

## Curriculum Department News

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Happy holidays! Being almost half way through our school year is difficult to believe... And what a fabulous year it has been!

### Getting Ready For The State Assessment

Our Student Learning Objectives (SLO's), formerly Known as ESLR's (Expected Schoolwide Learning Results), state that all students will be effective communicators in reading and writing, technologically and socially skilled individuals, historically aware, and science and mathematical thinkers. This is the perfect foundation to help prepare our students not only to be life-long learners, but to move towards proficiency on state exams. We encourage you to work with your ES on understanding how you can effectively support your student's growth in our SLOs. Additionally, you are welcome to give me a call or send me an email, and we can discuss curriculum options that can help you supplement what you are already doing at home.

### Increase The Rigor

During this holiday season, we want to make sure you know we recognize all the hard work that each and every one of you put forth to help educate your child. Our ESs are also working hard to help support you in your endeavors of ensuring every one of our students graduate ready for career or college and life beyond high school. This effort begins from the very moment you join the Connecting Waters family. Here are some statistics we want our parents and students to be aware of regarding the importance of education.

*Throughout most of the 20th century, a student could withdraw from high school and still have access to the middle class. In 1970, 74 percent of the middle class was composed of high school graduates and dropouts. By 2007, the middle class was composed of 31 percent high school graduates and only 8 percent dropouts (Carnevale, Smith, & Strohl, 2010). Furthermore, many high school graduates seem unprepared for the rigors of higher education. More than one-third of students entering college require remedial courses (Strong American Schools, 2008), and 34 percent drop out of college by the end of their first year (ACT, 2013). Only 36 percent of students who enter a public college have earned a degree within five years (ACT, 2013). These statistics are alarming because men and women who are not prepared to continue learning beyond high school will be increasingly left behind in the American economy (Carnevale et al., 2010). (DuFour, 2016)*

Talk to your ES or contact me about ways we can support you and your student increase rigor in your program to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills, and to ensure your student is prepared for life after high school. It's never too early to

begin thinking about the future!

### **Spotlight On Curriculum**

[Prodigy Math](#): Free curriculum-aligned math game for Grades 1 – 8 offers a fun and engaging way for your students to practice their math skills!

If you have any questions regarding curriculum, please feel free to contact me via phone or e-mail at any time. You can reach me at [sjohnson@connectingwaters.org](mailto:sjohnson@connectingwaters.org) or call me at 800-808-9895 x252.

## **English Department News**

By Teresa Matranga

We are already at the end of the first semester, and that means it's almost time for finals. This year, all students enrolled in the Moodle a-g English courses, grades 9 -12, will take a proctored final in December.

The proctored finals for a-g English classes will be administered on Tuesday, December 10, 2019, from 12:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.. Your ES will know the location of the test site nearest to you.

Calling all students who enjoy lively discussions about interesting topics! The Speech and Debate Club is looking for new members. Students in grades 7 – 12 are welcome. The Speech and Debate Club meets every other Friday from 11:00 a.m -12:00 noon on Moodle. Meeting dates for the remainder of this semester are; November 15 and December 6.

You can email at [tmatranga@cwcharter.org](mailto:tmatranga@cwcharter.org) for more information.

## **Social Studies Department News**

Saturday, December 7, 2019, is National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day in the United States. We have provided a few resources if you would like to present this historical event to your student. Grades 3-8: [Scholastic: Attack on Pearl Harbor Teaching Guide](#), Grades 4 - 12: [PBS Learning Media](#), and Grades 9 - 12: [ReadWriteThink Historical Figure and Event](#).

## EL Department News

As parents, I know that you are very careful about how much time your child spends using technology. Research has shown that too much screen time isn't good for our kids, and we want what is best for them. Did you know that the American Psychological Association says there is a benefit to screen time, though? ([You can see the article here.](#))

We live in an increasingly digital world. Most of us keep in contact with friends and family digitally (either through social media or email), work digitally, and many of our kids are in online classes, learning digitally. Having adequate computer skills is important for children, especially when they enter the school system and are faced with digital testing environments.

Think back to when you were in school. Do you remember the anxiety in your belly as you sat with your number 2 pencil in your hand, looking at all of those bubbles on the standardized testing forms? I do! I remember being totally unprepared for what to do on my first standardized test and bubbling at random. I had a great teacher though, who saw my error and carefully went over the procedure with me, allowing me to try my test again!

We can save our children from the uncertainty of what to expect on their state ELPAC and CAASPP testing. The state of California has some amazing resources for us on [their website](#). One of my favorite resources for parents is [Starting Smarter](#). The Starting Smarter site walks you through everything that you, as your child's parent and primary educator, need to know about the ELPAC. There are wonderfully informative pages on the student score report, practice questions for your child's grade level, and many other helpful parent resources.

As a school, it is our goal to support both you and your child as we move into the testing season. The best way that you can prepare your child is by giving them plenty of time to practice; using a strong, standards-aligned curriculum; and by using that great Concepts and Skills Review curriculum that your ES equipped you with. You will find that there is a great deal of academic vocabulary on both the ELPAC and the CAASPP. It's a very good idea to practice and use [these vocabulary words](#) with your child. Lastly, I created a few slideshows to walk you and your child through using the testing tools that are available to every child on the training tests for [CAASPP](#) and all four domains of the ELPAC ([reading](#), [writing](#), [listening](#), and [speaking](#)). Please use these with your child, and then have them do their [practice tests](#) for their grade level.

Being confident with the technology used on the CAASPP and the ELPAC will aid your child in feeling more prepared for their testing. Let's equip our kids with all of the tools that we can give them, ensuring that their testing experience is the least stressful one possible!

# Important Information

## Firearms Safety Memorandum

To: Parents and Guardians of Students at Connecting Waters Charter Schools

From: Executive Director, Sherri Nelson

**Subject: California Law Regarding Safe Storage of Firearms**

The purpose of this memorandum is to inform and to remind parents and legal guardians of all students at Connecting Waters Charter Schools of their responsibilities for keeping firearms out of the hands of children as required by California law. There have been many news reports of children bringing firearms to school. In many instances, the child obtained the firearm(s) from his or her home. These incidents can be easily prevented by storing firearms in a safe and secure manner, including keeping them locked up when not in use and storing them separately from ammunition. To help everyone understand their legal responsibilities, this memorandum spells out California law regarding the storage of firearms. Please take some time to review this memorandum and evaluate your own personal practices to assure that you and your family are in compliance with California law.

- California makes a person criminally liable for keeping a loaded firearm, under their custody and control, where that person knows or reasonably should know that a child is likely to gain access to the firearm without the permission of the child's parent or legal guardian and the child obtains access to the firearm and thereby: (1) causes death or great bodily injury to the child or any other person; (2) carries the firearm to a public place, including to any preschool or school grades kindergarten through twelfth grade, including to any school-sponsored event, activity, or performance; or (3) brandishes a firearm to others. The criminal penalty may be greater if someone dies or suffers great bodily injury as a result of the child gaining access to the firearm.<sup>1</sup>
- As of 2014, California makes a person criminally liable if they negligently store or leave any loaded firearm on their premises where a child is likely to gain access to it—regardless of whether or not the child brings the gun to a public place.
- A parent or guardian may also be civilly liable for damages resulting from the discharge of a firearm by that person's child or ward. These damages may be up to \$30,000 per victim.<sup>2</sup>

Note: Gun owners may avoid criminal liability under California Penal Code Section 25100 by keeping their firearm in a locked container or secured with a locking device that renders the firearm inoperable.<sup>3</sup>

Thank you for helping to keep our children and schools safe. Remember that the easiest and safest way to comply with the law is to keep firearms in a locked container or secured with a locking device that renders the firearm inoperable.

Sincerely, Sherri Nelson, Executive Director

**Dodge Ridge Trip**

<sup>1</sup>See California Penal Code sections 25100 through 25125; 25200 through 25220.

<sup>2</sup>See California Civil Code Section 1714.3.

<sup>3</sup>See California Penal Code sections 25105; 25205.

Save the dates for a fun-filled time on the slopes. Snowboarding and Skiing will be available. Lift tickets, lessons and equipment will be provided through student funding. Parents will be providing the transportation and meal for the day.

January 24 and February 28 are set dates for this trip.

Watch for Information in Parent Square for our upcoming ski trips, which will include pricing, paperwork requirements, and participation information. Parent Square post will be in November.

If you have any questions, you may email Daneen Campa @ [dcampa@cwcharter.org](mailto:dcampa@cwcharter.org)

## **Welcome New Staff**

Kyle McDaniel- Education Specialist

Hello. My name is Kyle McDaniel. I've been a teacher for many years. My husband is a long time 10th grade English teacher. I have a son and daughter, both adults, and two delightful young grandsons, the oldest of whom is a Connecting Waters kindergartener. I'm a woodwind player, clarinet being my primary instrument. I have played for many decades, beginning when I was 9 years old, which is why I believe all children should be exposed to instrumental music. I love to swim, quilt, and hang out with my furry feline, Stanley, and I love to tell cat stories. I love aha moments of discovery: the joy on a child's face who reads a hard word for the first time; a student who wants to share with me a difficult math or science problem; a nervous performer who begins a recital only to discover that it isn't all that hard to entertain an audience. I am very much looking forward to getting to know my Connecting Waters students and families, and learning about the things that you love.

Aaron Stout- IT

My name is Aaron Stout. I am the new IT Computer Technician. I have 15+ years of experience in the field including almost 10 years working for Empire School District as well as my own business of in-home/in-office computer and software repair. I am very excited to be back working within a school district environment. I look forward to being of service to your technology needs.