

PALO ALTO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

*Report  
to the  
Community  
2007-2008*



**Gunn  
High  
School**

*Student demographics, testing and accountability data, class size, staffing and financial information are available in the state-mandated School Accountability Report Cards. These may be found on the PAUSD Web site: <http://www.pausd.org/community/about/sar.shtml> or obtained at your school. Similar information, current and historical, about individual schools and school districts is also available on the California Department of Education Web site: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/>*

**School Description  
& Mission Statement**

The mission of Gunn High School is to foster a community of creative thinkers who strive to:

- Be resilient, responsible, respectful, contributing citizens
- Lead rewarding lives in the pursuit of personal excellence and life-long learning.

Everything we do at Gunn has these goal embedded in it. The four-year transformation from middle school childhood into young adulthood is a challenge. Gunn High School's faculty, staff and administration are committed to helping all 1849 students from diverse backgrounds, who have a wide range of interests, skills and talents, to reach their individual academic and personal goals.

Our academic and extracurricular options are extensive. Our students have the opportunity to participate and perform in a wide variety of offerings. We are nationally recognized in such diverse areas as Choir, Robotics, Jazz, Journalism, World Languages, Mathematics, Computer Science and Biotechnology. We realize that all students have specific gifts and needs so we encourage them to engage in activities that are meaningful to them. Our goal is to help students learn lifelong skills that will lead to personal fulfillment and to help them become responsible, contributing citizens in a democratic society.

**Opportunities for  
Parental Involvement**

The Volunteer Program provides structure for the high level of participation on the part of parent and community volunteers. The purpose of the program is to support and enrich the school programs and provide services unavailable within the school budget. Services cover a broad range of activities. Volunteers tutor individuals and groups, assist in classrooms, provide office help, serve as guest speakers, host college visits, chaperone dances, assist with Homecoming activities, improve the physical plant, drive for field trips or serve with others doing small one-time projects or on committees for large all-school functions such as the Turkey Feast, International Days, School Service Days, the Health Faire or Career Month. Booster clubs for various programs provide immense support for school musical and theater productions and the many sports activities.

Contact Norma Hesterman, Coordinator, Volunteer Services at 650-354-8234 or [nhesterman@pausd.org](mailto:nhesterman@pausd.org).

## **School Programs & Practices That Promote a Positive Learning Environment**

The majority of Gunn students see themselves as college-bound, thus the school offers a rigorous college-prep program to meet the needs of this population. The University of California approves the academic program as meeting requirements for four-year college admission. Each year close to 80% of graduating seniors move on the four-year colleges and universities and about 15% enroll in community colleges. Students who do not wish to enroll in college directly after graduation may choose from a wide variety of vocationally oriented courses.

Support is offered to students with special needs through Special Education, ELL and other programs such as Focus on Success/AVID. A number of committees have been in existence for over three years, bringing together staff members and students to address issues such as stress, ethics, equity and drug and alcohol problems. It has also done much work through programs such as Camp Everytown to promote respect for diversity and to create an environment in which all members of the school community feel appreciated and able to contribute.

Large parts of our campus have been renovated and improved under the Building for Excellence program. In addition to refurbished classrooms and a remodeled gymnasium complex, we have a new state-of-the art science building and a new library/media center. These improvements have done much to raise staff and student morale.

## **School Instruction & Leadership**

### **Quality of School Leadership and Instruction**

The Principal of Gunn High School is in her third year following six years of experience as Assistant Principal in the Guidance Office at Gunn. Leadership of the school is in the hands of a number of bodies which are all involved in major decision making and in planning the direction the school will take. The Administrative Team which consists of two Assistant Principals, Dean of Students, Student Activities Director, Athletics Director and Teachers on Special Assignment with responsibility for technology and staff development, is responsible for the day-to-day running of the school and meets weekly. The Instructional Council that includes the Administrative Team, Instructional Supervisors of all departments and the Librarian meets bi-weekly. The IC assists the Principal in making decisions regarding curriculum, assessment, staffing and school policy. The School Site Council that has parent, student, certificated and classified staff members meets once a month and is kept apprised of all school issues. Its input is sought on all major issues affecting the school. The PTSA meets monthly and is kept informed of issues relating to the school and provides input that assists the Leadership Team in decision-making.

All school staff and parents are offered the opportunity to evaluate and provide input to teachers and the Leadership Team each semester.

### **Instructional Program for All Students**

Gunn offers a strong college-prep program but also works hard to meet the needs of non-college bound students. Those requiring support because of learning or other disabilities receive support through Special Education. Those students learning English receive special instruction through our ELL program. In addition, courses are reviewed regularly to ensure that they meet State and District standards. Major efforts are being made under our WASC Plan to align curriculum, instruction and assessment within departments to ensure that students have very similar experiences regardless of the particular instructors to which they are assigned. In addition to a varied and rigorous academic curriculum, students are offered multiple opportunities in music, dance, drama, art, journalism, athletics, robotics, computer studies, student government and many other fields that allow them to pursue their interests and to excel. Each year a School Improvement Plan is written and presented to the School Site Council and the Board of Education. The plan is posted on the Gunn Web site.

# School Safety Plan

Gunn’s Safe Schools Plan was developed to effectively manage natural and man-made emergencies on campus. Our disaster plan manual outlines procedures and responsibilities for staff and students during an emergency. At least twice a year we conduct a two-stage evacuation and emergency response drill. The first aid response team of designated staff members, trained and led by the school nurse, practices a variety of basic first aid response procedures and would transport the injured, if required, to a safe location. The Safe School Task Force reviews and assesses these drills, then updates our emergency response procedures, as needed. To increase Gunn’s safety response, the school has a lock-down procedure in the event staying in the classroom is the safest response to a crisis. The procedural information is in the students and staff manuals.

Traffic and pedestrian safety on and around campus is an ever-present concern. Kudos goes to Gunn’s GO-FAST program which received the Metropolitan Transportation Commission’s Merit Award in October 2006. A group of concerned parents and staff volunteered their time and talents to improve parking and pedestrian safety, encourage car-pooling and use of alternative transportation (biking, walking, bus), and make our parking lots and roads a safer place for the entire community.

## *Gunn High School*

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- Principal ..... Noreen Likins
- Assistant Principal, Guidance ..... Kim Cowell
- Assistant Principal,  
Facilities & Budget..... Tom Jacoubowsky
- TOSA / Dean of Students ..... Phil Winston

