



Liberty Union High School District, Contra Costa County, CA

A Case Study on Improving High-Stakes Test Scores with EPATH Assess® and Practice Path™

Quick Facts

Liberty Union High School District

District Enrollment: 7,300

Grade Levels: 9–12

Number of schools: 5

Students receiving free and reduced

lunch: 9%

English language learners: 7%

Community: Suburban

District Status: in PI

Made AYP: No

Title I School/District: No

The Challenge

After administrators at the Liberty Union High School District in Brentwood, California, created a test prep class to help at-risk students meet state proficiency requirements, they found themselves constantly reinventing the wheel.

About five years ago, the 7,300-student district began offering intervention courses for students who had either failed or were likely to fail the California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE), for which a passing grade is required to earn a diploma. But administrators and teachers were spending too much time adapting off-the-shelf course materials to meet evolving state standards.

"There was no sustainable curriculum for the course," said Mary Vinciguerra, assistant superintendent for educational services. *"Every year, it needed to be updated."*

The Solution

That changed three years ago when the grade 9–12 district began using EPATH Knowledge™, a comprehensive assessment solution which provides electronic progress monitoring for students in English and math, among other subjects.

Liberty Union uses EPATH Assess® to monitor student progress, identify areas for improvement, and to create an array of practice assessments. It also uses Practice Path™, a skill-building program that students direct at their own pace.

California's state board of education ranked Measuring Up® and EPATH Assess® first among seven vendors in a 2007 evaluation of companies that provided intervention programs for the CAHSEE. Liberty Union chose EPATH because Peoples Education was one of three vendors eligible for funding by the state.

While the program relies on technology, even gadget-averse teachers can use it—and students embrace it readily, according to Jeff Marchetti, a Liberty Union teacher. Teachers can create reports that track performance by class or individual student, and the program is designed so students progress at their own rate.

"Students like the fact that it's more individualized," Marchetti said. *"If three or four struggle with something, 10 or 15 others who have mastered it can move on."*

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The Results

The district saw results right away. Two-thirds of the students recently enrolled in Liberty Union's prep class passed the English/Language Arts part of the CAHSEE, while 60 percent passed math. Excluding alternative education students, the numbers soared closer to 75 percent for both categories.

Marchetti said he likes the fact that he can create tailored tests to strengthen specific skills, although full-length practice assessments are available, too.

The program has a "Word Explorer" function to expand vocabulary, which can be critical in quickly discerning the correct answer to a problem. "Sometimes, kids lack an understanding of the question," Marchetti said.

Vinciguerra said that future state funding for the prep course is up in the air, given California's current budgetary woes. But the district is sold on EPATH's results and is committed to continuing the program.

Marchetti is sold, too. *"It's working really well,"* he said. *"We see a marked improvement in our students."*

For more information about EPATH Assess® and Practice Path®, please visit www.epathknowledge.com.