



**HILLSBORO**  
SCHOOL DISTRICT



**HILLSBORO**  
**BIG**  
**PICTURE**

*Individualized education  
for lifelong learning*

**PROGRAM  
DETAILS**

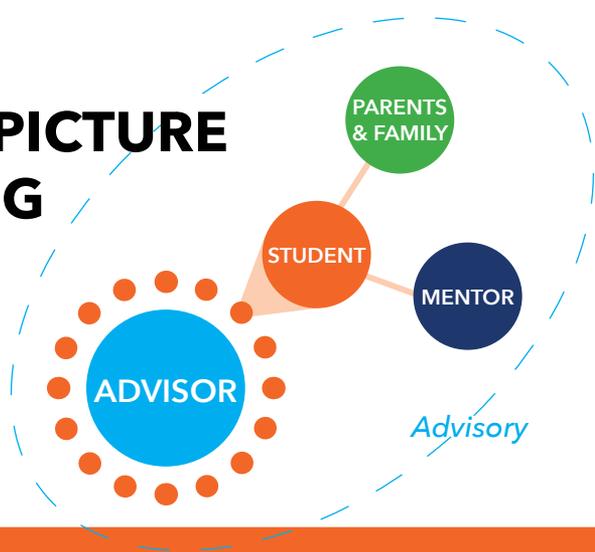


At Hillsboro Big Picture, learning is centered around **YOU**, the student. You are challenged to pursue your interests, and work closely with your support system—advisor, parents and families, and mentors—to personalize and be involved in your education.

**DREAM BIG** and be ambitious:

- Take ownership of your learning, rather than waiting for others to tell you what to do.
- Be prepared for meaningful work you are passionate about.
- Be an active and responsible participant in your community learning experiences.
- Use your Big Picture learning to prepare to be successful after high school and in life.

# THE BIG PICTURE LEARNING DESIGN



You will be part of a small learning community of 15-18 students called an advisory. Each advisory is supported and led by an advisor, who is a teacher that works closely and forms personalized relationships with the group.

You will partner with your advisor to identify your interests and personalize your learning. Being at the center of your learning, you will be challenged and engaged with authentic and relevant experiences.

You will be in an internship where you will work closely with a mentor, learning in a real-world setting.

Your parents and families will be actively involved in helping to shape your learning plan. They are valued as integral resources to the school community.

The result is a student-centered learning design, where you are actively invested in your learning and challenged to pursue your interests as you are supported by a community of educators, mentors, and family members.



# DISTINGUISHERS

## ONE STUDENT AT A TIME

The entire learning experience is personalized to each student's interests, talents and needs. Personalization expands beyond mere academic work and involves looking at each student holistically.

## ADVISORY STRUCTURE

Advisory is the core organizational and relational structure of a Big Picture Learning school, often described as a "second family" to students. Students stay with their advisor and a group of classmates for four years, enabling close personal relationships that last a lifetime.

## LTI's

Learning through interests and internships, or LTI's, enables students to intersect their interests with the real world and gain experience. Big Picture students intern—often twice a week for an entire school day—with experts in their field of interest, and complete authentic projects.

## PARENT/FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Parents are valued members of the school community and play a proactive role in collaborating in the planning and assessment of student work. They use their assets to support the work of the school, often helping to build relationships with potential LTI mentors.

## SCHOOL CULTURE

In Big Picture schools, trust, respect and equality are evidenced by the ease of interactions between and among students and adults. Students take leadership roles in the school, and teamwork defines the adult culture. Student voice is valued in the school decision-making process.

## What makes Big Picture Learning unique?

Big Picture Learning schools exist throughout the country and the world. They are in rural environments and urban environments. They serve both large and small populations of students. Some Big Picture schools exist in gleaming new buildings, while some can be found in retrofitted structures that haven't been used for some time.

In short, Big Picture schools—like the students they serve—often look dramatically different from one another. Each is its own unique environment where students can flourish as individuals within a community of learners.

However, there are many elements within the Big Picture learning design that are uncommon and distinct, which pull Big Picture schools together and distinguish them from most other schools.

### **AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT**

Students are assessed not by tests, but by public displays of learning that track growth and progress. Assessment criteria are individualized to the student and the real-world standards of a project. Students discuss learning growth with staff, parents, peers, and mentors.

### **SCHOOL ORGANIZATION**

Schools are organized around a culture of collaboration and communication. They are not bound by the structures of buildings, schedules, bells, or calendars. There is an interdependence between school and community.

### **LEADERSHIP**

Leadership is shared and spread between a strong, visionary principal; a dedicated, responsible team of advisors and other staff; and the students. The community functions as a democracy. A pervasive sense of shared ownership drives a positive culture dedicated to ongoing improvement.

### **POSTSECONDARY PLANNING**

Students develop plans that contribute to their future success, whether it is through college, trade schools, travel, the military, or the workforce.

### **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Regular advisor professional development is conducted at each school by principals, other staff, and Big Picture Learning staff and coaches. A Big Picture school is a community of lifelong learners who embrace continuous improvement.

# BIG PICTURE

- *How is a Big Picture school different from regular high schools?*
- *What is expected of me?*
- *What happens during my first year?*



## Differences between regular high schools and a Big Picture school:

### REGULAR SCHOOL

#### *Top-Down Teaching*

Larger class size with teacher as center, students as audience

Curriculum taught from textbooks and online materials

Teaches entire class as a single group

High schools average over 1,500 students

Parents only occasionally involved

Nearly all teaching happens in the classroom

On-time graduation rate:  
74.7% nationwide  
80.42% HSD (class of 2015)

### BIG PICTURE SCHOOL

#### *Student-Centered Learning*

Small class size run by advisor-student-parent-mentor team

Curriculum always relevant to the real world

Teaches one student at a time

Small school learning environments

Parents an integral part of the teaching

Students go into the real world to pursue projects

On-time graduation rate:  
87% across all Big Picture schools



*photo by Travis Loose, Hillsboro Tribune*

## **As a first-year student, you are expected to:**

- Follow your interests in the real world (informational interviews, shadow days, LTIs).
- Obtain an LTI during the first semester.
- Have a positive impact on the community (service learning, etc.)
- Meet with your full Learning Plan Team at least four times a year.
- Reflect on gaps in your learning and address them through project work.
- Create at least four learning plans during the year.
- Complete the work in your learning plans.
- Build a portfolio of your work online. Save hard copies of your work in your working portfolio and your portfolio box.
- Exhibit your work publicly four times a year.
- Write in your journal three times a week.
- Schedule your supercalendar every week.
- Come to school each day on time.
- Be responsible for your location and actions.
- Show respect for others and yourself.
- Take responsibility for the learning process.
- Take advantage of opportunities and make summer plans.
- Take part in mediations if conflicts arise.
- Prepare for any required state assessments.



# BIG PICTURE

# FAQS

## TERMINOLOGY

**Advisory**—Starting freshman year, students are put into an advisory group that they will stay with until graduation. Advisories are led by advisors (teachers) who coach and guide students through their individual learning and internships.

**Learning Plan (LP)**—Students work with their advisor to create their own individual learning plan that includes independent projects, internships and competencies they want to master. These are fluid documents that will be presented at least twice a year in exhibitions and transcribed into credits at the end of the school year.

**Exhibitions**—Twice a year, students present their progress on their LPs in front of their advisor, parents and other students in order to determine whether they have met their criteria and goals.

**Learning Cycle**—The time between exhibitions (similar to terms).

**Learning Through Internships (LTIs)**—One of Hillsboro Big Picture’s main goals is for our students to experience the world inside and outside the classroom in authentic work environments, and in the company of influential adults. Our hope is that, by the time our students graduate, each of them will have explored areas of interest and experienced life in the “real world” in order for them to become the adults they imagine being.

**Mentor**—The business professional partnered with the student at the LTI site.



## BY THE NUMBERS

### Postsecondary preparation

**78%** of students take college courses in high school

**>95%** of students are accepted into 2- or 4-year colleges

**74%** of graduates enrolled in college within the first year of graduating from high school

### Meaningful work

**88%** of those not in college are in a full-time job or career position

**74%** of those who are working and not in school report securing their job through a contact from their high school internship

*Source: BigPicture.org 2014-15*

## Q&A

### ■ What happens in advisory?

Advisory is the heart and soul of the school and is often described as the “home” and “second family” by students. It is the core organizational and relational structure of Big Picture and comprises about 15 students plus an advisor that stay together through all four years of high school. This is where students have the time and support to develop and complete work on their internship project, work on their autobiographies, learn about and prepare for college and other post-high school options, and develop academic skills like writing, reading, critical thinking, quantitative reasoning, etc.

### ■ When and where do advisories meet?

Advisories meet each Monday, Wednesday and Friday to engage in a variety of group and independent work related to students’ individual learning plans. This work is based in the advisory room, but students may work with different staff throughout the day.

■ **Why don't you have classes? The schedule seems flexible or "loose." How does this support learning?**

Each student at Hillsboro Big Picture has a unique learning plan, so each student's day may look a little different, and flexible scheduling is needed for this. The openness of our schedule helps us personalize instruction and meet the needs of each student. Also, one of the biggest challenges facing college students (and adults) is how to manage projects and structure time to efficiently meet their goals. Rather than structuring a student's entire day and taking that responsibility away from them, we give students extensive leeway during independent work time, and then coach them on how to manage their time well. This can be a very difficult lesson to learn; we believe it is an essential one for future success.

■ **How is an advisor different from a teacher?**

The advisor's role is not only to teach, but to facilitate the overall learning plan of each student. To do this, the advisor works to know each student and his or her family well (including home visits and one-on-one meetings with each student), and to establish trusting relationships. Though certified in one area, the advisor does not "teach" his or her subject area; rather, the advisor draws upon many disciplines to meet the needs of each student, their projects, and the advisory activities.

■ **Why internships, and how do they work?**

We believe some of the most powerful learning takes place in one-on-one relationships and when people are doing something that interests them. We also believe that when students work among adults and develop projects of real value in those work places, they see the relevance of their learning and aspire to higher-quality work.

To start, we will work with our students to help them identify what they are passionate about. Then, we help them contact adults who share their interests. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, our students are calling and emailing to set up informational interviews where they travel to businesses and other workplaces to talk with people about what they do. Through these interviews, students experience different work settings and often discover new interests. They also learn how to schedule their time, how to get to places, and how to present themselves professionally. We encourage students to do as many of these as possible.

Students write thank-you notes after informational interviews and, if interested, they follow up and request to do a shadow day with the person at their workplace. A shadow day involves spending half or all of the workday learning more about what it's like to work there. Students will often do shadow days at many different places as they explore different interests.

If the shadow day is a success for the student and the host, the LTI coordinator and advisor talk with the host about the possibility of an internship. If agreed, the internship set-up meeting is scheduled with the advisor, student and the new mentor. Once an internship is established, the student often reports directly to the internship site on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Soon after the internship begins, the team of student, mentor and advisor meet again to develop an internship project. Ideal projects challenge students to develop new skills and add value to the host site by providing a needed service.

■ **How long do internships last?**

We hope internships will last as long as it takes to complete a meaningful project with the mentor. Internship timelines can range from less than one learning cycle to all four years of high school. The length of time depends on the student’s interests and on the student-mentor relationship.

■ **Will AP or IB classes be offered at HBP?**

Hillsboro Big Picture will not offer AP or IB classes. However, if a student would like to work toward college credits, our schedule allows for the flexibility necessary for them to do so during the day (the student must provide their own transportation, if needed).

■ **What will postsecondary support and planning look like at HBP?**

We work to make postsecondary education an opportunity for each student because we believe they deserve options in life. Advisors, staff and school leaders plan backwards to maximize these opportunities: they develop challenging individual learning plans; take students on college visits; educate families about the postsecondary planning process; and build relationships with local colleges. No matter what their chosen course, we require all students to develop postsecondary plans that contribute to the future success of the student—be it through college, a professional internship, travel, trade school, the military or the workforce.

■ **Will students still be required to test in this model?**

Students will still be required to demonstrate mastery on their state-level assessments (in addition to other graduation requirements) in order to graduate.

■ **How do students earn credits at HBP?**

Students demonstrate mastery of five Big Picture learning areas. This is done through their individual learning plans and later translated into credits to be put toward graduation requirements.

■ **What is staying the same at Miller?**

We still serve free breakfast and lunch, offer a free on-site nursery for teen parents, provide busing to and from school, and start at 8:45 a.m. and end at 3:15 p.m. What will change is the original alternative model at Miller West; this will be phased out as senior classes graduate at each successive school year.

■ **How do I apply to be at HBP next year?**

Both the student and their parent(s)/guardian(s) need to complete the paper application and mail, email or drop it off at Miller.

Miller Education Center  
Attn: Counselor  
440 SE Oak Street  
Hillsboro, OR 97123

Email: [omarag@hsd.k12.or.us](mailto:omarag@hsd.k12.or.us)  
<http://schools.hsd.k12.or.us/mec>



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## **Miller Education Center**

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