**Common Sense Digital Citizenship Recognized District:**

# Jurupa Unified School District

**GRADES TK–12 | JURUPA VALLEY, CALIFORNIA**

**Jurupa Unified School District (JUSD) is located in Riverside County, the hub of population growth in Southern California and the state's fourth-largest county. JUSD serves 19,000 students in the city of Jurupa Valley, incorporated in 2011, plus a section of neighboring Eastvale. Jurupa Valley spans roughly 44 square miles, and horse tradition runs deep. It's not uncommon to see riding trails weave through neighborhoods in this municipality with roughly 100,000 residents.**

**In 2015, thanks to funding from a local ballot initiative with overwhelming support, JUSD launched the Digital Gateway initiative to put a Chromebook in the hands of every student in grades TK–12. The program, named a 2018 Model of Excellence and Academic Innovation by the Riverside County Office of Education, promotes learning equity, digital proficiency, and excellence in education through universal student access to modern technology.**

## Why Digital Citizenship?

JUSD students in grades 2–12 have their Chromebooks 365/24/7: They take the devices to and from school, keep them over the summer, and continue to use them as they move to the next grade level and/or school. This approach not only extends and expands learning opportunities but also gives students and families a sense of ownership and responsibility for the devices.

That responsibility includes online safety and behavior, taught and modeled by Jurupa Unified.

Student safety is a central concern for JUSD teachers and administrators, not only in the lunchroom or on the playground but also in online spaces. "We wanted to make sure everyone was teaching digital citizenship—and that students understand password safety, stranger danger online, constructive use of social media, and other components of digital citizenship," said Josh Lewis, director of education-information technology for JUSD.

With that goal in mind, JUSD partnered with Common Sense Education. Sue Thotz, education program manager for Common Sense, met with JUSD principals in 2014 to discuss how and why to teach digital citizenship. The response was overwhelmingly positive: Every JUSD site leader supported designing a road map for implementation.

### STATISTICS

**No. of Students**: 19,112

**No. of Schools**: 26

**Ethnicity of Student Body**:
African American: 2%
Asian American/
Pacific Islander: 1%
Latino: 86%
Multiracial: 1%
Native American: <1%
White: 9%

**Economically Disadvantaged Students**: 79%

**English-Language Learners**: 31%

## Implementation

Once he had buy-in from site leaders, Lewis arranged for digital citizenship planning teams to meet. Each team—composed of site administrators, teachers, classified staff, and parents—discussed how best to incorporate the Common Sense curriculum on campus. Each school had autonomy over when and how it would train teachers and when the lessons would be taught, Lewis said.

**To learn more about Common Sense Education, visit www.commonsense.org/education.**

For instance, the implementation team at Jurupa Middle School opted to teach digital citizenship in homeroom. During the school's daily 20-minute homeroom period, teachers deliver lessons tailored from the Common Sense curriculum by exploring topics such as information literacy, cyberbullying, digital footprints, and effective communication in relationships.

Erika Krause, eighth-grade language arts teacher and school technology leader at Jurupa Middle School, has coordinated these lessons for the past four years. She says teacher buy-in has been consistent: "For the most part, the staff has really embraced the lessons and says they have made a big difference in the classrooms."

In another example, students at Troth Street Elementary receive digital citizenship lessons during assembly-style gatherings led by kindergarten teacher Jovanka Martinez, the school's technology coordinator. Each trimester, every student attends assemblies organized by grade level, and Martinez plans activities appropriate for each age. Classroom teachers then give a short assessment when the students return to class.

In addition to ensuring a digital citizenship curriculum for all students, JUSD prioritizes parent outreach. Each school site engages parents in distinct ways; these include sharing family tip sheets, posting Common Sense links on school websites, hosting parent events, and sharing the Common Sense parent advice articles.

## Impact

Digital Gateway, now in its fifth year, already has paid dividends for students, teachers, parents, and other stakeholders. According to California Department of Education data, in the district's second full year of the program, graduation rates increased, English language arts and math rates climbed, more students completed the courses required for college, and fewer students dropped out. And though the district can't say this was a direct result of Digital Gateway, the correlation with the program's implementation is something to note.

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**JOSH LEWIS, DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION-INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY FOR JUSD**

At the same time, the program has trained students to protect themselves and respect others online. The district earned Common Sense District Recognition for both the 2016–2017 and 2017–2018 school years.

Students have found the digital citizenship lessons engaging and sometimes inspiring, teachers say.

According to Krause, Jurupa Middle School students' favorite topics are cyberbullying, "Digital Drama" (which draws from reality TV to help teens comment constructively online), and "Trillion Dollar Footprint," which shows how social media posts can harm perceptions of someone's integrity. "It's been eye-opening for them that colleges look at this stuff," she said.

Troth Street principal Ilsa Crocker praises student engagement at the elementary school level, too. "The kids always have questions related to social media," she said, and many want to learn about how their social media posts are monitored and whether the posts will affect them long-term.

Both Crocker and Martinez say that parents appreciate Common Sense tools for assessing what's appropriate for their children to watch online. For example, many Spanish-speaking parents have been empowered to learn about the differences between animated shows such as *Family Guy* and *Phineas and Ferb*. "Just because they are both cartoons" doesn't necessarily mean they're age-appropriate, Crocker said.

Moving forward, Digital Gateway will continue to bolster academic success and digital citizenship at JUSD, Lewis said. The initiative supports an increasing emphasis on STEAM coursework, a growing catalog of college-preparation and career technical education programs, and a focus on building good character along with strong knowledge.

"Digital Gateway plays a key role in redeeming the district promise to help every student learn without limits," Lewis said. "I can't tell you how exciting it is to be in the vanguard of K–12 digital learning."

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