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GGUSD Connection

Connecting GGUSD students, parents, staff and community

GGUSD ... Celebrating Our 50th Anniversary

Turn back the clock to a half-century ago. A new Pontiac GTO was selling for \$2,699 and a four-bedroom home in Garden Grove, described as a "King's Mansion," was priced at \$22,950.

It was 1965, also an important time for education in Orange County. On July 1 of that year, Garden Grove Unified School District became officially operational after local voters overwhelmingly supported the merger of three smaller school districts and chose a new Board of Education.

Much of the current school year is devoted to celebrating the district's 50-year milestone.



Students at Peters (K-3) Elementary School show off the new banner celebrating the district's 50th anniversary.

To promote this significant occasion, a new 50th-anniversary logo was unveiled for the current school year, special colorful banners will decorate all district sites, and employees are wearing new lapel pins featuring the 50th-anniversary logo.

In the past half-century, many GGUSD students, the district, and its schools have earned recognition. Included among more than 170,000 alumni are Olympic medalists; a Medal of Honor recipient; leading scientists; business CEOs; outstanding educators; and pro athletes.

In 2004 GGUSD earned the Broad Prize as the top urban school district in the U.S., and was a finalist for the award the prior two years. More recently, 26 schools were recognized by the Campaign for Business and Education Excellence, and five schools were named California Gold Ribbon Schools for gains in putting in place academic standards. Our seven comprehensive high schools are consistently listed among the nation's elite in annual rankings by U.S. News & World Report magazine.

As proud as we are of our accomplishments of the past 50 years, the district looks forward with great anticipation to an even more exciting future in the next half-century.

New District Logos Unveiled; Designed In-House

The district has unveiled a pair of new official logos, one for display in 2015-16 commemorating our 50th anniversary and another fresh design for use in following years.



The new logo for the current school year draws as inspiration the district's 50th anniversary and features the new formal logo it will employ after 2015-16. The design illustrates GGUSD's focus on developing academic and personal skills to achieve lifelong success, and depicts three student icons superimposed on a circular blue background, representing a student's progression

in GGUSD, culminating in college and career success.

Initial proposals for logos were conceived by visual arts classes, then further developed by intermediate and high school Visual and Performing Arts department chairs. Final designs were refined by a smaller working group of visual arts teachers. Kelly Snedden, visual arts teacher and Elective Department chair at Fitz Intermediate School, provided the winning concept of the nested students. Eric Keawekane, visual arts teacher at Los Amigos High School, is credited with creating the final logos and digital files.



Measure A School Modernization Projects Moving Forward

Modernization projects made possible by voter-approved Measure A are continuing at a brisk pace – on time and under budget – to deliver 21st-century classrooms and leading-edge technology for GGUSD schools. Measure A projects are completed

clocks, bells, speakers, and emergency lighting. Underground infrastructure work was also completed during the summer and included new water and natural gas lines, electrical conduits, and higher-capacity electrical service.



The modernized entrance and front office at Garden Grove High School due to Measure A.

at 37 elementary schools and one intermediate school.

Complete makeovers are continuing with extensive work ongoing at four high schools, four intermediate schools, five elementary schools, and both special education schools.

Measure A modernization projects at Doig, Jordan, McGarvin, and Walton intermediate schools started in December 2014.

Improvements to all modernized schools include upgraded access for the disabled, improved fencing, doors with panic hardware, new ceilings and insulation, energy efficient lighting, casework, flooring, carpeting, painting, superior wireless access, upgraded intrusion and fire alarms, and new

Faylane, Hill, Paine, Post, and Stanford elementary schools and Mark Twain and Jordan ATP schools are in various stages of modernization work. The extent of modernizations is similar to the intermediate schools including the use of one-time funds for air conditioning.

Alamitos Intermediate School is scheduled for modernization starting this December, with Fitz, Irvine, and Lake intermediate schools and Carrillo and Stanley elementary schools planned for next summer. The three remaining high schools, Bolsa Grande, Los Amigos, and Santiago, start in December 2016.

The modernization of our schools is the largest such project in Orange County history. We want to thank our parents, employees, students, and the community for their continued support.

An Update on Air Conditioning Our GGUSD Schools

Last year, the GGUSD Board of Education, in recognition of the challenge of attending school and working in non-air conditioned classrooms, committed to bringing air conditioning to **ALL** schools. While approximately 50 percent of all Garden Grove Unified School District classrooms are air-conditioned due to the use of portable classrooms at many schools, GGUSD is one of several districts in Orange County where the majority of schools are not completely air-conditioned, due to the ages of our schools and the lack of electrical systems and other infrastructure.

While our successful 2010 bond, Measure A, paved the way for air conditioning by upgrading required critical infrastructures, including higher capacity electrical systems, it did not provide sufficient funds to air-condition all schools. The cost of installing air conditioning in the 42 GGUSD schools lacking school-wide air conditioning is approximately \$140 million. The district has already secured \$68.4 million for the first tier of schools from one-time district funds, primarily redevelopment fees. In determining the priority timeline for air conditioning installation, overall temperature of classrooms was the primary consideration (hottest locations given first priority based upon data collected over time) as well as the fact that air conditioning cannot be installed in any school prior to the completion of modernization.

As excited as we are to bring air conditioning to all GGUSD schools, installation is not an overnight process. Before any work can begin, the district must first complete a plan design, submit the plans, and receive approval from the Division of the State Architect. Once state approval is granted, we must also install insulation, drop ceilings, LED lighting, and new windows, which requires vacating classrooms and a temporary move into interim housing. Since the efforts began, three additional schools have been air conditioned with another nine in progress. An additional 15 schools are soon to start their air conditioning projects. After the first tier of 27 schools is completed, 42 of our schools will be



The newly modernized fourth-grade classroom, with air conditioning, of teacher Kari Shane at Gilbert Elementary School.

fully air-conditioned, with the remaining 25 schools having air conditioning in portable classrooms.

In the interim, our **Heat Advisory Task Force** has created guidelines for schools to implement during periods of excessive hot weather. Industrial-strength fans have been purchased for all schools and our Maintenance and Operations department initiated school custodial practices to cool rooms at non air-conditioned schools in evenings and before classes begin in the morning. We are aware of suggestions to lower classroom temperatures through the use of portable air conditioning units. The use of such units, however, is strictly prohibited; they are unsafe for classroom use and not approved through our insurance carrier as they overload electrical circuits, increase fire danger, heighten the risk of power outages, and violate electrical and fire codes.

Adding air conditioning to the final 25 schools will cost approximately \$70 million. We are currently working to identify funding for the remaining schools and will be updating our community in the near future on these efforts. The Board of Education greatly values your support as the district moves forward with the Measure A modernization projects and our work to air-condition all schools. We appreciate your patience and understanding as we work together to ensure the best interests of our students.

Technology Keeps Parents Connected to School

Technology is breaking down traditional barriers and transforming home-school communications by empowering parents as more active participants in their child's education anywhere, anytime.

With online tools provided by GGUSD, parents now have convenient ways to stay connected to the school in order to support academic achievement and school attendance.



The Student and Parent portals offer secure online access to Aeries, the district's student information system. Once inside, students and parents can view the student's schedule, grades, progress reports, transcripts, and attendance record. Parents also use the portal for registering returning students at intermediate and high schools, while use of the portal for registering returning elementary students still remains an option for parents.

Account information and access instructions for the Parent and Student portals is provided by the school.

School Messenger is the parent notification system used by schools and the district for routine and emergency communications. Using School Messenger, subscribers receive instant updates, news, and information from their children's school or the district. Messages can be broadcast in multiple languages as a text, voice mail, or by e-mail, or in any combination.

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For parents wanting to receive text messages, first ensure the telephone number for each wireless device is on record at the school. To do so, simply call the school and share the numbers to be included for text messages. Following confirmation with the school, text the word "YES" to 68453 from each device designated to receive the messages

GGUSD also uses social media to convey important messages and strengthen and maintain engagement with the community, parents, and students. The district Facebook page is another way to see announcements, news, and presentations around the clock, and provides a means for feedback on any postings. "Like" us at www.facebook.com/GGUSD.

Want to find out this year's school recess and holiday schedule, the date for the next Board of Education meeting, or access the Parent Portal? All this and more is found on district's website. The website, at ggusd.us, is a one-stop location for comprehensive information about the district and schools.

A student automatically receives an optional free Gmail account when he or she enrolls in the district. Google also provides apps which exist entirely online, or in the cloud, and includes programs for e-mail, word processing, spreadsheets, and presentations, and can be accessed with any device having an Internet connection.

Google Classroom is a paperless classroom, an online learning environment, with assignments, presentations, tests, quizzes, and tools to collaborate with classmates and communicate with teachers in real time.

Using the online tools described, GGUSD provides many ways to stay connected with the district and its schools to help ensure academic success.

Learn About the State Standards

GGUSD parents are invited to attend free information nights to learn more about the CA State Standards and student assessments. The following sessions take place from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

- *Thursday, Nov. 12, Peters 4-6 Elementary School, 13200 Newhope St., Garden Grove.*
- *Tuesday, Feb 9, Allen Elementary School, 16200 Bushard St., Fountain Valley.*