



## **Frequently Asked Questions about Samohi's Project Based Learning (PBL) Pathway**

### **What are the key beliefs of PBL Pathway?**

We believe that through building relationships, our students become creative and persistent problem solvers. It is our vision that all students live lives of their own design, supported by caring mentors and have equitable opportunities to achieve their greatest potential. Relationships matter most in learning, in and out of school. Student voice and choice have to be honored. We support our students so they succeed academically and thrive emotionally. We believe a rigorous education is about learning to ask the right questions. We want our students to apply their classroom learning to their world and have a social impact. Our motto is do.learn.thrive

### **Why PBL Pathway?**

- Cultivates future ready skills for all students
- Improves student and teacher engagement
- Closes the achievement and opportunity gap  
(As indicated by data around literacy and math state testing scores, dual enrollment in college courses while in high school, two and four year college acceptance rates, rates of finding financially secure meaningful work, healthy student-adult mentoring relationships, and level of civic engagement)

### **Where is this located and how many students can be there?**

- PBL Pathway is a Santa Monica High School program, located on the renovated and renamed Michelle and Barack Obama Center for Inquiry and Exploration at Lincoln and Ocean Park. PBL Pathway students spend 4 periods a day at the Obama Center and 2 periods a day at the Samohi Pico campus. The Obama Center campus is shared by Olympic High School, Samohi's Off Campus Learning Center, Independent Study, adult school and PBL Pathway.
- PBL Pathway can enroll up to 100 students per grade level.

### **What is the calendar and start and end of school day times?**

PBL Pathway follows the SMMUSD Samohi calendar and daily start and end times. The instructional minutes between those start and end times each day are used creatively to allow for cross-curricular project blocks, advisory time, and Learning Through Interest projects.

### **What is Learning Through Interest (LTI) and Advisory?**

Learning Through Interests is a 10th and 11th grade course during a 4 hour block for all PBL Pathway students. Students create independent projects based on their curiosity. They are mentored by their teacher advisor as well as a community expert as they complete authentic

projects to gain experience and exposure to how their interests intersect with academic knowledge and different career options. Students who demonstrate readiness work with those mentors at an off campus internship at the mentor's work location.

Advisory is scheduled 3 times weekly for all 9th - 12th graders. This is where community building curriculum such as Restorative Circles occur as well as executive functioning skills lessons, college and career advising, peer tutoring, and 1:1 teacher advisor check ins with advisees.

### **What does a typical week look like?**

Link to 9th/10th grade sample schedule

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1GWF6UK9aZMWdT4DyN8zMsEd05-5CPAiw/view>

Link to 11th/12th grade sample schedule

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1\\_PBqe3Ccp6PNBO8SSw2keTqXWDEiccPu/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1_PBqe3Ccp6PNBO8SSw2keTqXWDEiccPu/view)

### **What visual and performing arts (VAPA) electives and World Language courses are available?**

9th and 10th grade PBL Pathway students interested in auditioning for/enrolling in the 5th/6th period VAPA classes at Samohi's Pico campus may do so for a VAPA elective course.

11th and 12th grade PBL Pathway students interested in auditioning for/enrolling in the 1st/2nd period VAPA classes at Samohi's Pico campus may do so for a VAPA elective course.

PBL Pathway students take world languages as an elective on the Pico campus, at Santa Monica College or other Samohi approved language providers pending space and approval

### **What if a student wants to play a sport?**

Students may try out for any of the sports offered on Samohi's Pico campus. These occur 6th period and after school. PBL students who receive spots on teams travel to the main campus for this opportunity. When there are school day athletic competitions or special events, PBL students are excused from their regular classes to attend just as the athletes on Samohi's Pico campus do.

### **Will a graduate of this PBL pathway be college ready?**

Core courses will meet A-G approval and the expectation is that students are exposed to curriculum that would allow them to demonstrate mastery on standardized tests (CAASPP, SAT, ACT)

Taking college level courses through Dual and Concurrent Enrollment happens substantially in 11th/12th grade due to on/off campus mobility. According to a 2014-15 Innovation Unit study of public personalized PBL schools in 14 states, 78% of students in these types of schools take college courses while in high school.

There are no AP courses offered through the PBL pathway. The interdisciplinary projects do require advanced work and deep learning. Students are taking courses through SMC which do provide college credit.

### **What if a student wants to transfer into PBL or out of PBL?**

Students may transfer in via the lottery process.  
Students may transfer out at the end of a school year.

### **Can students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) attend?**

Yes if the student's IEP includes goals and services can be provided through the general education setting with a part time push in model of Specialized Academic Instructor support (SAI).

We do not have full time special educator-general educator collaborative courses.  
We do not have SAI content courses.

If the IEP team determines a specialized program placement (Positive Behavior Support Program, Structured Therapeutic Education Program, Life Skills...) then the student attends that program on the site where it is located, not PBL Pathway.

The PBL program is designed to serve students of a variety of abilities, interests, aspirations, and socio-economic backgrounds. Because of the individualized approach, this model can successfully meet the needs of many students, from the most vulnerable to the highest achieving.

### **What mental health counseling will be available?**

SMMUSD partners with several mental health providers (Family Services of Santa Monica, YRT, SEWI) who provide small group and individual counseling sessions.

### **What college and career counseling will be provided?**

ADVISORY: ~25 students meet with one teacher advisor 3 times per week. Personality inventories, interest surveys, resume building, interview skills, application essay writing, standardized test prep and reviews of college options take place over four years. A college counselor consults with each advisory.

DUAL AND CONCURRENT ENROLLMENT: PBL students are taking college courses while enrolled in high school.

LEARNING THROUGH INTERESTS and INTERNSHIPS: These are key components of college and career exploration and readiness.

### **How does a student apply?**

Must be a current SMMUSD student or a student/family that can establish residency within the SMMUSD attendance boundaries

- Seek to enroll 100 students per grade level
- Seek to ensure a minimum of 26% SED and/or EL and/or students with IEPs
- Seek to have a balanced representation from our middle school programs, LMS, JAMS, SMASH and MMS
- Provide an opportunity for resident students not currently attending SMMUSD schools

access to the program

- The Project Based Learning Application can be found at [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdQe6VVDiIGXJAKUINCadpi6N4\\_TfTtdLw1cqJLbUQXD8gzaw/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdQe6VVDiIGXJAKUINCadpi6N4_TfTtdLw1cqJLbUQXD8gzaw/viewform)
- Applications must be date stamped by March 11, 2022 3 p.m.
- Admission and waitlist emails sent in April 2022.

### **How does an interested family attend a virtual information session?**

Register at the links below:

2/9/2022 – 6-7:30pm

<https://bit.ly/PBL020922info>

2/23/2022 – 6- 7:30pm

<https://bit.ly/PBL022322>

3/9/2022 – 6 – 7:30pm

<https://bit.ly/PBL0309info>

Questions? Please contact:

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