

## **STATE OF THE DISTRICT**

*Presented by GGUSD Board President Dr. George West*

It is my pleasure to provide a short update on the State of the Garden Grove Unified School District. There are a number of research studies that indicate, "great communities have outstanding schools."

On July 1, 2015, we will celebrate our 50th Anniversary as a "unified" school district; the district was created by the merger of three districts - the Alamitos and Garden Grove Elementary School Districts and the Garden Grove Union High School District.

Today we are the city's largest employer with over 5,600 employees. We serve more than 47,600 students in preschool through 12th grade programs. Fifty-five of our 72 sites are located within the City. And our all-funds budget is in excess of \$500 million.

We are proud of the number of schools that have been recognized by the State and federal government as Distinguished and Blue Ribbon Schools. All of our high schools have been recognized by US News and World Report as among the nation's elite.

More than 70% of our students speak a language other than English at home and live near or below the poverty-line. However, the District continues to decrease our drop-out rate and increase the number of students graduating from high school.

We have more students than ever before completing the requirements for the University of California system and an ever increasing number of students taking challenging Advanced Placement courses.

Based on our demographics, the District is considered an urban school district. We are especially proud that the GGUSD has the highest Academic Performance Index Score among the state's 25 largest urban school districts.

Thanks to the voters in the City, we were able to purchase \$250,000 in bonds for the modernization of our schools. With state matching funds, federal funds, and restricted facility funds, over \$550 million has been allocated to upgrade 69 school sites.

Thirty-three projects have been completed and 15 are currently under-way. The Board of Education has been good stewards of these one-time funds; to date, all finished projects were on-time and within allocated budgets. Attractive schools with quality programs are a factor in maintaining and increasing home values.

The modernization projects have created hundreds of jobs related to construction; each day, the workers at the school sites purchase goods and services within the community.

By the end of this calendar year, the District will have the fastest fiber-optic, 40Gbps, broadband system in the region. The district will serve as the "back-up" system for the Orange County Department of Education. Mayor

Nguyen was a proponent of developing this robust network.

The District believes that long term partnerships can improve the quality of the District and the Community. Some ideas for consideration are:

- Mentoring and intern programs for high school students with the City, Chamber, and local colleges and universities.
- Participation in the Next Century Cities initiative to enhance communication and internet accessibility.
- Increased use of school facilities when school is not in session - every school is a potential neighborhood community center, health clinic, or site where computers can be utilized.
- And, cooperation in improving existing sports facilities and expanding the number of gymnasiums.

We are very proud to be part of the City of Garden Grove.