

# Curriculum and Instruction Update

## Update on 2021 Spring State Testing - CAASPP

We are preparing to administer the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) test for all eligible students, which includes the ELA and Math portions for all 3rd through 8th grade students, and the California Science Test (CAST) for 5th and 8th grade students. The time it will take students to complete the CAASPP has been reduced considerably from prior years in light of this highly unusual school year. Testing will be administered for both hybrid students and distance learners. *The testing window for administration will take place between April 26th and May 7th.*

The CAASPP test is one of several ways we are assessing students' academic progress this school year. The data from these assessments will be very helpful to teachers and administrators as we plan for the 2021-2022 school year. We ask that parents/guardians please prioritize your students' school attendance during the CAASPP test administration. More details will be shared by Principals about specifics regarding the assessments in the near future.

For more information and resources related to CAASPP testing, please click on the CAASPP website for parents [HERE](#).

## Update on Elementary Trimester Two Report Cards

It has been so exciting to welcome students back to campuses. Our transition to in-person instruction on February 10th included a re-shuffling of several classroom rosters, with many students and teachers returning to hybrid programs and others remaining in distance learning.

During the Board of Trustees meeting on January 21, several parents/guardians made public comments about ways to support our teachers that would facilitate the reopening of our schools to students in a hybrid model of instruction as soon as possible. These comments included strong support for foregoing our second trimester elementary report cards in recognition of the time and effort needed to make the shift from the distance learning to the hybrid model of instruction.

We agree that the transition in models and reconfigured classroom rosters make completing a typical timely, accurate, and comprehensive mid-year report card for all students unfeasible. In many cases, teachers have not had sufficient time working with their new class to complete a traditional end of trimester report card. Please know that all teachers continue to use a variety of tools to better understand their students' growth and progress. These tools include benchmark literacy and math assessments, as well as ongoing formative assessments in all classrooms. Students in Special Education will still receive their second trimester progress reports per their IEPs.

Trimester three report cards with comments will be completed for all elementary students and shared with parents/guardians digitally on May 29, 2021. Details for accessing report cards will be shared later in May. If parents have any questions or concerns about their child(ren)'s progress, they are always welcome to contact their classroom teacher for a conversation or a meeting.

### **Response to Dr Seuss Publisher's Decision**

Theodore Geisel's (a.k.a. Dr. Seuss') books have been prominent in many elementary classrooms for decades. March 2nd marked the annual Read Across America Day, an event begun by the National Education Association in 1998 to promote reading—and intentionally aligned with Geisel's birthday. Recently, however, the business that manages Dr. Seuss' work and legacy said that it plans to stop publishing six of the author's children's books, due to racist stereotypes in the stories.

The six titles that will be pulled from publication are *And to Think That I Saw It on Mulberry Street*, *If I Ran the Zoo*, *McElligot's Pool*, *On Beyond Zebra!*, *Scrambled Eggs Super!*, and *The Cat's Quizzer*. Dr. Seuss Enterprises, which manages the author's legacy, released a statement saying that the books "portray people in ways that are hurtful and wrong."

Orinda USD is deeply committed to our vision of developing communities where all students and families feel welcomed and celebrated. This includes our District Strategic Directions, which state we will **cultivate ethical and respectful citizens** who "develop and defend values and viewpoints that respect diversity and inclusion." This commitment also includes ongoing work with the Wellness, Inclusion, and Student/Staff Equity (WISSE) group and our Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Action (IDEA) partnership with the City of Orinda.

The decision by Dr. Seuss Enterprises has caused us to reflect on the impact of these books, and we believe they are not appropriate to house in our school classrooms or libraries going forward. The negative stereotypes and images they portray are not aligned with our Districts goals or vision that "Everyone Belongs Here."

For more information about the recent decision by Dr. Seuss Enterprises or the associated events, please click [HERE](#). Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns at [dschrag@orinda.k12.ca.us](mailto:dschrag@orinda.k12.ca.us).

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