Smaller Learning Communities Model

Since 2000, Hillsdale has worked steadily toward implementing research-based reforms necessary to raise achievement of all students. The school has based the Smaller Learning Community (SLC) vision on input from the entire staff and our Cornerstones in order to provide a set of common goals for SLCs and to reassure all stakeholders that redesign would strengthen, not compromise, the school’s academic identity.

The Cornerstones of Hillsdale’s vision are: Equity, Personalization, Rigor, and Shared Decision Making. The school’s current governance structures base decisions on whether outcomes will facilitate achievement of the Cornerstones. Decision-making is shared at Hillsdale, with Administration, Leadership Team, Site Council, houses, and staff engaged in aspects of governance. Hillsdale has implemented and revised the structures and vision annually through interrelating our Single Plan for Student Achievement, WASC Action Plan, and SLC Grant report in order to clarify the vision and concentrate our work. The model, in brief:

- Each fall, all incoming Freshmen will be placed, as equitably as possible, into one of three Houses consisting of approximately 108 students each (Florence, Kyoto and Marrakech).
- Four subject area teachers, one each from English, Science, Social Studies and Math, will be assigned to each of the three Houses. All students will be assigned to these classes and stay with the same teachers for two years (except when credentialing requirements disallow this).
- At the end of the 10th grade, students will be shuffled and reassigned to a new set of “upper division” teachers and advisors in one of three Houses (Cusco, Timbuktu and Jakarta).
- Faculty within each of the five House will teach four academic classes and be assigned a group of twenty-five to thirty students for an Advisory period.
- Teachers within each house will have a preparation and common collaboration period.
- All students will have access to elective programs outside of the House core: Foreign Language, Visual and Performing Arts, PE/Athletics and other elective offerings.
- To the greatest extent possible, all ELD students will be incorporated into the Houses.
- To the greatest extent possible, all Special Education students will be incorporated in the Houses and all Resource teachers will only serve students from a specific 9/10 House.
- The focus of the school’s efforts and the allocation of its resources will be to realize the school’s Cornerstones: Personalization, Equity, Academic Rigor and Shared Decision-Making.
- Students will master state standards of curriculum and demonstrate achievement of Hillsdale’s Graduate Profile (schoolwide standards for all grade levels: communication, thinking, responsibility, reading and content mastery).
- By the end of 10th grade, all students will on track to meet the UC/CSU requirements for college admission.
- By the end of 12th grade, all students will be eligible to attend a four-year college and will have demonstrated “college-readiness” through the completion of a rigorous academic portfolio which will culminate in an oral defense of the student’s work.
- Professional Development will focus on expanding the capacity of the staff to meet the needs of all students through the close examination of instruction, curriculum and assessment.
- Collaboration is an integral part of the master schedule.
- Decisions will be made, whenever possible, in a democratic manner, based on the processes describe in the Hillsdale Constitution.
- All Seniors will defend a “portfolio” of work developed over the course of four years to a panel of judges that include teachers and students. Students must achieve a level of proficiency in content knowledge, critical thinking and communication in order to graduate from Hillsdale.
Hillsdale High School
Smaller Learning Community Model

UC/CSU Eligible

Jakarta House
- 130 Students
- 5 Advisories
- **CORE:** English
- Econ/US Gov’t

Out of House:
- Electives
- College Classes
- ROP
- AP Electives

Cusco/Timbuktu Houses
- 190 Students
- 7 Advisories
- **CORE:**
  - English
  - Econ/US Gov’t

On-track for UC/CSU Eligibility

Marrakech House
- 105-08 Students
- 4 Core Teachers
- 2 Year Loop
- **CORE:**
  - Science (Chem)
  - World History
  - English
  - Geom or Alg 3-4

Florence House
- 105-08 Students
- 4 Core Teachers
- 2 Year Loop
- **CORE:**
  - Science (Chem)
  - World History
  - English
  - Geom or Alg 3-4

Kyoto House
- 105-08 Students
- 4 Core Teachers
- 2 Year Loop
- **CORE:**
  - Science (Bio)
  - World History
  - English
  - Alg 1-2 or Geom

Resource Special Ed Students: Fully integrated into SLCs with an additional Directed Studies period
Special Day Class Students: Enrolled in self-contained classes and not integrated into this chart