



GGUSD Connection

Connecting GGUSD students, parents, staff and community

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GGUSD Students and Schools Continue to Excel

Both our schools and wonderful students are making headlines for their outstanding achievements.

In recently released data for the class of 2014, the graduation rate at Garden Grove Unified School District stands at an impressive 89.7%, topping the list of all large urban districts in the state of California. The rate was also higher than the average for Orange County (88.6%) and the state (80.8%).



Throughout the past several years, GGUSD has placed an increased emphasis ensuring all students are college and career ready. Our efforts have paid off as graduation rates have increased by more than 6% and dropout rates have decreased about 6% since 2009-10. Additionally, a-g completion rates (eligibility for UC and CSU admissions) have doubled in the last decade!

More evidence of our students' progress came when five schools were honored with California Gold Ribbon Awards. These schools have been recognized by the state for making tremendous gains in implementing academic content and performance standards for all students, including English learners.

Fitz and Walton intermediate schools along with Bolsa Grande, La Quinta and Pacifica high schools were named California Gold Ribbon Schools, a new state program which is temporarily replacing the state's Distinguished Schools Program. The California Gold Ribbon program recognized middle and high schools in 2015 and will honor elementary schools in 2016.

2015-2016 School Calendar

September 7 - Labor Day

September 8 - Students Start School

November 11 - Veterans Day

November 25 - Local Holiday

November 23 through 27 - Thanksgiving Recess

December 21 through January 1, 2016 - Winter Recess

January 18 - Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

February 12 - Lincoln Day Holiday

February 15 - Presidents' Day

April 11 through 15 - Spring Break

May 30 - Memorial Day

June 22 - Last Day of Classes for Students

Strategic Plan Annual Report

By now, staff have received a copy of *The Garden Grove Way*, the district's strategic plan. While it was similar to the one-page document you received earlier in the school year, we hope you found it helpful to read more details about our three goals (Academic Skills, Personal Skills, Lifelong Success) and subgoals.

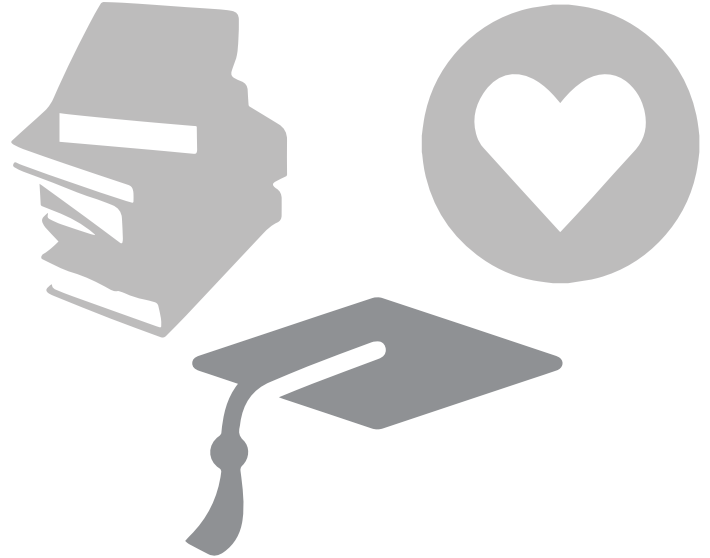
One item that was discussed in the document was our annual survey. Thank you to all our staff, students and parents who provided their feedback through the strategic plan survey. Your input about our district and schools is a key part in helping us to improve!

We will continue to annually survey all groups so we can assess our progress toward the three goals outlined in *The Garden Grove Way*.

In addition to assessing, we are happy to provide staff, students, parents and the community a

report about our progress. In our upcoming Annual Report, we will discuss how information from the recent surveys as well as other data is going to help shape the next year.

The Annual Report will be sent to all staff and parents in the fall and will also be made available online.



K-6 Dual Immersion Program

Beginning in the fall of 2016, GGUSD will begin offering a Spanish Dual Immersion school of choice. In this program, students will begin dual language instruction in kindergarten or first grade and will be able to think, read, write and communicate in English AND Spanish by the time they complete the sixth grade.

In these programs, students are taught the same curriculum as their peers in English-only schools and are expected to meet the same high standards that all other GGUSD students are expected to meet. Highly qualified teachers will be able to provide children with the support they need to excel in their primary and the secondary language.

Numerous studies have shown the benefits of dual immersion programs, including producing adults who are better prepared to enter our global job market where a second language is an asset.

When compared to their peers in mainstream programs, dual immersion students outperformed ALL comparison groups by the fifth grade.

These programs benefit both native English and native Spanish speakers. Native English speakers in dual immersion programs outperform students in English-only schools on reading, writing and listening tests. Native Spanish speakers in similar programs make better progress toward becoming proficient in English than students in ESL or English-only programs.

If you are interested in learning more about this exciting program, please contact Luisa Rogers at (714) 663-6143 or email her at lrogers@ggusd.us.

This summer and fall, there will be more information about the program on our website and social media sites.

2016 Teachers of the Year

This year, three outstanding GGUSD teachers are being honored by the Orange County Department of Education as part of their Teacher of the Year program. These amazing teachers are great representatives for our district!

Elementary - Debbie Redenbaugh, Peters K-3



Ms. Redenbaugh's principal, Michelle Pinchot, said "I have been in education for 17 years. Never have I witnessed a more dedicated, compassionate or motivating teacher than Debbie." As a K-3 special education teacher, Ms. Redenbaugh truly lives the district's goal of looking at the whole child. She is passionate about finding ways to include special needs students into the general education environment, she helps other teachers create behavior management plans for children who are at-risk, and she has been instrumental in providing students access to extra-curricular programs, including the Canine Literacy Program, the GLEE program, Pennies for Patients, K-1 Literature Night and talent shows.

Intermediate - Ellen Fields McLeod, Bell

Superintendent Gabriela Mafi summed up Ms. McLeod with one, powerful word: inimitable. Through her 36 years of service at GGUSD, Ms. McLeod has proven time and time again that her students are her life. As a special education teacher, Ms. McLeod works hard to ensure that her students are prepared for life outside of the classroom. Her students collect recyclables to fund weekly outings and cooking lessons. What started as a small fundraiser now brings in about \$5,000 per year. The money raised from aluminum and plastic funds Bell's annual Thanksgiving Feast, during which Ms. McLeod's students cook and decorate for more than 250 people. The event is one that many community members, local officials and district personnel look forward to every year.



High School -Luz Adriana Alba, Garden Grove

Ms. Alba's principal, Steve Osborne, testifies that she has accomplished something for which every teacher strives," Adriana draws her students into complex discussions that require critical thinking, analysis, synthesis and connections to prior learning." As an 11th-grade English Language Arts teacher, Ms. Alba designed a course on Mexican American Literature and Culture to meet the demand created by our diverse district and multicultural state. She connects with a variety of students by serving as a faculty advisor to several organizations, including the BRIDGES Task Force, Gay Straight Alliance and English Learner Advisory Committee. Her work has allowed students from vastly different backgrounds to work together and form relationships that might have never happened otherwise.



SAVE-THE-DATE!



This July marks **50 years** since Garden Grove Unified School District became unified in 1965 and we plan to celebrate in a big way! Special events will begin in the summer and will continue throughout the year. Please watch this newsletter, our website and GGUSD's Facebook and Twitter for more information about our Golden Anniversary events!

California State Standards FAQ

WHAT ARE THE NEW STATE STANDARDS? The California Department of Education regularly sets and updates academic standards for all schools in the state. The standards were recently revised and, effective this 2014-2015 school year, all schools in California are required to teach the new state adopted English Language Arts and Mathematics standards. State standards indicate what students are expected to learn at each grade level. Each standard is aligned to a college and career standard that provides a pathway for student learning from kindergarten through twelfth grade.

HOW DO COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES FEEL ABOUT THE NEW CALIFORNIA STANDARDS? All major California universities and colleges have stated their support in a document you can access at: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/pn/nr/yr14sberel04att.asp>

IS IT TRUE THAT STUDENTS NOW HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL 9TH GRADE TO TAKE ALGEBRA? In Garden Grove Unified School District, we have a long history of academic excellence in advanced math courses and will be continuing our traditional practice of offering advanced math coursework to students, including an opportunity to take Algebra in the 7th or 8th grade and Geometry in grade 8. While many neighboring districts have chosen to eliminate advanced math coursework at the intermediate level, we have not, as our students have always been quite successful in their accelerated math trajectories, with many students enrolling in Calculus BC by senior year.

HOW CAN I HELP MY CHILD AT HOME? Later this month a message will go out (via phone, email and text message) to all parents giving more information on ways you can support your child at home, during the school year and summer. It will also contain a link to the new math textbooks that you can access online and have your child preview the math topics for the coming year. This information will also be posted on social media (website, Facebook). If you do not currently receive emails or text messages from the district, please make sure that the school has your updated email address and cell phone number.

Garden Grove Unified School District Board of Education



Board of Education

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Vice President Lan Quoc Nguyen, Esq.

Bob Harden

Linda Reed

Teri Rocco

The five Board of Education members are elected by voters of the district to serve four-year terms.