



from the office of Superintendent Robert Collins

Building a Strategic Plan for Grossmont Schools



Assemblyman Joel Anderson and Superintendent Bob Collins Discussing the Strategic Plan for Grossmont

Assemblyman Joel Anderson and Bob Collins had the opportunity to discuss the Grossmont District last week. Both shared an interest in three proposals: **Career Tech Education (CTE), home schooling and values education.** These subjects will be part of a strategic plan that will be presented to the Board of Education on February 21st.

A Focus on Career Tech Education

A strong interest exists for a Career Technical Education Plan that addresses every school in our District. Our draft for a district-wide CTE plan is currently being compiled by the CTE/ROP Department with input from all of the stakeholders. The plan sets a goal for approximately 30 Career Academies/Pathways based on state industry sectors. This long range plan will seek to **modernize current facilities**, develop greater numbers of strong **business partners**, **integrate academic curriculum** and strengthen the existing **partnership with Grossmont-Cuyamaca** community colleges.

Home Choice

Also of interest are the hundreds of East County students who are home-schooled. As a school District, we have a responsibility to students and parents to support their home school decision. To address this need, we will propose a major **expansion of our Home Choice program** in February.

Character and Values Education

There is also widespread agreement on the importance of **character and values education** in our schools. This is an area of concern for most parents and our business community. Our plan will address both supporting current character education programs and expanding our efforts.

The above areas are important to our schools and community. We are fortunate in the East County to have legislators such as Assemblyman Joel Anderson who support our schools and our efforts to design programs that will support real school reform.

READING: A FOCUS ON ACHIEVEMENT

In visiting schools, several issues have become evident – **too many students are not reading at grade level.** Students not reading at grade level are at risk of not graduating and limit their college and career opportunities.



Grossmont Teachers: Joann Phillips, ESL Coordinator & LeAnne Ginn, Literacy Coordinator

At the same time, we have examples of what can be done if we generate a new focus and expectation regarding reading. How will we address this issue in the coming years? As always, we have many experts among us. Joann Phillips, English as a Second Language (ESL) Coordinator and LeAnne Ginn, Literacy Coordinator at **Grossmont High School**, have been leaders in designing several bold and innovative steps to address reading. Those steps are outlined here along with additional ideas to drive a new focus on reading in 2008-09.

1. Inform all entering students and their families that **there is an expectation that every student will be reading at grade level.** There should be no idea that students will “just be passed along” even though they are reading 2, 3 or more grades below grade level.
2. Identify students not reading at grade level in the 8th grade – prior to entering high school – based on **multiple measures.** Then, **continuous assessment** of student reading development will occur.
3. Students not reading at grade level need to be in a **reading support program designed to bring them up to grade level.**
4. Offer teachers the opportunity to earn **Reading Specialist credential/certification.** This would allow us to have teachers who have the expertise to teach reading at each school site.
5. **Reading is everyone's responsibility.** While I understand that everyone wants to teach their subject content, the reality is that many students cannot be successful unless they have the tools and skills to access text and other materials.
6. **Professional Learning Communities** provide the perfect opportunity for teachers to discuss and analyze reading strategies in the content area.
7. Maintain **sufficient reading materials** for students both in the classroom and the library.
8. **Expand technology** (and, in particular, computers) in the classrooms.
9. Ensure **adequate staffing** for the reading support program.
10. Programs should use **multiple instructional materials.**
11. **Pedagogy is directly connected to the California High School Exit Examination.**

Finally, at Grossmont, **“struggling readers” and English Learners (beginning and intermediate) are in the same reading support program.** The combined effort provides for the targeted use of limited resources while providing English Learners with the very best reading instruction. The results have been significant over the past two years.

Data indicates the importance of having a dedicated reading support program and a renewed focus on addressing English Learners. It will be a topic for Instructional Councils. The design and implementation of a strong reading plan for struggling readers and English Learners will be reviewed by school teams this spring as part of an overall District strategic plan.