

GARDENA HIGH SCHOOL PUBLIC SCHOOL CHOICE QUESTIONS

Following are answers to questions presented at the Public School Choice Community Meeting held Tuesday, October 20, 2009, at Gardena High School. Every attempt has been made to answer questions as completely as possible. Should you need further clarification or have other questions, please e-mail Superintendent Linda Del Cueto, at linda.delcueto@lausd.net. Please include Gardena High School Public School Choice in the subject line.

This website will be periodically updated to answer new questions and to announce meeting dates and activities related to the Public Choice process.

INSTRUCTION AT GARDENA HIGH SCHOOL:

1. How does Public School Choice impact the accreditation (WASC) process?

Gardena High School has been working on their accreditation self-study for the past year. This process asks all stakeholders-- teachers, parents, students, and administrators—to look at school data to evaluate the effectiveness of their educational program and to create an action plan to continuously improve their school. This self-study will become an integral part of Gardena's plan for Public School Choice. The collaborative process Gardena High School has engaged in will be the foundation for the continued conversations that will shape the plan the school will submit in January.

2. What will happen to special education students if the school becomes a charter?

All Public School Choice applications must include a plan to serve all students, including special education students, English language learners, and Standard English learners.

2. What do we need to do in order to improve instruction and student achievement, including test scores?

All English, math, science, and social studies teachers use mandated curriculum such as Instructional Guides, Periodic Assessments, and research-based methodologies to provide differentiated instruction so all students can learn. The school has funded a data coach, intervention coach, and a math coach to assist teachers. Local District 8 staff has also been working closely with teachers and administrators to provide standards-based instruction for all students.

3. How are teachers evaluated?

School administrators formally evaluate teachers regularly as part of the STULL process. In addition, administrators must routinely observe classes and provide feedback to teachers about their effectiveness.

4. Is there an alternative instructional program to support students who are not succeeding in a traditional setting?

Gardena High School has intervention classes scheduled throughout the school day and after school to support students who continue to struggle in English and math. Beyond Gardena High School, students may be referred to other schools, such as Moneta Continuation High School, to make up credits in order to graduate. LAUSD offers many options to support students.

5. What support does Gardena High School have to enable students to pass advanced math and science courses?

Instruction in all core classes at Gardena High School must focus on teaching the standards and remediating students as needed in order to better prepare them for more rigorous courses.

6. How can teachers help motivate students to achieve?

Gardena High School is utilizing the Small Learning Communities: Model Green House, Sports Medicine, Health and Public Service (SHAPS), Creative and Liberal Studies (CALs), Architecture, Construction, Computer Engineering and Robotics (ACCER) Teachers have also received and continue to receive training and professional development on how to use research-based strategies designed to engage students in learning. These methods include the use of graphic organizers, collaborative groups, academic vocabulary, and instructional conversations. Teachers are also personalizing their interactions by regularly meeting with students and parents to keep them aware of student progress.

7. If they change this school, will our children's education get better?

Since Gardena High School is an under-performing school, all changes made will result in a better education for all. This is the goal of the Public School Choice initiative. Every change made at this school will be directly connected to improved student achievement.

8. How can the school offer more vocational classes?

Every school must offer electives and core classes to help students meet LAUSD graduation requirements. Student interest, the availability of highly-qualified teachers, the budget, class size norms, and graduation requirements dictate the creation of the classes being offered.

9. How can the school overcome the challenges of having higher class sizes and demoralized teachers?

Parents, students, and the community need to support the work of dedicated teachers, especially in times of a budget crisis. The school can support its teachers by continuing to communicate and listen. School teams of teachers working together toward a common goal are improving teacher morale. Successful teachers are sharing best practices with their colleagues.