



Happy Valley School

A California Distinguished School

1864-2015 • 151 Years of Excellence!



Superintendent/Principal
Michelle McKinny
mmckinny@santacruz.k12.ca.us

3125 Branciforte Drive • Santa Cruz • CA • 95065
TEL (831) 429-1456 • FAX (831) 429-6205
www.happyvalley.santacruz.k12.ca.us

Administrative Assistant
Paige Lynd
plynd@santacruz.k12.ca.us

September 8, 2015

Dear 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th Grade Parent /Guardian:

I hope this finds you well as we launch a wonderful new 2015-16 school year. Happy Valley School continues to engage in focused efforts to enhanced curriculum and instruction in all our classrooms; strong schoolwide performance data reflects our successful efforts in this important initiative. Our students continue to show outstanding progress in the mastery of California's rigorous Common Core standards.

In May 2015, your child took part in the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP), the new computer-based tests for English language arts/literacy and mathematics that replaced the former paper-based tests in these subjects. More information about the new test is available on the CA Department of Education website at www.cde.ca.gov/nr/re/ht/caaspp.asp

Your child's 2014-2015 CAASPP test results was mailed to you on Friday. These common core aligned tests were given to all Happy Valley students in Grades 3 through 6 in the spring as mandated by the State Board of Education. All students, unless exempted, were tested in Language Arts and Mathematics, and 5th graders took the standards-based science exam. These new exams are part of California's comprehensive plan for supporting high-quality learning at every school. They are based on California's challenging academic standards, designed to ensure all students graduate college and career ready.

These tests include a wider variety of questions than the multiple-choice tests they replaced, requiring students to explain how they solve problems, think critically, and write analytically. These skills take time and effort to master; as a result, we view these tests as an 'academic checkup.' Like class assignments and report cards, they are one measure of progress, providing you and the teachers with information about your child's progress toward the high goals we set for our students.

Like the new learning goals they were designed to measure, these new tests are much too different from the former CST exams to make comparisons between old scores and new. This year's scores are best thought of as a starting point- a baseline for the progress we expect students to make over time.

These results are also being provided to your current teacher, who will in turn use them to help set learning goals for students this year. We invite you to take an active part in those discussions. If you have questions or concerns about your child's progress, please contact your child's teacher or my office at 429-1456.

The trends are impressive in overall Happy Valley School performance. This is a credit to the outstanding efforts of teachers, support staff, and parents/guardians who enhance the learning experience for students at this special school. I applaud this fine work and look forward to working with the team to provide an outstanding schooling experience for all learners.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive that reads 'Michelle McKinny'.

Michelle McKinny
Superintendent/Principal