



Welcome Back Conquistadors!

We have worked hard this summer to make sure the 2018-2019 school year is going to be one of the bests! With that in mind, I want to bring you up to speed on some of the changes we've put in place to better serve the students and families of Serra.

We at Serra High School have developed and have started working on what we call the five in five. Five instructional goals in five years. This year we will continue to focus on engagement in the classroom. How do we measure that? We measure it with data. Are our students engaged and focused and are they being successful? This leads us into our goal this year, **data, data, data!** What does the data tell us? One thing the data tells us is that we have a lot work to do. Some of that work is going to require change. We cannot make this school better than what it has been and what it is, without embracing change. Change can be hard for some, but your children deserve better, and together, with a growth mindset, we will achieve that.

First, we set up a week long freshman bridge program right before school. This program allowed freshman to meet others, engage with staff early, get to know Serra, and even have some academics thrown in. This is in effort to make the transition to high school much more personal and ease some of those day one fears.

Second, the counseling office will be closed the first week of school. When it comes to opening a school, there are a lot of moving parts. I need to know that every student is in every class they are supposed to be in, and I also need to know that our new students are starting their time at Serra strong. With that being said, I'm going to need all hands on deck focusing on this work in the first week. You child received a preview card, changes were allowed and made until 2 days before school. Unless you child has a "gross" error (ex. two math courses that are the same). We do not change teachers, we do not lower the level courses the first week of school.

Third, we have reorganized our front office and staff in order to streamline things. Getting every child on that graduation stage is a top priority. In order to do that every student deserves personal attention and very stringent data tracking and intervention if/when needed. Here comes some of that "change" I was talking about. I believe that strong relationships are the key to health, happiness, and academic success of our students. But relationships take time to cultivate. We have to invest our time, into getting to know our students. Their strengths, the areas they need to grow in academically and/or personally, etc. Our front office staff will commit to our students for four years to better understand who they are, and how they will best thrive.

The office is now organized in "class of" rather than alphabetically. What does this mean? This means that your child will benefit from consistent mentorship and support. The new structure is outlined below.

Class of 2019: Your counselor is Traci Shenault, she will work with the Class of 2019 Dean which is Jonn Pisapia. Mr. Pisapia will work with our new Vice Principal, Nick Willis. These three people will meet on a consistent basis in order to monitor children for success and report to me regularly. They are responsible

for meeting with senior teachers and using data on assessments, grades, citizenship etc so we can better support each child.

Class of 2020: Your counselor is Elva Mora, she will work with the Class of 2020 Dean which is Jonn Pisapia and he will work with our new Vice Principal Nick Willis. These three people will meet on a consistent basis in order to monitor children for success and report to me regularly. They are responsible for meeting with junior teachers and using data on assessments, grades, citizenship etc so we can better support each child.

Class of 2021: Your counselor is Claire Bobis, she will work with the Class of 2021 Dean which is Joe Schmidt and he will work with our VP, Elizabeth Ward. These three people will meet on a consistent basis in order to monitor children for success and report to me regularly. They are responsible for meeting with sophomore teachers and using data on assessments, grades, citizenship etc so we can better support each child.

Class of 2022: Your counselor is Margarita Perez-Ibarra, she will work with the Class of 2022 Dean which is Joe Schmidt and he will work with our VP, Elizabeth Ward. These three people will meet on a consistent basis in order to monitor children for success and report to me regularly. They are responsible for meeting with freshman teachers and using data on assessments, grades, citizenship etc so we can better support each child.

Frequently Asked Questions about this model (FAQ's)

1. Why this change, it was fine before?

While it appeared it was working, data shows it was not. Teachers, counselors, VPs, all need to take a very in depth look at the students they are serving. Any child left off the stage four years later is a failure for Serra High. Teachers need to be held accountable to their data. This starts now and I will be working all year to support our teachers in getting comfortable with me reviewing their data in the data teams listed through the above structure.

2. So, does this mean I will have a different counselor, dean and VP each year?

NO! Your team will follow you for ALL four years! My counselors will now be responsible for a set group and class of children rather than trying to do everything for every child freshman-senior. This will allow my staff to focus on the same group for four years. So the group serving this year's senior class will then service freshman next year and so forth.

3. What are data teams?

*Last year I would block out 2 weeks on my calendar to do almost nothing but meet with teachers about data. While this is worthwhile for me, it only informed me. Everyone needs to take responsibility: teacher, counselor, dean, VP. The only way to do that is in data teams/class of teams. **Grades will now be posted every three weeks by student ID so grades will always be updated.** Teams will input assessments in a data base for the office to look at, then your team (including teachers) will meet as a team in order to take a personal, academic, social emotional look at your child. You as a parent will also be able to talk with your team instead of individuals (too many people for you, and you are too busy!). Then these teams will be reporting to me on a 3 week basis.*

4. How can I be part of this as a parent?

*You are always welcome to come visit your child's class. In addition, we have Principal's Coffee where you get personal access to myself, a VP, and a counselor in addition to data review of where we are at on our journey. Dates are on the Serra calendar but the first one is **September 28th, 2018 at 7:30 AM**: coffee and light breakfast provided.*

5. I have a problem. Who do I go to?

Here is the "chain of command":

- 1. Grade issue:** *I can't tell you why your child got a grade and neither can my counselors. The best advice is to go straight to your child's teachers.*
- 2. Problem in the class that involves students:** *Again, it's best to start with your child's teacher. We can't tell you what happened or why etc. Call, e-mail, or set a conference with the teacher.*
- 3. Problem that escalated to the office (disciplinary issue):** *please call your child's dean of students.*
- 4. Social emotional issue/ scheduling/programs:** *This is where the counselors come in. They are here for you.*
- 5. Teacher issue:** *First set a conference with the teacher, once that happens and you are not satisfied please set an appointment with your child's VP. **My VP will not meet with you unless you have attempted to meet with the teacher first** (remember we are not in your child's class all day everyday! If you have a concern set an appointment to get your concerns worked out with the person who needs to rectify it. If you are unhappy after that, contact your child's VP. Through experience we know that going to the teacher first, will expedite results.*

There is no length that I as principal will go to to make your child's experience the best it can be! Don't hesitate to reach out.

Again our first Principal coffee of the year is **September 28th, 2018 at 7:30 AM!!!! In the Media Center!**

Thank you so much! I am beyond excited for this year!

Dr. Erica Renfree