



Jon Ray, Superintendent  
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September 24, 2019

To Parents, Teachers, Students and Staff-

Bishop Unified School District is experiencing an epidemic of academic under-performance in our students. The most recent state data shows BUSD holding steady with two-thirds (!) of our students unable to meet grade level standards in math when they complete the school year. For example, according to the most recent standardized test given in the Spring of 2019, 31% of our students in 4<sup>th</sup> grade were at grade level; unfortunately, 69% were not. This means that over 100 of the 150 students in 4th grade last year were promoted to 5th grade, yet not scholastically ready to be 5th graders. The data shows the same level of under-achievement for the past several decades, in fact Bishop kids consistently score approximately 10% below the California state average in English Language Arts and 3% below the average in math; the state average is unacceptable on its own. The Board of BUSD has taken a stand through our new Superintendent Jon Ray to reject the notion that our students are really this disparate from benchmark. The BUSD Board is not pointing blame, this is a collective effort (failure) between generations of board members, administrators, teachers, parents and community members. We are now asking the question: can we be better? And the next question: how can we be better? Both of the hot button issues at Thursday's meeting were tools that the BUSD Board is evaluating to answer the latter. Mandated state testing occurs in May before the school year is finished, yet the results are announced in September, which is too late to change a student's trajectory. MAP testing is an instantaneous diagnostic test to assess the academic health of each individual student in real-time. The advantage? We can now know that the 4th grade student is under-achieving BEFORE he/she reaches 5th grade and maybe we can help him/her accelerate and reach grade-level in a timely manner. The problem? The burden that is placed on the teacher to analyze and implement a tailored response to each of his/her 27 students is immense. In the age of technology, there are a multitude of teaching tools that are delivered electronically that can produce specifically targeted material to that struggling student, to ALL struggling students, simultaneously in the classroom. A teacher cannot possibly be everything to every student in the classroom. Edgenuity is a proprietary mechanism to deliver this 'differentiated' material to each and every student. This product has similar competitive products and we will be evaluating those as well. **We have no intention to replace current curriculum, we have no intention to replace the teacher(s) in the classroom, we have no intention to use this as a teacher evaluation method (which is against CA state law), we simply intend to answer the question: how can we be better?**

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