

New Support Classes for Language Arts and Math for 2010-11

In September of this year the District was notified that it is a **Program Improvement (PI) District** under the rules of **No Child Left Behind (NCLB)**. Although we made great gains and have much to be proud of, we missed some of the federal targets. As a result, we revised our district's plan for improving student achievement with substantial input from staff and the community. This PI-response plan was approved by our Board of Education and submitted to the state for approval. In the meantime, as required by the state, we have begun to expeditiously implement our new plan. With this plan come some K-12 program changes that we are excited to implement with the start of the 2010-2011 school year. Below is information that we want all families to be aware of.

Most significantly, we are proud to announce that our district has developed a new during-the-day **English Language Arts and Math intervention program** for students who are significantly below grade level. The program is appropriate for below grade level students who are entering the **6th-9th grade** in the Fall. These new courses are part of our continual efforts to meet the needs of all students while focusing on giving extra support to students potentially at risk of not passing the CAHSEE or graduating from High School. Many districts that have had these intervention programs in place for several years are showing **significant** improvement in student skills, test scores and graduation rates. The goal is to accelerate achievement so that next year these students can make much more than one year's growth and be successful in High School and beyond. Here are the answers to some common questions:

What is this new program for eligible students? This Intervention Program---known formally as "Tiered Intervention"--- requires enrolling eligible students in **both** a core, grade level Math or Language Arts course **AND** a second Math or Language Arts support course called a "Companion Course". The goal of the Companion Course is for the teacher to propel the students towards a passing grade in the main, core class so that the student does not need the Companion Course any more. Without this support the student is likely to fall further behind each year.

How will students be assigned to these new courses? Eligibility for enrollment in these classes would be made only after careful consideration of grades, test scores and the recommendation of the current teacher. That is happening this Spring at each school site (including 5th grade at elementary schools). Some students would be in just the two periods of Language Arts (Core Class and Companion Class), some would be in just the two periods of Math (Core Class and Companion Class), and a few others may be in both (Language Arts Core and Companion Class PLUS Math Core and Companion Class)

How will schedules be affected for students who are recommended for the extra period of support in Language Arts or Math? In a six period day, enrollment in this necessary extra support class means that the student will have one less other period available in his/her schedule. This may mean that the student is not enrolled in an elective until they are exited from the Companion Class. At the middle school level, if the student is behind in both Math and Language Arts, the student may not have periods in the schedule for both a year-long Science and a year-long math class. Those students will temporarily take a new course that is one semester of grade level Science and one semester of grade level Social Studies. Again, this a necessary, short-term intervention to ensure success in all academic classes.

When will I know if my student is in need of the support classes? By the end of the year, a letter will be sent out to parents of students who have been identified as benefitting from these new courses.

For more information please contact your site principal.