



from the office of Superintendent Robert Collins

In GUHSD the song is, “Where did they all come from?” and not, “Where have they all gone? or “Where do they all belong?” *Eleanor Rigby, 1966*
Dropout Recovery Programs Increase District Enrollment



GUHSD's Dropout Prevention Specialists make the difference each day. From left to right: Ron Carper, Doreen Asaro, Tammy Ullsperger, Jeni Mendel and Sherman Miller

It was projected that the Grossmont Union High School District (GUHSD) would lose 360 students this year. Declining enrollment combined with student drop-outs was the reason and, like other districts throughout California, that reason had been acceptable in the past.

But the staff of GUHSD challenged that assumption. They know that there were hundreds of students who had dropped out. There were hundreds more who wouldn't graduate in June and would become dropouts next year. Then there were students who “checked out” with no one tracking where they were going. Other students decided to check into charter schools and some opted to be home-schooled. **Last Spring specific steps were taken to address each of these issues:**

1. **School procedures for checking in and out of school were tightened up.** No student checked out without a counselor conference and determination of where they were going. More often than not, students were counseled into alternative school programs.
2. **A Learning Center was set up at the East County Regional Education Center.** The Center enrolled 70 potential dropout students in its first month of operation. We also implemented the first District online learning program there.
3. **Over 300 fifth-year seniors were enrolled** at high schools across the district.
4. **Direct mailing to potential home school students and Charter school students,** brought many of these students back to GUHSD schools.
5. **Dropout Prevention Specialists went door-to-door** to speak with students who had left the District to bring them back and offer them a wide range of alternative programs and options.

The result? There has been an **increase in enrollment of 215+ students, approximately 575 students over projections.**

And now the work begins for 2009-2010. Critical to maintaining this momentum is our ability as a District and schools, to communicate clearly to all students that there is a program for them in GUHSD. We need to expand our Learning Center programs to other areas throughout East County. Also critical to maintaining and increasing enrollment is our focus on Career Tech Education (CTE). These programs must be modernized, and implemented in regular and alternative education programs.



Addressing the Dropout Rate with Learning Centers
A Rigorous Curriculum in a Personalized Learning Environment

3.1% GUHSD	6.4% State	6.2% San Diego County
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GUHSD has one of the lowest dropout rates in California, significantly lower than both the State and County averages. However, one dropout is too many and more often than not, our dropouts are English Learners, Latino/Hispanic and African American students. The District has implemented safeguards at the school site to ensure students are kept in school and **developed a Learning Center Program** model for “students at risk.”

The Learning Center combines an individualized, high interest curriculum, with a personalized learning environment for each student. Knowing the route to high school graduation and a post-secondary experience will be different for every student. The Learning Center teachers provide guidance and support to each student. **Our goal this year is to build our alternative school programs at Chaparral and Gateways and to open three additional Learning Centers** where students can recover attendance and credits towards graduation. The initial results of our work with Learning Centers and student recovery have resulted in an increase in enrollment in the District for 2008-09.

We will also ensure that our alternative school students have access to a full range of career tech opportunities in the Learning Center – this will include ROP, Adult School, community college and CTE opportunities at their home school.

Project SHIELD

Project SHIELD, a new Federal grant program will be in five schools and will provide additional support services to at-risk students and their families. The grant will significantly expand the Family Resource Centers, ensuring that students and families have ready access to a range of support services. This will be a significant compliment to the Learning Center program.

An intervention curriculum, CAHSEE prep and other support programs still need to be addressed in order to meet all areas of need.