

SELECTION CRITERION

(A). GRIMMWAY IS A HIGH-QUALITY APPLICANT (40 PTS)

(9) ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT RESULTS

As detailed more fully in this section below, our students are outperforming their peers in the local districts and Kern County by virtually every measure, outperforming almost every Statewide subgroup measure, and approaching *overall* State proficiency levels, despite large disparities in demographics.

THE GRIMMWAY MODEL: We are accomplishing student success through a rigorous academic model that includes high expectations for every student, with differentiated, personalized instruction and myriad strategies to scaffold and provide interventions in MTSS. Teachers write an ILP for all students. ILPs are updated every six weeks based on interim assessments, and include assessment information, measurable, explicit goals that are realistic yet ambitious for a six-week period, classroom modifications, computer curriculum focus, and after school interventions. All students participate in Learning Lab for 360-440 minutes each week, where they receive targeted, individualized instruction in Literacy and Math at their current level based on the most recent assessment data, both online with adaptive software that adjusts to their specific needs (and provides crucial, real-time data for our teachers), and via Small Group Instruction (SGI) led by Instructional Assistants.

¹⁰ Given that our inaugural class will not graduate until a few months after the grant term ends, we will rely on the GAHS Graduation Tracking tool, modeled after similar successful HS programs, that will be used by students and their Academic/College Counselors to track their progress towards graduation requirements and goals on a semester basis. This tool will be used by Bellwether to assess students' progress towards goals prior to the grant end.

Learning Lab time also includes Leveled Readers for students to read at their “just right” level, both fiction and non-fiction. By providing an extended school day from 7:55 a.m. to 3:40 p.m. for K-8, we give our students extra school time to catch up academically. In fact, a student enrolled at GAA for K through 8th grades receives 164,580 instructional minutes beyond state requirements, *equivalent to more than three years of added learning time*. Students also can participate, free of charge, in our after-school program, with tutoring provided by teachers, Instructional Assistants and administrators.

The Edible Schoolyard (ESY) goal is that every child has the opportunity to share in the planting, harvesting, cooking, and eating of delicious, healthy food thus learning about the importance of healthy food choices. In 90-minute garden and kitchen classes, certified ESY teachers (six at each K-8 school) connect garden and kitchen lessons to math, science, social science and language arts curricula. Students practice churning butter and grinding their own wheat and corn into flour. Students count 100 seeds in a tiny tomato and are awed by its ability to hold the potential for 100 plants. They practice the principles of ecology as they reuse, recycle and compost. Vegetable peels and scraps become stock, a tin can becomes a cookie cutter, and bottles are employed as rolling pins. Children carry garden produce to the kitchen and then return kitchen scraps to the garden’s compost pile, thus participating in nature’s cycle of regeneration. As they plan menus in anticipation of crops they planted, and as they eat their way through the seasons, their attachment to the natural world strengthens and they learn to be stewards of the environment and aware of the world around them.

The Grimmway Café at each site, led by an executive chef, serves nutritious and delicious meals every day that are freshly prepared using seasonal, locally-grown fruits and vegetables. The Grimmway Café has eliminated most processed foods, all trans fats, high

fructose corn syrup, chemicals, dyes, additives, and nitrates from our school lunches, making virtually everything from scratch. We are working to eliminate refined sugars and refined flours. School breakfast, lunch and supper (after-school) are provided free to *ALL* students, who are encouraged to enjoy the provided meal rather than bringing lunch from home, though if they do bring in food from home, families are urged to follow our healthy guidelines. ESY provides on-site cooking classes, health and nutrition lessons and farmer's markets for family members held quarterly. Parent volunteers also help to serve student meals and maintain the garden.

All Grimmway curriculum is aligned with California Common Core State Standards (CCSS), including Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), as well as national professional organizations such as the National Council for Teachers of Mathematics, the National Academy of Sciences, and so on. Curricular resources are selected based on their success with similar populations of students, levels of student engagement, and ability to personalize/differentiate. Current K-8 resources include: **ELA:** Success for All, Core Knowledge Language Arts, Readers/Writers' Workshop, Amplify ELA; **Math:** Engage NY and College Preparatory Math; **Science:** Amplify Science; **Social Science/History:** Core Knowledge History and Geography. Students also engage in array of Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA) and enrichment activities including field trips.¹¹ (A chart of sample K-8 curricula is included in Appendix H.) Teachers use the Understanding by Design (UbD) framework to backwards map lessons to major objectives in the standards.

¹¹ At the secondary school level we offer single-sex sports and clubs such as Girls in STEM. At all times, Grimmway Schools complies with title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20U.S.C. 1681, *et seq.*) and its implementing regulations, including 34 C.F.R. 106.34.

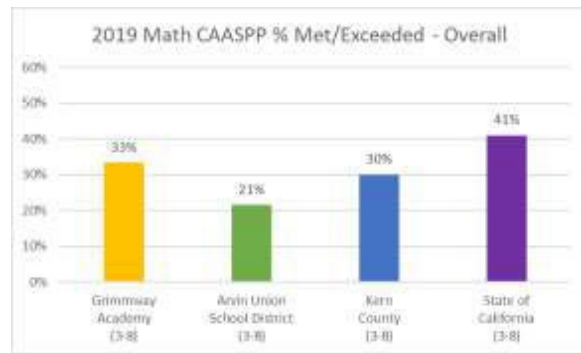
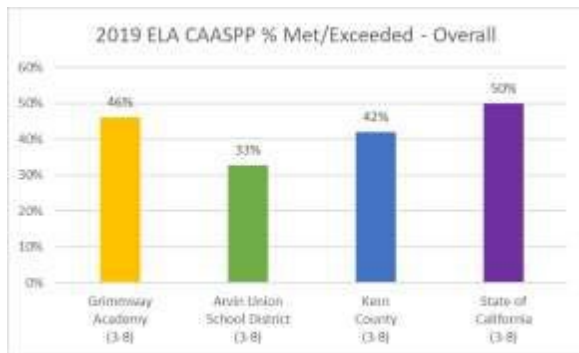
Learning is integrated across core subject areas, and our subject- specialist teachers (even our youngest students rotate to Humanities and STEM specialists after Homeroom) collaborate extensively to coordinate lesson planning and continuously review data. The faculty participates in extensive training on critical analysis of data in order to address any performance deficiencies or negative data trends. Data analysis is tied to professional development (PD) for teachers, so that teachers can enhance their understanding of student performance and rethink current pedagogical practices to meet the changing needs of students.

Full-time, full-release Instructional Coaches are provided for every teacher at a ratio of 13:1. These coaches serve the formal role as mentor for new teachers and provide support and feedback for each teacher in a non-evaluative context. We collaborate with the New Teacher Center (NTC), a nationally recognized, research-based non-profit dedicated solely to the development of instructional coaches and mentors, to provide training for our Instructional Coaches to ensure industry-standard best practices. We partner with outside experts to conduct in-depth PD in Literacy and Math, including multi-year partnerships with the Loyola Marymount University (LMU) Center for Math and Science Teaching (CMAST), Success for All (Literacy), UC Santa Barbara Mathematics Project, and EL learning PD provided by the County.

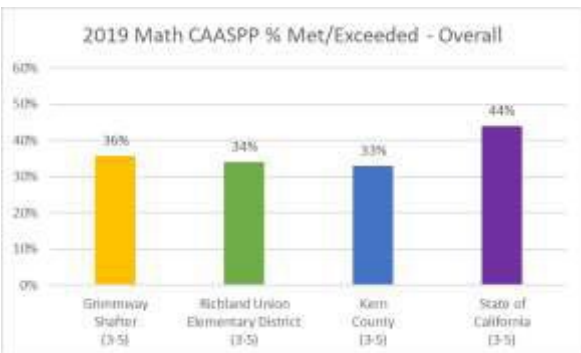
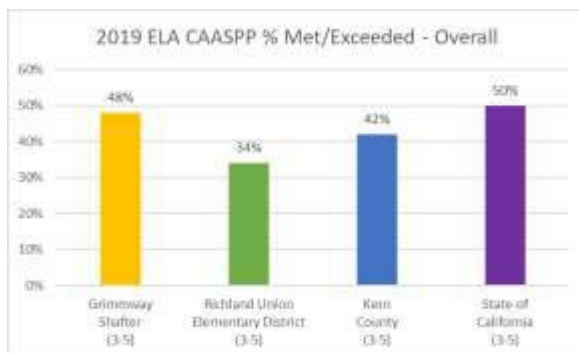
Finally, we attend to our students' psycho-social needs through social-emotional learning, restorative justice strategies, and on-site counseling support. Success for All's *Getting Along Together* program helps K-8 students build social and emotional skills (SEL) with a three- pronged focus: students learn thinking and cognitive skills, emotional management, and interpersonal and social skills. In addition, the Community Matters Inside-Out Approach helps us build a positive school climate with a solution-oriented restorative practices approach. We partner with local service organizations for referrals for our students/families in need, including

those experiencing homelessness, food instability, trauma or other stressors. These programs and efforts help Grimmway maintain a zero suspensions or expulsions environment for the past two and a half years, and, as detailed below, high stakeholder satisfaction rates across the board.

STATE TEST DATA: On the 2019 California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP), administered to students in grades 3-8 and 11 in English Language Arts and Math, GAA students outperformed their grade 3-8 peers at the local District and County, and nearly matched the State proficiency rates, with 46% Met/Exceeded standards in ELA and 33% Met/Exceeded in Math:



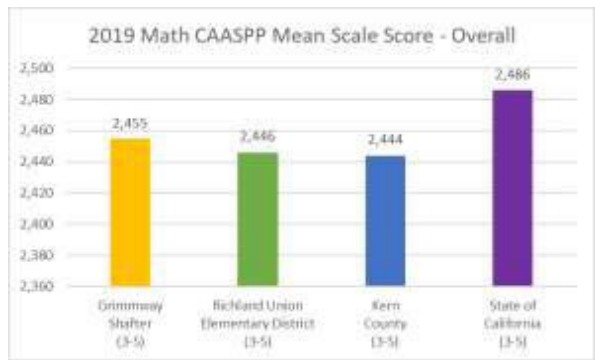
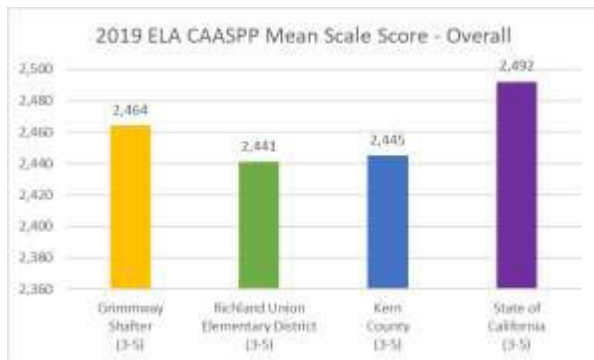
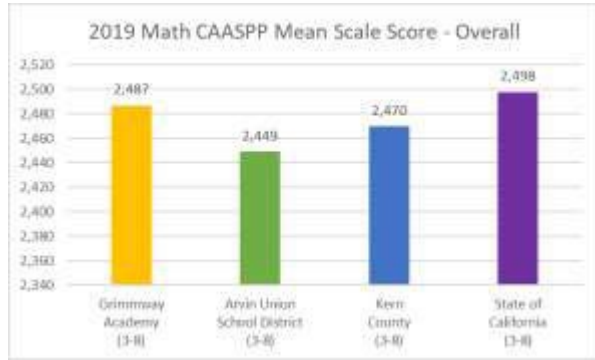
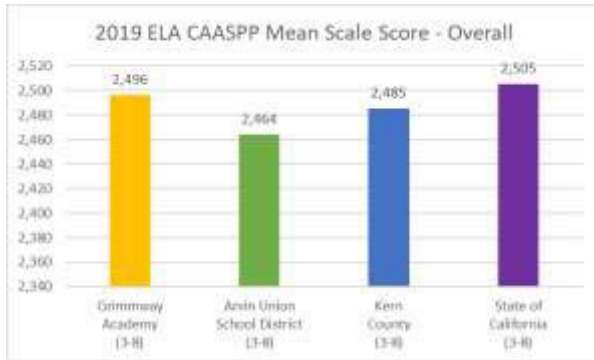
In just its second year of operations, GAS’s 3rd-5th graders achieved similar results as GAA compared to other students across the State, with 48% Met/Exceeded in ELA and 36% in Math. Notably these students have not benefited from a full Grimmway educational span – the 5th graders tested started with us in 3rd grade -- and already are achieving strong results.



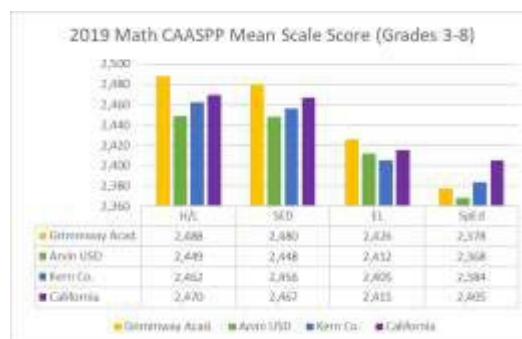
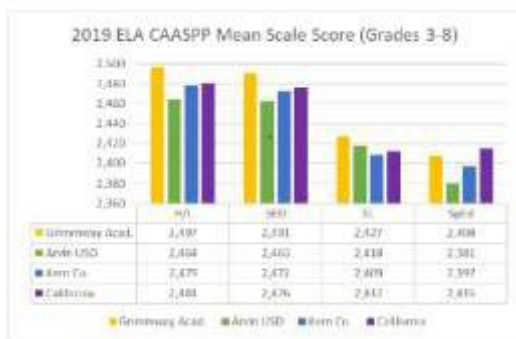
CAASPP Mean Scale Scores provide a holistic picture of students' performance, accounting for both those students who Met or Exceeded the state standards, as well as those who scored Nearly Met or Not Met, and their specific range from the standard.¹² Comparing Mean Scale Scores (MSS), both GAA's 3-8th graders and GAS' 3-5th graders outperformed their grade level peers in the surrounding Districts and Kern County in both ELA and Math. Most notably, *despite the fact that GAA serves 40 percentage points more Hispanic/Latino students, 24 percentage points more SED students and twice as many EL students as the Statewide average enrollment, GAA's students are within 9 points of the State MSS in ELA (2,496 v. 2,505) and within 11 points in Math (2,487 v. 2,498) for the same grade levels. In other words, **our students are closing the achievement gap.***

¹² The State's new Dashboard accountability system includes a Distance from Standard (DFS) which is designed to accomplish a similar task in that it measures how far the "average" student is from meeting the grade-level standard. To date, the ability to segregate out grade level strands is not yet available, preventing apples to apples comparisons. But again, Grimmway's performance on this measure demonstrates our strength: in 2019, GAA's 3rd-8th graders have an ELA DFS score of -12 and GAS (3rd-5th grades) is -5, meaning our "average" students are 12 and 5 points from the standard, respectively. This compares to the local Districts (also grades 3-8) at -42 and -41; Kern County (includes 3-8 and 11th grade) is -147; and California (grades 3-8, 11) is at -3, just 9 points higher than GAA and 2 points higher than GAS. In Math, GAA has a DFS of -37 and GAS is -27, the local Districts are -73 and -63, Kern County is -233, and the State is -34.

While GAS's students in 3rd-5th grades are not yet on par with the State just two years after the school opened, both GAS and GAA's students are outperforming their grade level peers in the surrounding District and County, by margins of 9 to 38 points.



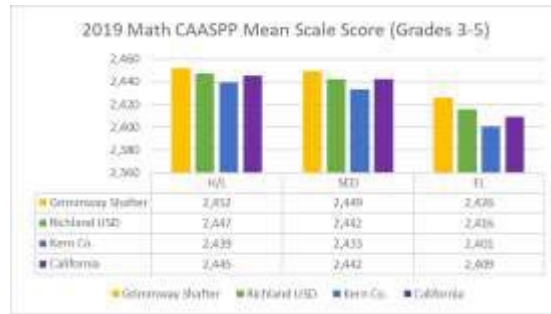
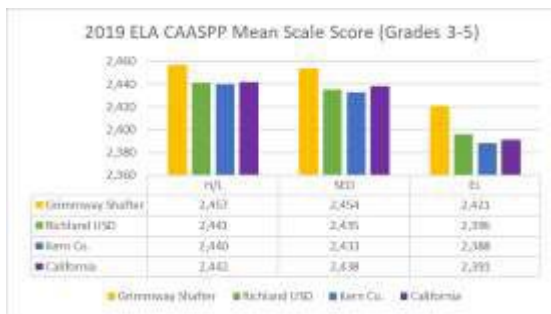
In looking at subgroup performance, Grimmway's students are outperforming their grade level peers in the surrounding District, County and State across almost every metric for which subgroup data is reported:¹³



¹³ Subgroups not included here, including SpEd for GAS, had 10 or less students tested per grade.

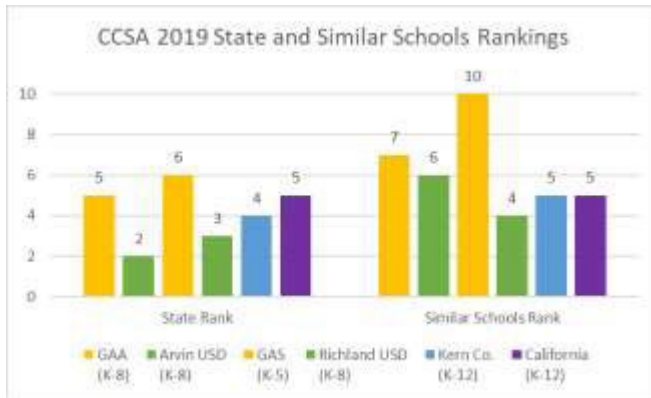
GAA’s Hispanic/Latino students had a 2019 MSS of 2497 in ELA (> State by 16 points) and 2,488 in Math (> State by 18 points); SED students at GAA were 2,491 in ELA (>State by 15 points) and 2,480 in Math (>State by 13 po ints); ELs at GAA were 15 points > State in ELA at 2,427 and 11 points higher in Math at 2,426; and GAA’s SpEd students were lower than State MSS rate in ELA by 7 points at 2,412 – though still higher than the surrounding District and County – and lower that both the State and County in Math, though still higher than Arvin School District at 2,378.

At GAS, Hispanic/Latino students in grades 3-5 at GAS outperformed their peers across the State in ELA by 15 MSS points (2,457) and 7 points in Math (2,452); SED students were 16



MSS points stronger than the State in ELA (2,454) and 7 points in Math (2,449); and ELs at GAS were 30 MSS points higher in ELA than the State (2,421) and 17 points in Math (2,426).

CCSA STATE AND SIMILAR SCHOOLS RANKINGS: As California moved to a new statewide testing system and replaced the old system of school rankings, the California Charter Schools Association (CCSA) developed a method of comparing public schools using CDE-published test data. Based on this analysis of 2019 test data, GAA and GAS are outranking the



comparisons, particularly when the focus is on schools serving “similar” demographics of students. GAA and GAS rank 5/10 and 6/10, respectively on the state rankings, higher than their two surrounding Districts, Kern County and on par with or higher than

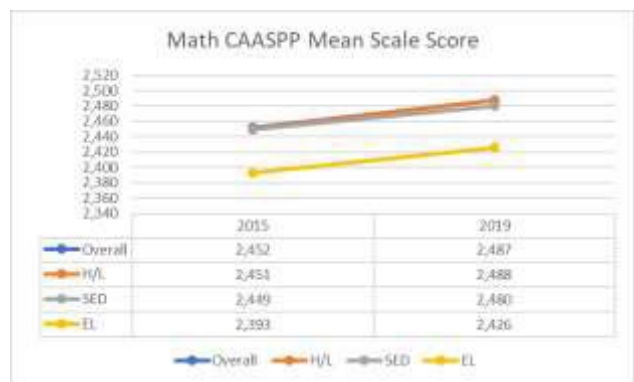
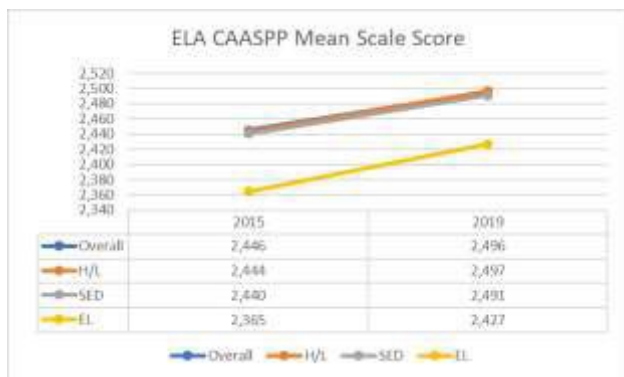
the State mean. Similar Schools reveals a greater disparity with GAA at 7/10 and GAS at 10/10 – in the top 10% of schools Statewide serving a similar demographic of students – while the comparisons range from 4-6.

ATTENDANCE DATA: Average Daily Attendance (ADA) at both of our schools is quite strong, ranging from 95.3-96.2% at GAA the past three years and 95.5-95.7% at GAS the past two years; to date this year, ADA at both schools is above 96.0%. Across California, not including charter schools or schools operated by county offices of education, ADA in 2018-19 was 95.0%, based on enrollment of 5,511,004 and average attendance of 5,233,193 students.¹⁴

¹⁴ Based on email from K. Kappahn, Legislative Analyst’s Office, Jan. 2, 2020.

STUDENT RETENTION RATES: At our flagship school, which is now in its 8th year of operation and has operated a full K-8 span for four years, student retention rates have been 95-97% the past three years. The most common reason a family gives for leaving GAA is moving out of the area. At GAS, which is in just its third year of operations, retention has been 90% each of the past two years, which we expect will increase as the school reaches full K-8 capacity. Student retention rate data is not routinely tracked or available for non-charter schools in California,¹⁵ though dropout data is published for middle and high schools. *Grimmway has never had any dropouts.* In 2016-17, the most recent year for which dropout data is available, Kern County reported 176 dropouts and the State had 2,591 dropouts from 7th and 8th grades. At the high school level, Kern had another 1,116 grade 9-12 dropouts (2.0%), lower than the State rate that year of 2.4% (47,249 HS dropouts).

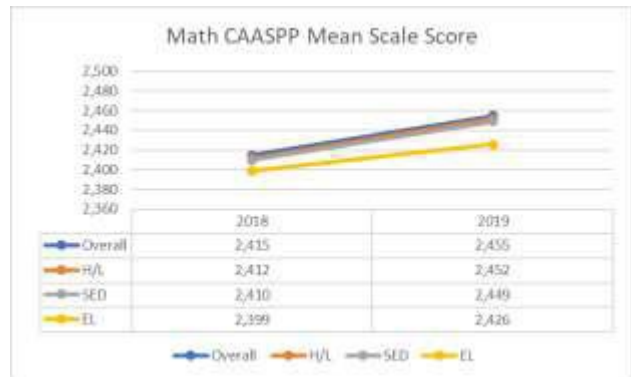
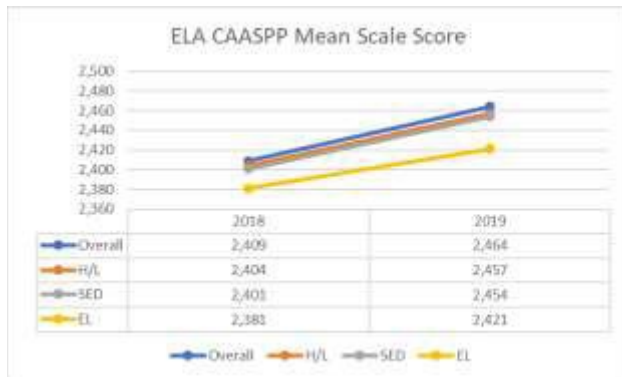
GROWTH DATA: In addition to the 2019 test data detailed above showing *our 8th graders demonstrating higher proficiency than 3rd graders*, unlike their peers across the State, our schools are exhibiting strong growth over time. In addition to the fact that our students demonstrate increased proficiency as they age up through the system – contrary to statewide norms, especially in Math, as illustrated in the Intro above, GAA has made steady improvements both schoolwide and for each subgroup since the new CAASPP tests were introduced in 2015.



¹⁵ Ibid.

Given that our Hispanic/Latino and SED subgroups each comprise an almost-majority of our student populations, the overlaps illustrated below are not surprising, but we are pleased to see that Overall, H/L, SED gained approximately 50 MSS points in ELA and ELs gained 62 points, while in Math, Overall, H/L, SED and EL gained approximately 30 points. In the same time period, across CA for the same grades, ELA MSS average gained 44 points and Math gained 33 points, thus GAA’s growth is on par with statewide gains.

At GAS, in just one year, Overall, H/L and SED gained approximately 55 points in ELA between when 3rd and 4th graders were tested in 2018 to 3rd-5th graders testing in 2019, with ELs making an impressive 40 point gain. And in Math, Overall, H/L and SED gained approximately 40 points, with ELs gaining 27 MSS points.



	Reading	Math
GAA(K-8)	60%	62%
GAS(K-5)	65%	70%

In order to track students growth between fall and spring each year, Grimmway

uses NWEA MAPs nationally-normed benchmark assessments twice annually (fall/spring).

Each student is assigned an annual growth target by NWEA based on their individual status. In 2018-19, 60-70% of students met their annual growth goals in Reading and Math.

ADDITIONAL DATA: EL Reclassification Rates are on par with State averages. At GAA, over the last three years, we have an average reclassification rate of 14%, compared to

14% for the same time period Statewide, 15% across Kern County and just 6% in the Arvin District. At GAS, EL reclassification was 13% in our first year of reclassification (reported fall 2018-19), though we anticipate it will be significantly higher in our second year of reclassifying students. We had **zero student suspensions or expulsions** in 2018-19. In our eight year history, Grimmway has never had an expulsion and has had just a few suspensions, compared to 4% average suspension rates across the County and State. **Parent engagement** is quite strong: parents can access information about their child's progress any time online via Illuminate, with computers available on campus for parents to use and training on how to use the system. Parents meet with teachers twice annually for formal conferences about their child's progress. Each site's School Site Council (SSC) provides monthly feedback to the Principal on all aspects of the school including allocation of resources and parent volunteers encourage all parents to get involved in school activities. Parents are notified about all Grimmway Board meetings and invited to attend (one parent-elected representative also sits on the Board); parents also participate in the annual goal setting and review process for the school site as the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) is reviewed and updated annually. Parent education workshops, family cooking classes, family and community events, parent volunteer activities and more all foster a close home-school connection. Given the significant percentage of our families who are primary Spanish speakers, all printed/online materials are published in Spanish and translation is provided at meetings and events.

Parents, students and teachers are **surveyed annually** to assess their satisfaction and engagement with our programs with strong results: ***93% of parents and 86% of our students and believe Grimmway is preparing the students for success in college and career.*** Notably, ***97% of teachers and staff*** report they are proud to be team members at Grimmway.

(10) NONE OF GRIMMWAY’S CHARTER SCHOOLS HAVE CLOSED

Grimmway has not had any charter schools it operates or manages closed for any reason whatsoever; has not had a charter revoked due to noncompliance with statutory or regulatory requirements; and has not had our affiliation with any charter school revoked or terminated, including through voluntary disaffiliation. Grimmway Schools originally was established in 2010 as a non-profit public benefit corporation under California law, and granted 501(c)(3) status by the IRS, prior to the founding of GAA. (See App. D.) GAA’s charter was authorized in 2010 by the Kern County Office of Education (KCOE) on appeal after it was denied by the local Arvin Union School District. GAA opened in the fall of 2011; the charter most recently was renewed by KCOE for a new term that continues through June 2026. In 2016, the Richland Union School District authorized GAS for a five-year term through June 2022.

In the event closure of a school should ever become necessary, the California Ed Code contains detailed school closure procedures that Grimmway would follow, including sending written notice of the Closure Action to parents/guardians of all students currently enrolled (with detailed instructions about transfer, student records, etc.); the Board also would ensure that staff worked to identify available openings at nearby charter schools and other alternatives for displaced students. Cal. Ed. Code § 47605(b)(5)(P).

(11) NONE OF GRIMMWAY’S SCHOOLS HAS HAD ANY SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

Our two charter schools have not had any significant issues in the areas of financial or operational management or student safety, nor have they otherwise experienced significant problems with statutory or regulatory compliance that could lead to revocation of the schools’ charters. Grimmway has a very strong financial position, as evidenced in detail in the attached financials and most recent audit. Annual audits conducted by independent auditors certified by the State of California have been “clean” each year of operations with no findings. (See App. G

for the most recent audit and complete 3-year financials.) Our independent Board of Directors is trained annually by our back-office services provider, EdTec, in all aspects of financial management and budgeting, and reviews comprehensive financial reports at each meeting. Thanks to conservative fiscal planning, fiscal reserves currently exceed 36% of operating expenses, well in excess of the 5% reserve required of charter schools under California Ed Code.

Due to the high quality of our schools, along with the dearth of charter schools in the County, both GAA and GAS have been fully enrolled from Day 1, with waiting lists for entry. Given that school funding in California is based on ADA, full enrollment and strong annual ADA (>95% each year) have directly helped our bottom line. With population in the County growing at a steady clip,¹⁶ we anticipate continued demand. Purchasing land and custom building new facilities prior to opening are clearly a significant expense, but there is a real shortage of unused District school facilities in Kern County given recent population growth such that District facilities under California's Prop 39 law for charter use are scarce. The State's SB740 facilities reimbursement program generates \$1,147 per student in facilities funding for each school that meets certain SED minimums (currently 60%). Moreover, the luxury of customizing a facility – and one-acre garden space – to meet our model's needs has been a tremendous asset to our program.

(12) GRIMMWAY HAS CONTINUED SUPPORT AFTER FEDERAL FUNDING ENDS (10 POINTS)

In California, funding for charter schools does not include any start-up allowance for furniture, books, computers or other instructional materials, pre-opening staff time or planning,

¹⁶ https://www.bakersfield.com/news/bakersfield-grew-by-an-estimated-people-in-year-of-lowest/article_f5afc688-705f-11e9-aa8d-e70bd021bbf6.html

or a facility (including any necessary improvements). The same is true of charter schools that expand grade levels. Furthermore, California's per-pupil funding, while improving in recent years, lags behind other states. (\$13,239 per student in K-12 in 2017-18, compared to a high of \$23,894 for New York and \$21,001 for District of Columbia.)¹⁷ (NEA Report 2018.) In addition, due to our slow-growth model for each new school, expenses outpace revenues until each school reaches capacity and becomes sustainable on standard public funding streams, projected at Y3 of operations for each new school. As noted above, ample reserves and strong fundraising help offset this initial deficit. Each Grimmway school is an independent LEA and thus receives funding directly; each school in turn allocates revenues to the CMO. Consistent with California Ed Code, the charter authorizer retains a 1% fee.

Grimmway's operations and financials have been fully vetted by several entities in the process of awarding funds to our first two schools. We have a strong track record of securing grants from private entities \$2.25M since 2016-2017, including peer reviewed grants from the CA Department of Education (USDoe Charter Schools Program sub-grants for initial planning and implementation of GAA and GAS, both of which were completed favorably), the Walton Family Foundation, NewSchools Venture Fund and others. For the newly built facilities for GAA and GAS, Grimmway secured a total of almost \$25M in tax-exempt bond financing. In addition, Grimmway has a \$200,000 revolving loan with CDE.

CSP grant funds will provide critical one-time start-up money for Principal-in-Residence training, school planning/development and launch time; teacher/staff recruiting/hiring/training; student outreach and enrollment; curriculum and assessment planning; acquiring critical

¹⁷ Despite this low funding rate, California has the 2nd highest average teacher salaries in the nation at \$80,680 in 2017-18. (NEA Report 2019.)

equipment and supplies; and the Bellwether evaluation. CSP grant funds will be used to supplement, not supplant, any federal, state or local funds, and will not be used to pay for existing levels of service funded from any other source such as Title I or Title II or any non-allowed costs, in accordance with applicable regulations and CSP Nonregulatory Guidance.