

Galt Joint Union Elementary School District Model Programs and Practices

District Information

CD (County District) Code: 3467348

County: Sacramento

District (Local Educational Agency): Galt Joint Union Elementary School District

Demographics

Enrollment: 3,844

Location Description: Suburban

Overview

The Galt Joint Union Elementary School District (GJUESD) Bright Futures initiative advances strengths-based education through personalized learning practices, technology tools, supports and opportunities. The school system is committed to a well-rounded and rigorous learner-centered education. The district serves 3,844 pre-kindergarten through grade eight learners at five elementary schools, one middle school and one school readiness center. In December 2012, the Galt Joint Union School District was selected as one of sixteen districts in the United States for a Race To The Top grant to personalize learning practices.

The GJUESD reflects a commitment to learner growth and achievement through a vision of Growing And Learning Together by “inspiring learning- one plan at a time.” Every GJUESD preschool through grade eight learner has a personalized learning and strengths-based growth plan that results in increased learner engagement, development of essential executive skills and capacity to “own learning.” The powerful learner-centered model is woven within a positive district culture and climate fostering a growth mindset with the belief that “one size does NOT fit All.”

Personalized learning approaches maximize each child's' strengths, needs, interests and aspirations. The positive changes in SBAC results along with social-emotional and engagement data demonstrate our on-going focus and commitment to continuous improvement through shared responsibility. GJUESD nurtures and nudges learners not only to achieve but personally to grow as an individual. Through the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) processes, youth and adult learners express and act upon

ideas and actions to identify and cultivate “pockets of excellence” into a “harvest” of improvement and innovation.

The GALT Bright Futures initiative is described through four LCAP goals:

1. Implementing personalized strengths-based growth plans for every learner
2. Implementing California State Standards in a variety of blended learning environments
3. Process and measures for continuous improvement and accountability
4. Safe and healthy Next Gen school facilities

Key elements of the strengths-based personalized learning initiative include:

1. Personalized Learning Plans
2. Blended Learning and Integrated Technology Opportunities
3. Bright Future Learning Centers
4. Strengths-Related Assessments
5. Learning Management System
6. Educator Professional Learning Cycle
7. Extended Learning Opportunities and Project-based Service Learning

Throughout the three years of the LCAP development and implementation, GJUESD has moved from a student-centered proficiency model to a learner-centered growth and achievement model.

Model Program/Practice

Name of Model Program/Practice

Category 1: Positive Culture and Climate- Personalized Learning Plans for Growth and Achievement

Summary

Length of Model Program/Practice: 2–4 years

Description

Positive School Culture and Climate: Personalized Learning Plans for Growth and Achievement

“We want students to want to come to school. We want to be able to provide an environment where students wake up in the morning and say, we want to come to school today because school is fun.” ~ Principal, GJUESD

Just imagine... a school district set aside the traditional cookie-cutter approach to teaching learner en masse and instead called on administrators, teachers, students and their parents to come together to craft a unique, Personalized Learning Plan (PLP) for each child. This vision may appear wildly ambitious and almost too good to be true, but that is what the GJUESD has accomplished as part of the GALT Bright Futures initiative efforts.

As the district transformed from a student-centered proficiency model to a learner-centered growth and achievement model, a static trimester report card no longer aligned. The PLPs reflect a shift away from a traditional report card to a more dynamic and engaging tool for inspiring learning while communicating strengths, goals, and academic progress.

Personalized Learning Plans (PLPs), stored and accessed via the district's data and learning management system, are a cornerstone of the Galt personalized learning model. The PLP is a goal-setting tool designed to facilitate frequent reflection and discussion. By capturing and reporting multiple sources of data at frequent intervals, students, as well as their educators and parents, can monitor growth and set goals for achievement in specific areas.

Every pre-K through grade eight student has an individual PLP that is updated at least each trimester to reflect changes in information related to learning, goal setting and grades. The PLP displays information in multiple sections, including:

1. Student Strengths and The Future Me
 - Learners' strengths identified by the GALLUP assessment or spotted by educators
2. PLP Goals and Reflections
3. Growth and Achievement Report

Educators and students use PLPs to reflect on individual student data, participate in individualized goal setting, and blend digital resources with face-to-face instruction to work toward goals. Though individual goals are updated in the PLP at least once a trimester, student reflection and goal-setting activities occur as often as once a week.

The initial PLP prototype online platform included menus with suggested activities and enabled users to designate stakeholders (e.g., educators, parents, instructional assistants, social workers, afterschool staff) who supported the student's goals and actions. As PLP implementation capacity and understanding increased, this feature was removed resulting in the current model with greater learner engagement and reduced educator design time. The most recent PLP model directly involves students in goal setting, considering career and life aspirations and reflection.

Implementation and Monitoring

“My biggest takeaway...has been goal setting for the students, and giving them a little bit more choice... It’s part of them now and they know about goal setting.” ~ Teacher, GJUESD

Through the Personalized Learning Plans (PLPs), educators, parents and students have weekly access to updates on student progress and accomplishments. The PLP is designed to facilitate frequent reflection and discussion. By capturing and reporting multiple sources of data at frequent intervals, students, as well as their educators and parents, can monitor growth and set goals for achievement in specific areas.

The PLP is an exemplary practice for developing youth capacity to maximize academic growth and achievement while more importantly, preparing them for “to and through” college for career and life success. Essential executive function skills embedded in the model practice include:

1. Establishing of personal goals for life direction
2. Engaging in learning to “own it” through coaching and mentoring of caring adults and peers
3. Building emotional intelligence including a strong sense of self-awareness and self-management, conscientiousness, persistence or “grit”
4. Applying social intelligence to build respect for self and others

This model practice and other personalized learning elements have been monitored for improvement, expansion or removal based upon multiple feedback loops incorporated within the LCAP. Annual Listening Circles support deep understanding and innovative idea generation related to PLP implementation.

Each February, learners, parents and school staff gather to discuss, listen and generate new ideas based upon needs. Students benefit from this process that embodies the three major protective factors that are also incorporated within the PLP implementation process: caring relationships, high expectations and meaningful participation.

A key question for our youth in February 2018: Every student at your school has a PLP with goals. How can we support you to help you achieve your personal goals and future dreams? A sampling of youth feedback themes include:

1. Career building: “I want to know more about careers in science, entertainment and sports.”
2. Confidence and encouragement building: “The words my teacher uses can inspire me to try harder and learn. I like the extra time my teacher spends with me to help me learn and grow.”

3. More choice and variety: “I want my teacher to survey my class so he can make learning more interesting and fun.”
4. Cross-age mentoring: “I think my school needs to find more ways for older kids to help the younger kids at my school.”
5. Challenge and rigor: “I want to have harder activities to learn and grow even more.”

Listening deeply and acting upon youth voice throughout the PLP development and implementation process are critical monitoring elements of the Galt Bright Futures initiative.

Results and Outcomes

“It’s wonderful to have a growth model instead of saying, they have to meet this benchmark. Parents dread coming and hearing ‘Oh, they didn’t meet the benchmark.’ The other exciting part about the growth visuals (in the PLP) is the kids love them. You show them, ‘Look, you were here, and now you’re here- oh my gosh! Celebrate all that.’” ~ Teacher, GJUESD

The Galt personalized learning model reflects a reform journey that includes shared responsibility for improvement, for innovation, and for results. The Personalized Learning Plan (PLP) has changed over time based on educator feedback, parent surveys and focus groups. The implementation of PLPs has contributed to the following accomplishments:

- 100% of preK through grade eight learners have a PLP.
- Individual Goal Accomplishment Spring 2017:
 - 70% met or exceeded individual growth targets for language arts
 - 66% met or exceeded individual growth targets for mathematics
 - 58% of English learners met English Language Development goals- 8% improvement from the previous year
- SBAC English Language Arts Three Years Positive Change: Grades 3, 5, 8
- SBAC Mathematics Three Years Positive Change: Grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8
- California Dashboard
 - Suspension: Rating Green
 - English Learner Progress: Rating Blue

- Gallup Student Poll Hope and Engagement mean scores exceed U.S. scores (based on 2000 schools) for grades 5, 6, 7 and 8.
 - 92 % agree/strongly agree they will graduate from high school.
 - 90 % agree/strongly agree they have a great future ahead of them.
 - 91% agree/ strongly agree they will find a good job in the future.

In addition, WestEd is finalizing research on the initiative through an Impact Study Report. The findings suggest that the Galt personalized learning model is effective in promoting academic achievement in mathematics, reading and language usage.

The GJUESD personalized learning journey is not over. The school system is committed to shared responsibility to ensure every learner Growing And Learning Together through inspiring learning – one plan at a time! The Sacramento Educational Cable Consortium (SECC) produced a series of videos that highlight our learners in action toward their bright futures as the Grow And Learn Together;
<https://www.secctv.org/galt-bright-futures-initiative/>

Galt Bright Futures: Learner Goals & Pathways <https://youtu.be/68VXAU7FeEY>

Galt Bright Futures: Blended Learning Environments <https://youtu.be/i9UB0KCbv9o>

Galt Bright Futures: Continuous Improvement Through Shared Responsibility
<https://youtu.be/zXJw42yC8xE>

Galt Bright Futures: NextGen School Facilities <https://youtu.be/1FkeFfu84Ps>

The GALT Bright Future initiative blends innovation with research based efforts to prepare each and every learner for college, career and life. The district recognizes the power and potential of PERSONalization for NextGen learners.