

California Comprehensive Center: Successful Schools and Districts

Prepared by the American Institutes for Research

Giano Intermediate School Rowland Unified School District

Quick School Facts

Enrollment	823
Average class size	29
Grade span	7-8
Location	West Covina
County	Los Angeles

Source: California Basic Educational Data Systems (CBEDS), 2006-07.

Quick Student Facts

Percent free/reduced lunch	82%
Percent minority	98%
Percent English Learners	33%
Percent Special Education	10%

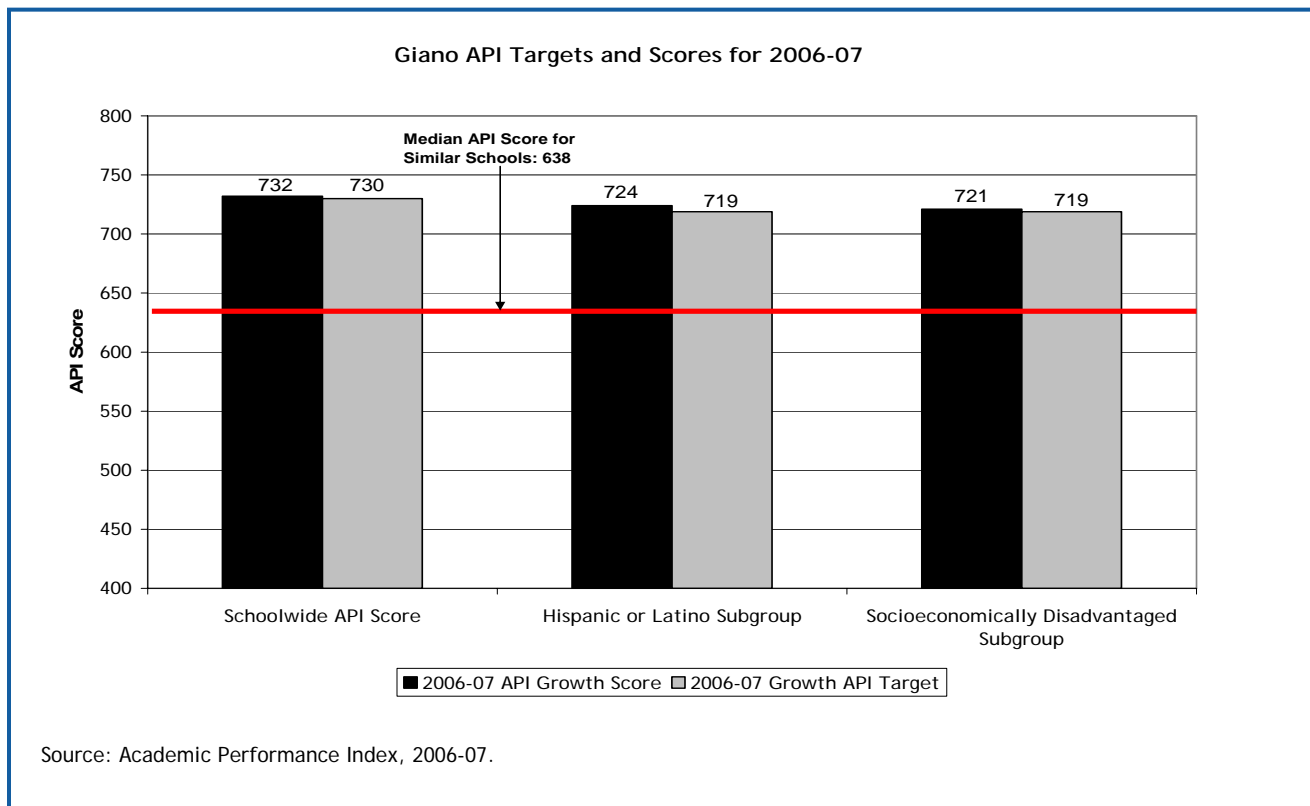
Source: California Basic Educational Data Systems (CBEDS) and Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program, 2006-07.

School Rankings

	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Similar Schools Ranking	10	10	10	10
Statewide Ranking	5	5	6	6

Source: Academic Performance Index, 2003-04 through 2006-07.

2006-07 API: Schoolwide and Subgroup Scores



Recognitions of Giano's Success:

Giano was named a 2007 California Distinguished School, received a Diamond Award for its counseling program, is an Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) National Demonstration School, and has been recognized for its efforts in closing the achievement gap.

Why Giano Was Selected

To identify a pool of high-performing schools we examined student and school performance data from 2003-2007. An overview of our methodology is posted on this website. Generally, we selected schools to highlight based on the following criteria:

- **Substantially higher performance than predicted**
As indicated by a Similar Schools rank of 10, Giano students are performing well above the levels of their peers in similar schools.
- **Meeting or exceeding subgroup performance standards**
Giano students in all subgroups are meeting or exceeding Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) goals, particularly in mathematics.
- **Sustained performance over time**
Giano has never been identified for program improvement under No Child Left Behind and, with the exception of 2005, they have met all AYP requirements. Furthermore, Giano has met all Academic Performance Index (API) targets across all subgroups.
- **High poverty**
82% of Giano students are eligible to receive free or reduced price lunch
- **No selectivity in admissions**
Giano serves neighborhood students within their attendance zone. Approximately 10 students per year attend the school on an intra-district permit.

Factors in Giano's Success

Giano staff attribute its success to a well defined plan for instructional improvement, a professional learning community comprised of a stable and dedicated staff, and a well-established system of data use.

The Giano principal, Steven Hansen, plays a large role in its success. Hansen has been principal at the school for 15 years and has developed a school culture that is both demanding and supportive. When asked what three factors have been the most effective in achieving this high level of success, Hansen listed high expectations, a comprehensive improvement planning process, and a variety of interventions to improve student performance. Hansen emphasized that teachers and school leaders ensure that all three of these factors work together to help Giano achieve its goals.

Hansen is quick to point out that the school's success is largely attributed to staff and district support. The staff create a community full of trust, respect, and responsibility between adults and students. The district provides the school with the flexibility needed to design an instructional program that best fits the needs of its students. These factors, along with strong leadership from Hansen, have made Giano a high performing school.

How Giano Sets High Expectations

- Create a culture of high expectations**
 The principal and teacher leaders consistently emphasize the belief that every student can learn and that the school can help students achieve high results.
- Set measurable goals for student achievement**
 Though Giano meets or exceeds overall and subgroup AYP proficiency goals, the principal and staff set specific goals that exceed the federal requirements for all students and track their progress towards those goals.
- Communicate performance goals with students**
 At the beginning of each school year the principal and counselor spend a full class period in each homeroom discussing performance goals. Students examine their own state test scores, proficiency levels, and individual performance goals.
- Involve parents in goal setting**
 Parents are invited to counseling sessions with their child to discuss student test scores and achievement goals.

Students

	Giano	Statewide Middle School Average
Percent students eligible for free/reduced price lunch	82%	49%
Percent students with parent education level at high school degree or greater	52%	77%
Percent minority students	98%	67%
Percent American Indian	0%	1%
Percent Asian	1%	8%
Percent Pacific Islander	0%	1%
Percent Filipino	4%	3%
Percent Hispanic	91%	46%
Percent African American	2%	8%
Percent English learner (EL) students	33%	20%
Percent special education students	10%	10%

Source: California Basic Educational Data Systems (CBEDS) and Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program, 2006-07.

Vision Statement:
 We are dedicated to a student-centered program of academic excellence. The students, staff, and community are working together in a partnership to develop capable, responsible, and productive members of society.

How Giano Staff Collaborate and Lead

- Be a visible school leader**
 The Giano principal is visible and active within the school community. He frequently observes classrooms; periodically he visits homerooms and conducts “Binder Reminders” to check student planners and demonstrate investment in students’ success.
- Create a strong school leadership team**
 The vice principal, Title I project specialist, school counselor, department chairs, and teacher leaders meet regularly to make school-wide decisions. Giano department chairs also select an additional teacher to occasionally participate in meetings to build future school leaders.
- Build a professional learning community**
 Teachers work together to share ideas, tackle problems, and improve their instructional practice during weekly department meetings. Giano is a safe climate where teachers welcome visits, feedback, and ideas from their colleagues.

Staff

	Giano	Statewide Middle School Average
Total Administrators	2	2
Total Pupil Services (counselors, nurses, etc.)	1	2
Total Teachers	35	31
Average Years in Education	15	12
Percent Teachers with Greater than Bachelor's Degree	80%	82%
Percent Teachers with Full Credential	91%	93%
Total Paraprofessionals	10	10
Total Office Staff/Clerical	5	5

Source: California Basic Educational Data Systems (CBEDS), 2006-07.

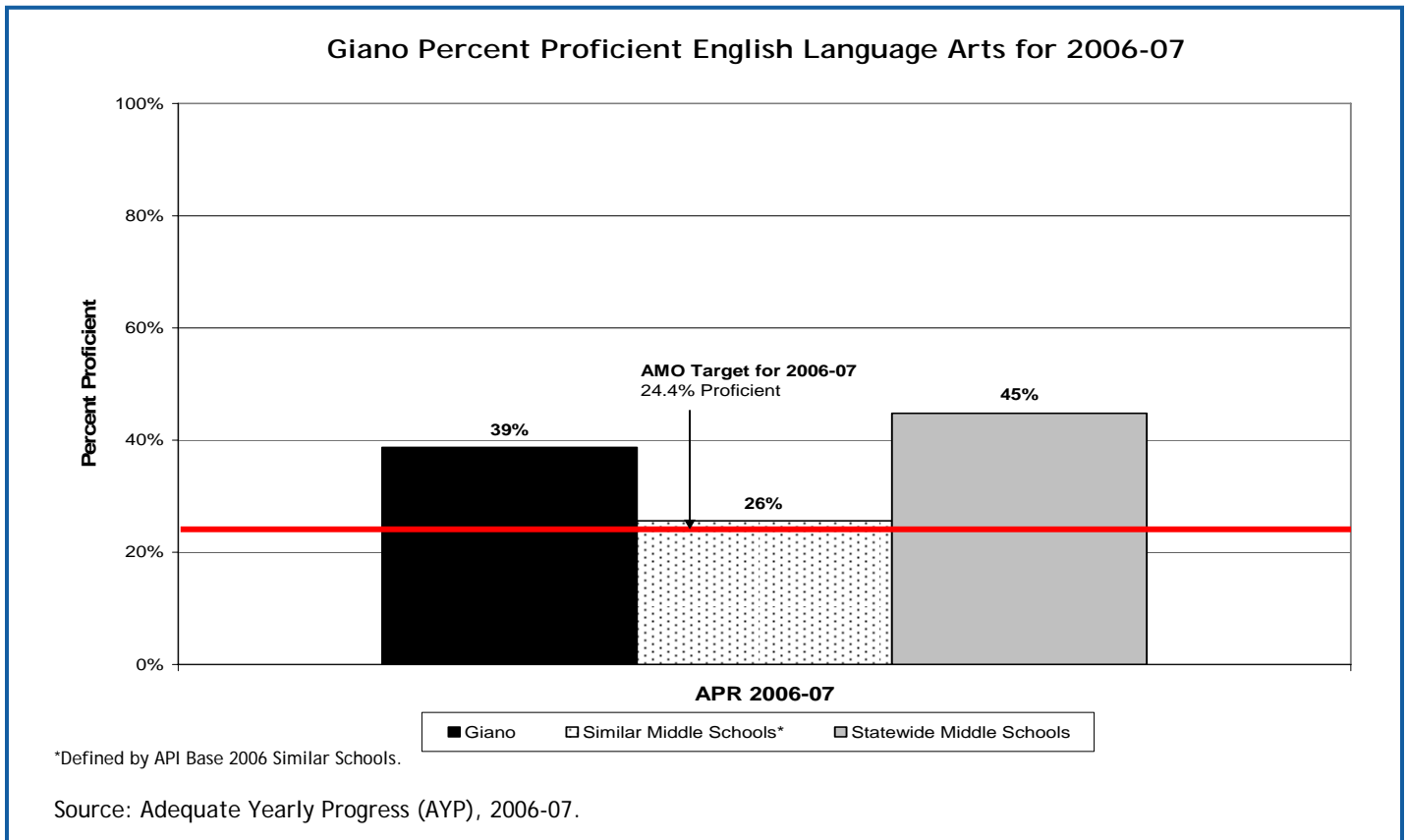
How Giano Organizes the School to Support Student Progress

- Offer parents opportunities to engage with the school**
 Giano has a parent center that offers 12-week parenting classes provided by the Parent Institute of Quality Education, a non-profit parent group. These classes, attended by over 100 parents annually, offer specific strategies for parents to better support their child's success in school.
- Provide interventions and assistance within and outside of the school day**
 Giano offers an array of interventions for struggling students including “double dose” classes in core subjects, daily before- and after-school tutoring, and weekly Saturday classes in the Giano Acceleration Program (GAP) from 9am-noon. While students do lose out on some exploratory electives due to “double dose” classes, Giano staff believe that these classes improve student performance, especially for English learners.

Giano's Key to School-Wide Success:

With high expectations and support structures in place, student performance will increase.

Percent Proficient: English Language Arts



How Giano Uses Data

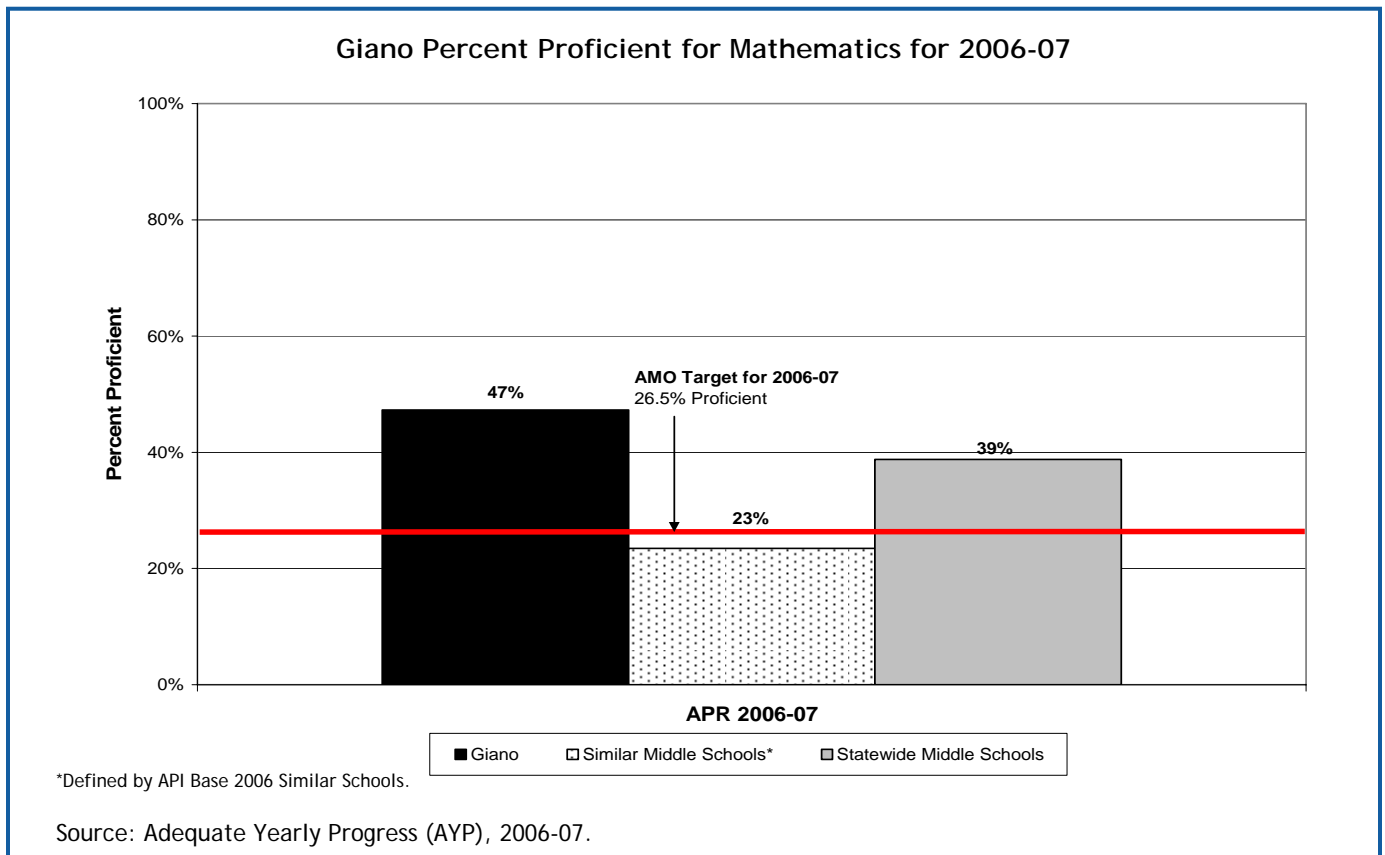
- Conduct an annual comprehensive planning process**
 Giano staff undertake a four-level approach to school improvement using student data. First, they develop school-wide instructional strategies based on demonstrated student needs; next they develop departmental goals, grade-level goals, and classroom goals to reinforce the school-wide focus.
- Identify gaps in student learning**
 Giano teachers analyze data to reveal gaps in student learning and identify areas to re-teach or ways to modify instruction.
- Create an individualized student experience**
 To ensure that students are placed into classes that will meet their needs, the school counselor and teachers visit each elementary school that sends students to Giano to talk to incoming students' sixth grade teachers and obtain student data.

Giano's No Excuses Philosophy:

"No matter what the student's background is, no matter what the parents' educational background, no matter what their socioeconomic background is, we have them here for six to seven hours a day and we can control that [time]."

Steven Hansen, Principal

Percent Proficient: Mathematics



How Giano Targets Instruction

- Identify school-wide instructional strategies**
 Giano teachers select an instructional strategy and use it across the curriculum. For example, the school uses the Cornell notetaking method, which teaches students how to record, recite, reflect, review, and summarize main ideas from a lecture. Teachers discuss the success of these school-wide instructional strategies during staff meetings and make changes accordingly.
- Integrate technology to increase student understanding**
 Giano teachers use various technologies, such as PowerPoint; and interactive whiteboards, such as SmartBoards, to support instruction. This technology has helped to engage students with instructional material. Though some teachers were resistant to using technology at first, they were willing to try to integrate it into their teaching once they saw how effective it was in helping students access the curriculum.

Giano's Tip on Changing Practices:

Don't just leap into changes in instructional practice. Make intermediate steps and allow teachers time to reflect on changes and share best practices.