



*Annual Report*  
*2017-2018*



## **1. Administrative Summary**

As we moved into the 2017-2018 school year, Eagle Peak was once again in transition. Through transition and growth there were celebrations and struggles. Eagle Peak Montessori is proud of the reputation it has earned in the larger Montessori and Charter School communities.

As a staff, we were anticipating the arrival of an additional portable classroom in the fall. However, this classroom arrived in early spring and was not fully functional until the end of the academic year. This found us struggling for space as programs continued to grow.

A large celebration for the year was the return of a third Upper Elementary classroom. Denise May graciously agreed to move to the Upper Elementary program which allowed us to only need to hire one teacher at that level.

One of the programs we intended to begin in this academic year was the Spanish program. We hired Gaby George, a former parent and Montessori credentialed teacher to fill this position. However, as circumstances changed in our Lower Elementary classrooms, Ms. George became a teaching assistant first in room 401 to fill in during Sara Kagan-Real's family leave, and then to assist in room 302 when Robin Christiansen had to leave for family reasons mid year. It was incredibly fortunate to have a Montessori trained teacher available to fill in those positions. We hope to institute the Spanish program in the Fall of 2018.

Academically, Eagle Peak is still adjusting to the new testing which has now taken place for four years. A comparison of those scores is included in this report.

## **2. Achievement of Academic Goals**

We are now in the fourth 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.

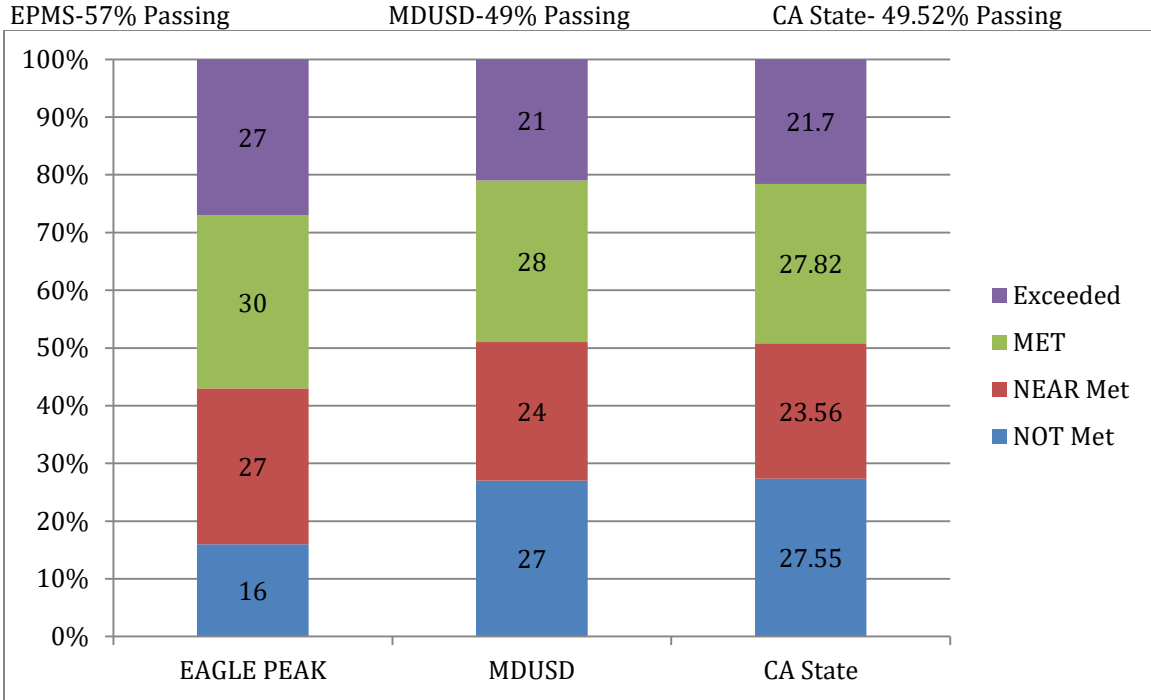
While our scores are higher than the district's scores for grades 3,4 and 6,they are within 1 percentage for 5<sup>th</sup> grade, but drop in comparison for grades 7 and 8. Math continues to be the lower area of achievement. Despite additional teacher professional development, we are still struggling with this area. To be fair, the entire state is still not seeing even 50% of the students in any grade level passing this test in Math. For Eagle Peak, the desired outcome is a greater understanding of how to blend Montessori instruction with Common Core 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 Eagle Peak continues to surpass both the

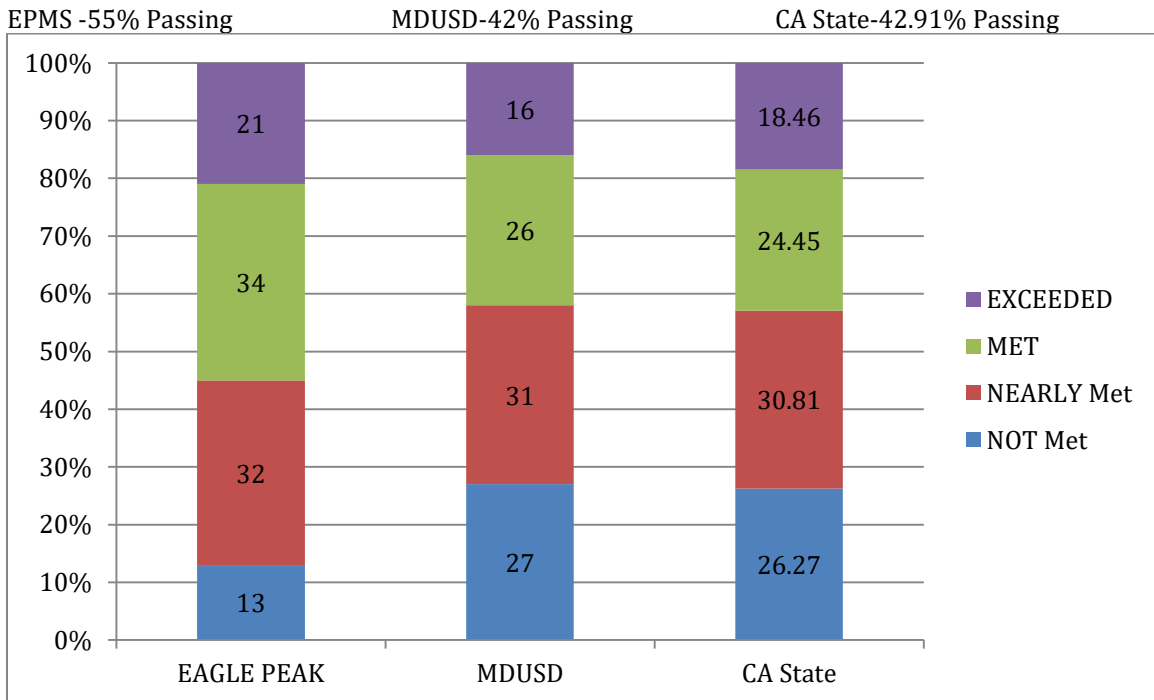
District and the State in average of students passing the English Language Arts portion of the CAASPP.

# CAASPP MATH COMPARISON

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade MATH Scores



## 4<sup>th</sup> Grade MATH Scores

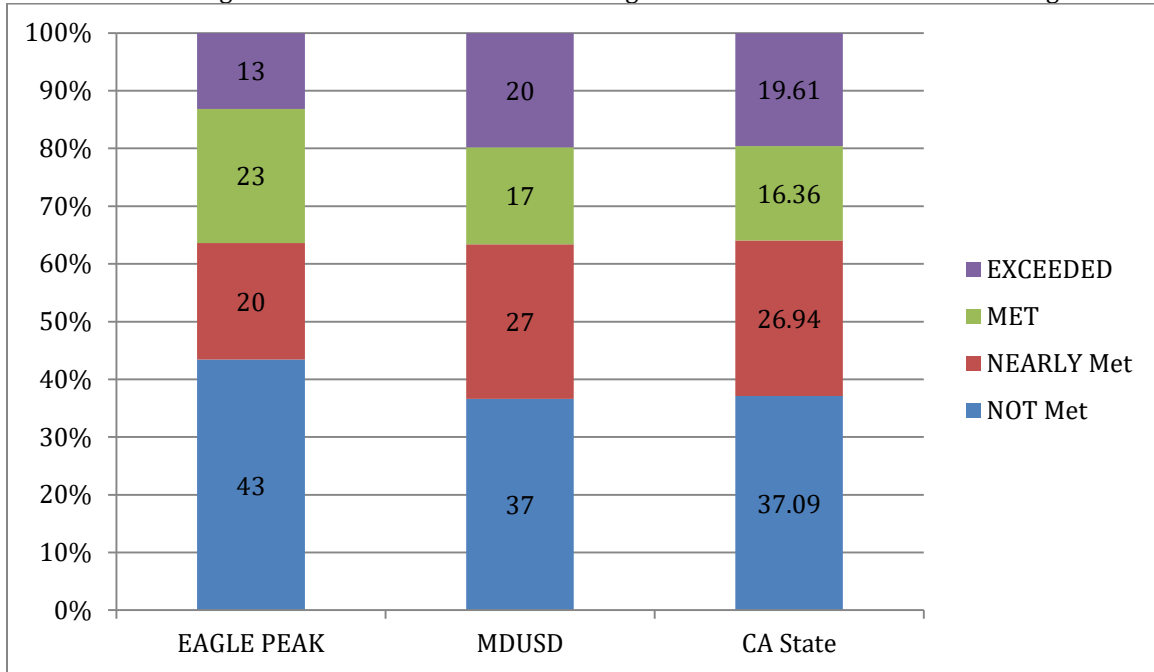


## 5<sup>th</sup> Grade MATH Scores

EPMS- 36% Passing

MDUSD- 37% Passing

CA State-35.97% Passing

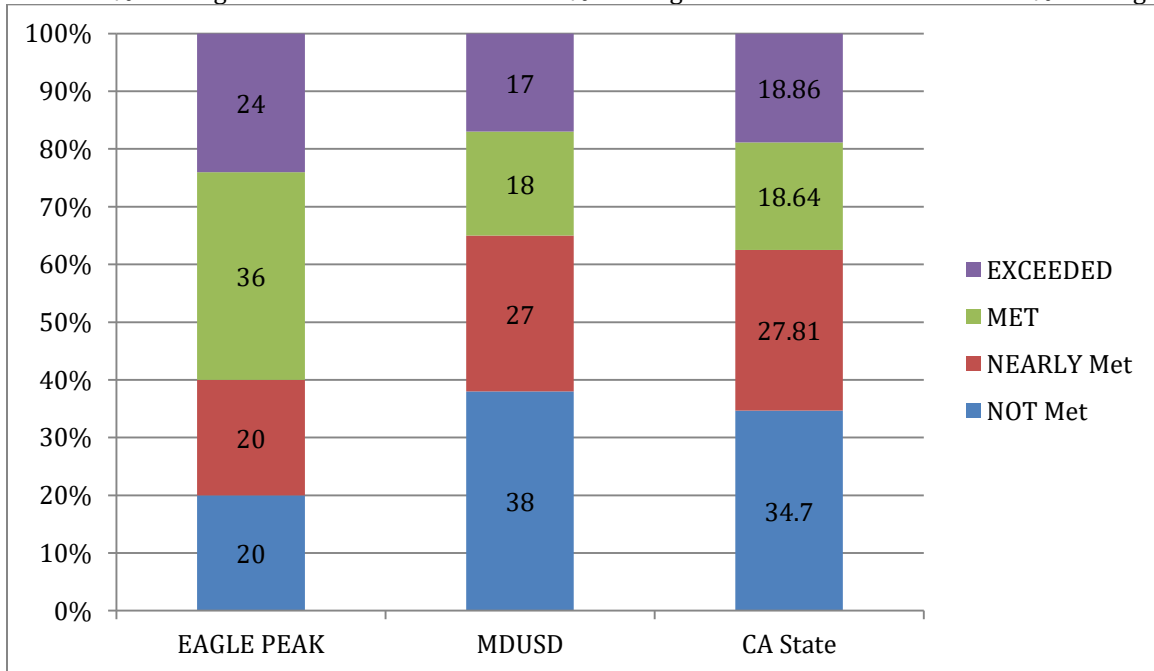


## 6<sup>th</sup> Grade MATH Scores

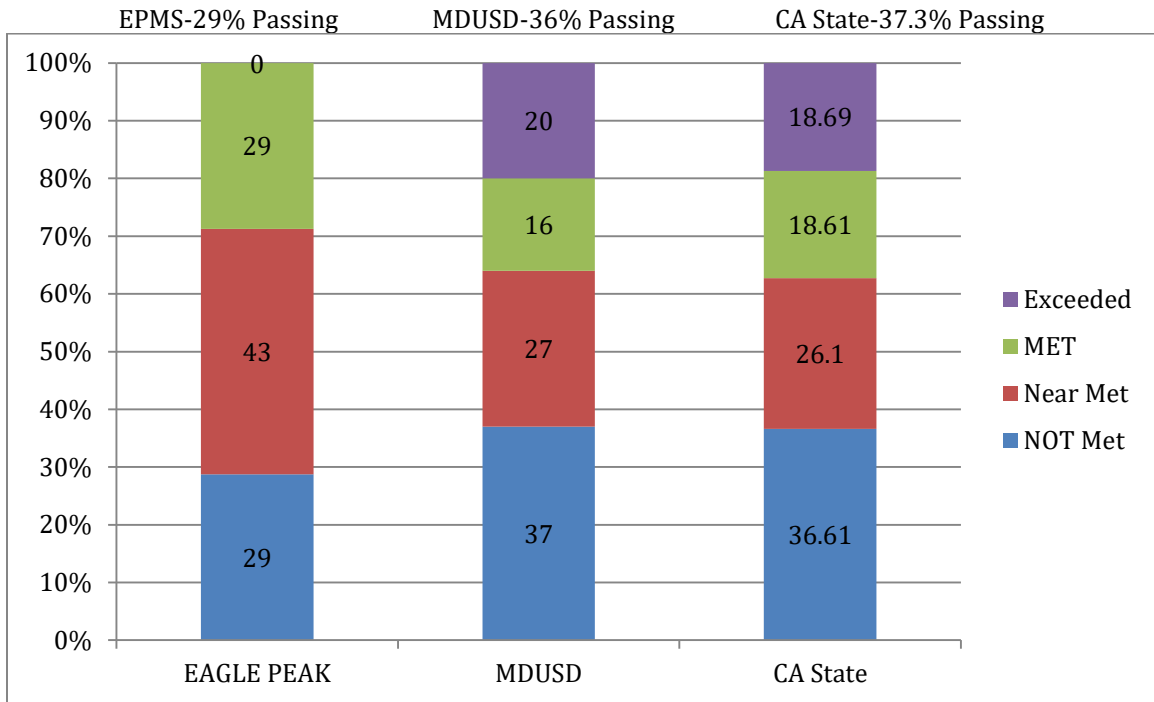
EPMS-60% Passing

MDUSD-35% Passing

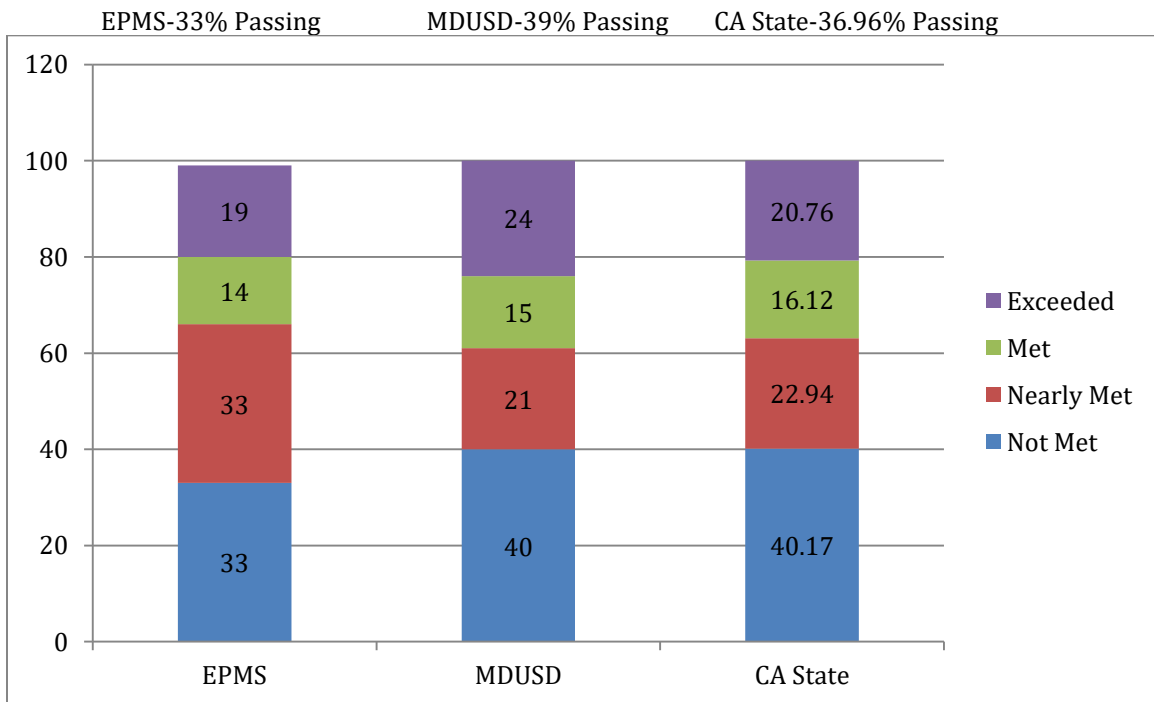
CA State- 37.5% Passing



## 7<sup>th</sup> Grade MATH Scores



## 8<sup>th</sup> Grade MATH Scores



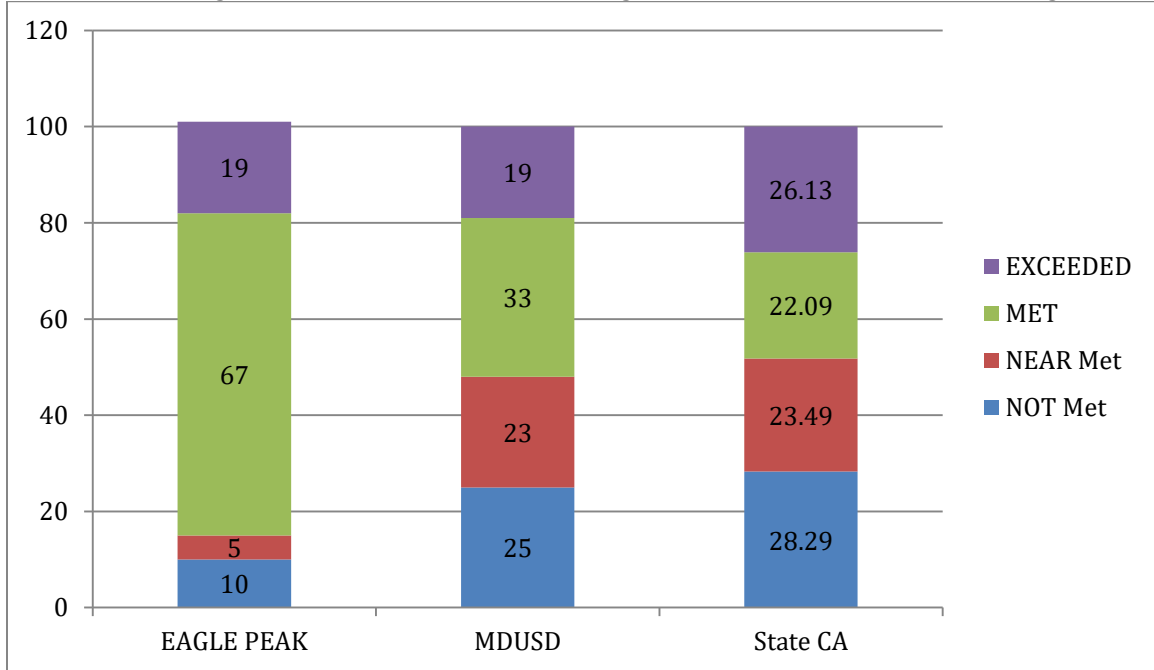
# CAASPP ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS COMPARISON

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade ELA

EPMS-86% Passing

MDUSD-52% Passing

CA State-48.22% Passing

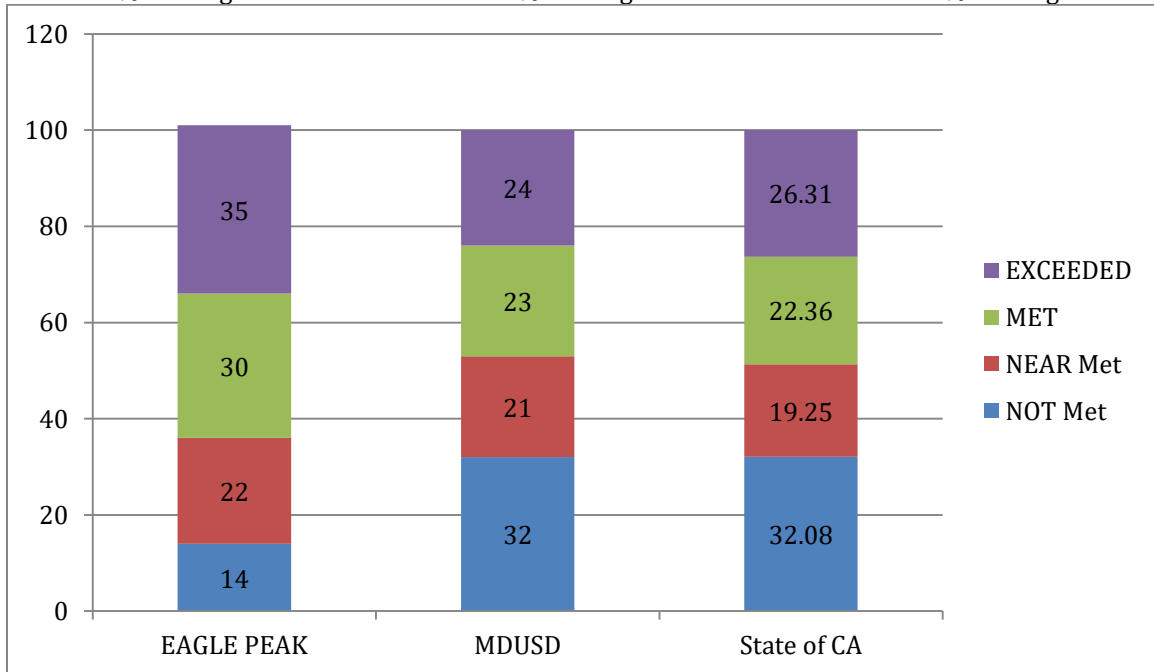


## 4<sup>th</sup> Grade ELA

EPMS -65% Passing

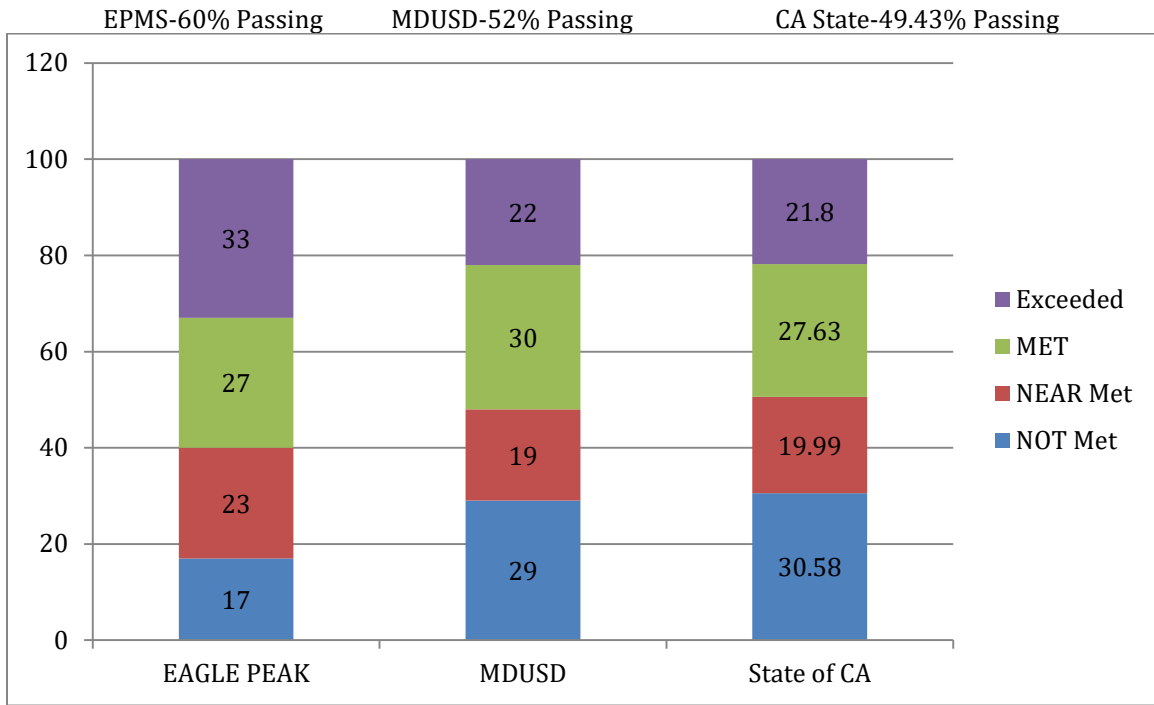
MDUSD-47% Passing

CA State-48.67% Passing

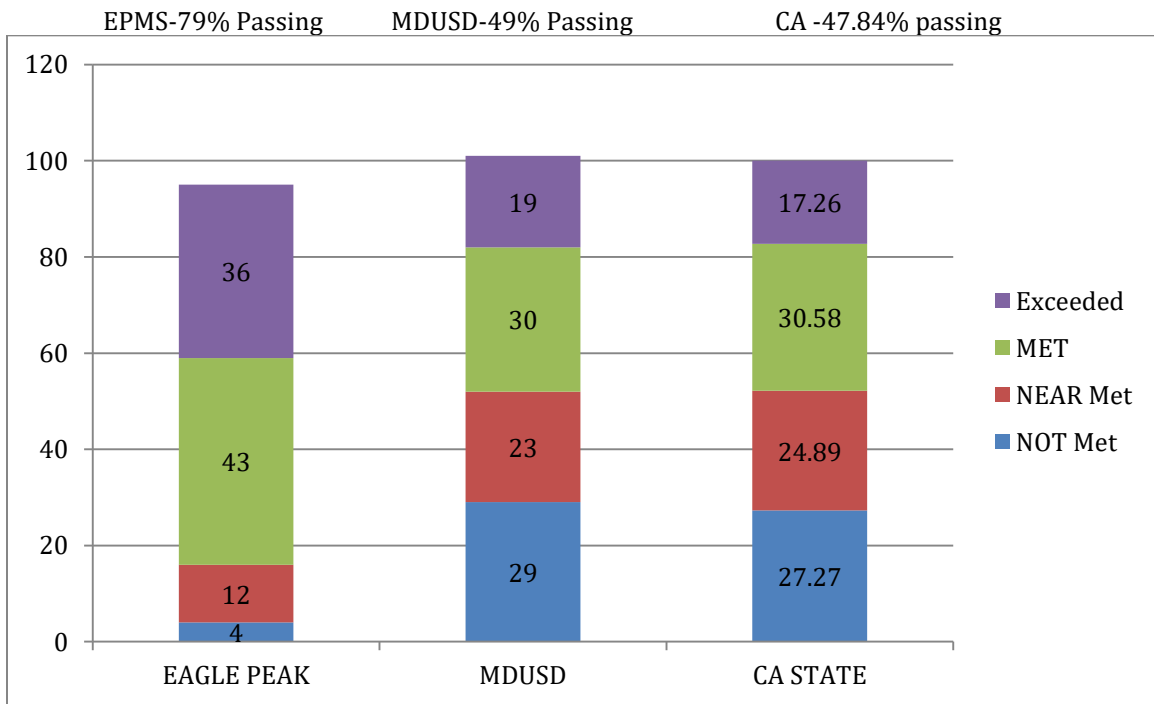




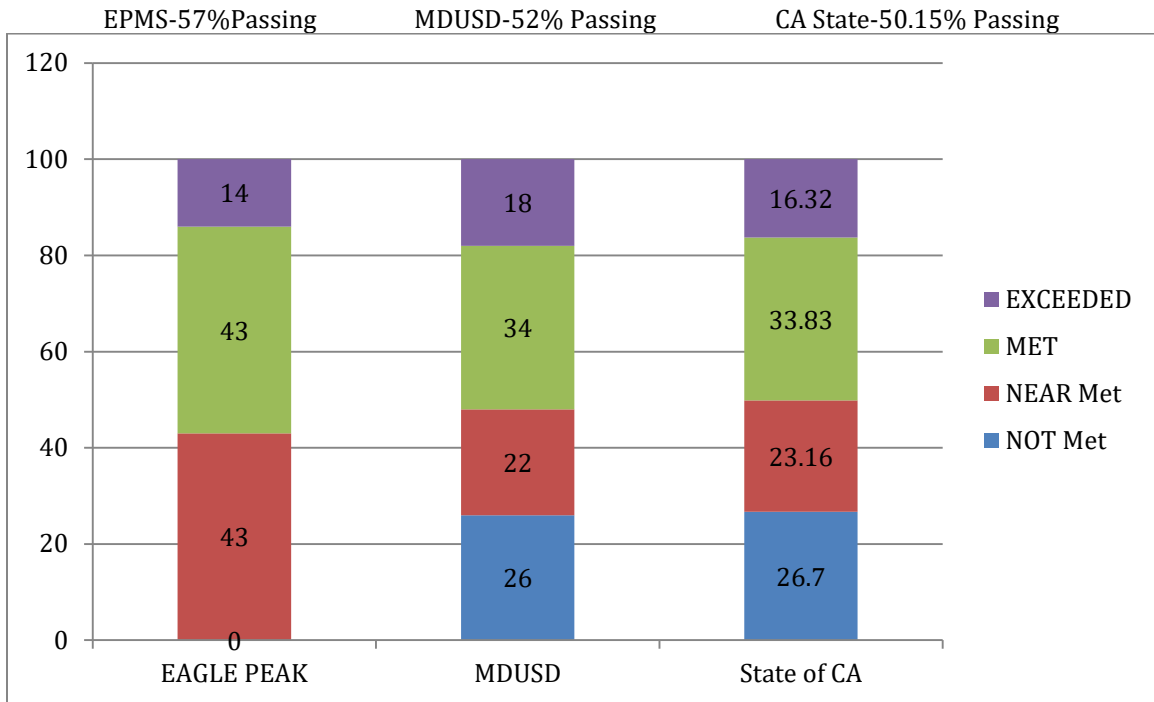
# 5<sup>th</sup> Grade ELA



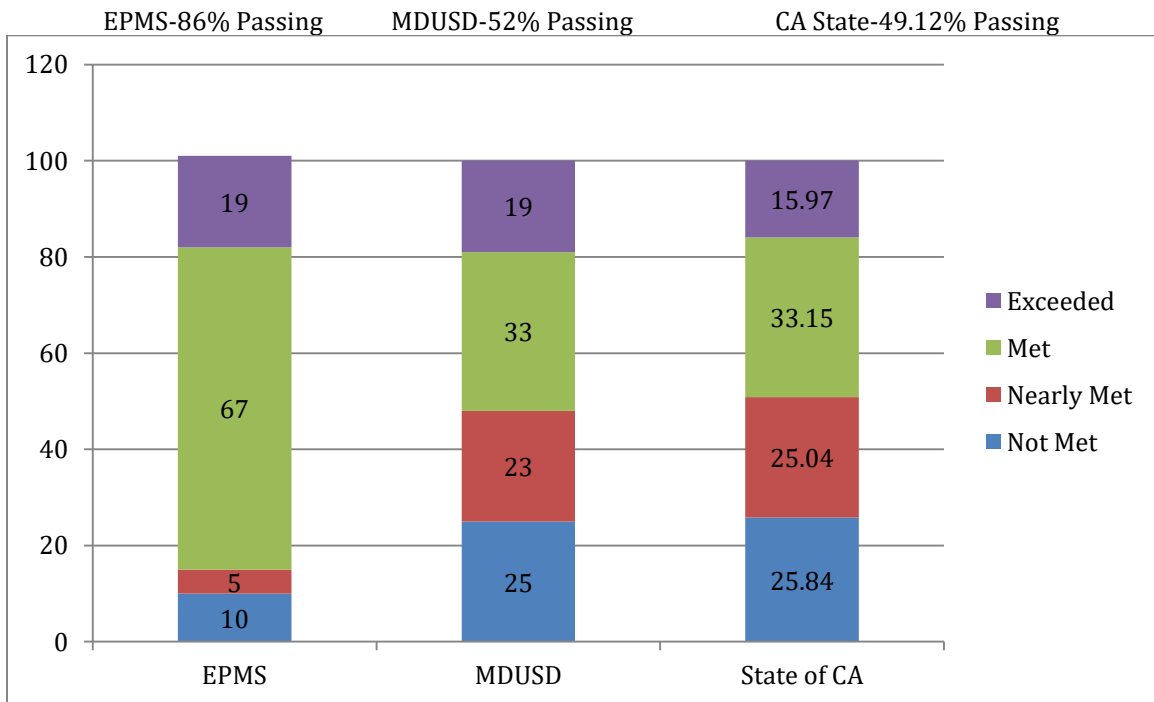
# 6<sup>th</sup> Grade ELA



## 7<sup>th</sup> Grade ELA



## 8<sup>th</sup> Grade ELA



When looking at these test scores it is important to note that while Eagle Peak's scores are definitely not what we would want in math, the state as a whole is struggling. The hope is that the state reflects upon this and makes any changes that would reflect better what the students across the state are being taught and in turn learning. It is hard to imagine that up to 60% of the state's students are not retaining a basic level of understanding of the grade level standards.

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. This past year we decided to implement Fontis and Pinnell reading assessment for grades 4-8. We made this change based on the fact that the bulk of the DRA at the higher levels 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.

Three years ago, Eagle Peak also started conducting the NWEA (Northwest Educational Assessment). 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. The fall tests seem to be a more accurate measure of the students' levels. In the spring, it seems as though students rush through and are not as engaged in the process. This of course does not hold true for all students, however, it is a factor with some of the students.

#### Academic Program Update:

As mentioned in the overview, we had our third group of 8<sup>th</sup> grade students matriculate. This is a huge milestone. One of the board members from MDUSD attended and was very impressed by the student speeches. We have continued having Science as a pull-out for Upper Elementary and Adolescent Program.

It is difficult to discuss the Adolescent Program without getting emotional. The work that the staff has put into this program, first with the partnership of Denise May and Annie Rodriguez continuing through personnel changes, is extraordinary. The energy they put in is definitely witnessed through the development we see in the adolescent students from 7<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Working with adolescents is a challenge, and the classroom has definitely experienced the pangs of adolescent angst, but through it we see students leave our program as confident young adults who can express themselves in any situation.

### **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.

The Adolescent Program takes on the role of community service and global citizenship. The AP students work to serve our school community by helping to distribute lunch on Tuesdays and Fridays as well as through the Friday Market on Fridays. However, their service does not stop at our gate. They go out into the larger, community to do service as well. They stock food at pantries and work at Rogers Ranch as well.

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 2016-2017 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. Most Mondays we meet in the courtyard for our Monday Gathering. We have 5<sup>th</sup> 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 Common Core based 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 common core 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, Community Foundation for Eagle Peak, Community Connection Committee, Parent Volunteer opportunities, and Parent Education.
- Completing a minimum of 40 volunteer hours (20 additional hours for additional students). During 2016-2017, we have recorded 12,067.77 volunteers hours by parents. This was an increase in the volunteer hours by over 200 hours. This averages to 48.67 hours per student which is a .67 hour increase over 2016-17. However, since we know that parents do not record 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 2017-18 school year, we established the Community Connection Committee. This committee started during the 2016-17 school year as the Cultural Awareness Committee. However, the group felt strongly that the way to have awareness and anti-bias was to start by making connections within the community.

Eagle Peak does not participate in the Parent Teacher Association (PTA). Rather, the Head of School opted to create Eagle Peak's own parent group in 2003 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**

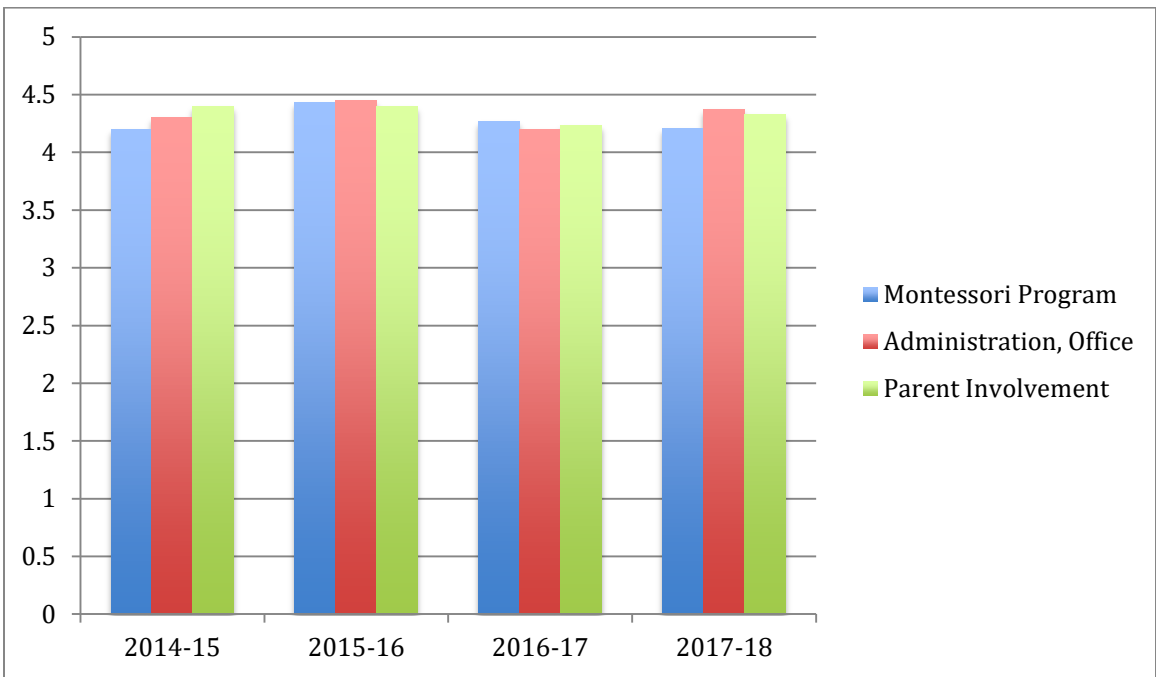
### **5a. Enrollment Stability**

Eagle Peak was fortunate to have a slight growth in student enrollment for the 2017-18 school year. The 2016-17 school year saw a slight decline from 248 to 235 but we were back to 244 in the 17-18 school year. 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 2018-19 school year went well. We anticipated starting an additional Lower Elementary classroom and had plenty of applicants from which to do this. 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 2018-19 school year lottery, we had 87 applicants for 52, 1<sup>st</sup> grade openings. There was a total of 191 applicants for the open grade levels in the lottery. In 2015, the Eagle Peak Board of Directors voted to freeze enrollment in 5<sup>th</sup> 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 40-94 responses each year. This year 44 families responded to the survey. Our current survey is divided into several sections including: Parent Experience, Classroom Experience, School Administration, Board of Directors as well as School Climate and Culture. The areas measured below are based on sections of the survey that directly ask about these areas of the program. The scores are an average of the questions in these specific areas.



## **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 annual CSDC fall leadership conference. 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 currently serves on the American Montessori Society Board of Directors. For six years Ms. Hammons was a team leader for the CSDC Leadership Institute during the summer.

### **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.

The 2017-2018 school year was the sixth 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 in 2016, 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.

Five teachers from the school attended the American Montessori Conference in Denver, Colorado. Michelle Hammons and Sibyl Buckner presented for the second time on "Authenticity through Autonomy: Montessori in the Charter Sector".

### **7c. Certification and Credentialing Support**

We continue to have teachers participate in the Cal State Teach 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 Teacher Induction Program. We will have 4 teachers starting this program in the fall of 2018.

### **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.

Eagle Peak will be starting a fourth Lower Elementary classroom in the fall of 2018. This will bring an additional 40 students on campus. We have not opened an additional Lower Elementary classroom since the second year of the school.

We also retained a larger number of our 5<sup>th</sup> grade into 6<sup>th</sup> grade students than in previous years. We had 26 students stay for 6<sup>th</sup> grade.