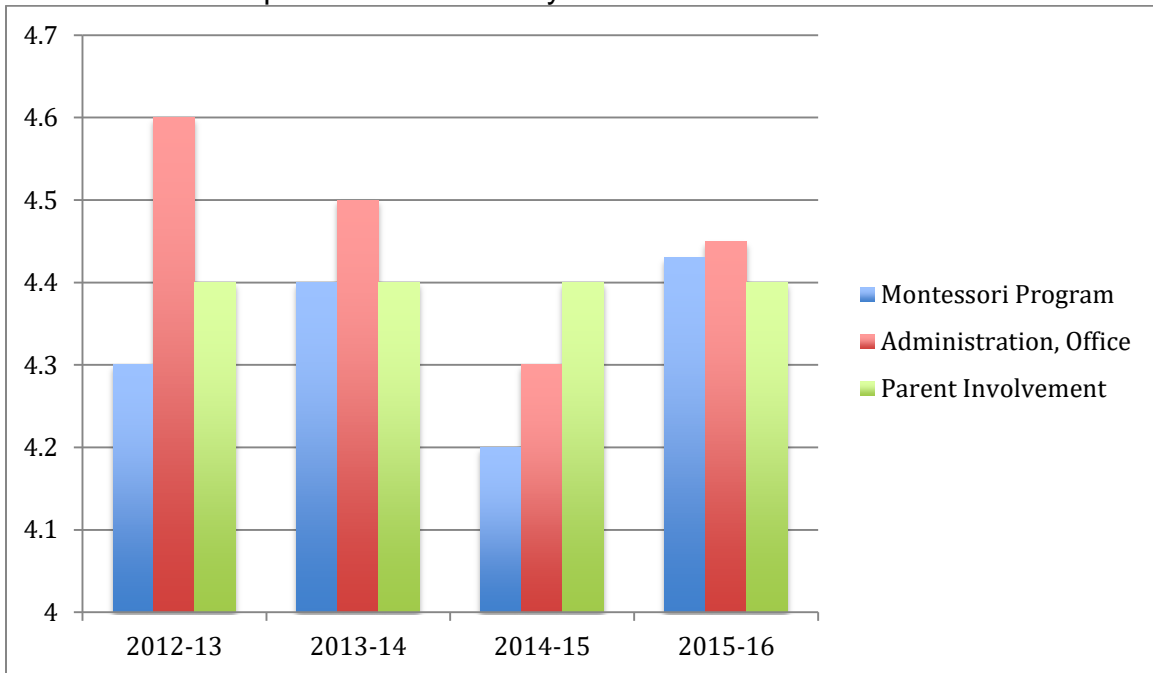
5a. Enrollment Stability

Eagle Peak was fortunate to have a slight growth in student enrollment for the 2015-16 school year. We began the school year with 249 students enrolled, and ended the year with 248 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 2016-2017 school year went well. Each year, the lottery takes place in April of the current 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 turned in their application packet. For the 2015-16 school year, we had 88 applicants for 36, 1st grade openings. There was a total of 165 applicants for the open 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 past four years. (Please refer to past Annual Reports for additional years of data.) We average anywhere from 60-94 responses each year. This year 87 families responded to the survey.



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. Allison Lloyd the music instructor and Ellen Rutgers 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.

The 2015-16 school year was the fourth 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 helps 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

The board voted this year to increase the school's contribution to conferences from \$500 to \$1000 per teacher. 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 goal. The EPMS Board of Directors increased this amount from \$4000 during the 2013-14 school year.

Four teachers from the school attended the American Montessori Conference in Chicago, Illinois.

7c. Certification and Credentialing Support

We continue to have teachers participate in the Cal State program. Once the teacher has completed the requirements for 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

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.

We brought in Peter Gascoyne to work on a financial forecast for the school. This looked at projections 15 years forward. As we progress, we recognize the need to increase the number of classrooms we have moving forward in order to both accommodate the demand for the program, and to guarantee the sustainability of the school.