



Clara Schmiedt meets with educators to discuss QISA practices.



MHS Teacher Tim Jensen works with a student.

How Quality Instruction Improves Education in Manteca

The decline of academic standards in public schools is one of the most controversial education issues today, but in Manteca Unified School District, educators are coming together to reverse this trend. In Manteca Unified, the quality of education is not based just on teachers' qualifications and materials taught, but on staff collaboration and teaching strategies. Why? Because students deserve a high-quality education that provides them with the tools to navigate real world situations.

Quality Instruction for Student Achievement, also known as QISA, is a key component in improving the academic success of high school students in MUSD. It is a Tier-1 support system that establishes an overarching network of educators specifically for the support of student success in high school and beyond. More importantly, QISA encourages teachers to collaborate and implement strategically agreed upon curriculums, and it provides valuable feedback for their teaching practices.

"This year, sites have worked to identify essential standards and are working on [developing] Common Formative Assessments," shares Clara Schmiedt, Executive Director of Secondary Education in MUSD. "The data [we receive] will develop best practices across the district."

While all California high school curriculums teach and assess students on state-wide standards, MUSD teachers also focus on individual schools' essential standards, which are the needs and gaps in education. For example, English Language Arts essential standards for speaking, listening, and language are different at every MUSD high school. A campus with less native English-speaking students will require different essential standards and curriculums for student success than one with an English-speaking majority.



"All teachers need support and training on how to delve a little deeper to find the essential standards," explains Bonnie Stogner, a Teacher on Special Assignment and QISA facilitator. She leads QISA meetings with different departments and helps them decide on which essential standards to focus on for different subjects. "It all goes back to supporting all students learning in all different areas."



With the help of site- and subject-based essential standards, teachers can help students achieve success by teaching them how to think critically and how to demonstrate their knowledge. Students' progress is tracked through Common Formative Assessments, or CFAs, regularly administered tests based on the identified essential standards for each subject.

Unlike MAP tests, which assess whether students are meeting state standards for Reading and Math, CFAs also test for efficacy of materials and instruction. Instead of

testing students purely on state standards, the goal of CFAs is to ask and answer whether students are learning at all. By comparing post assessment data and analysis, teachers can identify and focus their efforts on areas students struggle in.

That's what makes QISA an essential Tier-1 support system in Manteca Unified: it provides the District with quality data, through assessment and feedback, on what high school students are learning and how high school teachers can tailor instruction to better meet their students' needs.

The implementation of QISA's Common Formative Assessments will help educators improve their lesson plans and relationships with students. As QISA continues to grow as a community and resource for educators, Manteca Unified also progresses towards a more equitable and accessible future for all students.

