

## ***The information below is no longer current, but is a valuable resource for individuals interested in the evolution of BHS' School Redesign Process***

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**June 14, 2017:** We are excited to announce that tonight, the BUSD School Board voted to approve the BHS Universal 9th grade for 2018-2019! President of the School Board, Ty Alper, put it best when he said:

*"...It's not because I think that this redesign will solve all of Berkeley High's problems. It's not because I don't recognize that some members of the BHS community have heartfelt and genuine concerns about what the redesign will mean for their schools and their students. It's not because I am under the delusion that this plan has unanimous support from the large and complicated ecosystem that is Berkeley High School.*

*I am proud to cast my vote in favor of this plan because I am absolutely convinced that it is the result of a process that was deliberate, inclusive, guided by the best research and the best data available, a process that originated at the site and led by teachers. And it was a process that was initiated because many of the professional educators in the BHS community were willing to say, 'we need to rethink what we are doing, because we are not serving all students'."*

We are committed to maintaining the vision of the Universal 9th to bring that which we know is good for our students, to *all* of our students. You can watch the 15 minute portion of the meeting [at this link](#), starting at 1:08:50.

Please see below for information about the Universal 9th grade and the process which led us to this moment.

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After a period of 18 months of research, dialogue and discussion, and extensive engagement with Berkeley High faculty, staff and students as well as parents, and community groups, a Special Board Meeting, held on Wednesday, February 15, 2017, moved the core elements of the first phase of the BHS Redesign forward with the unanimous support of all Board Directors to move to the next phase of planning.

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On Wednesday May 17th, at 8pm, the Berkeley High Design Team presented this plan to the School Board in the Board Room at 1231 Addison Street. The presentation was followed by a 30 minute public comment session specifically designated for the Universal Ninth Grade proposal. Please see [this link](#) to the board documents for more information (scroll down to Section 13 for specific information about the redesign).

You can watch the entire presentation [here](#) beginning at 1:07:00, and can find a link to the staff's presentation to the board [here](#).

The Board will vote on the Berkeley High Universal 9th Grade proposal at their meeting on June 14, 2017.

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Middle School Community Meeting Nights were held at each of the three middle schools the week of May 8, 2017.

Please see the [attached pdf document of the slideshow](#) that was presented at the Middle School Community Meetings. You can also [view it here in Spanish](#).

Families learned more about the BHS Redesign Plans, and in particular the first phase of implementation of the Universal 9th Grade Program proposal for Fall 2018. (If approved, current 7th grade students would be the first class to participate in the Universal 9th grade program.) The final proposal is now moving forward to the School Board for first reading on May 17, 2017 with the goal of final approval in June, for implementation for the incoming 9th graders in Fall 2018.

The lessons from a [broad body of research](#), combined with our school and community outreach, led us to focus on four main areas of redesign:

- Personalization,
- Improving our student assignment system,
- The transition between 8th and 9th grade, and
- Collaboration time for teachers.

The current proposal for the first phase of the BHS Redesign is summarized in the chart below, followed by more background information on the redesign efforts.

[En español: Please see the chart below in spanish \(PDF\).](#)

### **Updated April 2017: Essential BHS Redesign Elements Being Considered for 2018-19**

#### **Essential Elements**

#### **Benefits to Students**

**Universal 9th grade** program composed of “houses” of 112-120 students and 4 core teachers.

- Elimination of the 8th grade lottery
- Shared 9th grade experience
- More personalization from teachers who know students better
- More time to learn about high school courses and learning community program choices for 10-12 grade, including career pathways and elective offerings

A **"modified block" schedule\* of six period courses for the whole school** in which students do not attend each class every day.

\*Staff will consider more fully all options for bell schedule in spring of 2017.

- Longer class periods that meet for a comparable amount of instruction time but not every day
- Fewer transitions from class to class
- Labs and project/problem-based learning more feasible
- Time for homework assignments/project completion spread out over more days

**Common collaboration time for 9th grade teachers** during teacher “prep” period.

- Shared best teaching practices
- More personalized instruction
- Time for teachers to communicate around student needs and supports

**LEAP: Academic Development Period**  
for high needs students lead by 9th grade  
core teachers (English, History, Math,  
Science) staffed at approx. 8:1

- **LEAP** stands for Learn, Engage, Accelerate, Persist
- **One period per day for every Freshman Math, Science, English, History Teacher** to provide **direct services** to high need students in the teacher's house:
  - Calling home weekly / Regular Parent Meetings
  - Regular meetings with focal students / monitoring grades / monitoring attendance / monitoring supports
  - Regular communication with house teachers re: assigned students
  - Direct support on executive functioning skill building and some academic supports

Two days per week will be direct academic support in area of need

Two days per week will be [Get Focused. Stay Focused](#) college and career readiness curriculum

One day per week will be community building; 1:1 student check-in

Will count towards a "G" elective credit to keep students on track for college eligibility

All teachers trained in [AVID](#) (Advancement Via Individual Determination) and use AVID strategies with their class

Students selected through middle school transition rubric and 8th grade counselor recommendation

Enrollment in the class is voluntary and subject to parent/guardian approval

### **Advanced Math**

- The advanced math course progression will be provided to students who test in, but will be outside of a student's "house".

**Teachers all “in”:** teachers in this model are “9th grade specialists,” they do not teach out of their house

- Focus on one grade level, one subject matter, and one set of students during professional development and collaboration time
- Teachers have a group of students they share and are responsible for
- Anti-racist and culturally-responsive pedagogy and curriculum for all

### **Reformed 10th grade lottery**

- Better, more accurate information for 9th graders through a year long information campaign
- Application to CPA academies

The projected cost to fund the elements for the universal 9th grade program is estimated at between \$500,000 and \$600,000 depending on the final staffing needs. These costs are determined by the additional teacher staffing required for the Academic Development period and teacher collaboration time.

A brief overview was also presented at the [January 25, 2017 School Board Meeting](#) and can be viewed starting at the 1:06 mark. During this meeting, board members posed specific questions to the Berkeley High School Administration and Design Team leadership. Below is a brief outline of the proposed redesign elements.

You can read a more detailed outline of the proposal and find specific answers to Board questions from January 25th in [this document \(PDF\)](#) prepared by BHS Design Team leaders. You can watch the [Feb. 15 board discussion here](#).

### **Background for the Redesign**

In the Spring of 2015, a group of teacher leaders, inspired by an educational lecture from Linda Darling Hammond, proposed to pursue the redesign of Berkeley High. The purpose of this proposal was to solve the following problem: The current structure of BHS was not created intentionally to meet the needs of all students. This structure is not aligned to what a [broad body of research](#) tells us is effective school design for the success of all students. The research, combined with our school and community outreach, led us to focus on four main areas of redesign: Personalization, improving our student assignment system, the transition between 8th and 9th grade, and collaboration time for teachers.

During the Academic Year 2015-2016, a 40 member Design Team with staff, student, and community stakeholders was formed to devise a research based proposal which we presented to the school board in May of 2016. This was after a thorough, year long vetting by Berkeley High staff as well as presentations to, and feedback campaigns with, the wider community. That proposal included a Universal 9th grade, with students diversely placed in houses; a 7 period day that included collaboration time for all teachers in a modified block schedule; an advisory in the 9th and 10th grades; and a merger of the two large school programs, AC and BIHS, into houses for grades 10-12.

In 2016-2017, the Design Team changed its structure to accommodate the tasks specific to each element of this well supported plan. We created committees, led by staff and students, to specifically address: Advisory, Lottery/Student Placement, Performance Based Assessments, Humanities Scope and Sequence, Bell Schedules, and Campaign/Communication.

In a parallel process, the Design Team leadership collaborated with District administration in pursuance of the proper funding channels for the \$1.3-\$1.6 million cost of adding a 7th period to

our schedule. Despite our belief that this set of reforms, comprehensively implemented, are best for Berkeley High, we encountered insurmountable funding challenges. District administration returned to the Design Team with a request for a proposal which would more closely align with the district's budget realities, understanding that our expectations for student outcomes would be commensurate with the reduced financial investment.

We believe that the plan outlined [here](#) will bring more personalization to the 9th grade through houses and common teachers, more targeted interventions for our most struggling students, a resolution to our flawed student assignment system, and a more unified and integrated school culture. The Design Team, along with BUSD Administration present this plan in the hopes that as future funding becomes available, we can add some of the features from the original vision for redesign at Berkeley High.

**Questions or Comments:**

The Design Team leadership is interested in your comments and questions, and is committed to keeping you informed about and engaged in our work to build an effective high school for all students. Email inquiries are welcome: [designteam@berkeley.net](mailto:designteam@berkeley.net)