



# Sonoma Valley High School

Dino Battaglini, Principal  
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**Dragons**

November 30, 2010

Dear Sonoma Valley High School Families,

I have enjoyed getting to know your children and our community as the new principal of Sonoma Valley High School. I am impressed by the potential and grateful for the collaborative spirit as we work together to steer our school into a new era of achievement. It has been a busy four months so I wanted to take this opportunity to update you about all the good news on campus.

With the help of an incredible group of teachers, staff, community, Teacher Support Network volunteers and the Sonoma Valley Education Foundation, we have a beautiful new website, full of helpful information. If you haven't already done so, please check it out at [www.sonomavalleyhigh.org](http://www.sonomavalleyhigh.org). You will also find tools to help you and your student plan for the future, including a College Handbook and Course Catalog, available online or in the school office.

One of the most exciting developments is the creation of our Sonoma Valley High Design Team, led by some of our standout teachers chosen by their peers, who has been tirelessly working on a comprehensive plan to improve our school. So far, we have agreed on our objective:

**Every Sonoma Valley High graduate will be college and career ready.**

The Design Team has worked with a team of experts from U.C. Berkeley's Department of Education, to determine the best strategies for achieving our objective. With input from teachers, students, parents and community leaders, we have selected these "education cornerstones" to guide our improvement efforts:

Authentic Curriculum  
Personalization  
Adaptive Pedagogy  
Collaboration, Planning and Professional Development  
High Standards and Performance-Based Assessments

These guiding strategies, explained in further detail on the attachment, will help us choose the tactics to begin successfully implementing our plan.

One effort will be to ensure all incoming freshmen are on the University of California/California State University "a-g" track while maintaining and expanding our quality elective programs. This track, further

explained on the attachment, includes fifteen classes in seven subject areas to be taken over the four years in order for a student to graduate prepared to continue on to college or to pursue career technical education. Beginning with next year's freshmen, every student will take "a-g" certified classes so that the Class of 2015 will graduate college and career ready. Recently adopted by several school districts committed to substantive improvement, the move to "a-g" track is a very important first step in our efforts to make Sonoma Valley High School the world class institution our children and our community deserve.

There is a great deal more work to be done. We welcome your help and support. We hope you will attend our upcoming Design Team Forums, starting soon, to provide your feedback on and contribute your ideas to the process. In the interim, if you have any questions, comments or concerns, my door is always open. I can be reached at (707) 933-4030 or by e-mail, [dbattaglini@sonomavly.k12.ca.us](mailto:dbattaglini@sonomavly.k12.ca.us), or come on by and see the great things that are happening for yourself!

Sincerely,

Dino Battaglini, Principal  
Sonoma Valley High School

### ***What is the SVHS Redesign?***

The objective of the redesign is to position Sonoma Valley High School for success in the 21<sup>st</sup> century by ensuring every graduate is college and career ready. The Design Team, a group of staff members from a variety of positions, experience and subject areas and chosen by their peers, is researching, analyzing, designing, recommending and guiding the implementation of a framework that will prepare all students for postsecondary success. With multiple opportunities for community review and commentary, the framework will reflect the commitment of the District and the community to the development of a world-class high school.

### ***What are “Education Cornerstones?”***

These are widely accepted and implemented strategies for improving education. The Design Team reviewed numerous strategies and chose these five as the most relevant and critical for bringing secondary education in Sonoma Valley to the next level:

Authentic Curriculum: Aspects of authentic curriculum include challenging work; project-based and student-demonstrated learning; coursework related to student’s own life and interests; and most importantly preparation for life, career and college.

Personalization: Hallmarks of personalization include meaningful, supportive, caring relationships between teachers and students; school schedules and structures enable teachers to know students well; student teamwork; and schedules, activities and curriculum that foster positive relationships.

Adaptive Pedagogy: Adaptive pedagogy, or teaching, focuses on student-centered learning; multiple educational strategies; student support to develop skills for engaging the curriculum; learning opportunities outside of class; and an active approach to teaching through demonstrating and modeling.

Collaborative, Planning and Professional Development: This teacher-centered strategy encourages teachers to collaborate on student development; to design and lead their professional development; and to meet and plan together across departments and grades.

High Standards and Performance-Based Assessments: This strategy clarifies expectations and improves transparency through consistent requirements, habits and skills across all classes; clearly communicated standards of knowledge and skills for all students; multiple opportunities to demonstrate learning and progress; and project-based learning and performance based assessment aligned to standards.

### ***What is the University of California/California State University “a-g” track?***

California has the leading public school system for higher education in the world, comprised of 112 Community Colleges (i.e. Santa Rosa Junior College, Napa City College), 23 California State University campuses (i.e. Sonoma State University, San Francisco State University) and 10 University of California campuses (i.e. U.C. Berkeley, U.C. Davis). The California State Universities (CSU) and University of California (UC) established a

minimum list of classes a high school student must complete with a grade of “C” or better in order to be prepared for continuing their education on a UC or CSU campus:

- a. History** – 2 years required
- b. English** – 4 years required
- c. Mathematics** – 3 years required, 4 years recommended
- d. Laboratory Science** – 2 years required, 3 years recommended (one biological; one physical required)
- e. Foreign Language** – 2 years required, 3 years recommended (same language required)
- f. Visual and Performing Arts** – 1 year required (same subject area)
- g. College Preparatory Elective** – 1 year required

Many California high schools interested in improving the quality of education have adopted these standards as a minimum graduation requirement. Beginning with next year’s freshmen class, the class of 2015 and onward, I will ask the Sonoma Valley School Board to adopt these requirements in order to graduate and receive a high school diploma. More information can be found at <http://www.edtrust.org/west/our-work/college-and-career-for-all>

### ***How will students benefit from the redesign?***

The redesign benefits every student as it elevates the structure and organization of learning at SVHS to support an optimal and personalized 21<sup>st</sup> century education. The redesign will promote even greater levels of individual and collective achievement, which then strengthens the regard for a SVHS graduates’ academic profile.

### ***What kind of changes can my student anticipate at the high school?***

The Design Team will be looking at everything, including schedules and classes, in order to determine the best way to reach our objective of graduating every student college and career ready. In the future, there may be more opportunities to take a greater breadth of subjects and some classes may be redesigned to align with “a-g Requirements” and the expectations of contemporary education. It is too early to know specific changes. The Design Team will first develop recommendations and then the Design Forums will be held to gather public input. Can't wait to share your ideas? Please email Dino Battaglini at [dbattaglini@sonomavly.k12.ca.us](mailto:dbattaglini@sonomavly.k12.ca.us)

### ***If my student graduates before 2015, can he/she also be on the “a-g” track?***

Absolutely! Students who are graduating before 2015 can also be on the “a-g” track, when they choose “a-g” approved courses and fulfill the above requirements.

### ***Where can I find the dates, times and locations of the Design Forums?***

Design Forums will be held in early 2011. Visit the SVHS website where details will be posted: [www.sonomavalleyhigh.org](http://www.sonomavalleyhigh.org) Details will also be e-mailed in the SVHS daily bulletin; to subscribe e-mail Sherry Anderson, [sanderson@sonomavly.k12.ca.us](mailto:sanderson@sonomavly.k12.ca.us). We invite and encourage everyone to attend.