

# Golden Valley Unified School District



Golden Valley Unified School District improves student assessments with the Lexmark Testing & Grading solution

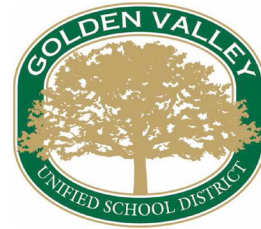
## Challenge

Though ranked as having the academically highest performing elementary and high schools in Madera County, teachers were finding that administering and scoring assessments—a key component in gauging student progress—was growing increasingly difficult. Specifically, the scanners being used to score student test “bubble sheets” were slow, inefficient and prone to frequent breakdowns. Reliability was hit or miss.

“Our standards, in terms of academic excellence and accountability of what we expect from our teachers, is high,” said Andy Alvarado, the district’s assistant superintendent for educational services. “Similarly, these teachers demand excellence from us. They began noticing two years ago that our systems for student assessment were lagging behind.”

Each scanner required a dedicated desktop computer that tied up valuable resources. Compounding matters, the overall functionality of the data management software being used no longer measured up as teachers’ expectations for interpreting assessment results grew. “There was a level of frustration from teachers who lacked confidence in this system,” said Alvarado. What they wanted, he said, was the ability to see leading and lagging indicators of achievement as students moved from one grade to the next and a way to compare assessment results with other districts throughout the state. They also wanted the ability to create their own classroom quizzes and generate bubble sheets with “preslugged” student information.

With the existing software platform unable to deliver these features to the district’s satisfaction and breakdowns of the dedicated scanners becoming increasingly frequent and costly, the district decided the time had come to replace them both.



## Meet Golden Valley Unified School District

With 2,000 students and fewer than 100 teachers, the eight schools comprising the Golden Valley Unified School District in Madera, Calif., are widely recognized for the educational experience they provide. The district operates under a \$14.5 million budget.

### Products in use:

- ▶ Lexmark multifunction products
- ▶ Lexmark Testing and Grading solution

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**Andy Alvarado**

Assistant Superintendent, Educational Services  
Golden Valley Unified School District

## Solution

After evaluating available products from several suppliers, the Golden Valley Unified School District chose a comprehensive solution consisting of multifunction products (MFPs) the Testing and Grading solution from Lexmark, combined with an integrated academic assessment and data management platform from Performance Matters™.

This combination of products, solutions and services best met the district's challenges while supporting the information needs of its students, teachers, school administrators and parents. The entire project was completed at Golden Valley USD in just 70 days.

Each MFP includes Lexmark's e-Task™ interface, a vivid color touch screen panel that guides users through each task, such as printing bubble sheets or scanning completed sheets for scoring.

Golden Valley USD teachers now have the ability to develop their own classroom quizzes, print the personalized bubble sheets and later, use the same Lexmark MFP to scan the sheets for scoring by Performance Matters. On the MFP touch screen, teachers select their name and class to retrieve the student roster. Then, they select and print bubble sheets for all students or skip those marked absent. The bubble sheets are printed on plain paper, a cost-effective option compared with purchasing expensive preprinted bubble sheets. After testing, teachers scan the completed bubble sheets at the Lexmark MFP. Each test is automatically scored by the Performance Matters software and scores are automatically logged into the student information database.

Teachers also have the ability to email results to themselves by tapping a single icon on the eTask touch screen, streamlining the process while advancing the district's paper reduction initiative.

“We did the rollout during teachers' professional development days and we had nothing but positive feedback,” he said. “Teachers were impressed with the intuitive ease of use, functionality and efficiency. One even compared the Lexmark solution and the academic assessment and data management platform from Performance Matters to a high-performance sports car.”

“Everything came together so smoothly,” he said. “There were times with our previous vendor when we waited a month for them to address a technical or support issue. With Lexmark and Performance Matters, the response is immediate. Being able to talk with a person we know by name, someone we know will be there, has made an enormous difference for us.”

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## Results

With its Lexmark MFPs, Testing and Grading solution and Performance Matters data-management platform, teachers throughout the Golden Valley district now administer and score student assessments quickly and reliably, without worrying that finicky hardware or inflexible software will cause delays. Teachers have the ability to author quizzes tailored for their classes and generate the corresponding pre-slugged bubble sheets. With scores available immediately, teachers can now differentiate instruction to make sure students are learning required lessons.

“Our objective was to improve the entire testing experience for teachers, administrators, students and parents,” said Alvarado. “We have achieved that objective and more.” Word of Golden Valley’s success is already spreading through neighboring districts eager to modernize their own academic assessment infrastructures. “The education community is keenly aware of what we have accomplished with Lexmark. Another district is already following our lead,” said Alvarado.

The success of the Golden Valley Unified School District’s assessment project shows that advanced solutions are not beyond fiscal reach, even in difficult economic times. Indeed, modestly sized districts like Golden Valley USD, leveraging their ability to make decisions and implement solutions quickly, are catching up to and even surpassing assessment systems used in many major metropolitan districts. For the teachers, administrators, students and parents in Madera, California, their comprehensive solution from Lexmark and Performance Matters scores straight As.

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