

YOU Program Case Study

Baldwin Park Unified School District



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-Mark Skvarna

Baldwin Park Unified School District Profile

LOCATION

Los Angeles County, California

2013 ENROLLMENT

18,845

DISTRICT SIZE

22 schools total

13 elementary

4 middle

3 high

1 continuation

RACIAL DEMOGRAPHICS

3% African American

87% Latino

3% White

ENGLISH LEARNER

25% of student population

LOW-INCOME

86% of student population

Baldwin Park Unified School District was in need of a special solution to impact student achievement with a multiplying effect. In an effort to improve performance in the school district, Baldwin Park made big changes to internal communications and teamwork efforts to maximize educator collaboration. Based on the needs identified from their own data, they enhanced local assessments, and tailored curriculum and teaching styles to the unique needs of the student population.

In addition, Baldwin Park recognized there was a key component to student success that needed greater acknowledgement, deeply engaging the students' parents. To expand their parent engagement efforts, Baldwin Park turned to the YOU Program.

YOU Program Implementation Strategy

Baldwin Park was the first client to implement the YOU Program starting from birth through 12th grade. Parents were not only educated on how to help with their child's early development, they were also shown how to transition into the K-12 system. By doing so, Baldwin Park expects parents to be more significantly engaged as they follow their child through the education pipeline.

School staff were trained and empowered to train other staff and teachers so that all of the Baldwin Park administration and educators used the same educational language as the parents. By doing so, the parents better understood what was expected of them, they were less intimidated by the school system and felt better equipped to participate. The expectations are that as parents build knowledge they build confidence, and as they build confidence, they are more actively engaged in their children's education.

Kindergarten readiness, Common Core State Standards, and college readiness were all weaved into the YOU Program implementation. It was a district mandate to have parents more informed on these key initiatives and to provide them with the skills and resources they need to support them at home.

As put by Baldwin Park Superintendent Mark Skvarna, "In order to achieve systemic change, you have to empower an organization with the right tool and it will take off like a virus. You start with the parents and it catches fire through the rest of the district, resulting in better student outcomes."

Results

Baldwin Park Unified School District received the highest overall grade of B from The Education Trust-West in its yearly District Report Cards two years in a row in 2012 and 2013.

The report cards grade and rank the state's largest districts on academic and college readiness outcomes for low-income, Latino and African-American students. Each district is assigned letter grades for Performance, Improvement, Achievement Gaps, and College Readiness. These letter grades are based on rubrics created by The Education Trust - West. Each letter grade is then averaged into an overall grade based on a traditional 4.0-0.0/A-F scale.

Districts are ranked for each indicator in the full report cards based on how they measure up among the other large, unified districts in the state. Two additional peer groupings were also created that rank: (1) the 20 highest poverty unified districts, or those districts with the greatest percentage of students eligible for free and reduced-price meals, and (2) the 20 largest unified districts, or those 20 districts with the greatest number of students tested.¹

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- The Education Trust-West

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For the second year in a row, Baldwin Park Unified has been recognized as one of the state's top school districts in improving the success of low-income and minority students and closing achievement gaps.

Low-income students make up 86 percent of Baldwin Park's nearly 19,000 students, the highest in the top 12 ranked districts. Five-year weighted API growth among African-American and Latino students was 82, earning the district top ranking in that area among all districts.

"Districts with the best outcomes for California's Latino, African-American, and low-income students don't always get the recognition they deserve," said Arun Ramanathan, Executive Director of The Education Trust-West. "We applaud their leaders, teachers, and staff for their hard work and their unwavering commitment to equity and improving student outcomes."

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¹ The Education Trust-West. California District Report Cards, n.d. Web. 8 July 2014.

² The Education Trust-West. Promising Practices and Lessons Learned, n.d. Web. 9 July 2014.