

MONTEBELLO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
123 SOUTH MONTEBELLO BOULEVARD / MONTEBELLO, CALIFORNIA 90640-4729
(323) 887-7900 • (562) 806-7900

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
Feb. 25, 2014

CONTACT: Valerie Martinez
Maritza Fairfield
(909) 445-1001

TWO MUSD SCHOOLS AWARDED GRANT TO ASSIST STUDENTS STRUGGLING WITH READING

MONTEBELLO, CA – Two Montebello Unified schools are leveraging competitive grant funding to expand a program that serves to raise achievement for students struggling with reading and English-language arts skills.

Suva Intermediate and Montebello Intermediate were two of only 40 schools throughout the state to be awarded with competitive Project READ grants totaling approximately \$320,000 over a three-year period. The money will be used to expand an existing program that has been proven to be successful in helping to close the achievement gap for sixth- through eighth-grade students on the campuses. The money will be used for instructional materials and technology, professional development for teachers and additional support for families and parents.

The Read 180 program is designed to assist students who are two or more years behind in their reading level, providing individualized instruction for children, and data to enable teachers to further cater to students' specific needs.

"It's our goal to make sure that students don't fall through the cracks, no matter what their individualized struggles may be," said MUSD Board of Education President David Vela. "I applaud these schools for their leadership in applying for these grants, which are no doubt providing a great resource for both students and teachers."

At Suva Intermediate, Principal Teresa Alonzo has already seen great success with the Read 180 program that currently serves special education students in the sixth- and seventh-grade, as evidenced by a nine-point increase in API scores for this population of students. The growth is double the increase that Suva Intermediate experienced school-wide. This grant will allow the school to extend this program to 110 additional students.

"This program tailors interventions to meet the individual needs of our students and provides valuable feedback and data to our teachers so they can continue to individualize instruction," Alonzo said. "Our students are getting immediate feedback about the work they are doing, allowing them to evaluate where they are, and giving them the ability to celebrate as they reach important academic milestones and goals."

During Read 180 classes, students are placed into different groups based on their various levels of ability. One group of students will work on computers using the adaptive technology, reading books into headsets so that the program can evaluate their use of syllables and fluency. Meanwhile, some students will work one-one-one with teachers, while others work together with their peers in a small group setting.

At Montebello Intermediate, one special education class is currently participating in the Read 180 program. This subgroup saw the tripling of their Academic Performance Index (API) scores, which are the state's benchmark on academic achievement and growth.

"For us, there has definitely been a need for a comprehensive intervention program for our students," said Montebello Intermediate Principal Leticia Alvidrez. "I look forward to extending this valuable program to our general education students so that they can continue to develop in their reading and literacy skills."

Implementation of the grant and the Read 180 programs at both schools begin in March.

"Our District and our schools make it a priority to find creative ways to support our students' success," said MUSD Superintendent of Education Susanna Contreras Smith. "We are excited to see our students' growth under this instructional program, which has already proved to be successful in Montebello Unified."

PHOTO CAPTIONS

READING1: A student in the Read 180 Program works one-on-one with a teacher during a class at Suva Intermediate School. Both Suva Intermediate and Montebello Intermediate were awarded grants to expand the Read 180 program, which provides additional support for students struggling with reading.

READING2: Two students in the Read 180 Program work on computers equipped with adaptive technology that helps evaluate their reading levels. Both Suva Intermediate and Montebello Intermediate were awarded grants to expand the Read 180 program, which provides additional support for students struggling with reading.

###

Montebello Unified School District is a dynamic learning institution employing top-quality educators. It is the combined work of many that allows the District to continue educating more than 30,000 students every year using the 40 Developmental Assets at all of our school sites. It is through everyone's efforts – students, parents, teachers, staff and administrators – that we are achieving the District's number one goal of raising student achievement. Learn more online at: www.mhs.montebello.k12.ca.us.