



Carmel Valley High School

8-9-18

Dear CVHS Parents,

Exciting changes are occurring at CVHS this school year, and I want to let you know what to expect. Changes include new bell schedule and longer school day, as well as a shift in our teaching model to Big Picture Learning.

Big Picture Learning – Big Picture Learning schools exist throughout the U.S. and the world. These innovative schools use each individual student's interests and strengths to drive their education through core studies, with an emphasis on real-life and project based learning experiences.

In addition to core studies, this model provides each student with an advisor (certificated teacher) who assists in developing job interview and resume skills, and in finding projects, vocations and volunteer opportunities that spark interest and excitement for them. After the first quarter, students may have the opportunity to reach out to local businesses or non-profits to request an internship or job shadow experience. If a student has prepared and earned this opportunity, those work days will be Tuesday and Thursday. Advisors support students through these steps and will work closely with employers in our community. Please read on to the next page for more information about Big Picture Learning.

Changes in Bell Schedule – CVHS's school day will start at 8:30am each day and will release students at 2:40pm on Mon., Tue., Wed, and Fri. with a weekly minimum day on Thu., releasing at 12 noon. CVHS will continue to operate on a quarterly grading schedule and will continue to follow the Carmel Unified School District calendar and observe all holidays and staff development days listed.

Please feel free to contact us with any questions, (831) 624-4462.

Tom Parry
Principal
Carmel Valley High School



Carmel Valley High School

BIG PICTURE LEARNING

10 DISTINGUISHERS

Big Picture Learning schools exist throughout the country and the world. They are in rural environments and urban environments. They serve both large and small populations of students. Some Big Picture schools exist in gleaming new buildings, while some can be found in retrofitted structures which haven't been in use for some time. In short, Big Picture schools (like the students they serve) often look dramatically different than one another. Each is its own unique environment where students can flourish as individuals within a community of learners. However, there are many elements within our learning design that are uncommon and distinct, which pull our network together and distinguish them from most other schools.

ONE STUDENT AT A TIME - The entire learning experience is personalized to each student's interests, talents and needs. Personalization expands beyond mere academic work and involves looking at each student holistically.

ADVISORY STRUCTURE - Advisory is the core organizational and relational structure of a Big Picture Learning school, its heart and soul, often described as a "second family" by students. Students stay with an advisor and a group of fellow classmates until graduation, building close personal relationships that last a lifetime.

LEARNING THROUGH INTERESTS AND INTERNSHIPS (LTIs) - Real world learning is best accomplished in the real world. Big Picture students intern--often twice a week for an entire school day--with experts in their field of interest, completing authentic projects and gaining experience and exposure to how their interests intersect with the real world.

PARENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT - Parents are welcome and valued members of the school community and play a proactive role in their children's learning, collaborating in the planning and assessment of student work. They use their assets to support the work of the school, and often play an integral role in building relationships with potential LTI mentors.

SCHOOL CULTURE - In Big Picture schools, there is palpable trust, respect and equality between and among students and adults. Students take leadership roles in the school, and teamwork defines the adult culture. Student voice is valued in the school decision making process and visitors are struck by the ease with which students interact with adults.

AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT - Students are assessed not by tests, but by public displays of learning that track growth and progress in the student's area of interest. Assessment criteria are individualized to the student and the real world standards of a project. Students present multiple exhibitions each year and discuss their learning growth with staff, parents, peers, and mentors.

SCHOOL ORGANIZATION - Schools are organized around a culture of collaboration and communication. They are not bound by the structures of buildings, schedules, bells, or calendars. There is an interdependence between school and community.

LEADERSHIP - Leadership is shared and spread between a strong, visionary principal; a dedicated, responsible team of advisors and other staff; and students. The community functions as a democracy. A pervasive sense of shared ownership drives a positive culture dedicated to ongoing improvement.

POST-SECONDARY PLANNING - Students develop plans that contribute to their future success be it through college, trades, schools, travel, the military, or the workforce.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT - Regular advisor PD is conducted at each school by principals, other school staff, and BPL staff and coaches. A Big Picture School is a community of lifelong learners who embrace continuous improvement.