

### Superintendent Rick Schmitt's Monthly Update

February 24, 2014

*Superintendent Schmitt plans to update the greater San Dieguito Union High School District community through our local media with a monthly update. Topics covered will include curriculum, facilities, budget, safety, and other specific and special interest topics. Today's update focuses on two important topics: Field testing California's new standardized testing system, and technology and infrastructure upgrades across the district.*

#### Field testing California's new standardized testing system

In my fall update I discussed some of the significant changes being made to standardized testing in California. We, along with school districts across California, are participating in a field test of a modern assessment system designed to help shape teaching and learning in the classroom. Known as the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress – or CAASPP – these computer-based tests replace the STAR program. These tests are aligned to the Common Core State Standards for English and math, which the State Board of Education in California adopted in 2010 to describe what knowledge and skills students need to be well prepared for college and careers, no matter where they come from or where they live.

Part of the goal of the field test this year is to determine how well individual questions allow students to demonstrate what they know and still need to learn. We are also taking this opportunity to see how well our technical capabilities meet the demands of computer-based assessments and to see what resources our teachers and schools may yet need.

Finally and importantly, this year also gives your student an opportunity to try out the new system; there will not be any student or school scores generated from the field test. Instead, the state will use what they learn from this field test to help ensure a successful full launch of the system in the 2014-15 school year.

Our next step in our transition to Common Core-aligned assessment is to administer the field test to students in grades 7, 8 and 11 from April 7 - May 16, 2014. Each school site is developing a plan to administer the field test during part of that 6-week window. The testing schedule will differ from years past as students need access to computers to take the exam. Testing schedules will be made available on your school's website as they are confirmed. If you want to see what types of questions students will be asked or how the test will be presented, there is a practice test available online at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/practicetest.asp>. There are also links on our SDUHSD Common Core website <https://sites.google.com/a/sduhsd.net/ccsscommunity/> for more information about the Field Test, as well as videos you can watch.

If you would like additional information, please visit the California Department of Education Smarter Balanced Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/smarterfieldtest.asp>. If you have any questions regarding your child's participation, please contact your school principal.

#### Technology and infrastructure upgrades across the district

As we continue our Prop AA work throughout the district, we are fast-tracking our technology infrastructure upgrades in an effort to keep up with the increased demands of our students and staff. San Dieguito Union High School District believes in a robust, 21st-century, open learning environment that is flexible, adaptable, and technology-rich. Prop AA is a \$449 million bond initiative approved by the voters in November 2012 to "provide safe, modern schools and prepare students for success in college and careers by repairing and upgrading outdated classrooms and schools, construction and upgrading school facilities, including classrooms, science labs, and libraries, improving safety and security, and supporting career training and math, science, and technology instruction with 21st Century instructional technology and facilities."

As we upgrade all nine schools' infrastructure and wireless capacity over the next several years, we are also working to identify how to supplement classrooms and media centers with district-provided devices that meet the instructional needs of our classrooms, including Chromebooks, laptops, tablets, and desktop computers. The District is committed to ensuring equitable access to instructional technology for all students and staff.

Our current technology policy combines allowing students to bring their own technology onto campuses and into classrooms with practices that promote the use of appropriate devices for a variety of applications. Bringing devices to school is not about the devices themselves; it is about creating constructive change in teaching practices and empowering students to make decisions regarding how they will learn in class. Allowing students to bring their own devices to school allows our schools to remain ahead of the curve in terms of innovation. Students are learning to become information producers in addition to information consumers. Our goal is to guide our students in developing the skills they will need to thrive in a rapidly-changing 21st century. Helping students become responsible digital citizens will not only enhance what we do in the classroom, but also give students skills and experiences that will prepare them for college and for careers.

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