

# Smaller Learning Communities at Clear Brook

## What are smaller learning communities?

SLCs are smaller, personalized school settings where students get individual attention from involved, motivated staff. SLCs create a positive climate where each student is expected to excel and receives the help and encouragement to do so. To support this environment, we are moving toward a more rigorous and relevant curriculum for all students.

## Why are many schools organizing themselves into smaller learning communities?

In large high schools such as Brook (almost 3000 students), it is difficult for teachers to know every student, and students often find themselves lost in the system. If they are struggling, students may decide it is easier to leave school than continue on, especially if it seems there are no adults who care. As educators, we are looking for ways to focus each student's insatiable curiosity and open-mindedness as we build a system that respects their diversity, personality, and learning style. Fostering strengths and potential will make the initiative strong.

## What are the SLCs at Brook?

- School of Business and Applied Technologies**
- School of Communication and Public Services**
- School of Engineering, Agriculture, and Technology**
- School of Medical and Health Sciences**
- School of Visual and Performing Arts**

## What is Clear Brook doing to help students in SLCs?

- Developing rigorous and relevant curricula for all students
- Implementing comprehensive strategies and interventions to assist students who enter high school with reading or math skills that are significantly below grade level
- Providing extension and enrichment for AP students
- Providing professional development for school staff in the teaching methods that would be used in the smaller learning community
- Developing and implementing strategies to include parents, business representatives, community-based organizations, and other community members in the activities of the smaller learning communities

## Why did teachers change rooms?

Teachers have moved classrooms to be closer to their SLC; thus, they are located near teachers of different subjects within the specific school. Teachers continue to meet with their departments as well as with their school. They are able to work together with teachers of other subject matters and are able to communicate more easily with their shared students. Students will usually see their teachers and their SLC students more frequently because their classes are in close proximity.

## What is an advisory?

An advisory is a small, structured academic setting designed to personalize the learning experience for each student. The make-up of an advisory class is approximately 25 students who meet with one teacher (advisor) at least once a week. The purpose of the advisory class is to allow students and teachers to work together. As they develop a working relationship, a group spirit will be built and benefit the students, SLC, school, and community. A family atmosphere will provide a safe place for students to perfect decision-making skills, practice life skills, and develop personal learning and future plans. The advisory teacher acts as a mentor to the student.

## **How do the counselors and principals fit into each school?**

Principals and Counselors are an important part of each SLC. At Clear Brook, both principals and counselors are assigned to the SLC according to their interest and expertise. Each SLC has an Assistant Principal and a Counselor.

## **What are the three R's of SLCs? --- Rigor, Relevance and Relationships**

A **rigorous** curriculum raises the bar for all students requiring them to perform at a higher level. The high school curriculum is mandated by the Texas Education Agency (TEA). The Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) provide the foundation for district curricula.

A **relevant** method of teaching is one where teachers continuously integrate the interest areas of the SLC in to the curriculum. Integrated curriculum and differentiated instruction are key components as we move forward in each SLC.

**Relationships** and personalization are drivers of the smaller learning communities. A personalized and comprehensive advisory program is being revamped by an advisory committee this spring. The advisory classes are designed to encourage students to connect to their school, teachers, and friends. The advisor is an additional advocate for each student. Parents and students should be able to readily find the information they require through this additional support avenue.

**When will SLCs being fully implemented at Brook?** *It takes 5 to 7 years to fully implement  
Please be patient with us as we evolve!*

## **How can I help Smaller Learning Communities?**

- \* Volunteer to help with all aspects of your student's Smaller Learning Community.
- \* Donate your time or business resources
- \* Become a guest speaker in your SLC
- \* Teach a job skill in your SLC
- \* Help plan or implement an activity for your SLC
- \* Tutor in areas of your specialty

Questions, Comments, Suggestions, or to Volunteer please email the Campus Leader for Smaller Learning Communities at Clear Brook: [sfinley@ccisd.net](mailto:sfinley@ccisd.net)