

## **Garden Grove Unified School District Model Programs and Practices**

### **District Information**

CD (County District) Code: 3066522

County: Orange

District (Local Educational Agency): Garden Grove Unified School District

### **Demographics**

Enrollment: 43,336

Location Description: Urban

### **Overview**

**Our Vision:** We are committed to preparing all students to be successful and responsible citizens who contribute and thrive in a diverse society.

**Our Mission:** To ensure student success, we will provide a rigorous and supportive academic experience that motivates all learners to meet high expectations.

**Our Strategic Plan Goals:** Academic Skills + Personal Skills = Lifelong Success

Garden Grove Unified School District (GGUSD) has a strong reputation for providing outstanding instructional programs to a diverse student population. Students receive an exceptional education at our award-winning schools. GGUSD is a leader in college and career readiness with a greater number of students meeting rigorous college entrance requirements than other districts in the state or county. With all our successes, however, we know that academics is just one element of a successful education, and we work to nurture the whole child. The key to our success is treating all students as if they were our own children and providing them all the academic and personal skills for lifelong success. GGUSD prides itself on being innovative, fiscally responsible, and committed to providing a safe learning environment with a high level of support for all students and their parents.

Established July 1, 1965, the district encompasses 28 square miles of territory, serving Garden Grove as well as six surrounding cities—Anaheim, Cypress, Fountain Valley, Santa Ana, Stanton, and Westminster. GGUSD has a total of 68 schools, including 45 elementary schools, 10 intermediate school, 8 high schools, 2 preschools, 2 special

education centers, and 1 adult education center. We are a large urban district, where one of our greatest assets is our ethnically and linguistically diverse student population (53.6% Hispanic/Latino, 34.2% Asian, 8% White, 4.2% other) with 50 different languages spoken by families within the district. Recognizing the value of biliteracy, students in GGUSD have options to enroll in a Spanish dual immersion school or a Vietnamese dual immersion program.

About 71% of our students are second language learners (38.5% English learners and 32.6% reclassified fluent English proficient). Over 86% of our K–12 schools qualify for Title I, which supports schools with high percentages of children from low-income families. In 2016–17, our unduplicated count of English learners, free/reduced price meals, and foster youth was 76.8%. The percent of educationally disadvantaged students in GGUSD exceeds the state's average percentage of students receiving free and reduced price lunch and percentage of English learners. GGUSD is committed to approaching the education of our students with an equity lens, working to close achievement gaps between student groups, and ensuring that we provide a rigorous and supportive academic experience that motivates ALL learners to meet high expectations. (2,889)

## **Model Program/Practice**

### **Name of Model Program/Practice**

“The Garden Grove Way”

Category 1: Positive Culture and Climate

Category 2: Exceptional Strides in Student Achievement

We believe that our Model Program meets criteria in both categories 1 & 2. If we must select one category, we would select Category 2 to emphasize the growth in achievement yielded by our commitment to The Garden Grove Way.

### **Summary**

Length of Model Program/Practice: 5–8 years

### **Description**

The Garden Grove Way exemplifies our deep commitment to putting our students first, providing them with the quality education that we would expect for our own children. The Garden Grove Way Strategic Plan was launched during the 2013–2014 school year as the district's roadmap to move us forward. Developed with input from students, parents, and staff, the Strategic Plan is based on an equation that includes three primary goals: Academic Skills + Personal Skills = Lifelong Success.

Strategic Plan Goals: Goal 1: Academic Skills – All learners will develop the academic skills necessary for continual individual growth towards mastery of standards. Goal 2: Personal Skills–All learners will develop the personal skills necessary to achieve academic and social goals.

Goal 3: Lifelong Success – All learners will be prepared for lifelong success in their intended career paths.

System Coherence: We are an organization that values coherence, a well-aligned system with clear goals and expectations. The Garden Grove Way Strategic Plan goals serve as the foundation for our Local Control and Accountability Plan and our Single Plans for Student Achievement. We use the same districtwide goals and metrics as the foundation for all district and school planning documents, aligning all actions and expenditures. Our core aim for bringing this coherence is to ensure that every child in GGUSD receives a high quality education. Our foundational belief is that every school, and every child in this district deserves to have the same opportunities for success.

Teacher Professional Development and Collaboration: One of the keys to ensuring coherence and alignment is our district system of professional development of teachers. Our LCAP Action 1A(1) states that we will “maintain quality practices that align to the CA State Standards through site level support and build long-term capacity in teacher leaders through research, consults, and collaboration.” Our LCAP Action 1A(2) focuses specifically on “Professional Development” with attention to how “strong instruction” leads to “increased student achievement,” which is accomplished through building “teacher capacity... through instructional leadership teams.” As a learning organization, we value both individual and collective learning, building capacity, and empowering people through opportunities to collaborate. Every school in GGUSD participates in formal collaboration, or professional learning communities (PLC) among teachers. Instructional Leadership Teams (ILT) provide teachers with opportunities to work together, plan together, and reflect together for the purpose of continuous improvement. Collaboration in GGUSD cuts across content areas, focusing foremost on effective instructional practices. This districtwide practice is an essential feature of The Garden Grove Way. (2,850)

## **Implementation and Monitoring**

The Garden Grove Way, which creates system coherence and facilitates a culture of collaboration, have led to “Exceptional Strides in Student Achievement.” The implementation of system coherence is accomplished through the intentional alignment of all planning to the Strategic Plan goals and metrics. Student data, both quantitative and qualitative, are analyzed for the purpose of developing specific actions and allocating district and site funds for targeted needs. As evidence of system coherence, we have developed a common pedagogical perspective on effective teaching. Teachers and other staff are able to focus on improving student outcomes through effective instructional practices cultivated through collaboration. Collaboration has the potential to greatly impact student achievement, because it allows teachers to develop strong

instructional practices together as teams, rather than in isolation. As is often said, together as a team, we can achieve more.

The Garden Grove Way extends to all district staff, administrative staff, classified staff, and our parents and students. The Garden Grove Way means that we take seriously our commitment to our students and community. Every year, all students, parents and employees are invited to provide their feedback by completing an annual survey. The Annual Strategic Plan Survey helps us understand what our schools do well, and how we might improve. This survey is administered to all students in grades three through twelve, all staff, and parents. The survey contains items that help us measure how well we are doing as a district in areas related to our Strategic Plan, such as improving scholarly habits, motivation, well-being, and school climate. The survey results, combined with other data on our progress toward each of our goals, are distributed to all stakeholders in an annual district progress report each fall.

As an example, several system wide efforts were launched in response to the results of the survey in combination with student outcomes data, California Dashboard results, and survey results from all stakeholders. The expansion of extended day programs and enrichment programs, the development of a district family resource center, increased school-based mental health services, and the development of a districtwide framework of scholarly habits and motivation (FAR Model) are all examples of districtwide efforts that have contributed to our strides in student achievement.

The Garden Grove Way exemplifies our deep commitment to putting our students first, providing them with the quality education that we would expect for our own children.  
(2,630)

## **Results and Outcomes**

As a result of The Garden Grove Way, GGUSD has continued to maintain strong growth in academic performance as evidenced by the scores on the state's California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CASPP) on the Smarter Balanced Assessments (SBAC). Outcomes for this metric are included in our LCAP/Strategic Plan Goal 1, Academic Skills. When interpreting comparison results, we also consider the percentage of educationally disadvantaged students in categories such as English learner and low-income students. GGUSD has higher rates of educationally disadvantaged students than the statewide average and countywide averages (Second Language Background: GGUSD 71.1%, OC 47.5%, CA 42.6%; English learners: GGUSD 38.5%, OC 24.3%, CA 21.4%; Free and Reduced Price Meals: GGUSD %, OC 47%, CA %). In the area of English Language Arts, the percentage of GGUSD students who met or exceeded standards was better than the statewide average in all three past three years of SBAC testing: 2015 (GGUSD 49%, CA 44%), 2016 (GGUSD 54%, CA 49%), and 2017 (GGUSD 57.44%, CA 48.56%). Historically, Orange County, with some relatively affluent areas, tends to outperform statewide averages. With our continued growth in scores, GGUSD surpassed the countywide average in 2017 (GGUSD, 57.44%, OC 57.39%, CA 48.56%). In the area of Mathematics, the percentage of GGUSD students who met or exceeded standards was better than the statewide

average in all three past years of SBAC testing: 2015 (GGUSD 39%, CA 33%), 2016 (GGUSD 45%, CA 37%), and 2017 (GGUSD 47%, CA 37.56%). While GGUSD in Mathematics scores on the SBAC have not yet surpassed the countywide averages, we have reduced the gap to 1.26% (2017: GGUSD 47%, OC 48.26%).

Our LCAP/Strategic Plan Goal 2, Personal Skills, includes graduation rate as a metric. In GGUSD, our 2015–16 graduation rate was 92.2%. The countywide graduation rate was 91.0% and the statewide graduation rate was 83.8%. Over half of GGUSD students are Hispanic/Latino, with a graduation rate that exceeds the countywide and statewide rates (Hispanic/Latino graduation rates: GGUSD 93.1%, OC 87.5%, CA 80.5%).

Our LCAP/Strategic Plan Goal 3, Lifelong Success, includes Advanced Placement (AP) and a–g college entrance requirements as metrics. Students in GGUSD are encouraged to take rigorous coursework in preparation for college/career success. In 2017, GGUSD was named on the AP District Honor Roll for increasing access to AP for underrepresented students while simultaneously maintaining or increasing the percentage of students earning AP Exam scores of 3 or higher. GGUSD also maintains pass rates that exceed the statewide, nationwide, and worldwide pass rates! GGUSD is also proud to highlight our increase in a–g completion rates. In 2004, our a–g rate was 24.5%. Since then, with the initiatives connected to our Garden Grove Way, a–g rates have exceeded countywide and statewide averages, where now over 51.6% meet these college entrance requirements. (2,981)