



# Garden Grove Unified School District

## Strengthening Mental Health Supports for Students and Staff



Project Cal-Well's mission is to increase awareness of and improve mental health and wellness of California's kindergarten through grade twelve students, and provide training for school personnel to detect and respond to mental health issues. In October 2015, Garden Grove Unified School District (GGUSD) was awarded a five-year Project Cal-Well grant. GGUSD is committed to increasing mental health support and services to support the socio-emotional well-being of all students. This brief provides an overview of the progress made through the third year of the Project Cal-Well grant.



**Project Cal-Well** is a five-year (2014–19) "Now Is The Time" Project Advancing Wellness and Resilience in Education grant funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (<https://www.samhsa.gov/nitt-ta/project-aware-grant-information>).

Through the California Department of Education, Project Cal-Well (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/cg/mh/projectcalwell.asp>) is implementing programs statewide and in partnership with: Garden Grove Unified School District, ABC Unified School District and San Diego County Office of Education.

## Project Goals

1

Create **positive school climates** that promote healthy social-emotional development and well-being

2

Increase availability of and **access to school-based mental health services** for students and their families

3

Build partnerships and cross-system collaborations to promote youth well-being and **access to community-based services**

4

Deliver **Youth Mental Health First Aid** to train concerned adults how to identify and help students experiencing mental health challenges

# 1. Creating Positive School Climates

**School-Wide Interventions:** During the third year of Project Cal-Well's implementation, GGUSD used the following school-wide strategies to improve school climates:

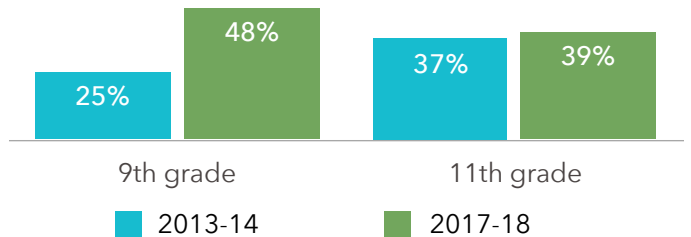
- 26 schools implemented Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) using proactive strategies for defining, teaching, and supporting appropriate student behaviors to create positive school environments (<https://www.pbis.org/school>).
- 14 schools implemented evidenced-based programs to support student emotional resiliency and learning, such as classroom-based mindfulness programs.
- Five schools hosted National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) on Campus Clubs. Through these peer-led, mental health awareness clubs, student members rose awareness on their campuses about mental health and worked to reduce stigma.
- Four schools implemented restorative practices through community classroom circles to build positive relationships.

GGUSD also provided school staff professional development trainings, including 13 on PBIS, six on supporting students with mental health concerns, and four on restorative practices.



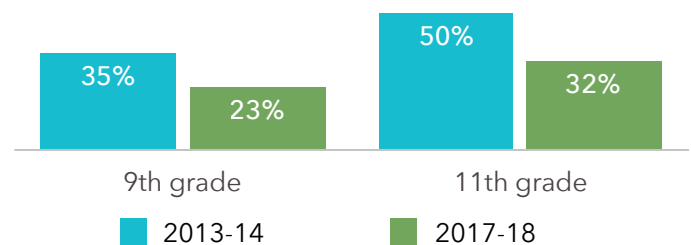
**Improved School Connection:** The percentage of students reporting “high” levels of school connectedness increased since 2013-14, before Project Cal-Well started.

“High” Levels of School Connectedness



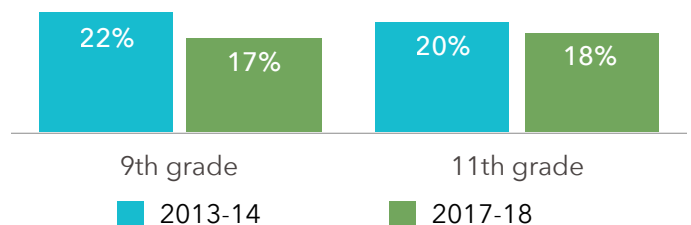
**Reduced Substance Use:** The percentage of students who reported ever having used alcohol or drugs decreased.

Lifetime Alcohol or Drug Use



**Reduced Suicide Ideation:** The percentage of students who reported seriously considering suicide during the past 12 months decreased.

Suicide Ideation



Data Source: GGUSD California Healthy Kids Survey

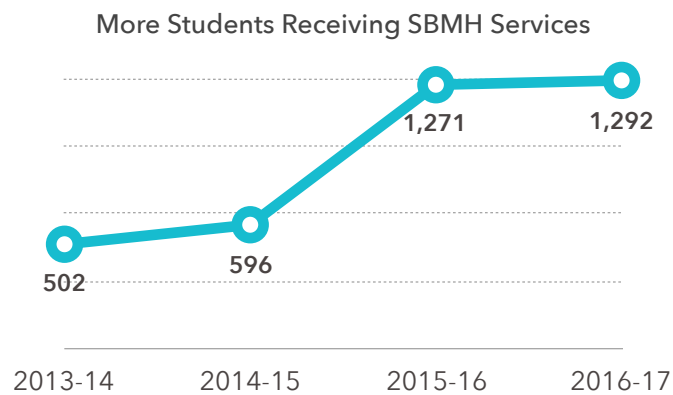


## 2. Increasing Access to School-Based Mental Health Services

Each GGUSD school has access to at least ten hours of school-based mental health (SBMH) services a week, in addition to 2-3 hours of school psychologist counseling hours. The district contracts with four community-based organizations to provide direct counseling services to any student who is referred. These SBMH services are provided at no cost to students and families.

**Expanding Counseling Hours:** In Year 3, GGUSD provided 23,542 school-based mental health counseling hours, an increase from 20,120 in 2014-15.

As shown below, this resulted in 1,292 students receiving school-based mental health services, an increase from only 502 in 2014-15.



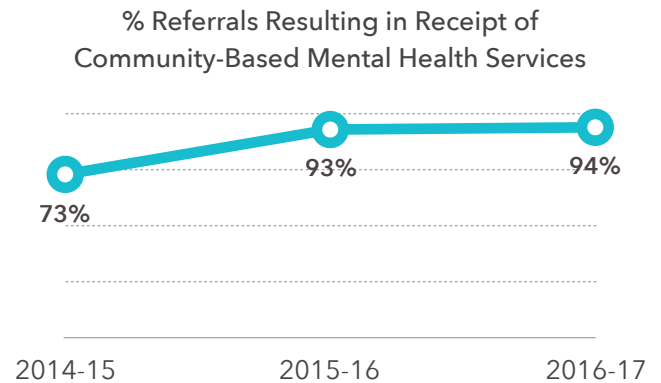
**Serving Families:** In Year 3, 98 families received 1,567 hours of school-based family counseling, an increase from zero in 2014-15.



## 3. Building Partnerships and Cross-System Collaborations

GGUSD expanded partnerships with local agencies through training opportunities for parents and staff, direct services for students, and improved referral systems.

**Community Referrals:** The percentage of mental health service referrals for school-aged youth which resulted in a service being provided in the community has increased, as shown below.





**Family Resource Center:** GGUSD partnered with over two dozen community partners to open its first Family Resource Center in August 2017. Providers collaborate to connect families to community resources in areas like health care, homeless education assistance, immigration resources, legal advocacy, and mental health counseling (<http://www.ggusd.us/ggusd-opens-new-family-resource-center>).

*“We want our families and students to know they are not alone. There is a place to turn for help; and just like our schools, the Family Resource Center will be a safe space.”*

Walter Muneton,  
Board of Education Trustee



## 4. Youth Mental Health First Aid

### Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA)

teaches adults who regularly interact with young people how to help adolescents who are experiencing mental health challenges in both crisis and non-crisis situations. Participants are trained to engage in “ALGEE” with students:

- ▶ Assess for risk of suicide or self harm
- ▶ Listen non judgmentally
- ▶ Give reassurance and information
- ▶ Encourage appropriate professional help
- ▶ Encourage self-help

Over the three years of the grant, GGUSD has trained 323 individuals in YMHFA. During this time, these trained adults referred 871 students to mental health or related services.



#### FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

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This brief was produced for Garden Grove Unified School District by the University of California, San Francisco, Philip R. Lee Institute for Health Policy Studies, School Health Services Research and Evaluation Team (<http://healthpolicy.ucsf.edu/school-health-services-evaluation>) with funding from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA) [Award #5H79SM061895]. The content is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the official views of SAMHSA.