

Eastside Prep more than just a basketball school

■ With 100 percent of grads going to college, principal believes school fulfilling its goal

By T.S. Mills-Faraudo

STAFF WRITER

EAST PALO ALTO — Eastside College Preparatory School's two basketball teams are both playing for state championships today — but no matter what happens the school has already triumphed at its real mission, says Principal Chris Bischof.

Every single student graduating from Eastside this year

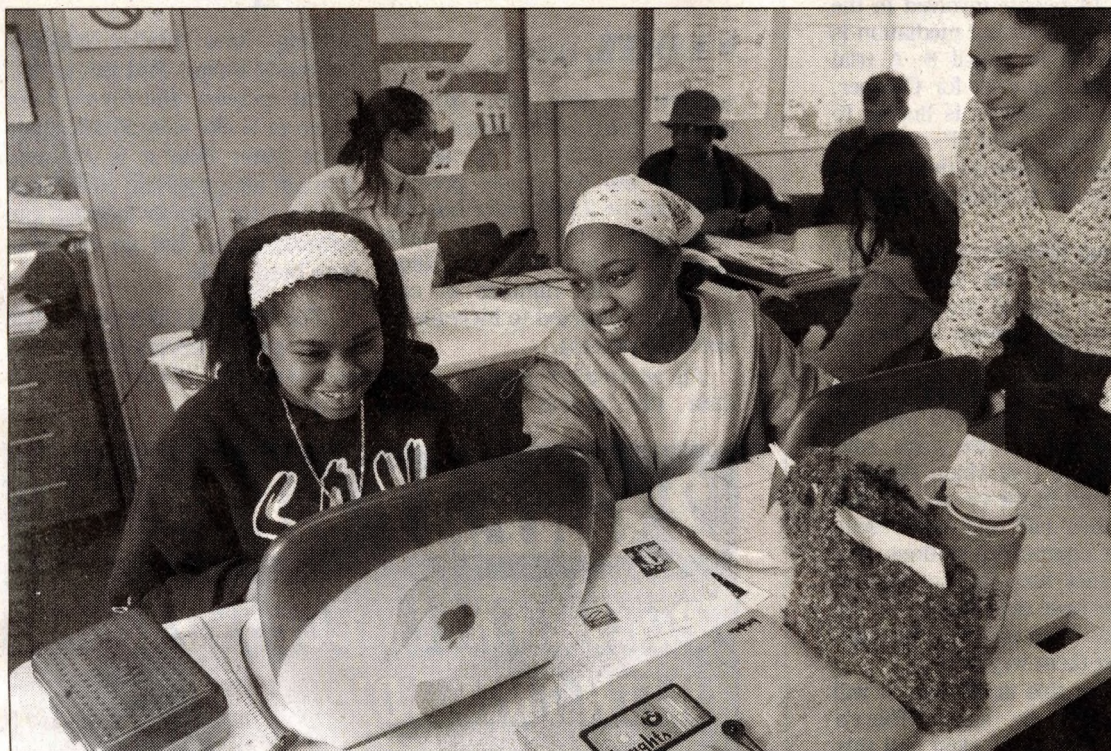
has been accepted to college — including universities such as Harvard and Columbia.

The dual sports and academic achievements are especially stunning given the school's location in one of the most economically depressed areas of San Mateo County.

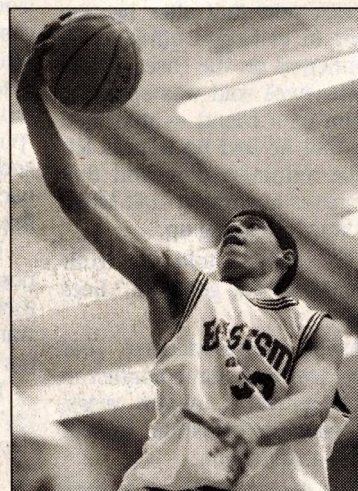
Armed with his school's 100 percent graduation record, Bischof discounts rumblings from other schools that Eastside is nothing more than a basketball factory that hand picks students who are good players.

Talented basketball players

See **EASTSIDE**, News 14



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TESSA YEAGER (left, standing), a tutor from Stanford, helps students Shayla Gardner (left, on left) and Alicia McKean at Eastside College Preparatory School. The school is known for its basketball program, with players such as Keith Garner (above).

School's first goal is college preparedness

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aren't the only thing that makes the 6th- through 12th-grade school great; the school's main purpose is to prepare students for college, he said.

"The more you excel in an area the more people assume that's the school's focus," he said. "Basketball just gets all the recognition in the news." Of the 140 students at the school, about 20 play on basketball teams, Bischof said.

This is the first time in the private school's seven-year history that both the girls' and boys' basketball teams are competing in the state championship for the smallest schools in the state, Division V.

Other students at Eastside work on the school's award-winning newspaper, compete on the mock trial team or on the yearbook staff for extracurricular activities, he said.

Sophomore Dallas Teo, 16, originally applied to the school so he would not have to travel 20 minutes to a public high school in another city. But now he enjoys writing articles for the student-run newspaper, the Eastside Panther, which won 10 awards at the last Peninsula Press Club journalism competition.

"It's a great school and I wouldn't want to go anywhere else," Dallas said.

Some have said the school is

building 40 dorm rooms so it can recruit basketball players from out-of-state. This would go against its original mission of providing a high school for students in the lower-income communities of East Palo Alto and east Menlo Park.

But Bischof says the school will remain committed to accepting students from the community.

Many students at the school are in families that have to move from area because of the cost of living or their parents are divorced. The school, Bischof said, wants to give these students the opportunity to continue to attend Eastside.

But Mike Ciardella, athletic director at Sacred Heart Preparatory School in Atherton, said when he heard about the dorms he thought they were going to start recruiting players. "When I saw the dorm thing I was wondering if they were looking to be a national school because there are schools that do that."

Athletic director Pam Wimberly at Carlmont High School in Belmont said private schools often have an unfair advantage over public schools. "While private schools can recruit people under the umbrella of education, public schools can't."

Wimberly was also concerned when she heard Eastside was planning dorms. "That's a little scary to hear that that might happen," she said. "Coaches

around the area are going to be looking over their shoulders to see if 'so-in-so' is from Idaho."

For freshman Norma Jaimez, 14, the dorms may have come in handy last year when she was pulled from Eastside because her family was moving to another city. "I hated it (attending a public school)," she said. "I begged my parents to come back here."

The school's plans, which were recently approved by the city, also include a soccer field, fine arts center and an office building. Bischof said this will allow the school to double its enrollment and add a soccer, drama and music programs.

Help for lower-performers

When senior Jeremiah Williams, 19, first came to Eastside he was barely maintaining a 2.0

grade point average. Now the basketball team's captain has a 3.5 gpa and has been accepted to 13 colleges.

"One day I took it upon myself to check it (Eastside) out," he said. "Chris (Bischof) told me they have teachers here that really care about the students, and it's true."

In order to be on the basketball team, Williams had to get decent grades. This worked as a motivational tool for him to do well in school.

It's success stories like Williams' that Eastside administrators like to tout. When students apply for Eastside, Bischof said they don't look at their GPAs. "We look at students that are really going to want to be here," he said.

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