

## **Menlo Park City Fifth Grade Students among those who Score High on National Laboratory-Based Science Assessment**

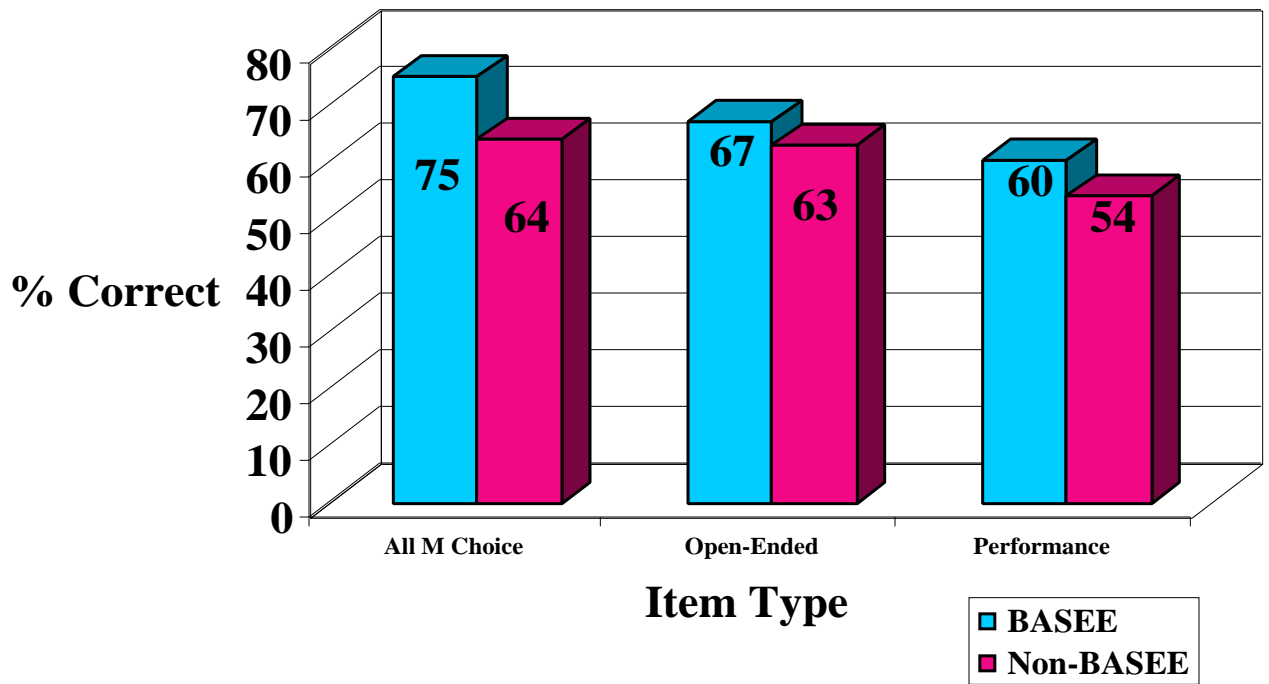
**Menlo Park, Calif., January 14, 2002** – Fifth graders in the Menlo Park City School District are among a group of South Bay students who scored high on a Laboratory-based national assessment. The group of approximately 2,000 South Bay fifth-graders who participated in a multi-district laboratory science education program showed a significant increase in their knowledge of science over a two-year period from 1998 to 2000. Students involved in the program attend schools in districts that make up the Bay Area Schools for Excellence in Education (BASEE) science education collaborative.

In addition to the Menlo Park City School District, BASEE districts include Cupertino Unified School District, Los Altos School District, Mountain View-Whisman School District, Palo Alto Unified School District, Redwood City School District and the Santa Clara Unified School District. The seven districts are working together to strengthen elementary school science education through teacher professional development and a hands-on approach to teaching science to students.

The assessment given to the BASEE students was developed by the Partnership for the Assessment of Standards-based Science (PASS). It uses a balanced variety of methods to measure learning including multiple-choice items, open-ended questions, constructed-response investigations and hands-on performance tasks. The PASS assessment was developed by teams of teachers, scientists, curriculum specialists and measurement specialists with funding from the National Science Foundation.

BASEE began in the early 1990s when each of the seven member-districts received a grant from Hewlett-Packard Company to enrich science teaching and learning in their K-8 classrooms. Other organizations supporting BASEE are the National Science Foundation (NSF), the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the Noyce Foundation and the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, to provide content background learning and leadership training for teachers, plus ongoing support for classroom science.

BASEE students significantly out-perform students in similar districts in all categories.



All groups showed improvement although some group improvement was not significant.

Largest gains are with African American (9%) and Latino (6%) students.

### Closing the gap

