



Galt Joint Union High School District

Estrellita Continuation High School - Galt High School - Liberty Ranch High School

2011-2014 Instructional Focus

Every Student.... Ready for College and Career!

“High School Graduate” is a distinction that marks a significant milestone in the life of a student. It is a hallmark of achievement for the student and a communal recognition of his/her preparation for success beyond high school. It is also a source of pride for the student’s family; a fitting “payback” to the professional educators whose commitment nurtured the student’s cognitive and affective development; and a positive return-on-investment for the community and taxpayers who support our public schools. That is why **our Goal is to produce high school graduates who are ready for college and career.**

The Galt Joint Union High School District views education as a continuous process of academic, intellectual, social, and emotional growth and achievement for our students and adults. Teachers, administrators, staff, students and parents work together to form a community of learners, focused on assisting students to learn and master a rigorous and relevant curriculum.

Dr. Daisy Lee
Superintendent of Schools
April 2011



This Instructional Focus is our educational roadmap for accomplishing our Goal. It begins with what we want for all students and how we will measure their progress toward the Goal. Then, it defines the **Four Pillars** on which we will build our educational “house,” namely: *High Expectations for All, Standards-Aligned Rigorous Instruction, Culture of Continuous Learning, and Safe Climate and Strong Partnerships*. Finally, it specifies the **Vital Signs** that we will monitor along the way.

This plan is a statement of our collective dedication and commitment to the Goal: **every student... ready for college and career!** Our mutual success depends on how diligently we follow through, because getting things done well demands discipline.

our
goal

*Our Goal is our
collective promise
to every student,
without exception.*



Every Student... Ready for College and Career!

Every student who is continuously enrolled in district schools for at least 3 years will graduate ready for college and career.

Every student will experience year-to-year growth in learning and achievement, regardless of length of time in district schools.

Vital Signs of Student Progress

1 Continuous academic growth



- Student proficiency in all content subjects
- Student access to and success in higher-level courses (e.g., Honors, Advanced Placement)
- Closing the “achievement gap” and accelerating learning for all students

2 Academic tenacity



- Student attendance and attitude
- Successful transitions (from grade-to-grade; middle school to high school to postsecondary)

3 Responsibility and resiliency



- Student motivation
- Student ‘voice’ and civic responsibility

four pillars

Effective professional practices form the foundation for high levels of student learning and achievement. If we are to realize our Goal for student learning, we must build our educational programs on a strong foundation of *Teaching Practices, Leadership Practices and Organizational Practices*. Our **Four Pillars** are the building blocks of our professional practices; they frame what we must do well and consistently in order to ensure success for all students.

Teaching Practices

Leadership Practices

Organizational Practices

Pillar #1

Beliefs and behaviors reflect commonly held high expectations and shared responsibility for professional practices and student learning.

High Expectations for All

T1: Teachers will provide students with the timely and specific information they need to monitor their own learning.

T2: Teachers will share lessons with their resource colleagues to expose all students to the same high-level materials and curriculum that require higher-level thinking and allow for open-ended responses.

L1: Administrative team will monitor the implementation of standards of professional practices and promote academic and behavioral standards that are consistent for all students, regardless of their background or 'circumstance'.

L2: Leadership team will hold high expectations for all staff regarding lesson planning and implementation of the course of study.

O1: School/district will make the completion of a rigorous college-preparatory or career-oriented curriculum a high school graduation goal for all students.

O2: All district employees will support teachers by implementing the school-wide positive behavior program for all students.

Pillar #2

All students have access to challenging, on-standard teaching with standards and consistent teaching practices at the center of curriculum-planning and student learning.

Standards-Aligned Rigorous Instruction

T3: Teachers will communicate objectives for all lessons so students are aware of what is expected.

T4: Teachers will raise expectations and level of rigor for all students, regardless of current levels of achievement, to ensure their continuous growth and development.

L3: Principal/leadership team will conduct classroom observations and give timely feedback regarding standards-based instruction.

L4: Principal/leadership team will allocate resources to support core instruction and professional development needs, relative to meeting the state standards.

O3: School/district will allot time for training, collegial collaboration and preparation of standards-aligned instructional materials, as well as school-wide reflection and dialogue.

O4: School/district will use data to identify strengths, challenges and adjustments to delivery of standards-aligned curriculum, instruction and assessment practices.

Pillar #3

Teachers and leadership staff engage in year-round, evidence-based cycles of inquiry with clear standards of professional practice and accountability.

Culture of Continuous Learning

T5: Teachers will provide students with timely information and support based on student assessment results.

T6: Teachers will set content area goals and assess own growth over time and analyze the effectiveness of professional practices relative to their impact on student learning.

L5: Principal/leadership team will ensure decisions are based on the highest professional standards and will hold colleagues accountable individually and collectively.

L6: Principal/leadership team will conduct walkthroughs and share critical feedback about vital signs of student learning and teaching practices.

O5: All teachers and staff will participate in scheduled evidence-based cycles of inquiry to share data about student learning and reflect on individual and team professional practices.

O6: School/district will develop a cadre of school and district leaders who have attained mastery of core leadership practices and will facilitate the learning of other administrators and teacher leaders.

Pillar #4

The school culture and structures support the socio-emotional needs of students, and standards for student and adult conduct are fair and consistently enforced.

Safe Climate and Strong Relationships

T7: Teachers will work collegially to develop and consistently enforce school practices that promote a high-achieving, caring and supportive environment.

T8: Teachers and staff will communicate care and concern for students' learning and well-being, both verbally and non-verbally, to students and parents.

L7: Principal/leadership team will equitably enforce high behavioral classroom and school expectations that are clearly communicated to all students.

L8: Principal/leadership team will disseminate information on school reforms, policies, discipline procedures, assessment tools, and school goals, and include parents in any related decision-making processes.

O7: School/district and community will develop a shared vision and plan for promoting, enhancing and sustaining a high-achieving, positive school climate.

O8: School/district leadership will provide training and opportunities for staff and parents on collaborative partnering and shared decision-making.

vital signs & look-fors

What gets measured and reinforced, gets done!

In the medical profession, vital signs define the body's most basic functions and are used to detect and monitor patient health. In a professional learning community, a series of vital signs can be used to track "organizational health" and monitor progress toward the goal.

By paying consistent attention to the Vital Signs of Student Learning and Professional Practices, we will be able to monitor and communicate progress, continuously improve practices, ensure accountability, and celebrate our successes.

Student Learning	Teaching Practices	Leadership Practices	Organizational Practices
<p>Cognitively Engaging Work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students know and can articulate learning goals. Students use thinking, questioning, and problem-solving strategies during rigorous learning activities to demonstrate learning. <p>Work That Meets Standards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of students scoring "meets standards" or higher on performance assessment. Student articulation of the skills and concepts that are currently being taught. <p>Motivation & Satisfaction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students receive timely, constructive academic feedback and encouragement. Percentage of students who feel "connected to and challenged by my teachers." 	<p>Rigorous Learning Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher includes instructional tasks with high levels of rigor. Teacher assigns tasks/activities directly related to the standards. <p>Relationships with Students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher communicates and enforces consistently realistic high and positive academic and behavioral expectations for all students. Teacher communicates caring for and interest in students' welfare, learning, and academic achievement. <p>Collegial Accountability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers collaboratively analyze student data and reflect on teaching practices. Teachers collaboratively develop common formative assessments and analyze student data together. 	<p>Enforcing Expectations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of teachers who use the school's vital signs and "look-fors" rubric for self-monitoring of instructional effectiveness. Department teams meet for blocks of time sufficient to develop and refine instructional plans and review student learning data. <p>PD Aligned to Priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional development for teachers includes self-assessment relative to the school's Instructional Focus, vital signs of student learning and effective instructional practices. Principal plans opportunities for teachers to share their strengths and training with other teachers. <p>School-Home Relationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal and teachers use a variety of communication tools on a regular basis to reach parents. Percentage of parents who "agree that teachers contact home with 'good' news about individual students more than 'bad.'" 	<p>Resources Aligned to Priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'Sacred time' is set aside to collaborate, monitor and reflect on practice. Extent to which instructional time is reserved for quality instruction without unnecessary interruptions <p>Communications With Families</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal and teachers actively encourage parents to communicate with them regarding their students (children). Principal and teachers contact parents in a timely manner regarding student behavior and grades to discuss strengths and areas for improvement. <p>Data Management Systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> District-wide benchmark exams for all subjects are administered four times a year. Benchmark exams and state exam data are collaboratively analyzed and continuously utilized to improve instruction and student learning.