

https://www.sfexaminer.com/news/hillsdale-high-snags-federal-funding-prize/article_98e328b9-f969-5a6e-bd19-0186f24d6ec9.html

Hillsdale High snags federal funding prize

By Examiner Staff

Oct 12, 2007

Hillsdale High School's long-term effort to divide itself into three distinct "Smaller Learning Communities" was given a boost this week by securing a \$1.1 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education.

The grant will be doled out to the school over the next five years.

The school will continue to partner with the School Redesign Network at Stanford University, as it has since the conversion process began in 2002.

The grant will fund the final steps of Hillsdale's ongoing transition, including refinement of the school's SLC structure, curriculum revision and staff development.

The program allows for a more personal and rigorous education for students, proponents say.

“Hillsdale High School, with the help and curriculum guidance of the School Redesign Network at Stanford University, along with our many teachers and interns from Stanford, has already achieved a remarkable transformation from traditional comprehensive high school to national leader in accomplished school redesign through our new Smaller Learning Communities,” Hillsdale Principal Jeff Gilbert said.

The program offers students smaller classes and a continuity of instructors over multiple years; access to technology and college credit; and opportunities for internships with local businesses and community service, according to school officials.

Since classes began in 2004 in accordance with the new format, Academic Performance Index scores at the school have risen each year, and students this year received more college scholarship money than any other school in the San Mateo Union High School District, the school reported.

Hillsdale, with a student body of about 1,200 students from various diverse ethnic and economic backgrounds, now has the lowest dropout rate of any school in the district, according to school officials.

“As a result of this program’s successes 97 percent of our students are pursuing higher education,” ,” Gilbert said.

Students from Hillsdale have gone on to attend institutions of higher learning such as Stanford, Yale, UC Berkeley, UCLA, Brown, Duke and Cornell, among other universities and colleges, according to Gilbert.

The grant money will be spread out over the next five years in order to complete the school’s transition, provided the school achieves certain specific benchmarks, school officials said.

Students’ benefits

- » Reduced class size
- » Instructor continuity over multiple school years
- » Guided internships at local businesses and agencies
- » Community service opportunities

» Technology access, featuring creation of digital portfolios of academic work; and completion of 25 units of college credit before graduation.

– *Source: Hillsdale High School*