



10th-graders Darien and Javier



CCPA's First Graduating Class Takes the Lead

When Coliseum College Prep Academy staff meets monthly to discuss the future of CCPA – namely the curriculum and programs the school will offer as it grows to add 11th and 12th grade over the next two years – you see the expected stakeholders around the table: Principal Aaron Townsend, teachers, advisors. But you also see 10 current 10th-graders, right there in the mix.

Early on, staff decided it was crucial to give student representatives a voice: After all, these 10th-graders will soon be the very 11th- and 12th-graders the design meetings revolve around.

"We're planning how to use the money for next year's curriculum," explains 10th-grader Javier. "We have a say in how the staff uses resources, and we can speak our minds about whether things are a good idea or a waste of time."

"The 10th-grade class has really matured into school leaders," reflects College Access Director Betsy Pfeiffer, "[and as] the first graduating class

of CCPA, they have opportunities to be role models for the other grades. [Their input at the meetings] is extremely important because the meetings involve decisions that will impact students for years to come."

"We're going to be the first seniors to graduate, and I'm proud to be one of them."

- 10th-grader Adrian

The sophomores have taken their roles quite seriously. "We do feel like role models," says Javier. In discussing their vision for CCPA, the kids often sound more like wizened principals than teenagers: "We want to make class sizes smaller," says Javier. "With 15 or so students per teacher, it's easier for kids to learn. Also, we think it's important to keep veteran teachers here."

Among the promising plans they've helped approve and arrange:

- 11th-graders will have the chance to take college classes at Laney College next year.
- 11th-graders will do a "practice" senior project (featuring an 8-10 page paper and presentation) to

prepare them for the real thing in 12th grade, when a senior project is a key graduation requirement.

- In Fall 2011, CCPA will open a health center on campus.

As CCPA grows into its identity as a high school, the students have reached out to other Oakland schools to learn what works for them. "We've visited MetWest, Life Academy, and ARISE to get different ideas that we can use to make our school even better," shares 10th-grader Darien. "For example, we talked to MetWest students about their internships, and decided that we want to try the same thing here at CCPA."

Fellow 10th-grader Adrian feels optimistic about his future as part of CCPA's Class of 2012. "We're going to be the first seniors to graduate, and I'm proud to be one of them," he says. "It feels great to be here because we're showing that we're doing well and improving. A lot of us, including myself, have already passed CAHSEE [the high school exit exam]. We feel safe inside the school and the teachers works with us to always show us the way to a great education."

Eureka! CCPA 8th-Graders Get Jump on Career Planning

Thanks to a software program called EUREKA, Coliseum College Prep Academy 8th-graders are preparing not only for high school and college, but for careers. The unique tool, available to CCPA through a partnership with East Bay Consortium, quizzes students on their interests and matches them with potential careers and professions.

"I feel that the 8th graders have benefited greatly from the Eureka program," says College Access Director Betsy Pfeiffer. "It has helped some of them realize that there are more jobs out there than just being a doctor or a teacher. Some students said, 'Wow! I can get paid to do that!'"

Importantly, EUREKA also offers tips and next steps based on specific career paths. "It gives them some insight on what they will need to focus on in high school in order to obtain the job they want in the future," explains Pfeiffer. "It was amazing to see them show such excitement about their futures." CCPA plans to have kids use the



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8th-graders Karen, Ebony and Miriam

tool through graduation. "They can revisit EUREKA every year and tailor it to how their high school years shape out."

"It matches your personality with what you might want to do when you get older," says 8th-grader Ebony, "and then it suggests different classes you can take in high school and college."

While the software has been a good guide for kids unclear about their future goals, it also helps affirm and encourage the interests of students who already have a clear passion. "For me it was great," reflects 8th-grader Karen. "I want to be a lawyer, and a lot of things

about criminal justice and law came up in EUREKA when I used it."

Students' parents have also begun to use the tool, not only to help their kids figure out their career paths, but also to get a read on how their personalities mesh with their teens' (or, sometimes, don't). "It actually helped me with my parents," explains Ebony. "Sometimes we argue, but then we figured out why."

As an added bonus, Ebony, Karen, and Miriam were invited to appear on OUSD's KDOL TV to share their experiences with EUREKA. "I like to be on the spot and I like to be known," says

Ebony, "but I was nervous when the cameras came on."

CCPA pride helped the kids ride out their nerves. "We felt proud representing our school," says 8th-grader Miriam.

Reflecting on their school pride leads the students into a lengthy list of CCPA's strengths. "It's a really good school, and you should send your kids here," says Ebony.

"You can even call the teachers at home when you need help," says Miriam. "The teachers really help us," agrees Ebony. "Before school, during school, after school. A lot of people here are trying to help us – a lot."

SUPPORT CCPA! As we grow to become a 6-12 school, CCPA must fundraise aggressively to add all the programs and activities our students deserve. And due to unprecedented state cuts, we will enter 2010-11 with a tighter budget than ever. You can make a one-time or recurring tax-deductible donation by visiting:

<http://coliseumcollegeprep.org/donate.html> (designating CCPA)

or by check to: OSF/CCPA, P.O. Box 20238, Oakland, CA 94620. Thank you for your support!

A special thank you to all who supported us at our Golf Tournament. We raised \$3,400 to support CCPA!



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