

Montebello Unified School District

Operating New and Improving
Underperforming Schools
Garfield High School

1. Executive Summary

a. Assurances:

Montebello Unified School District is a public educational organization that falls under the division of California State Department of Education. MUSD, like Los Angeles Unified School District, is bound by state policy and Educational Code for its operating procedures. As such, MUSD provides high quality educational programs for all students, regardless of classification or disability. MUSD will agree to provide written consent of servicing students identified as 'high priority' by LAUSD and will sign into their Modified Consent Decree. In addition, a copy of our audit report is attached which demonstrates fiscal solvency for the district.

b. Student Population

Student Demographics at Garfield High School and Montebello Unified School District are very similar as indicated below:

	Garfield High School	Montebello Unified
Hispanic/Latino	99%	93%
Low Socio-Economic Status	98%	88%
English Learner Population	66%	47%
Students with Disabilities	9%	9%
Graduation Rate	77%	92%
API	594	697

MUSD has extensive experience in working with similar student populations as indicated by the chart above. The district has articulation agreements and MOU's with a multitude of higher education institutions, Community Based Organizations, and outside providers to ensure the needs of all students are met. Currently, MUSD services over 300 transfer students from Garfield High School at Schurr, Montebello, and Bell Gardens High Schools.

c. **Vision, Mission and Philosophy:** The Mission and Vision statements for Garfield High School are as follows:

MISSION

Garfield High School will provide powerful standards-based instruction that

inspires students to achieve academic excellence.

VISION

Garfield High School empowers its students with a high quality education in order to develop productive members of a global society.

The Mission and Vision of Garfield High School is consistent with the core values and beliefs of Montebello Unified. MUSD believes in preparing every student for life after high school by ensuring that each child is equipped to succeed in college and career; not one or the other. Our district believes that every student, regardless of designation, can be successful in a career of choice, and provides multiple opportunities for students during their tenure at our high schools. Because MUSD was selected as one of ten districts in California as a recipient of Multiple Pathways grant, we believe that through Small Learning Communities which are career themed can provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in the real world. As such, a 'day in the life' of a GHS student would be to see real-world connections in each of his/her classes, and a translation of such activities in a work-based program in the community. MUSD is working diligently to ensure a seamless transition between high school and post-secondary education and the world of careers.

d. **Education Plan:** MUSD will provide support to the educational program in the following manner: GHS would be incorporated into our 5 year strategic plan to increase student achievement and learning. This plan includes but is not limited to the following components:

- ✓ Clearly articulated and rigorous standards-based curriculum across the district
- ✓ Open access for Honors and AP courses
- ✓ District-wide, teacher created quarterly benchmarks based upon the 'Essential Standards'
- ✓ District-wide and school specific Professional Learning Communities (Provide time, training for weekly teacher collaboration meetings in course-like teams)
- ✓ Protocols for examining student data/work to inform instruction
- ✓ Instructional strategies and differentiated instruction professional development for teachers to support the success of all learners
- ✓ Leadership training and building capacity amongst site administrators and teacher leaders
- ✓ Multiple Pathways (Small Learning Communities) that enable students to access standards through real-world application under a career theme and integrating the curriculum
- ✓ Training for teachers on how to develop, administer, and evaluate common, formative assessments
- ✓ Provide infrastructure and scheduling to ensure appropriate safety nets are institutionalized for students who need additional support
- ✓ Professional Development for all school staff and counselors to build a College Going Culture

e. **Community Impact and Involvement:** Parent and Community participation is vital to the success of any public school. MUSD has a Parent Involvement Department that provides informational workshops (i.e., college planning and A-G requirements) as well as facilitate district and school site committees. MUSD has very strong ties with its PTSA and has robust parent participation on all of its school site committees. In addition, MUSD has strong ties with Community Based Organizations, Higher Education, and Business/Industry Professionals. All agencies listed above currently serve on Advisory Boards, planning councils, etc.

f. **Leadership/Governance:** The Board of Education, Superintendent, and his Cabinet have a proven track record of success when it comes to increasing student achievement. Under our current Leadership and tenure of our Superintendent, API scores for the district have risen almost 100 points in six years. Currently, the MUSD has an API score of 697, with many schools, including one of our 3 high schools, in the 700's. MUSD (add something about support).

g. **Fiscal Plan:** MUSD is compliant to both the Los Angeles County of Education (LACOE) and the California State Department of Education (CDE) as evidenced by its approval of current budgets and recent audit reports.

2. Curriculum and Instruction

a. A sample of course description, sequence, and pacing guides can be found in the attachments. The curriculum for MUSD high schools was developed by teams of teachers from each of the high schools in all content areas. Blueprints from CST's, CAHSEE, and the Frameworks were utilized in order to develop 'Essential Standards'; the most important content areas students should know and be able to do. Teachers were then put through a process of deconstructing/unwrapping of standards using Bloom's Taxonomy as the foundation to ensure rigor. In the areas of English and Math, 12th grade drafts were shared with University Professors from CSULA, ELAC, and Cal-Poly Pomona. Student proficiency and outcomes were analyzed from a Freshman in college to ensure vertical and seamless transition for 12th graders into college.

MUSD is in year two of its high school curricular efforts, and is now addressing instructional strategies. Lesson design, assessments, instructional strategies, and Response to Instruction will all be addressed to ensure each student has access to the core curriculum and the necessary support/safety nets in place should they need additional assistance.

b. **Track Record of Proposed Curriculum:** All of the processes, methods, and curricular activities are based on the work of DuFour, Marzano, Kinsella, amongst others. Every session of professional development is based on proven research, and will support the success of all students, regardless of classification.

Currently, all 4 high schools in MUSD have received maximum terms of accreditation at their respective sites. Bell Gardens High School was recently awarded a 6 year accreditation term, its first maximum term in 18 years. The district office participates in both the Leadership and Focus Groups at each of the schools and works collaboratively with on-site personnel as a team during the WASC process. In addition, task committees have been formed at each school to ensure the work continues and that the WASC action plan is a living, breathing document each and every year.

Attached to this application is the Course Bulletin and College/Career Planning Guide that each student receives every year. The guide clearly indicates which courses are A-G approved, and we're working diligently to ensure more class offerings fall under this category. MUSD and its high schools have a College Board number and a multitude of AP course offerings at each school. In addition, MUSD was awarded a generous grant from the Irvine Foundation, that has provided professional development by the College Board for Counselors, teachers, and parents.

c. MUSD firmly believes that every student can succeed, regardless of disability or classification. Strategies and programs are designed to ensure that students receive appropriate services and support in the instructional program. This could be in the form of intervention classes, two-hour blocked classes, or specially designed course work through our after-school programs. Each strategy looks different depending upon the needs of our students.

d. **Accelerated Learning:** Honors, AP courses, and GATE are all strategies offered at each high school throughout the district. Most of these programs are 'open access', in that any student can enroll.

e. **Instructional Strategies:** The current focus at this time for high schools in MUSD is to move from a lecture-based to student-focused instructional program. Because students' knowledge of Academic Language is a consistent finding in our WASC documents, we realize that there needs to be an emphasis on providing more opportunities for students to discuss essential concepts in class amongst each other. In addition, MUSD's Multiple Pathways initiative is a focus on the integration of cross-curricular subjects and is tied to project-based learning. We feel it's important that students understand how/why concepts in any course are connected to real-world application, so that they can see relevancy. MUSD has also made a conscious effort to select instructional materials relevant to the students so that they can see themselves in the curriculum.

3. School Culture and Climate

a. **Description of Culture:** Recently, MUSD was awarded a three year, \$9 million grant to improve school culture, safety, etc. As a result of this, MUSD has been focusing on 40 developmental assets, and has trained certificated, classified, students, and parents in the following areas: Communication skills, anti-bullying, ethics, behaviors,

and social competency. The Garfield High School Community would be brought into this plan and would receive services as a result of this grant.

b. College And Career Readiness: As mentioned earlier, the College Board has been working with our district to provide PD in this area. Garfield High School would receive identical services, and have access to Multiple Pathways: preparing students for both College and Career. This particular initiative has provided funding and resources to provide career-themed academies that highlight curriculum integration, work-based learning, college/career readiness, and internships. Each academy is required to place students on and have access to A-G track. In addition, our district provides training for parents about A-G requirements, college readiness, and financial aid.

c. School Calendar/Schedule: MUSD would facilitate discussions with site personnel and the school community, so that they're the catalysts for what this looks like. We would put them through an exercise to look at potential barriers and opportunities to evolve the schedule so that it directly impacts and is driven by student needs. Initially, we feel that GHS' current schedule should be left intact.

d. MUSD feels strongly that all athletic and extracurricular activities remain intact, and that the district would see what it could do to provide additional support, resources, and enhancement of such activities.

e.

- ✓ We ensure fair and legal due process procedures. All students have the right to due process in all phases of the disciplinary process (suspension/expulsion) as provided through procedures prescribed by the Education Code.
- ✓ We work with parents whose children are experiencing difficulties in school and help responsibly resolve problematic situations that arise.
- ✓ We identify all students with special health issues, prepare an Individualized Health Care Plan for these students and notify all teachers of these identified students to ensure that they receive assistance.
- ✓ We provide alternative educational settings for students who for various reasons are experiencing difficulties in the regular school setting. The goal is to return these students back into the regular school setting.
- ✓ We ensure that all students considered for transfer receive due process as prescribed by Education Code.
- ✓ We assist schools with strategies that engage students, families and school-site personnel in successful programs to improve attendance.

f. MUSD would ensure compliance with all health mandates and health care needs, including students with 504 and IEP's. Our Pupil and Community Services Department provides oversight of these services, and the district has existing MOU's with many health organizations who work directly with our students and families in need.

g. Nutrition Services department is compliant with all current regulations regarding food served, vending machines, etc. In addition, there is a strong nutritional component in our Freshman Studies program that is followed up and monitored throughout a high school student's career.

4. Assessments and School Data

a. **Educational Goals and Metrics:** MUSD currently has an API score of 697 district-wide. Our short-term goal is to have every high school (GHS included) to be in the 700's within the next five years. Ultimately, we strive to have every school in the 800's as part of our long-term strategic plan. With respect to graduation rates, MUSD's high schools are at 91% district-wide. The goal of graduating every student would certainly include GHS, and we feel strongly we could support them in these efforts. The three over-arching goals for this district are as follows: Increase Graduation Rates, Increase the number of students completing A-G requirements, and increase the number of students enrolled in college (any post-secondary education). Through Cal-Pass, we're now able to track students in the UC, CSU, and Community College systems. Our district also collects data on college acceptance rates, enrollment, and success in post-secondary education. As of last year, 92% of our graduating seniors enrolled in post-secondary education. This data and achievement results are monitored and tracked by College Counselors and the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, 9-12.

b. **Student Assessment Plan:** Each student is prescribed a 4-year, A-G course of study. All core classes are A-G approved, as well as most electives. Student data is collected on quarterly, benchmark assessments (district-wide) as well as short-term, common, formative assessments (course-like teams at each respective high school) to inform our instruction. Our data assessment platform is EduSoft, and each teacher in the district has a password and access to this data (as well as state-mandated data for CST's, CAHSEE, and CELDT).

c. **Data Team and Instructional Team:** Student Data is analyzed in the following manner: District teams of teachers and administrators are brought together quarterly to examine benchmarks, CST's, and CAHSEE. At the school sites, testing coordinators work with course-like teams to examine the common, formative assessments every Wednesday morning during teacher collaboration time. Teachers and administrators have been given training and protocols for evaluating data to inform their work.

d. MUSD agrees to fully comply/agree to any terms of its Modified Consent Decree when it comes to the tracking, sharing, and monitoring of progress for all students with disabilities.

e. **School Report Card:** MUSD completes, publishes, and presents a School Report Card to each school community it serves. The district is committed to providing the same service for Garfield High School.

f. **Research and Evaluation:** MUSD supports entering into an agreement with LAUSD to replicate best practices, evaluation projects, higher education partnerships, and research organizations. MUSD is currently partnered with University of San Diego for research on best practices and to complete a longitudinal study on our Multiple Pathways program, and high school instructional program.

g. **Operational Goals and Metrics:** The operational goals and metrics will be consistent with the procedures and requirements set forth by LAUSD and the Garfield High School Community.

5. Professional Development Program

a. **Professional Development:** Please see the attached PD outline and calendar of events. All PD is developed based upon research, and supporting MUDS's goal of preparing every student for life after high school.

b. **Teacher Orientation:** MUSD facilitates and requires all new teachers to participate in its BTSA program, which provides mentoring and PD for two years. Upon completion, every BTSA candidate has a professional portfolio that is evaluated and presented to a panel.

c. **PD Calendar** (attached)

d. **Program Evaluation:** Every aspect of PD is evaluated by the participants at the end of each session; more importantly, it is evaluated by student achievement and data in order to determine what's working and what needs to be changed.

6. Professional Culture

a. **Professional Culture:** MUSD would support GHS in developing a culture of professional and small learning communities. This strategy has impacted our high schools in a very positive manner in which the teachers are more empowered, working collaboratively, and ultimately drive decisions on curricular and program needs. The district works closely with each school sites and provides facilitation so that decisions are made by site personnel.

b. **Evaluation:** In addition to working with teachers, MUSD provides capacity building and leadership training to site administrators and teacher leaders. Each month, site personnel are given tools to monitor and support the instructional program and outcomes for each training session offered throughout the district. Principals, Assistant Principals, and teachers then debrief with district personnel to discuss the effectiveness and to chart our next steps/action items.

c. **Feedback:** Input from teachers is always encouraged and used in order to facilitate next steps in our strategic plan.

7. Serving Specialized Populations

a. **Specialized Instruction:** MUSD proposes to provide support for GHS in the following manner:

- ✓ **Special Education:** The Special Education Department will provide the monitoring, support, training, and support for all school personnel working with students with disabilities. The Department works closely with teachers, parents, counselors, and outside agencies to provide support based upon student needs. Teams from this department also help facilitate IEP's to ensure every student is given the appropriate services and placed in the least restrictive environment. Services, where deemed appropriate through the IEP will be provided after school and during summer for students in need
- ✓ **Gifted and Talented:** College Course offerings on the high school campus, enrichment activities, and programs facilitated by our GATE office will provide additional and challenging services for these students
- ✓ **Homeless Students:** Each homeless student in the district will be supported by district Social Workers, through an existing grant. Our Social Workers assist students to ensure their academic and social/emotional needs are met.
- ✓ **English Learners:** Students will be placed based upon their determination as a result of CELDT scores and provided learning opportunities based upon their needs. This could include sheltered, intervention courses aligned with core classes, integration into mainstream courses, and additional support after school, depending upon the needs of the individual students. Teachers will be provided with instructional support from Kate Kinsella, SDAIE, and differentiated instruction.

b. MUSD strongly believes in providing every means possible to support at-risk students. One of the reasons our district has been successful in securing a 92% graduation rate is that it doesn't refer at-risk students outside of the district. In addition to the Continuation High School (Vail High School), MUSD operates a multitude of options for at-risk youth: Community Day Schools, Independent Studies, Cal-Safe/Infant Toddler Programs, Adult Education, ROP, Workforce Investment Act, Workability TTP, and others. Expulsions are not referred outside the district, and services are provided in-house with the overall goal of returning the student to his/her home school. Training is provided to staff and students on cultural diversity, sexual identity, drugs (TUPE), etc.

8. Family and Community Engagement Strategy

a. **Identification:** MUSD is quite familiar with the community of East Los Angeles, as some of its schools exist in this boundary area. In addition, many Community Based Organizations and health facilities we partner with are in East Los Angeles as well. There are a number of parents and business leaders in this community already working directly with our district, and MUSD has an interest in expanding this level of support and partnership throughout this particular community. As mentioned

previously, the demographics and socio-economic levels of our district constituencies and Garfield High School are very similar.

b. Family and Community Engagement: Strategies currently used by our district that would be employed at GHS are based upon the California Parent Center and School-Family-Community Partnerships. The framework and guidelines for family and community engagement are based upon seven principles:

- ✓ **Parenting-** schools and families working together to ensure every student's health, growth, and development throughout high school
- ✓ **Communicating-** Regular two-way communication between family and schools about educational standards/expectations, student's progress, educational choices and programs
- ✓ **Volunteering/Participating-** Development of volunteer opportunities for parents and community and opportunities to attend/participate in school/program activities for students
- ✓ **Learning at Home-** information, resources, and materials to assist families to support/monitor students' learning
- ✓ **Decision Making and Advocacy-** Educators and parent leaders working together on advisory/decision making groups, development of parent leaders and parents advocating for students
- ✓ **Connecting-** Identifying and connecting families to community services and resources, connecting community and families to the school and connecting families with each other
- ✓ **Relationship Building-** Establishing a welcoming school environment, celebration of events, and activities to establish positive relationships among families, schools, and community that can serve as a 'gateway' for strengthening partnerships. Source: California State Action Plan for School, Family, and Community Partnerships, November, 2009.

c. Key Community Partnerships: Currently, there are many advisory groups, School-site Councils, and the District Broad-Based Coalition that have active participation from businesses, CBO's, and other non-profits. These partnerships would be evaluated to see how they would be able to support Garfield High School. For example, our Broad Based Coalition is designed to move toward preparing every student for both college and career, and is comprised of higher education officials, business/industry professionals, unions, school staff, parents, and student advocacy groups. Utilizing similar strategies for engaging business/community involvement, MUSD would perform a needs assessment at GHS, and decide how we could further enhance/provide additional support at this school.

9. School Governance: MUSD School site councils operate under Shared Decision Making principles, and would provide similar support to Garfield High School. Our district firmly believes in distributive leadership, and would include all stakeholders in the decision making process. School Site Councils are comprised of on-site administrators, teachers, classified, parents, and students. MUSD proposes to examine

the existing structure that is currently in place, and will provide additional support and resources where necessary.

10. School Leadership and Staffing Plans

- **Recruitment of Teaching Staff:**

We strongly believe that the current staff is committed and capable of enacting positive change at Garfield High School staff. Our first initiative would be to identify and remove institutional impediments that so often cause a loss of instructional momentum. Concurrently we commit to strengthen and support a site based collegial staff development plan for all staff (classified and certificated). This staff development would be focused on immediate implementation of strategies and actions that strengthen existing staff's skills with particular focus on making Latino students successful in High School and College career ready.

11. Operations

12. Finances

Budget Narrative:

- Montebello Unified (District) as a School District functions under the budgeting guidelines set by the State of California. We would incorporate Garfield High school into our normal budgeting procedure. Montebello has a balanced budget for 2009-10 and 2010-11 and has taken a conservative approach of self qualifying for 2011-12 because of the unknowns from the State. Montebello has a track record of working with it unions to maintain a balanced budget.
- The District's budgets are built to match our mission as demonstrated in our increasing API scores.
- Revenue would be based on ADA and Federal and State categorical funding which the school's enrollment qualifies for.
- Unrestricted expenditures for staff would be based on the District's staff allocation formula using estimated enrollment and class sizes to establish the FTE's required for the school.
- Other unrestricted expenditures: instructional materials, books, consulting, professional development and supplies will be allocated based on the District's formulas and the specific needs of the school site.
- Categoricals are budgeted based on the requirement of the individual program.
- The District will evaluate grant and funding opportunities for the school and make applications on all that would provide benefit for the school site.

Financial Controls

- The Montebello Unified School District functions under the rules and regulations of the California Education Code and the California School Accounting Manual.
- Sites and departments are provided monthly reports of their current expenditure status as compared to budget.
- The District provides year to date reports four times a year to the School Board and public, County of Los Angeles Department of Education and the State of California as required by the State of California.
- The District's financials are audited annual and we have received Unqualified Opinions.
- The monthly financial reports are generated by our general ledger staff under the Supervision of Lily Lo, Controller and Cheryl A. Plotkin, CPA, Assistant Superintendent Business Services.
- The year to date reports are prepared by Lily Lo, Controller and reviewed by Cheryl A. Plotkin, CPA, Assistant Superintendent Business Services.

13. Facilities