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OAKLAND UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Community Schools, Thriving Students

# Memo

**To** Board of Education

**From** Tony Smith, Ph.D., Superintendent  
 By: Maria Santos, Deputy Superintendent, Instruction, Leadership & Equity-in-Action  
 Vernon Hal, Deputy Superintendent, Business & Operations

**Board Meeting Date** 6-27-12

**Subject** Annual Report for Gateway to College at Laney College

**Action Requested** Approval by the Board of Education of the 2010-2011 Annual Report on Gateway to College at Laney College for submission to California Department of Education.

**Background** California Education Code Section 58510 requires an Annual Report for the Gateway to College at Laney College program, an Oakland Unified School District Alternative School of Choice. During the past year, OUSD's Office of Alternative Education has worked with California Department of Education to launch a new template and process for the annual reports, resulting in the finalized report for school year 2010-2011.

**Discussion** Gateway to College at Laney College provides an alternative education program for students aged 16-21 who have dropped out of school. The program offers a unique opportunity for students to simultaneously earn a high school diploma and substantial college credit through dual enrollment at Laney College.

**Recommendation** Approval by the Board of Education of the 2010-2011 Annual Report on Gateway to College at Laney College for submission to California Department of Education.

**Fiscal Impact** Approximately \$450,000 per fiscal year of ADA generated revenue

**Attachments**

- 2010-2011 Annual Report on Gateway to College at Laney College

ANNUAL REPORT  
Gateway to College Program at Laney College  
Required by California *Education Code* Section 58510

**A. Overview**

Gateway to College at Laney College (GtC) is a small alternative education high school program in the Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) established in the fall of 2009 on the Laney College campus. GtC is a partnership between OUSD, the Peralta Community College District/Laney College and the Gateway to College National Network. Gateway to College is a nationally recognized dropout recovery education model, with over 30 programs across the country.

*Target Student Population*

The mission of GtC is to reengage high school dropouts (ages 16-21) so they earn a high school diploma while accruing college credits toward a certificate program and/or AA degree in a supportive college environment. At 40%, OUSD's four year adjusted dropout rate is among the highest in the state and the district has developed comprehensive prevention and intervention programs to increase the number of OUSD students who graduate from high school. GtC was created as a dropout recovery strategy to give the many hundreds of students who have already dropped out an opportunity to reengage and earn their high school diploma. GtC fills an important need at a time when Oakland's adult school services have faced drastic cuts, leaving few options for those seeking to master basic academic skills, complete high school and/or begin post-secondary education.

GtC's average student enters the program at 17 years of age with a 1.5 GPA and only 48% of the high school credits needed to graduate – essentially a senior in terms of age but a sophomore in terms of credits earned. The program serves a diverse student population: (50% African American, 29% Latino/a American, 16% Asian American/Pacific Islander, 3% Caucasian/White, and 2% Other) the majority of whom face many challenges to academic success.

GtC students come from all over Oakland. Risk factors and barriers to education include involvement with the child welfare or juvenile justice systems; teen parenthood, and mental health and/or addiction issues. The vast majority of GtC students are from low-income backgrounds. Most have a history of chronic truancy, behavioral problems, and many have attended more than one high school.

Oakland students have high rates of mobility and GtC students' lives are typically even less stable than those of their peers citywide. The transient nature of our population along with their significant need for support in dealing with ancillary issues are major challenges as we work to help our students continue their education and reverse their history of academic failure and disengagement. At GtC, students come to school in a safe, inclusive, collegial atmosphere where they are accepted, challenged, nurtured, and supported with tough love and high expectations. The school is dedicated to ensuring that vulnerable youth receive a second chance to reengage in education and create better lives for themselves and their families.

For many high school dropouts, returning to a traditional high school schedule is not a viable option, and the community college setting provides an environment where they can balance school with work or family obligations. GtC is not designed to be a shortcut to credit recovery or graduation; instead the program works with at-risk and off-track students to build their academic skills while they earn their high school diploma so they can succeed in college.



Without the support offered by GtC, few would ever finish high school and even fewer would complete a post-secondary course of study.

### *Program Strategies*

All Gateway to College programs are required to adhere to five essential elements:

1. **SIGNIFICANT DUAL CREDIT** | Gateway to College is a college-based dual credit program that serves eligible students who have dropped out of (or are unlikely to graduate from) high school and who simultaneously earn a high school diploma and substantial college credit
2. **SUSTAINABLE PARTNERSHIPS** | Gateway to College leverages the capacity of school districts, colleges, and other community organizations to create sustainable programs that help meet the local need for dropout recovery.
3. **HOLISTIC STUDENT SUPPORT** | Gateway to College provides wrap-around student support to meet the academic, social, and emotional needs of our students in an environment that fosters the development of the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in school and in life
4. **INNOVATIVE TEACHING & LEARNING** | Gateway to College encourages the implementation of innovative pedagogical techniques based on both research and proven practices in effective teaching and learning.
5. **INTENTIONAL COLLABORATION** | Gateway to College integrates collaboration, continuous improvement, and professional development, with the goal of improving student success and program sustainability.

By emphasizing rigor and healthy relationships, GtC challenges previously unsuccessful students to reset their educational trajectory to include high school graduation and the pursuit of higher education.

Designed specifically for high-risk students, GtC includes an array of student supports:

- *Foundation Courses:* In their first semester, students take introductory developmental courses in a small learning community of no more than 25 students. The foundation semester includes high school English, pre-algebra, and a college success course that teaches study and time management skills while supporting students' adjustment to college life. All foundation courses are taught by GtC staff and are designed to build students' capacity and confidence to take college classes, while fostering community among students and between students and GtC staff.
- *Individualized support:* Every GtC student has an adult counselor with whom they meet at least semi-monthly, and as often as daily. Counselors take a "solutions-based approach" to advising students, with students identifying concrete strategies to meet their academic and personal goals. Additionally, counselors act as case managers, connecting students to housing, mental health, childcare, and other services. Supporting the complex array of students' needs contributes to a small, familial learning environment where students feel safe and supported.

Each student has a personalized Student Education Plan, which they create along with their counselor. Plans outline students' educational goals and the steps they need to complete to graduate, charting an agreed-upon course of action to meet their goals. At their semi-monthly meetings, students and counselors formally review plans, discuss progress toward goals and make modifications as needed.

- *Specially trained staff focused on GtC student needs:* Our teachers and counselors are trained in a student-centered approach and use a Professional Learning Community (PLC) model to continually improve their practice. The PLC meets weekly to discuss the learning needs of individual students, analyze student work and test data, guide instructional practices to

accelerate learning across subject areas, help low performing students reach academic proficiency, and promote the integration of reading, writing, and mathematical skills development across the curriculum. In addition to participating in the PLC, staff receives training through staff development meetings at Laney College. The GtC Director, as well as staff from the national office provides instructional coaching. In addition to our internal professional development program, staff participates in the GtC national peer learning community and attends the Gateway to College Peer Learning Conference, an annual three-day conference for staff and instructors from around the country

### Successes

After two years, Gateway to College Laney has achieved significant gains in student attendance, course completion and satisfaction while building strong institutional relationships with Laney College.

#### *Increased Attendance*

Through a concerted effort, we have seen a marked increase in the attendance rates among the first semester foundation term semester students. Students in the spring foundation term had attendance rates of over 75%, a more than 25% increase over the previous spring's class. This is a particularly important result because our student population's history of truancy and the very strong correlation between attendance and course completion.

#### *Improved Course Completion*

Just as significantly, we have seen an increase in high school and college credit attainment among our continuing students, meaning that they are becoming more successful in transitioning to the general campus.

#### *Increased Satisfaction and Confidence in Academic Skills*

For many of our students, a lack of confidence in their academic capability was a key factor in dropping out of school. Therefore, we are very encouraged by the following responses from the 2011 student survey to questions related to their growing academic skills:

- 88.9% of students reported improvement in writing.
- 77% of students reported improvement in reading comprehension. 77.8% of students reported improvement in working in groups.
- 77.8 % of students reported improvement in asking instructors for help.
- 55.6% of students reported improvement in math.

#### *Greater Campus Integration*

GtC has successfully integrated itself within the Laney College campus structure. Our program staff meets regularly with other student support programs on campus such as EOP and PUENTE to share resources and information. These relationships have allowed staff to connect GtC students more fully with campus life, enhancing the support and opportunities available to them.

GtC has also developed relationships with academic departments and instructors and with the tutoring center, which now works with Gateway counselors to help support students in their academic courses. GtC has begun facilitating conversations between our students and their instructors in mainstream college course. These conversations help students better understand academic material and expectations, access support when they need it, and advocate for themselves. The practice has been extremely well received at Laney and is being used as a model for supporting other groups of students who have historically struggled in college.

### Challenges



In addition to our significant progress in year two, GtC experienced the following challenges and opportunities for growth.

#### *Transition to Mainstream College Courses*

Despite improvements in our students' performance in mainstream college course we still see grades and rates of attendance dip after the first semester. Helping students' transition into college is a challenge because of the many ways the expectations, instructional approaches and basic organizational structure differ from those of a traditional high school and the GtC program. We believe that the skills students develop in the foundation semester prepare them for the challenges of college. We are also working with the broader college community to address challenges including tracking attendance and academic progress so that we can further support our students' transition to college.

#### *Administering K-12 Testing*

Administering state-required K-12 testing such as CST and CAHSEE proved to be a particular challenge. Because of the students' varied class schedules and the importance of course attendance for college success, students were understandably reluctant to miss several days of class for testing, resulting in low rates of CST test completion. We understand the importance of students completing the CST and CAHSEE tests and have devised strategies to address the challenges of administering these exams, which will be discussed in the body of this report.

#### *Staff Turnover*

This year the program experienced high staff turnover. Two counselors and two instructors resigned after the first semester for reasons including retirement, maternity leave, other community college staff assignments, and other factors outside of the program. While staff turnover did not appear to be a result of any programmatic deficit, it has nonetheless has put a strain on the program. For this reason, we will continue to monitor staff satisfaction and make every effort to provide support and professional development opportunities to promote staff retention.

These highlights and challenges will be addressed in greater detail later in the report

## **B. Identification of Variables**

There are three features of the GtC program that differentiate it from other schools or programs in the district. GtC is (1) an entirely dual-credit program that requires curriculum articulation and agreement between the school district and the college regarding the credits earned toward a high school diploma; (2) a program located on the community college campus where students take all college courses; and (3) a program specifically designed to serve students who have dropped out or are at high-risk of dropping out of high school. The following section briefly describes each variable. The impact of these variables, as well as related goals, results, and recommendations for improvement, are discussed below in Section C "Academic Achievement."

#### *Dual-Credit*

Prior to starting the GtC program, Laney College and Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) aligned college courses with high school diploma and state testing requirements and developed new courses or supplemental coursework (e.g., CAHSEE prep) as needed to meet diploma and state testing requirements. This alignment ensures that the maximum number of college credits earned by GtC count toward the high school diploma, minimizing wasted credits. Please see "Credits Earned" in Section C below for related results, goals, and recommendations for improvement.



### *College-Based*

The GtC program is an integral part of Laney College. All classes and staff offices are on campus, with flexible class times to fit nontraditional students' schedules. The program adheres to the college calendar and has received a waiver from CDE in order to offer classes both during the academic year and summer term, providing much needed flexibility for working students or students with children. Students have full access to college courses, facilities, and support services. Please see "Attendance" and "Testing (CAHSEE and CST)" in Section C below for a discussion of the logistics and reporting challenges associated with operating an alternative high school model on a college campus, as well as the program results, goals, and recommendations for improvement.

### *Target Population*

As described above, GtC students are eligible for the program when they meet the following criteria: 16-21 years old, dropped out or on the verge of dropping out of high school, behind in credits for their age and grade level, GPA of 2.0 or below (or exhibiting other risk factors), live in OUSD's service area, express a personal commitment to earn a diploma, and read at an 8<sup>th</sup>-grade or higher level. . As outlined in the program overview, the eligibility requirements themselves result in an at-risk student population. Through GtC, these students are given another opportunity to reengage with their education and complete their high school diploma, while leveraging college resources so that they simultaneously earn college credits toward an associate's degree. GtC is not a silver-bullet solution for every student who has dropped out or is at risk of dropping out of high school, but it is an important component in OUSD's continuum of alternative education programs designed to achieve our mission of serving all students.

## **C. Academic Achievement**

**In essence, every high school credit earned and college course passed by GtC students represents an increase in achievement, since all GtC students have dropped out or were highly likely to drop out of high school.** Within this context, we are especially heartened to report steady, and in some cases dramatic improvements in almost every area of academic achievement that we have measured over GtC's first two years.

### **Attendance**

#### *Overview*

Program staff has the most contact with students during the GtC program's first semester as staff reporting directly to the program director teach the majority of courses, making daily attendance monitoring possible. However, as students progress into community college courses taught by non-GtC faculty, our ability to monitor and report attendance is limited.

The Gateway to College program requested and received approval to waive the California Education Code that prescribes the minimum daily, weekly, monthly and yearly school attendance. <sup>1</sup> The referenced Code specifies the time in which students are directly receiving instruction and engaged in learning in order to provide a unit of measurement for student accounting procedures used in apportioning and distributing state ADA funds. The waiver is necessary to fully implement the GtC model in a college setting. All GtC classes are taught on a college campus by college instructors, and students are expected to comply with the academic expectations and schedule of the college.

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<sup>1</sup> Education Code §37201, §46141, §46146, §46160, §46161, §46200

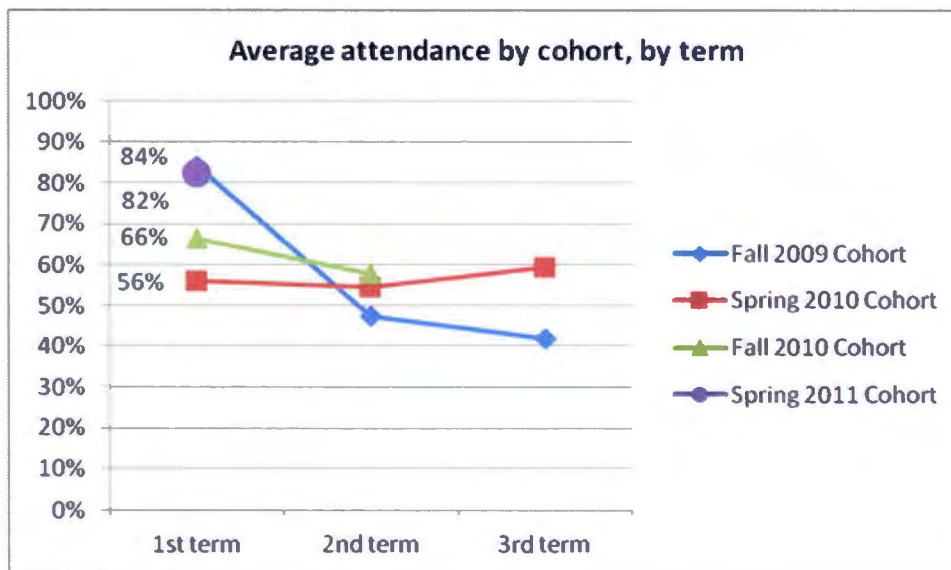
Adequate instructional time is provided to students enrolled in the Gateway program according to Sections 55700 and 55701 of Title 5, California Code of Regulations that govern the community college academic calendar. Students receive at least 35 weeks of instruction and evaluation and not less than 175 days of instruction. The program also meets approved attendance reporting procedures in the community college context as defined in Section 58003.1, Title 5, California Code of Regulations.

### Results & Context

In the spring of 2011 GtC students had their strongest first term attendance rate ever and increased attendance by more than 27% over the previous year's spring cohort. While we continue to see a drop in attendance rates after the first term those rates are falling much less dramatically than in GtC's first year.

The average attendance rate for all GtC students in the program's second year was 66.2%, down slightly from the prior year's rate of 63.6%. Low attendance is a challenge for the program, which is not surprising given our target population. While in high school, our students were some of the most chronically truant students and most enrolled in GtC only after dropping out altogether.

The graph below charts the average attendance of each GtC cohort as they persist through the program. Students receive the most intensive support during their first term, and there is likely a direct relationship between the drop in attendance rates after the first semester and the reduced staff-student contact in subsequent semesters. Nevertheless, the drop in second semester attendance seems to have stabilized. Furthermore, among our second cohort of students who began the program in the spring of 2010, attendance rates rose between the second and third semesters.



### Plans for improvement

GtC will work to improve attendance rates especially among students in their second and subsequent semesters, by enacting the following policies:

- Students will be required to sign in when they arrive on campus for classes and sign out when courses are finished for the day.



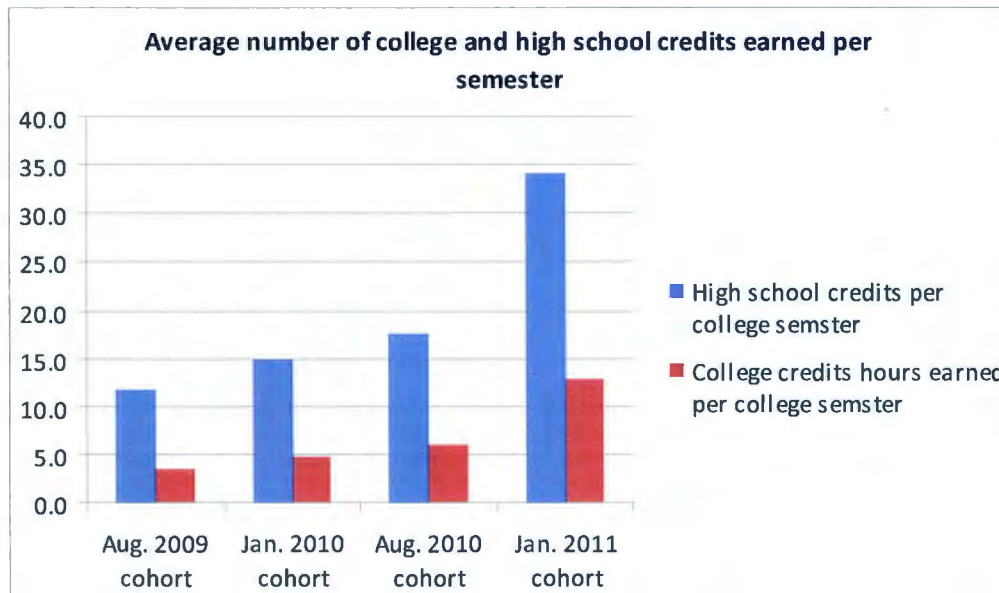
Counselors will monitor student sign-in sheets and telephone students who are not signing in.

### Credits Earned

OUSD is using high school credits earned as an interim measure of student progress and success for students enrolled in the Gateway to College program due to the problems administering the CAHSEE and STAR tests, which are discussed later in this report. Students earn high school credits by completing college courses.

#### Results & Context

Over the past two years, each successive cohort of students has earned significantly more high school and college credits per semester enrolled. The following graph demonstrates average credits earned per term, by cohort.



Only certain college courses align with the high school graduation requirements. Due to the constraints of the college course schedule, GtC students are not always able to enroll in the courses they need to follow the standard high school sequence. In our first year and a half, the first three cohorts of students averaged a maximum of 20 credits per semester, which put them on-track to earn 40 high school credits per year, less than they could have earned in a traditional high-school. However, the most recent cohort (Jan 2011) averaged of over 34 high school credits per semester. At the same time they earned almost 13 college credits per semester.

We attribute these gains to our enhanced tracking of and accountability for student attendance, additional academic support during the foundation semester and beyond, improvements in our ability to select and sequence appropriate college courses, and our growing collaborative relationships with the Laney faculty.

Stricter student attendance monitoring has helped counselors hold students accountable. Greater monitoring immediately identifies students who are not showing up for their classes allowing counselors to intervene by contacting them and/or their families. Poor attendance is likely the most important



factor in students' academic performance. Therefore, it is safe to assume that improvements in attendance have a direct effect on increasing both the number of credits earned and the students' grades each semester.

Increases in credits earned can also be attributed to earlier and more intensive intervention with and support for students who are struggling academically. GtC counselors have improved academic monitoring by asking for progress reports from students. Based on these reports, counselors reach out to instructors in partnership with the student and/or independently on the students' behalf. With the support of their counselors, students engage in meaningful dialogue with their instructors on how they can improve their academic performance. This dialogue is important in that students often disengage (either through formal withdrawal or lack of effort) from courses if they receive a poor grade or start getting behind in their work. Developing strategies to address problems early enables students to persist through courses and teaches them valuable communication and self-advocacy skills.

Improved course selection and sequencing have also contributed to increased course completion among continuing students. Gateway counselors have worked to ensure that students enrolling in courses have the basic foundational skill level needed to succeed in those courses. For example, students are not enrolled in courses that require a high level of literacy and advanced writing if they have not passed a corresponding English course demonstrating mastery of these skills. Creating a realistic course schedule for students is another necessary factor in satisfactory course completion. If students take too many courses, it is difficult for them to dedicate the time required for successful completion. Community colleges generally require least two hours of study time outside of class for every hour spent in the classroom. Having too many courses or the wrong balance of courses can potentially set students up for failure

Finally we have sought to enroll students in classes taught by instructors with experience teaching the "basic skills" students at Laney College. Basic skills students have experiences and needs similar to those of GtC students. Perhaps for this reason, GtC students enrolled in courses taught by these instructors are more likely to succeed.

#### *Plan for improvement*

We are extremely encouraged by students' improving rates of credit attainment and plan to continue implementing the following strategies outlined in greater detail above:

- Regular student attendance tracking and grade review matched with immediate intervention when problems are identified
- Increased tutoring especially in English and math
- Increased attention to scheduling and course selection including working to enroll students in courses taught by instructors with experience teaching basic skills students who are similar to GtC students.
- Counselors will communicate regularly with instructors and student supporters to inform them of academic and attendance issues. Students not signing in regularly will be placed on academic probation

#### **Course passage**

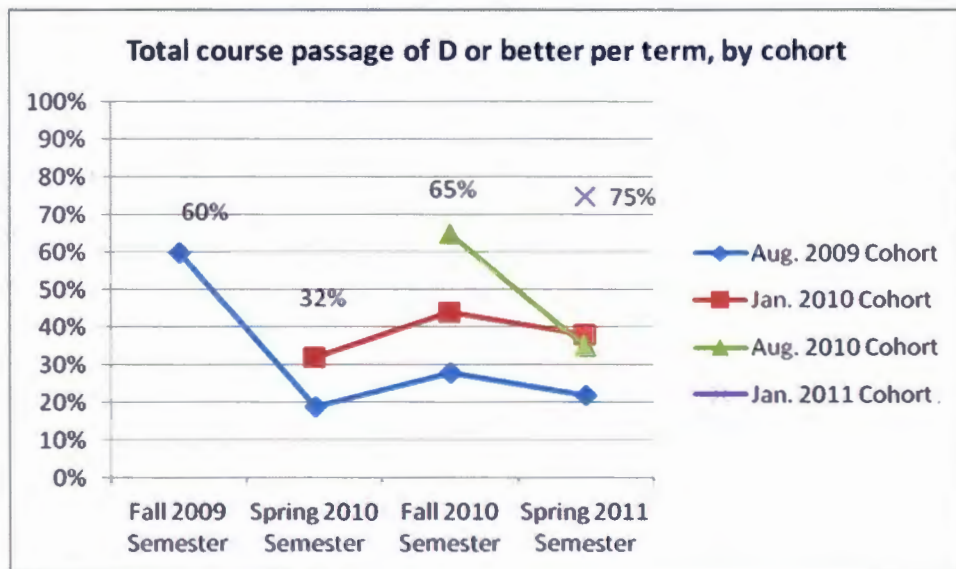
##### *Overview*

The number of high school credits students can earn for each college course is dictated by the curriculum articulation agreement between OUSD and Laney College. The college and school district are currently revising the agreement to enable students to accrue high school credits at a significantly faster pace. We are also exploring OUSD-approved credit recovery options including “Cyber High” and OUSD summer school for those students requiring fewer than 10 credits to complete a specified credit area. These efforts notwithstanding, the primary credit recovery method for GtC students remains the successful completion of college-level courses. A primary goal of Gateway to College is to help students develop the habits and skills necessary to *become* successful college students. This requires structuring opportunities for early success, scaffolding support, and intervening if it appears that students need additional time or preparation to succeed in a college level course. To that end, students are sometimes counseled to withdraw from a course if it appears they need more preparation to be successful. If students are on track to obtain a D in the course they may be encouraged to persist through the course since a D will result in high school credits despite the fact that no college credits will be awarded. These recommendations are made on a case-by-case basis dependent upon many factors including high school credits needed to graduate, the student’s personal education plan, and previous course completion.

Gateway to College calculates a college course passage rates that excludes certain courses from the denominator and includes only C or better course grades as passing. However, at the request of GtC Gateway to College recalculated our college course passage rates using methods more consistent with those used by high schools. All attempted courses are included in the following rates, and any course receiving a D or better is reported as passing.

*Results & Context*

For the past three semesters, each successive cohort of students entering GtC has achieved a higher rate of successful course completion, defined as receiving a grade of D or better. Our January 2011 cohort had an average course completion rate of 75%, an encouraging result considering that they entered the program with an average GPA of 1.5. [Option B]



We continue to see course passage rates decline as students begin taking mainstream college classes in their second semester, and that rate of decline among the August 2010 cohort was particularly steep. We know that the transition to college is difficult for most students and expect that there will always be some decline in course completion as students begin taking mainstream college classes. Our program is



dedicated to easing that transition by working to prepare students for college and continuing to actively support them as move into mainstream college courses.

*Plan for improvement*

In order to improve course completion rates, Gateway to College will do the following:

- Improve attendance monitoring after the first semester by having students sign in and out each day
- Increase outreach to and intervention with struggling students
- Provide students with greater opportunities to receive tutoring by hiring trained tutors in both English and math. We will offer tutoring in the existing tutoring centers to ensure that our students are comfortable accessing the full range of academic support available at Laney.
- Identify highly qualified instructors with a teaching style and relevant experience geared toward our students’ needs.
- Enroll GtC students in courses taught by those qualified instructors
- Strengthen the program’s relationship with those instructors, furthering our efforts to monitor attendance/academic progress.
- Enroll students in courses in which they have the background and corresponding skills required for successful completion
- Provide more balanced, realistic schedules that match students’ graduation needs.

**Testing (CAHSEE and CST)**

*Overview*

This year very few GtC students sat for the STAR test presumably because the testing period coincided with Laney’s midterm schedule. We recognize that for GtC students taking the CST is both important and challenging. During the spring, most of our students are enrolled in regular college courses and cannot easily miss a week of classes, especially during midterms. We are working with Laney to ensure students complete CST testing within the state’s testing window while still honoring their obligations to their college coursework. We are also seeking advice and potential solutions from other GtC schools including but not limited to the other programs in California.

GtC is making a concerted effort to ensure that all students pass the CAHSEE in their first year in the program, as the foundation curriculum directly aligns with the test content. It is during the first year that we are best able to support students in preparing for and passing CAHSEE and are doing so by incorporating CAHSEE preparation into the “College Preparedness” curriculum. Our average student is enrolled for 1.5 to 2 years before graduating. Students who do not pass the CAHSEE in their first year will receive counseling and instruction to further build their academic skills and prepare for the test in subsequent years. Below is the number of students who have passed the CAHSEE as of March 2011.

*Results & Context*

Grade	Total	Math Pass		ELA Pass		Pass Both	
10	12	5	42%	7	58%	5	42%
11	32	13	41%	21	66%	13	41%
12	79	50	63%	55	70%	46	58%

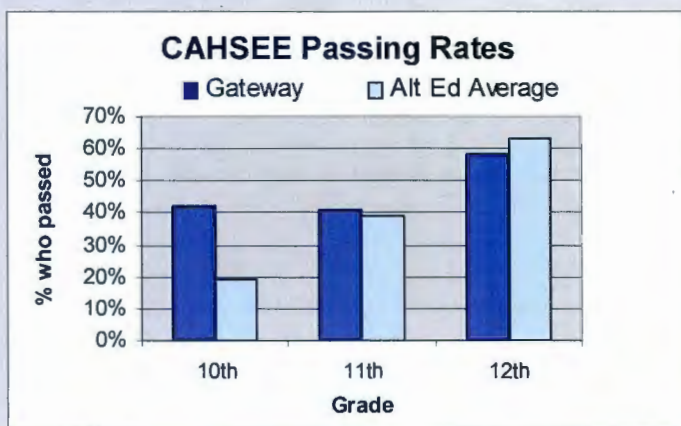
Our overall pass rates are equal to or greater than the majority of alternative high schools in the district. We are also encouraged by the general upward trend in the percentage of our students passing both sections of the CAHSEE.

*Plan for improvement*

In order to improve passage rates, students are now required to take the CAHSEE exam as part of their participation in the program. We have dedicated staff in charge of identifying and monitoring students who still need to pass the CAHSEE. We embedded elements of the CAHSEE exam in the first semester academic courses, and we are providing additional support through CAHSEE-prep workshops.

In the 2011-2012 year we will administer the STAR test to all students. We will send emails to instructors informing them that students will need to miss class on STAR testing days. Students will be responsible for informing instructors and turning in all work prior to missing class.

**CAHSEE Passage Rates at GTC and all OUSD Alternative Schools:**



**High School Diploma Completion**

*Overview*

The GtC program is designed to serve students who are significantly behind in credits for their age. The program is not intended to be a fast track to credit accrual. It is instead designed to serve those students for whom returning to a traditional high school is not an option but who want to complete and further their education. For this reason, it takes most GtC students at least two years to successfully complete the program and earn their high school diploma. The GtC program at Laney has only been serving students for two years, and as with any new high school program, significant numbers of program graduates are not expected until at least the third or fourth year of operation.

*Results and Context*

Despite not yet expecting graduates based on average credits at entry, we can celebrate the success of four students who earned their diplomas early. On average, these students entered the program with a high school GPA of 2.0. They have now earned not only their diploma, but also an average of 25 college credits.

**D. Teacher/Student/Parent/Guardian Input**

**Staff Input**

The Gateway to College model includes extensive collaboration between the foundation instructors and staff. Instructors work cross-curriculum on projects and meet weekly to discuss progress. Our instructors



also meet weekly to discuss students' academic progress and the ancillary supports they need to be successful.

Our Foundation instructors have direct input into the direction and structure of the program. During the 2011-2012 school year, we have also created new relationships with general instructors on the Laney College campus. These instructors provide input on the academic needs of our Gateway students, which allows us to better prepare students to be successful beyond their Foundation term. Laney College instructors have made the following general observations about GTC students:

- Gateway students develop a collegial attitude by the end of the foundation term.
- Gateway students show much growth after their foundation completion, yet still struggle on the general campus in keeping up with their rigorous academic schedule.
- Gateway students need more academic support and basic skills development.

#### *Planned Response to Input*

In order to better prepare our students for mainstream college classes and support them through the transition, GtC plans to implement a number of new and enhanced student supports, many of which have been described in previous sections of this report. To recap, these supports include:

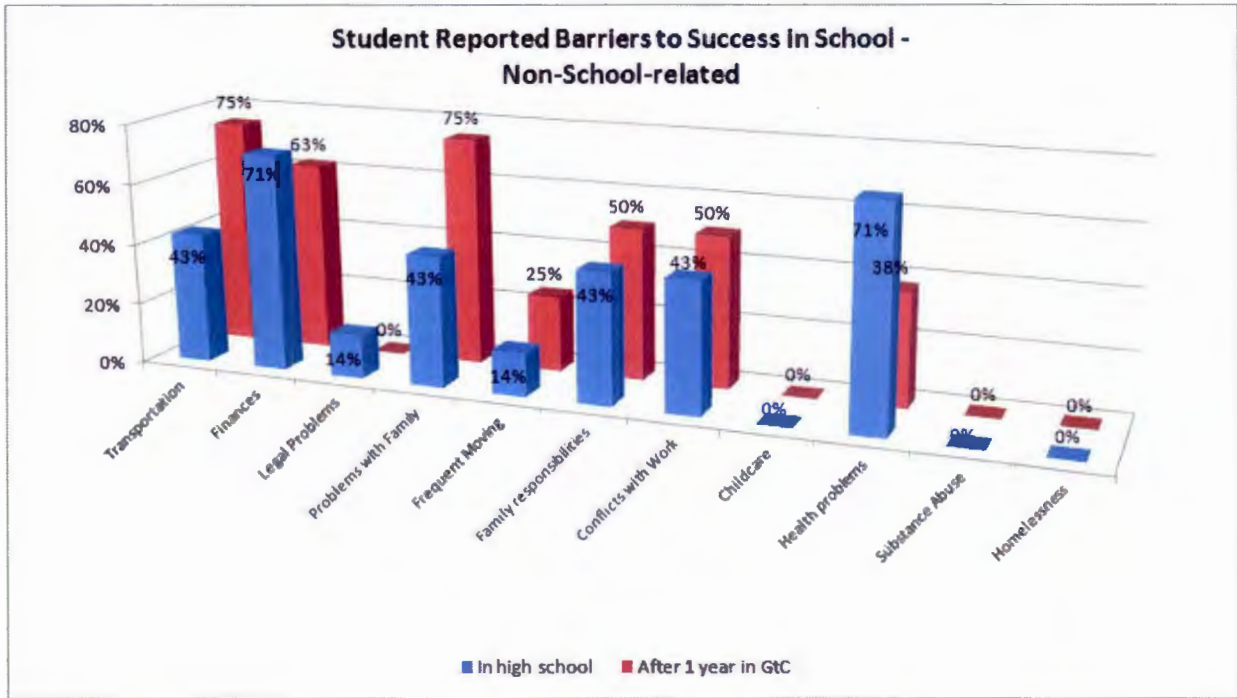
- Offering additional academic tutoring for their foundation courses and for continuing students in math and English. We will also embed our tutors and hire them for additional hours at the tutoring centers on campus. By working with the Laney tutoring center, we will ensure that our students will have assistance to meet every homework deadline. Additionally, this will help students to feel comfortable using the centers after their foundation term.
- Restructuring the "College Preparedness" course to place greater emphasis on the fast-pace and high expectations of college classes, and holding a pre-semester boot camp prior to the second GtC semester.
- Implementing enhanced attendance monitoring and early intervention with struggling students.
- Counseling continuing students to enroll in courses taught by instructors who have demonstrated their capacity for working effectively with students who are building their basic academic skills.

#### **Student Input**

Students are surveyed by the Gateway to College National Network during their first term and at the end of the year:

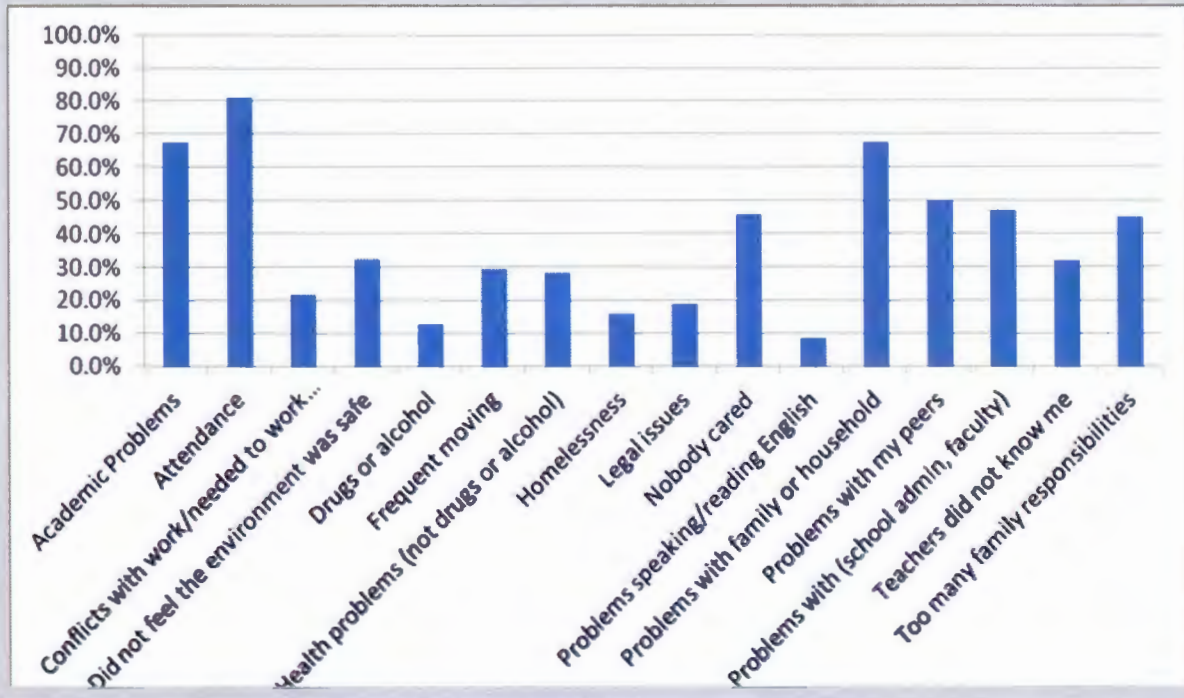
1. A New Student Survey given to all students upon enrollment for the purpose of giving a foundation for later data analysis, and
2. A Student Satisfaction Survey administered at the end of each semester (Attachment 1), which is designed to monitor student engagement and needs.

The results below are for responses that could be matched to students from entry to one year later in order track changes in students' needs and align supports to address ongoing and emerging issues. The survey comparison indicates changes in student attitudes over time:



The New Student Survey allows the program to gather information about student goals and challenges so we can respond with appropriate supports. The figure below presents findings from this survey in spring 2011.

**Student reported problems affecting ability to stay or succeed in high school, Spring 2011 New Student Survey:**





In the Student Satisfaction Survey at the end of each term, students respond to questions related to their overall experience in the program as well as their own progress developing positive attitudes, habits and academic skills. As outlined in the overview, a large majority of students reported improvement in their writing ability, reading comprehension, ability to work in groups, understand math, and seek help from their instructors.

#### *Planned Response to Input*

The GtC program and the new practices planned for 2011-2012 are designed to directly address the top two problems students cite as affecting their ability to succeed in high school: academic problems and attendance. Our counselors also recognize the full range of problems that our students face. We are continually deepening our staff's knowledge of community resources so that we are prepared to help students access supports and services beyond the scope of what GtC can provide.

We are deeply encouraged by students' self-assessment of their growing academic skills. Most GtC students enter the program believing that are "not good at school", an attitude that has been both a result and a cause of their history of scholastic failure and disengagement. Our students' belief in their increased capacity as learners bodes well for their future success.

#### **Parent/Guardian Input**

During its first two years, GtC staff individually engaged parents during the application process and through check-ins with counselors during the year. In the 2010-2011 school year, parents cited the following as areas that GtC was making a positive impact in their son or daughter's life.

- The Gateway program is helping students become more responsible and mature.
- Their son or daughter is more motivated and directed.
- Students feel supported personally and academically throughout their college experience.

Parents also expressed that they would like the program to grow in the following areas:

- More tutoring/academic support for students in their classes.
- Greater ancillary supports like internships, jobs, and financial aid.

#### *Planned Response to Input*

As we have noted throughout, GtC has substantially increased the tutoring available to our students. Students are offered – and are required to access – individual tutoring through the Laney College Tutoring Center. By deepening GtC connection to services available through Laney, our students will also have greater access to ancillary supports including financial aid and career development services including job search and internship opportunities.

For the 2011-2012 school year, GtC is formalizing its approach to parent engagement in recognition of its vital importance to the success our students. We further recognize that parents need special outreach and assistance to build their capacity to support student success. Our parent involvement plan includes the following elements:

- Holding four parent meetings annually.
- Educating parents in academic content standards, assessments, and ways to monitor student progress.
- Making counselors available to parents inquiring about their son/daughter.



- Ensuring that 90% of parent/guardians sign a Student-Parent-Compact that outlines the responsibilities of all parties and clearly indicates that parents will be included in any of GtC's interventions aimed at improving student attendance and achievement.
- Providing education and training for staff on the value of parent/supporter contributions and how to work with parents/supporters as equal partners.

## E. Conclusions and Recommendations

In its first two years of operation, Gateway to College has made steady progress in almost all areas of student achievement. GTC student performance in Foundation courses, the core of our program, improved substantially over last year with a 27% increase in pass/completion rates and 15% increase in student attendance. While second semester student pass rates and attendance have diminished for each cohort, the drop-off is increasingly smaller, indicating that GtC's interventions are effective. After two years of operation, we have successfully identified ways to further reduce, or even eradicate, the second semester drop off, as described earlier in this report. We have also seen continued improvement in the number of high school and college credits earned by our students. The spring 2011 cohort earned an average of 34 credits per semester. This is more than they could have earned in a traditional high school. At the same time these students accrued almost 13 units of college credit. This constitutes a highly productive semester, which will position students to earn their high school diploma and complete their college degree or certificate in a timely manner.

The improvements we have made to the program and the work we have done to build our relationship with Laney faculty and develop our staff's capacity are yielding positive results for our students. In particular, we believe that the following elements of our program are making a substantial difference in our students' academic achievement.

- Creation of **Learning Communities** where students take all classes together as a cohort and build an ethic of peer support.
- **Assistance for our students** that addresses the full range of obstacles to success that have – in the past – prevented them from remaining in school. Our solution-based approach to counseling means students get help with problems including lack of transportation, legal problems, and family issues, as well as individual tutoring.
- **Personalized academic planning** strategies for all students, which help promote attendance and academic engagement.
- Continued **integration of English, math and personal skills** development throughout the curriculum, supported by professional development for teachers.
- **Preparation for the CAHSEE test.**

We are committed to continuing to improve our program and our students' academic achievement. To that end, we will focus on the following in the coming year: Increase tracking of and response to student attendance and academic performance in the second semester and beyond. Supporting students' success as they enter the mainstream college system is critical. By implementing systems to identify problems early and increasing the tutoring and other academic supports available to our students, we will ensure that students attend class regularly and succeed academically beyond the foundation semester.

- Continue to build our relationship with the Laney College instructors and administration. Through stronger partnerships with instructors and greater familiarity with the college courses we will place students in the courses and with the teachers best suited to their needs and goals.
- Increase the academic support services available to our students including basic skills tutoring and CAHSEE preparation materials and tutorials. Not only have we added an additional 1 ½ hour



of instruction for both Math and English for our first semester foundation students, as well as embedded CAHSEE testing within the foundation course curriculum, we have planned to hire additional tutors for our continuing students.

- Formalize our partnerships with parents and support parents building their capacity to help their sons/daughters succeed. By holding parent/supporter meetings twice a semester and by continually reaching out to families regarding academic progress, we will empower families to better supports student success.
- Work with OUSD, the Laney College administration, and GTC National Network to ensure that our students are able to take the California Standards Tests without adversely affecting their college courses.

GTC has created a small, highly personalized school within a large urban community college. By supporting our students through consistent one-on-one academic and personal counseling and a peer learning community, we are creating opportunities for young people with long histories of academic failure to not only graduate from high school but make a successful transition to college and beyond.

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**Certified:**

[Signature] 6/28/12  
**Edgar Rakestraw, Jr., Secretary**  
Board of Education