



Santa Barbara SCHOOL DISTRICTS

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Dear Parents,

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with information about a new Bridge Program available to students enrolled in the Santa Barbara Secondary School District beginning in the 2009-2010 school year.

The Bridge Program is designed to support incoming ninth-grade students in a successful academic and social transition to our high schools. In addition, students in grades ten through twelve are eligible to attend as classes become available. You are receiving this letter because your student was selected as one who might benefit from this program. The basis for this selection was made using California Standards Test data in English Language Arts and math, previous grade history, and teacher and counselor recommendation from previous years. We are identifying students we feel have the potential to be academically successful but are currently considered academically at risk.

The goal for each of our high schools is to have students prepared to graduate with their class and be prepared for post-secondary education, regardless of setting. We believe as parents, you share the same goal and the Bridge Program is an ideal intervention and support to begin moving in the right path.

The Bridge Program is completely voluntary, and while we recommend that your student participate, you have every right to keep your student from entering this intervention program. Additionally, once students enter the program they will be eligible to exit at each nine-week grading period. However, we recommend participation in the program until grade level academic skills are reached in English Language Arts and math.

Educational research shows that the ninth grade year in high school is the most critical. It is during this year that students either become comfortable with the high school scene and requirements, or they begin to slip, fall and fail. If the freshman year is not positive for students, it is quite difficult for them to reach their goal of graduation and college readiness.

The Bridge Program is a concurrent program and students will be enrolled at the current high schools and remain eligible for all co/extra activities including sports, ASB, clubs, and all student services. The Bridge Program is considered necessary for the ongoing achievements of our students we feel have academic potential yet considered at risk of failing.

Courses in the Bridge Program are taught by specially selected teachers in English Language Arts and math. In addition, students will be eligible to take health, social sciences, physical education, and other electives, based on the school site. Additionally, one counselor and an administrator have been assigned to all Bridge students. The instructors, counselor, and administrator will meet regularly and discuss the success of every Bridge student.

We will be contacting you to schedule a time to discuss our program and to schedule interviews for the fall. Please contact our office should you have immediate questions or concerns.

Best wishes for a successful 2009-2010 school year!

Sincerely,

Name
Principal
High School
Telephone
email

Adams Elementary School	McKinley Elementary School	Roosevelt Elementary School	Goleta Valley Junior High School	Dos Pueblos High School
Cesar Chavez Charter School	Monroe Elementary School	Santa Barbara Charter School	La Colina Junior High School	La Cuesta Continuation High School
Cleveland Elementary School	Open Alternative School	Santa Barbara Community Academy	La Cumbre Junior High School	San Marcos High School
Franklin Elementary School	Peabody Charter School	Washington Elementary School	Santa Barbara Junior High School	Santa Barbara High School
Harding Elementary School				Home School Santa Barbara



SANTA BARBARA SCHOOL DISTRICTS

BRIDGE PROGRAM

Foundation

Students who meet grade-level standards promote from eighth grade to ninth, often with full graduation ceremonies. The question about what to do with students who are not ready for ninth grade is troubling, and there is a new debate about how to measure the dropout rate which does not alter the fact that approximately thirty-percent of students who begin ninth grade do not complete high school, yet research suggests there is little support for grade retention. In fact, retention is one of the factors found to increase the likelihood of students dropping out, and grade retention also appears to affect later career success. Research and analysis over the past century (studies between 1911-1999) conclude that the cumulative evidence does not support the use of grade retention as an intervention for academic achievement or socio-emotional adjustment.

Social promotion, however, is not the solution, as it simply postpones failure for most students. Mandatory summer school is one option, and another promising alternative is the concept of a *bridge program*. Like Saturday school, summer school and bridge programs offer students an intensive opportunity to catch up to grade-level standards without the stigma of retention. Bridge programs for high school students can serve as a second chance for students who do not have the grade-level skills needed for promotion, yet are enrolled in ninth grade.

In 2006, Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O’Connell’s P-16 Council (Subcommittee Four) made the following recommendation about eighth-grade bridge programs: “Districts shall provide research-based, state-funded bridge programs for exiting eighth graders who are below or far below basic on the California Standard Tests (CST) in English-language arts (ELA) and/or mathematics. Participation is mandatory for those students who are far below basic.”

The Bridge Program is a voluntary intervention program designed to provide students in grades nine and ten additional educational resources and instructional assistance to make their transition to high school more successful. Additionally, the program will offer students intensive programs in English Language Arts and math in a strategic manner that is designed assist students in reaching academic grade levels. For students in grades ten and eleven educational opportunities continue that include dual enrollment with home high schools and provide resources using a variety of educational strategies for credit recovery.

Adams Elementary School Cesar Chavez Charter School Cleveland Elementary School Franklin Elementary School Harding Elementary School	McKinley Elementary School Monroe Elementary School Open Alternative School Peabody Charter School	Roosevelt Elementary School Santa Barbara Charter School Santa Barbara Community Academy Washington Elementary School	Goleta Valley Junior High School La Colina Junior High School La Cumbre Junior High School Santa Barbara Junior High School	Dos Pueblos High School La Cuesta Continuation High School San Marcos High School Santa Barbara High School Home School Santa Barbara
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Bridge programs are distinguished from traditional education programs in that they seek to provide a broad foundation for increased student learning through a variety of educational strategies. Some of the key features include:

- Curriculum defined in terms of competencies needed to succeed in reaching grade level achievement in English Language Arts and math.
- Focus on the basics of communication, problem-solving, applied mathematics, use of technology applications, and acquiring the fundamentals of contextual learning.
- Instruction emphasizing learning-by-doing through projects, simulations, and presentations.
- Exposure of students to opportunities and requirements of employment and education in the target sector through career and college exploration and planning through the Choices Program.
- Additional counseling and support services that include individual assessment and counseling.
- Active cooperation in a smaller classroom setting utilizing small groups, individualized instruction, online education, and individualized instruction.

Staff and Student Expectations

To ensure every opportunity for success in the bridge program,

The staff will:

- Assign one assistant principal to work with all Bridge students
- Assign one counselor to work with all Bridge students
- Select student centered faculty to work directly with Bridge students
- Meet regularly to assess the progress of every Bridge student
- Target added assistance and resources where needed to assist in the success of each student
- Communicate regularly with students and parents about the progress and success of the student in the Bridge Program
- Be easily accessible to parents and students for contact

The student will:

- Make every effort to attend school daily
- Come to school with binder and required materials daily
- Work cooperatively with staff, counselor, administration, and fellow students
- Work to the best of their ability in each class, every day
- Give their best effort to complete all homework assigned
- Communicate with staff if there are any problems or barriers to their comfort and/or academic success in the program