

BERKELEY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

TO: Board of Education

FROM: William Huyett, Superintendent and Jim Slempt, Principal
Berkeley High School

DATE: February 11, 2009

SUBJECT: Recommendations for Berkeley High School Redesign
Proposal

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The following proposal is the plan presented by the Berkeley High School staff at the last study session of the Board with staff recommendations, which have been developed jointly by the principal and Superintendent. The Board is requested to give support to the continued development of the plan by approving the five staff recommendations (A-E) as listed in bold at the end of each of the school's proposed activities.

It is the intent of these recommendations to have the Board approve the concepts of advisory and a new schedule to provide increased personalization and student support while directing the school and district to continue to develop the specifics of how to implement these reforms. The Board is also asked to approve the implementation of weekly professional development time beginning in the 2009-10 school year and continued planning for a new small school. It is also suggested that the school give quarterly updates to the Board on the progress of the plan.

PROPOSAL #1

Goal: Increased personalization and student support

Activity #1: Each student will have a choice of six or seven Small Learning Communities following our current school assignment plan:

Academic Choice – 900 – 1100 students. The Academic Choice Advisory Council will create a plan for a house or core system for Academic Choice to break down into smaller groups within Academic Choice. This plan will be approved by the School Governance Council.

Arts and Humanities Academy – 240 students

Communication, Arts and Sciences Academy – 240 students

Community Partnerships Academy – 240 students

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Berkeley International High School – 900 – 1100 students. Currently in a core/house system. This will continue for all grades.

School of Social Justice and Ecology – 240 students

A new small school - to open Fall, 2010 or Fall, 2011. A design team will be formed in September, 2009 to begin this process. The design team will make the recommendation of when to open the new small school.

In all Small Learning Communities, the curriculum areas of English, History, Science and Math will be included as a part of the Small Learning Community team as of Fall, 2009. Math and Science teachers will be assigned to Small Learning Communities following our usual teacher assignment model. This process will take place in February, 2009.

Students will have access to classes outside of their Small Learning Community through an expanded passport system. School Governance

Council will develop this plan by March, 2009.

World Language, ELL, PE, Fine and Performing Arts, Special Education and African American Studies Departments will serve all Small Learning Communities utilizing this passport system.

Additional small schools may be added as capacity permits.

Staff Recommendation A

The Administration recommends that the Board fully support the schools eleven point recommendation to maintain existing Small Schools programs and to add a fifth small school. It is additionally recommended that the school and District consider the “Green Academy” programs and grants currently being proposed at the State level.

Activity #2: The school will implement an Advisory program as described below. The Advisory program will be implemented in Fall, 2009. Specific curriculum for all grades of Advisory will be written by April, 2009.

Advisory Program Goals and Outcomes

Goals

- To personalize the BHS experience by providing a safe, caring, and cooperative community.
- To empower students to be their own advocates.
- To develop habits of successful engaged students, and community members.

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- To provide students information and guidance regarding academic progress, policies, resources, opportunities, activities, etc.
- To provide every student with an adult advocate and peer support.
- To direct students to the appropriate academic assistance.
- To provide the key delivery point for information about our college going culture.

Outcomes

- To help students create a vision for their future by developing a five year academic plan by their sophomore year that will plan through graduation and into postsecondary education.
- Students will understand how to access support services, set personal and academic goals and develop a plan to monitor and achieve their goals.
- Students will demonstrate skills to manage conflict in a positive and productive manner.
- Students will experience an adult advocate who knows and cares about them and can strategize ways to improve their success.
- Students will be their own advocate and take responsibility for their own education.
- Students will work together to develop a community of peers to support their personal and academic goals.
- Students will understand and have a service experience in the community.
- Students will complete a Senior Project.

Organization of the Advisory

- Advisory will be one of each student's 8 classes.
- Advisory groups will be composed of only students from each of the separate Small Learning Communities. Teacher advisors will be from that Small Learning Community or from other departmental faculty members assigned to that Small Learning Community.
- Advisors will include all certificated staff (teachers, librarians, counselors and administrators). For part time teachers, the principal will work with each part time teacher for their appropriate assignment for this time.
- Advisories will be organized by grade level.
- Students will stay with the same advisor for one year. The school will develop a process to change advisors when a solution to a problem cannot be reached. Counselors will be in charge of this process and placement of students in Advisory groups.
- Advisory groups will be between 19 and 20 students in size.

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- Students will be given a pass or a fail grade for Advisory. A grading rubric will be developed as a basis for this grade. In order to pass Advisory the student must attend and participate in the vast majority of Advisory meetings and activities. Passing Advisory will be a graduation requirement. As with any other class, BHS attendance policy will be in effect. A student who fails Advisory must complete an alternate assignment to be worked out with their counselor. Advisors will be clustered in teams of three to support each other in the various activities that will take place for the Advisory period. Students, on a prearranged basis, will occasionally have the opportunity during Advisory to meet with their subject area teachers for academic intervention.

Staff Recommendation B

The Administration recommends that the Board fully support the goals and outcomes for advisory programs as outlined in the school's proposal. The Administration also recommends that the Board endorse the organization of advisory as proposed with two exceptions. Instead of stating that 'Advisory will be one of each student's 8 classes', it is recommended that, "Advisory will be a part of the regular schedule for each student and that implementation is recommended for Fall 2010."

Activity #3: Implement an alternating day block schedule. The alternating day block schedule will be implemented in Fall, 2009. The specific time schedule and other data is attached. Features of the plan are as follows:

- Four classes will be scheduled each day. They will alternate on a Red and Gold schedule.
- Advisory will be one of the eight classes.
- All 9th and 10th grade students will take 8 classes including Advisory. 11th and 12th grade students may take 7 or 8 classes including Advisory.
- Teachers will teach 5 regular classes plus Advisory. Three of those classes will be on one day and three on the alternating day. This will

provide a professional day that will allow teachers to focus on student academic success and learning of strategies to meet that goal.

- All 9th and 10th grade students will take 4 classes a day. 11th and 12th grade students will take 3 or 4 classes a day. If a student does not

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take 4 classes a day, their open period will be scheduled at either the first or the last period of the day.

- Students will have an additional elective class as a result of this schedule. Current zero and seventh period classes will be scheduled during the regular school day unless that is impossible.

- One teacher preparation period will be scheduled for each teacher each day.

Staff Recommendation C

The Administration recommends that the Board endorse the concept of implementing a different schedule than the current six-period a day model, in order to (a) provide opportunity for more courses during the span of a year and (b) provide time on a regularly scheduled basis for advisory and academic support.

It is recommended that the Board direct the District and school to work together to examine a variety of high school schedules offered in California comprehensive high schools. The benefits of a new schedule such as additional offerings, academic support personalization and better student and teacher working conditions must be balanced against the issues of cost and instructional time.

It is recommended that given the current restrictions and uncertainty of the economic environment the implementation of a new schedule be delayed until the 2010-2011 school year.

The school and the District must work together during the next six months to determine a schedule proposal and a funding model as well as to settle any contract issues before February 1, 2010.

PROPOSAL #2

Goal: To implement a professional development program that will focus on instructional improvement to meet achievement and equity goals set by each Small Learning Community and Department, implementation of Advisory and the alternating block schedule. This plan will provide time through increased preparation time and late start days for long term, sustainable professional development.

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The design of the professional development plan will follow the specific plans outlined in the Berkeley High School Smaller Learning Community Grant. This plan began implementation in Fall, 2008. An evaluation of the first year's progress will be completed in May, 2009. The results of this evaluation will be used to develop any modifications in the current plan. All professional development for the remainder of this current school year will focus on implementation of Advisory and successful teaching in an alternating block schedule.

Beginning Fall, 2009 there will be a Monday late start day 4 times a month. These late start times will be used in the following manner:

- One late start day a month for curriculum area coordination and planning
- Two late start days a month for Small Learning Community professional development. This will initially focus on Advisory implementation and teaching in an alternating block schedule.
- One late start day a month for individual teacher collaboration time based on teacher's goals.
- All of this professional development will be coordinated by the Professional Development Coordinator.

A teacher will continue to be released one period in the Science and Math curriculum areas to coordinate Science and Math curriculum school wide.

Staff Recommendation D

The Administration recommends that the Board fully endorse the school's proposal. It is also recommended that the school focus on intervention and academic support strategies in the regular classroom as part of the Professional Development Program.

PROPOSAL #3

Goal: Create an accountable evaluation program to evaluate the progress of these plans and assess the effect on improving student achievement and eliminating the achievement gap.

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Berkeley High School will hire an outside consultant firm to plan and complete this evaluation. This evaluation will also be used to meet the requirements of the Smaller Learning Community Grant.

In addition to other required District and Federal data, each Small Learning Community and department will set one or two equity and achievement goals that will also be a part of this evaluation process.

The outside consultant firm will report all data and analysis to the Berkeley High School Governance Council and the BUSD Board of Directors.

This data will be used in modifying this plan, the Smaller Learning Community Grant and the WASC Action Plan as necessary.

Additional information regarding this evaluation plan is described in the Smaller Learning Community Grant.

Staff Recommendation E

The Administration recommends that the Board endorse the school's proposal with one exception. It is recommended that the first item read as follows:

"BHS with collaboration and support from the District's Evaluation & Research office design an evaluation criteria and if necessary submit a request for proposals for approval of an outside evaluator."

POLICY/CODE

None

FISCAL IMPACT

For the 2009-10 school year, there are no additional general fund costs. Future costs and funding sources of a new schedule will be examined and reported to the Board during the next 12 months.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The Board is asked to approve the staff recommendations, A-E, as stated above.

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