



Bellflower Unified School District

Media Release

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Bellflower Unified Boosts Graduation Rates to 92.8 Percent in 2014-15

BELLFLOWER – Bellflower Unified boosted graduation rates in 2014-15 to 92.8 percent and closed the achievement gap for Hispanic, Filipino and African-American students on the strength of strategic teacher collaboration, integrated classroom technology and a discipline system that reinforces positive behavior.

Bellflower High School's rates soared to a nearly perfect 98.7 percent from 93.6 percent in 2013-14. Mayfair High School's rates rose to 95.4 percent from an already strong 94.4 percent. Student subgroups surged similarly, with graduation rates for Hispanics climbing to 92.6 percent, Filipinos to 94.6 percent and African Americans to 92.4 percent.

Rates for socio-economically disadvantaged students jumped to 92.3 percent. Those for English learners leapt the most, to 88.5 percent from 78.6 percent.

"This strong performance stems directly from the diligence of our teachers, staff and administrators in implementing key District initiatives," Superintendent Dr. Brian Jacobs said. "I'm proud of the team effort that helped our students achieve this success, and look forward to sustaining this positive progression due to the consistency of our instructional focus and practices."

The rates are for a four-year cohort of students who enrolled in high school as freshmen in 2011-12. This is the sixth year California has used the method for measuring graduation rates, aided by a data system that tracks students when they switch schools, drop out or continue their education without graduating. The federal government now uses a similar four-year cohort model.

California's overall graduation rate has risen dramatically since 2009-10, peaking this year at 82.3 percent from a starting point of 74.7 percent. Bellflower Unified's graduation performance has paralleled the state's growth, climbing 9 percent over the same period.

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Bellflower Unified School District provides a pathway for all students to attain the expertise and develop skills of academic excellence that will empower them to become lifelong active learners, demonstrate respect for themselves and others in a dynamic, diverse and global society, become responsible, informed, productive, independent and contributing citizens, and perform successfully in their chosen field and in society.



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Meanwhile, the District's dropout rate declined in 2014-15 to 3.8 percent, with Bellflower High posting an all-time low rate of 0.8 percent and Mayfair High recording just 1.6 percent.

Dr. Jacobs credits Bellflower Unified's improving performance to a series of District initiatives, including an effort to add digital tools to every classroom and train teachers on ways to strengthen lessons by integrating technology, and a more intentional focus on student engagement during lessons.

Teachers also work together to refine lesson plans, an effort driven in part by a growing compendium of student performance data from testing and other sources. At Bellflower Unified elementary schools, a secondary function of a new P.E. program is to free classroom teachers for weekly collaboration.

In addition, a discipline system called Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports is helping improve campus climates so students can focus more effectively on instruction.

"This is a tremendous stride forward for Bellflower Unified," Board of Education President Dr. Paul Helzer said. "It serves as a strong validation of the many changes we are making to improve every child's opportunities for finding success at college and in their eventual careers."

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