

New ReDesign Proposal To Be Presented At SGC Today

At yesterday's BHS PTSA Board Meeting, Principal Jim Slep presented the main points of the new ReDesign proposal that will be going before the School Governance Council this afternoon for their consideration. [Today's SGC meeting will be held from 4:15 to 6:00 PM in the lobby of the Community Theater, and all are welcome and encouraged to come.] The new proposal is a complete departure from the direction the process has been moving in the past few months, and will not be recommending a move to a trimester schedule. The proposal was worked out at a meeting between BHS admin and SGC teacher reps ten days ago, and shared with parent and student reps earlier today. The full text of the proposal should be available on the PTSA website later this evening.

The Components Of The Proposal:

The new ReDesign proposal are broken down into four main components – Developing & Supporting Small Learning Communities (SLCs) – “decentralization”; Advisories (SLC autonomy); Equity Grants; and a Modified Bell Schedule. We will have a better understanding of the full implications of the proposal after this afternoon's SGC meeting, and after there has been more time to study the proposal and ask any questions we might have. What follows below is a quick breakdown of the proposal's components.

- 1. Developing & Supporting Small Learning Communities:** There will be a “decentralization” of how to implement program changes, allowing each of the SLCs more autonomy in determining how to structure certain changes to address the achievement gap. AC and BIHS will use “houses” or a “core system” of approximately 480 students. “Looping” will be done within a format to be determined by each SLC. [Looping is the approach of having the same teacher with the same students for a two-year period.] Each SLC will have Common Curriculum and Pacing Guides for English, History, Science and Math. Each SLC must plan and leave room for 3 years of a world language. Each SLC must allow students to passport out into a Native Speakers or upper level language class.
- 2. Advisories:** Each SLC will develop their own plan to be reviewed by the SGC. Advisories will be structured within houses and small schools, and will meet the outcomes approved by the School Board. When asked about the status of the development of an advisory curriculum, Principal Slep responded that there would not be a completed advisory curriculum, but that a “resource notebook of possibilities” would be available to all SLCs.
- 3. Equity Grants:** The BHS enhancement FTEs (Full-Time Employee funding) will be used to support equity. Each SLC and department will make proposals to use this money, to be reviewed by the SGC. Equity grants will be for one year. The school currently has 6.0 FTE enhancement from BSEP, which are being allocated to science, art and music (4 to 5 of those FTEs are used to fund “0” and 7th period science labs). Principal Slep stated that the science labs would be eliminated and that the use of those FTEs would now be viewed through an equity lens.
- 4. Bell Schedule:** The bell schedule will be first and second period, followed by a nutrition break of 15 minutes; third and fourth periods, followed by lunch; then fifth and sixth periods. This creation of a nutrition break and the moving of lunch to between fourth and fifth is being proposed so that any SLC that chooses to do so, can accommodate some form of block scheduling.

As with any proposal for change, there are many aspects that may prove to be quite attractive, but there are also a number of implications that may not be to everyone's liking. As always, we encourage everyone to get as informed and involved as possible as Berkeley High considers how best to address the achievement gap. Principal Slep stated last night that this proposal “does not change the system enough to require a Board decision.” It is not clear yet if any of what is being proposed will need to be reviewed by the School Board. We will update you as information becomes available. When asked, Principal Slep stated that there were no

plans currently to present the proposal to the community in a public forum. The PTSA Board had preliminary discussion's last night about hosting an information evening in the near future. We'll keep you posted.

Sincerely,

Mark van Krieken
BHS PTSA

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