



INVESTING IN ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE *FOR ALL*

A Committee of the El Cerrito Student Activities Fund

Investing in Academic Excellence for All 2011

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2011 ANNUAL REPORT

Faculty Advisor

David Luongo

Investing in Academic Excellence (IAE) has successfully completed its second year of support for academic programs at El Cerrito High School. The mission of Investing in Academic Excellence (IAE) is to strengthen core academic programs at ECHS with an emphasis on major donors and the funding of focused curricular initiatives.

The response from our community continues to be overwhelmingly positive. In our first annual campaign (ending December 31, 2010), IAE donors contributed \$17,065.30 with 47 donors, and gifts averaging \$363 per donor. In our second year (ending December 31, 2011), there were 52 donors who gave \$22,414.13, averaging \$431 per donor. The increase in donors and average gift amount are exceptional and encouraging, demonstrating our community's commitment to academic excellence for all.



School Community

El Cerrito High School has 1,312 Grade 9-12 students and is one of six comprehensive high schools in the West Contra Costa Unified School District; El Cerrito High School draws students from the communities of El Cerrito, Richmond, and Kensington. The 2011 graduating class numbered 292 students, with 342 expected to graduate in 2012. Our student body is diverse, including 32% African Americans, 20% Caucasians, 19% Asian Americans, 27% Hispanics and 2% of Filipino origins. Approximately 106 students are Limited English Proficient (LEP), and 78 are in Resource Specialist Programs, Over 1/3 (35%) of our students qualify for the free/reduced lunch program. Approximately 46 students are Severely or Non-Severely Handicapped and 155 are designated as Gifted. The student-to-counselor ratio is 667-1.

Academies

El Cerrito offers a four-year college preparatory education. In addition, there are three Special Academies: Information Technology Academy, Media Academy, and Green Technology Academy. Approximately 40% of ECHS graduates go directly to four-year colleges, and another 50% to two-year colleges. We are a significant feeder for UC Berkeley's freshman classes and are among the top 22 California schools preparing under-represented students for four-year colleges.



Leaves on the Tree and In Memory

The year started out with the passing of IAE founder, Bob Zimmerman. While this was a huge loss for our community, his friends, family and colleagues contributed substantial funds in his memory. IAE also honored Bob with a plaque, and there will be a new leaf on the tree in his honor. Others may also want to honor loved ones in this way. All gifts of \$500 and over are acknowledged with a leaf on the tree in the school atrium and on the IAE website.

Investments in Excellence

Academic Rigor

IAE supports the ECHS goal of becoming a CA distinguished school within five years. Schools selected for the Distinguished School Award demonstrate significant gains in narrowing the achievement gap. Teacher professional development days have steadily dwindled due to budget shortfalls, yet teachers need time to meet with each other to integrate school wide curricular goals, share and improve each other's skills, and build energy and resilience as a team. To this end, IAE helped to fund a teacher professional development session prior to the start of the school year. This past year was particularly important due to a new administrative team coming on board. This session provided a chance for teachers and administrators to meet and share their vision for academic excellence at El Cerrito High. Additional funding was used to allow Advanced Placement (AP) teachers to conduct AP bridge sessions in the summer to help prepare students for some of our most rigorous classes.

Angaza

Angaza is a support and enrichment program for high-achieving students from historically underserved communities. Your substantial investment has supported after-school Angaza meetings, an Angaza retreat, and summer enrichment programs. These young leaders are given an opportunity to explore leadership and academic excellence during a time when they might otherwise be distracted by the perils that lie in many of our communities. The results for academic excellence are striking: ninety-five percent of Angaza students in 2011 went on to a four-year college!

Arts and Culture

Your donations procured substantial supplies for Photography and Visual Arts, along with costuming and other materials for Dance. A student review of a recent performance proclaimed, "This year, El Cerrito High Dance saved the best for last... The superb yet terrifying choreography made 'Aliens' truly a masterpiece." We are also very pleased to announce that IAE support helped convince the school district to provide a new theater director for the school year.

Math and Science

Investing in Academic Excellence has generously supported the El Cerrito High School Math Department. This year, we provided important tools for all levels of instruction, such as protractors, compasses, pull-down graphing charts, scientific and graphing calculators, and two conic section models for use with upper level math classes. Finally, IAE has allocated all needed funds for textbooks for the new algebra readiness course to be taught in the fall. Your gifts have supported and expanded our outstanding math program.

Study Trips

Experiential learning can improve students' understanding and retention of academic lessons and concepts. Shakespeare comes alive on the stage; Matisse's masterful use of colors is viewed up close in the actual painting; cultural appreciation is enhanced by a trip to the Day of the Dead exhibit - these are just some of the experiences study trips have offered. Your contribution provided a fund to enable teachers to expand learning beyond the classroom. For some ECHS students, this was the first time to attend a professionally produced play or dance performance, or to take a trip to a museum. Investing in Academic Excellence funds offset costs associated with transportation, tickets and/or admission to events.



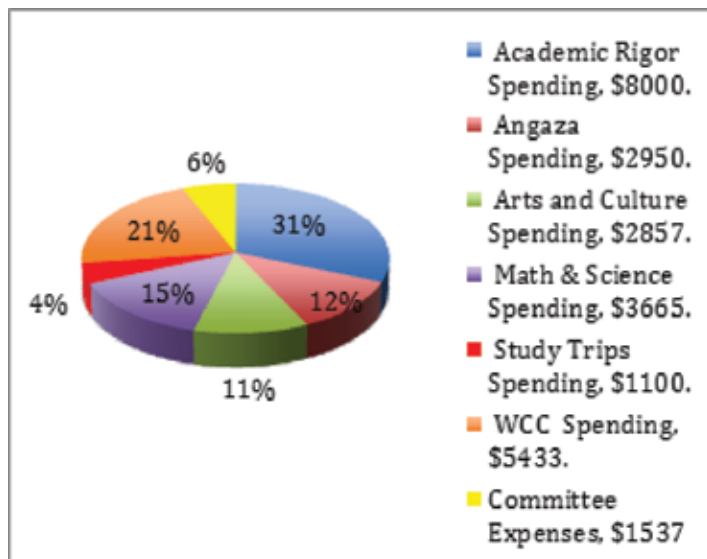
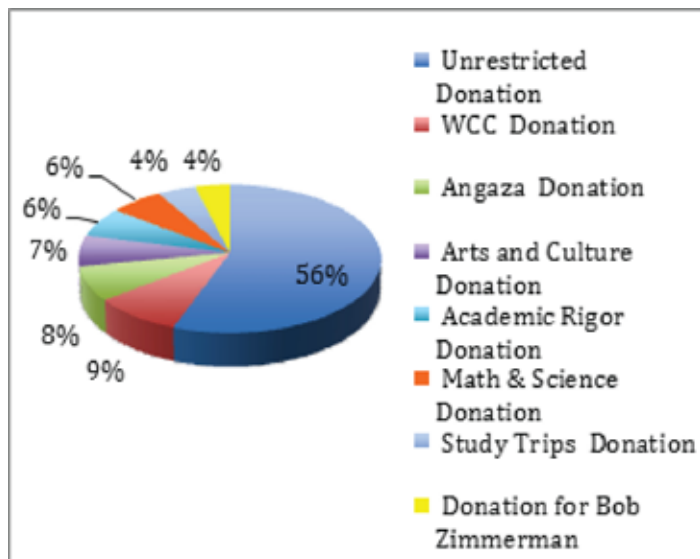
WriterCoach Connection

WriterCoach Connection (WCC) is a powerful, volunteer-based program that provides students with a personal coach to improve writing and critical thinking skills. The program was piloted in six ninth-grade classes last year at El Cerrito High. This year, with your support, we met our ambitious goal for the 2011/12 academic year to serve all 9th grade English students and advanced English learners. In all, the ECHS WCC program has been the swiftest and most expansive pilot in the program's history. WCC developed the capacity to cover all 400 9th grade students and upper ELD students, training 160 coaches and serving all but one 9th grade class. IAE's contributions have helped make it possible to train and support the many dedicated community volunteers who make this program a success. The ability to use targeted funds to leverage the community's deep desire for academic excellence is key to accomplishing our mission.

Total Donations: \$22,414.13

Total Funds Spent and Allocated*: \$25,542.00

*Includes committed funds and remaining 2010 Campaign funds.



Vision

IAE aims to support the work of students and teachers in the classroom, and thereby benefit the community as a whole. IAE endeavors to assist ECHS in becoming a California Distinguished School by 2017. The IAE's vision is to give substantial support for durable education equipment and materials, educational curriculum and training, and supplemental programs not regularly supported by the district, to enable all students to excel.

El Cerrito High School thanks all the contributors to the Investing in Academic Excellence 2011 Campaign

\$2500 and above

Carl and Lisa Brodsky

\$1000-\$2499

Paul Radosevich and Elise Thomas
Steven and Nancy Poulos
Bill Graham Foundation
In Memory of Bob Zimmerman*

\$500-\$999

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* Contributors listed separately

\$250-\$499

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Up to \$250

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**For further information
about IAE, or to make a
contribution, please
contact:**

**Pearson Miller,
510.528.9244**

P.O. Box 2396

El Cerrito, CA 94530



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