



Press Release

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‘Safe Schools’ Report Card Shows Transformation of Lynwood High School

Lynwood, Calif. – A new student mentoring program, consistent recognition of student achievement and the introduction of a variety of activities and programs have brought renewed enthusiasm and school pride to Lynwood High, a transformation documented by continuously rising scores on the “Safe Schools” Report Card.

The 2014 California Safe and Supportive Schools School Climate Report Card measures school safety and engagement using student and parent survey results and truancy rates. According to the report, Lynwood High has seen a 99-point jump in its School Climate Index Score since 2011, representing a 53 percent increase. Its dramatic improvement is further demonstrated when Lynwood High’s campus environment is compared with 100 other California high schools with similar demographics. In 2011, it ranked in the third percentile when compared with similar schools. The 2014 Report Card shows that it has climbed to the 63rd percentile.

Schools evaluated on the report card receive funding from the Safe and Supportive Schools grant, which provides financial support to implement programs that promote safe and drug-free learning environments, with a goal of improving academic success.

“As a school district, it’s our priority to give students every opportunity to succeed,” said Lynwood Unified Board of Education President Briseida Gonzalez, MSW. “That means providing them with a secure learning environment where they can focus their energies on academic and personal growth. “I am so proud of the work being done at Lynwood High and congratulate the entire school community for their role in this achievement.”

According to parent and student survey results, since 2011, 13 percent more students feel connected to school, 10 percent more of the school’s staff feel the campus is a supportive and inviting place to learn, and 29 percent more parents feel that Lynwood High welcomes parent input and contributions.

Several students this week said Lynwood High feels like a completely different campus, and teachers say the changes make them more excited to come to work every day.

“There’s just more of a positive energy here,” said Monique Tamayo, who plays on the girls basketball team. “People really try to help each other and it’s a safer environment. Not having to worry about fights or other things happening on campus really allows us to be able to focus on our education.”

This year, freshmen have additional opportunities to feel connected. Using funding from the Safe and Supportive Schools grant, the high school has introduced the Link Crew Program, in which seniors lead a “family” of approximately 10 freshmen they mentor throughout the year.

“What we’re trying to do is prevent freshmen from running into the pitfalls that can take place during freshman year, such as getting behind in credits or falling in with the wrong crowd,” said Jose Luis Vega, a Lynwood High teacher and Link Crew adviser. “Our juniors and seniors are creating activities that serve as an alternative to unsupervised parties, while also learning how to be leaders and taking responsibility for their peers.”

However, it’s not just this new program that has created a shift in the campus environment. Staff, teachers and students have created a culture of high expectations and introduced many different organizations and clubs, such as the hiking club, that give students the opportunity to meet new friends and stay involved in their high school. Lynwood High also created quarterly celebrations, when students are awarded for their hard work and good attendance at school.

In addition, students are taking ownership over their campus by picking up trash at lunchtime and ensuring they’re cleaning up after themselves.

“I enjoy coming to work every day knowing that my staff is making a difference in the lives of our students,” Lynwood High Principal Carlos Zaragoza said. “I am grateful for their dedication to making Lynwood High a better place. The work they are doing has a direct impact not only on our students, but our entire community.”

Lynwood Unified Superintendent Paul Gothold said the culture of Lynwood High is one the District strives to promote on every campus.

“Our students spend such a large part of their lives in our schools and it’s critical that we provide a caring and supportive environment that allows them to focus on their academics so that they can reach their goals beyond our schools,” he said. “Congratulations to Lynwood High for this significant progress.”

PHOTO CAPTIONS

SAFESCHOOLS1: Lynwood High School has made tremendous progress on the California Safe and Supportive Schools’ School Climate Report Card, which calculates scores based on truancy rates, how schools support and engage students, and the rates of violence and substance use on campus.

SAFESCHOOLS2: Groups of students at Lynwood High take turns picking up trash every day to help keep their campus clean.

The Lynwood Unified School District is dedicated to offering students a world-class education to prepare them for success in college and career in the 21st century. Under its Achieving Greatness Initiative, the district is realigning all aspects of its organization to strengthen and expand instructional programs, enrichment and extracurricular activities, and support systems for students and staff. For more information, visit www.lynwood.k12.ca.us.

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