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# Appendix B:

## Herbert Hoover High School Case Study

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## Leveraging the Schedule to Increase Access to Challenging Coursework: Herbert Hoover High School

### Summary

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**CHALLENGE** In academic year 2014-2015, over half of the student population at Herbert Hoover High School did not meet UC A-G college entrance requirements and few students were enrolled in AP.

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**STRATEGIC APPROACH TO SCHEDULING** Leaders at Hoover decided to change their approach to scheduling – dividing students into smaller academies, eliminating tracking in mathematics, and expanding criteria for enrolling in AP courses – in order to increase students’ access to rigorous coursework and the supports needed to thrive academically.

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**OUTCOMES** Students at Hoover now experience expanded access to coursework that meets A–G requirements. 75 percent of Hoover’s students met A–G requirements in academic year 2018–2019. In addition, AP enrollment nearly tripled at Hoover there is proportionate participation in AP based on students’ race or ethnicity.

### School Profile

#### Herbert Hoover High School in San Diego, California

|       |                                  |
|-------|----------------------------------|
| 2,719 | Students                         |
| 92.4% | Socioeconomically Disadvantaged* |
| 21.6% | English Language Learners        |
| 9.9%  | Students with disabilities       |
| 76.7% | Latino                           |
| 11.8% | Asian                            |
| 7.3%  | Black                            |
| 1.3%  | White                            |

\*“Students who are eligible for free or reduced- priced meals or who have parents or guardians who did not receive a high school diploma.”

Source: California School Dashboard

## INTRODUCTION

### A–G Requirements

In California, A–G college entrance requirements refer to the sequence of high school courses that students must complete (earning a grade of C or better) to be eligible for admission to the University of California and California State

When Vice Principal Diane Conti first arrived at Herbert Hoover High School, the master scheduling process looked a lot different from now. It was a “scramble,” Conti said. Teachers weren’t involved, structures and processes to support the counseling team were lacking, and students wouldn’t have their schedules for weeks after school began. Conti recalled what the first few days of school looked like then:

There was about two to four weeks at the start of the school year...where students and teachers didn’t have schedules. The scheduling wasn’t even done when school started... Some kids were in the gym, some kids were in the cafeteria, and some kids weren’t in classes for a whole month. When you know what you know about students coming in and only 30 percent of them are reading at grade level, that’s an incredible waste of time. There was not a plan and not a strategy.<sup>119</sup>

Conti, in partnership with Principal Jason Babineau, set out to address some of Hoover High’s most persistent challenges, including chronic absenteeism and low graduation rates, by using the schedule more strategically. “There was only room to grow,” Conti said, “We were really excited to take part in that work with the teachers and students and families.”

And grow they did. From 2014 to 2017, Hoover High made several changes to scheduling that contributed to improved graduation rates, decreased chronic absenteeism, and expanded access to rich and rigorous coursework, including college acceleration courses.

## COMMITMENT TO EQUITY

### Uncovering disparities in access and outcomes at the district-level

Years earlier at the San Diego Unified School District Central Office (Education Center), Cheryl Hibbeln began developing what became a district-wide approach to more supported, coordinated, and equity-focused master scheduling. Asked to support the district in revising its high school graduation requirements to align with A–G requirements, Hibbeln relied on a tool she’d used while principal at Kearny Senior High School: transcript audits. As a principal, Hibbeln printed and reviewed student transcripts every quarter to “align structure to instructional efforts” and to help answer the question, “are our actions matching our mission?” At the central office she sought to answer the same question, this time for thousands more students.

That first year she conducted audits entirely by hand with the help of five other people. Together, they uncovered how scheduling practices limited students’ access and opportunity, specifically:

- Access gaps existed between students who met A–G requirements and those who did not.
- Students were not always well supported in selecting courses, which led to enrollment disparities in college acceleration courses like advanced placement.

## DATA AND TOOLS

### Using tools and data to uncover and address disparities at Hoover

Data and tools play a key role in Hoover’s approach to master scheduling. Just as Hibbeln did for the district, Conti and Babineau regularly review audit data. With the help of Abl Master Scheduler, scheduling software that works on top of the student information system (SIS) to provide increased usability, functionality, and access to data, Conti is able to spot scheduling inequities and work to address them. For example, using Abl, Conti is able to see where there are significant differences between the school’s demographics and the demographics of students enrolled in a particular course or assigned a particular teacher. She and her team can then share this data with teachers and engage in conversations about addressing the disparities. Seeing the data makes it clear to everyone why change is needed and helps create buy-in. Conti explained: “When the teachers see that one teacher during the day or two teachers during the day have an all-female class, it doesn’t take long to convince them

that it should be a little different.” These conversations extend beyond gender to race and language status, giving Hoover’s staff a more complete picture of the effect scheduling has on marginalized students and proactively putting them in a position to improve.

In addition, Conti and her team also use tools provided by the district which set timelines and expectations for the scheduling process. These include:

- **Master Schedule Expectations:** Using the data from the equity audit, the district distributed a document for middle and high schools to guide schools in building their master schedules. These included particular ways of scheduling English Language Learners (ELLs) and organizing teacher preparation periods.
- **Master Schedule Placemat:** Another tool that emerged was a placemat or time line that integrated the master scheduling process with budget and staffing time lines to integrate these strategic processes.
- **Mindset and Online Student Profile System:** These tools helped Hibbeln and others to more rapidly and efficiently access and analyze schedule data. Instead of taking days to complete, transcript audits could be accomplished in minutes.

### **Scheduling to increase access and opportunity**

#### **DESIGN**

At Hoover High, Conti and Babineau built on the work that Hibbeln and others had started and strove to reduce disparities in student access and outcomes by taking a more strategic approach to master scheduling. Adding to the efforts already underway to increase the number of students who met A–G requirements, leaders at Hoover made four additional changes to the schedule to improve students access and opportunity to learning and overall readiness for postsecondary plans.

#### **Converted to a wall-to-wall academy model**

One significant change was the decision to move to a wall-to-wall academy model. Says Conti, “Wall-to-wall academy was major.” The shift allowed for Hoover to schedule students in smaller, more consistent, yet heterogeneous groups to foster a sense of familiarity and consistency: “Students were one in 500 instead of one in 2,200. They had repeat teachers...and knew all the teachers in their academy...They could predict what class would be like, and they had a routine and friends they traveled with throughout the day.” The wall-to-wall academy also allowed Hoover to ensure more demographically balanced cohorts and classes. Heterogeneously grouped students traveled together throughout the day and worked on project-based learning together. And there was intentional effort to balance academies by gender.

## Hoover High’s Master Scheduling Process

### PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Hoover’s core scheduling team includes Vice Principal Conti, Principal Babineau, Head Counselor Andrea Muñoz, and the counseling team. In the summer the team assembles and begins planning for the following school year. It analyzes schedule audit data from the previous year and review progress on the previous years’ goals. The audit data includes information on student distribution across classes by gender, students with IEPs, ELLs. It also shows teachers’ workloads by class size as well as the demographics of students they were assigned. The audit data gives the team an idea of whether the previous year’s schedule met expectations.

After reviewing audit data, the team discusses goals and priorities for the upcoming schedule with academic departments and academy directors. Around February, when the counseling team wraps up the student course selection

process, Vice Principal Conti begins using ABl scheduling software to build the schedule. The tool helps Conti ensure she builds an equitable and balanced schedule, “I can look at the class size, I can cohort students, evenly distribute students with IEPs and English learners, predict the conflicts.” As she’s working the schedule, Conti also continues to involve staff to discuss potential changes.

If needed, Conti can seek support from the district through things like master scheduling labs, where she can work on the schedule with other high school administrators or receive one-on-one coaching. By the end of the school year, Conti is able to share a draft form of the schedule with teachers and students. Over the summer, the team continues to make tweaks as enrollment and staffing change.

### STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

#### De-tracked 9th- and 10th-grade mathematics

To ensure all students accessed challenging coursework and to address the effect tracking had on isolating students by ability and race, Hoover de-tracked mathematics in the 9th and 10th grades. Everyone now had access to the same rigorous coursework as soon as they arrived at Hoover. In addition, and growing directly out of their decision to engage teachers in the process, Hoover also did something highly unusual for a 4-by-4 block schedule: It made mathematics yearlong.

We had conversations: What do teachers need in order to feel supported? Who has the time to bring students up to speed and believe in them and support them but then also cover standards? We listened to what they needed. A lot of it was about time, and time together, for planning and curriculum support. The following year, we agreed that all math would be yearlong as opposed to semester long, but it would also not be separated into advanced and regular.<sup>120</sup>

Doing so gave students time to receive the appropriate amount of instruction and support, but it also provided teachers additional time to adapt to a significant scheduling change and collaborate with one another to support students’ needs. This illustrates that access goes beyond simple enrollment. It also means providing the requisite support and time for students to be supported and successful in their learning.

## **IMPROVEMENT**    **Increased support for course selection**

Conti and Babineau also sought to reduce the information gap when it came to course selection. They revised articulation cards, the documents students use to select courses for the following year, so no matter what option or pathway students chose, they would receive access to rigorous coursework that met A–G requirements. Hibbeln had engaged in a similar effort at the district level to remove course offerings that did not meet A–G requirements and thereby reduce disparities in who had access to them. Jeffrey Thomas, an operations specialist who provided scheduling support to Conti and others in the district, spoke of the importance of structured choice for equity. “Look at choice versus structured choice.... We like to give all sorts of choices. We like to have articulation cards where they can pick any course that they want and to offer every opportunity. That’s not a good thing for equity.” Indeed, as Hibbeln had learned in her earlier auditing process, bloated course catalogs made it easy for students to unwittingly select courses that bumped them off the A–G track and landed them in “junk” courses that satisfied high school graduation requirements but not college admissions requirements. At Hoover, a revised version of the articulation card provided more structured choice for students and families and ensured that whatever they chose would keep them on track. Articulation cards went from being a “menu with every single course that Hoover High offers” to a single-page document with clear course sequences and A–G requirements. This helped ensure that all students, not just those with support for navigating course selection, were set up for success.

### **Expanded access to AP courses**

Hoover increased access to A–G courses and the availability of and access to Advanced Placement (AP) courses. A partnership with Equal Opportunity Schools, an organization focused on improving equitable access to and success in academically rigorous programs, gave Hoover additional data and tools for addressing disparities in access to AP. Hoover began using multiple measures, not just grade point average, to assess readiness for AP and created lists of students to actively recruit for AP. Finishing the schedule before summer begins allows the counseling team to continue recruitment efforts until the start of school. A partnership with the National Science and Math Initiative provides financial incentives for students to receive a qualifying score on the AP exam.

In addition, Hoover holds “celebrations,” events to recruit and congratulate students for their participation. Principal Babineau explained the support they provide first-time AP takers: “We have celebratory meetings for students and parents of students who have never been in an AP class.... We say, ‘Hey, you’ve been nominated. Someone believes in you. This is what [AP] looks like, and this is why you’re going to be successful.”

**RESULTS**    The combination of the district’s effort to increase access to A–G eligible courses and Hoover’s revisions to articulation helped produce vast improvements in the rate of students accessing A–G coursework at Hoover (Table 6). From academic year (AY) 2013–14 to 2018–19, the rate of students meeting A–G requirements went from 39.5 to 75 percent (Table 6). In addition, as a result of the use of expanded criteria for AP and intentional recruitment efforts, AP enrollment nearly tripled at Hoover (Figure 11) with near-proportionate participation based on students’ race or ethnicity (Table 8).

## CONCLUSION Sustaining the commitment

Hoover’s leaders have something that Hibbeln, who now supports schools across the country to schedule more strategically, refers to as commitment over compliance. Hibbeln noted that limitations emerge when even strategic scheduling becomes primarily about compliance: “We monitored really hard...but because we never shifted from compliance to commitment, people started to revert back to their old practices.”

By contrast, Conti and Babineau plan to continue leveraging the schedule to ensure they’re providing Hoover students equitable opportunities and access. They’re hoping to offer even more dual-enrollment opportunities and to ensure students are not just enrolled in AP but supported in succeeding. They view the schedule as a critical part of achieving these aims and others, and they will continue to use it to “structurally and systematically create options for kids,” Babineau said.

**TABLE 1**

A–G Rates at Hoover High  
Students who meet A–G  
requirements.

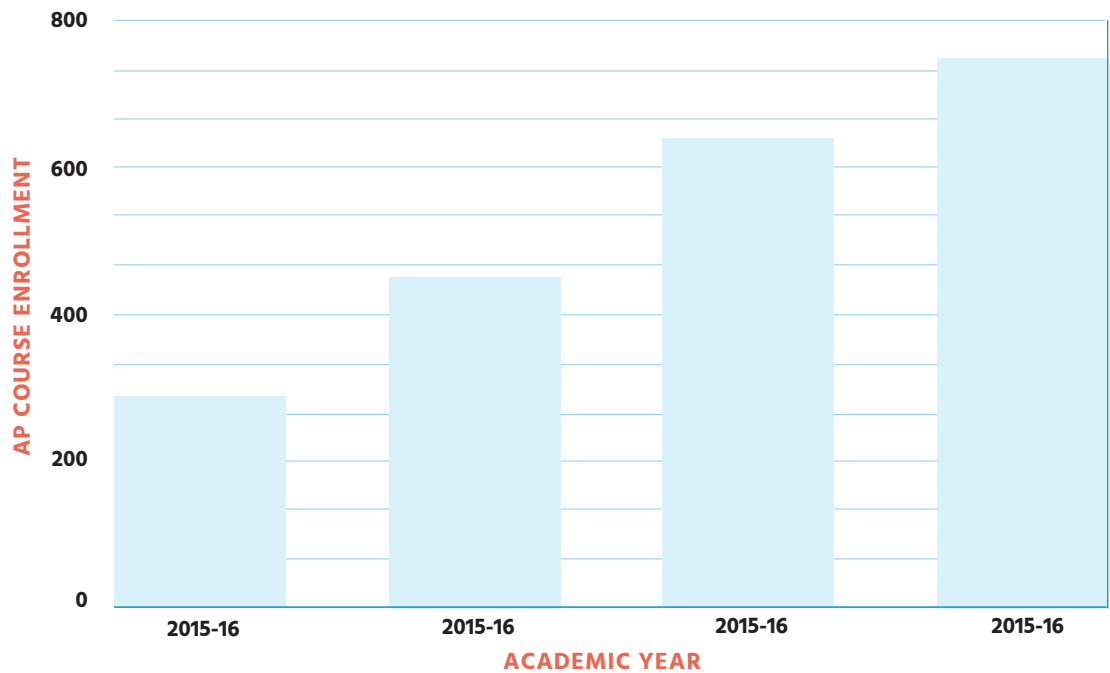
|   | AY 2013–14 | AY 2014–15 | AY 2015–16 | AY 2016–17 | AY 2017–18 | AY 2018–19 |
|---|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| <b>Overall</b>                                | 39.5%      | 45.2%      | 55.3%      | 62.4%      | 58.9%      | 75%        |
| <b>Individualized education program (IEP)</b> | NA         | NA         | NA         | 40%        | 47.4%      | 55.6%      |
| <b>ELL</b>                                    | 4%         | 16.2%      | 15.4%      | 51.5%      | 45%        | 69.2%      |
| <b>Low income</b>                             | 40.7%      | 44.6%      | 55.6%      | 62.2%      | 59.1%      | 75.1%      |
| <b>Black</b>                                  | 31.6%      | 32%        | 44.4%      | 68.4%      | 69.2%      | 72.2%      |
| <b>Latino</b>                                 | 37.3%      | 44%        | 54.2%      | 58.4%      | 55.7%      | 73%        |
| <b>Filipino</b>                               | 0%         | 100%       | **         | **         | **         | **         |
| <b>Asian</b>                                  | 54.8%      | 58.3%      | 65.4%      | 72.7%      | 72.2%      | 83.6%      |
| <b>White</b>                                  | 37.5%      | 50%        | 75%        | **         | **         | **         |
| <b>2 or more</b>                              | 50%        | 28.6%      | 75%        | **         | **         | **         |
| <b>Races</b>                                  |            |            |            |            |            |            |
| <b>Female</b>                                 | 44.9%      | 49%        | 65.1%      | 68.9%      | 63.2%      | 83.5%      |
| <b>Male</b>                                   | 33.3%      | 40%        | 44.7%      | 55%        | 54.9%      | 65.4%      |

Source: Personal communication of anonymized information

## Hoover AP Course Enrollment 2015-2018

**FIGURE 1**

Illustrates AP course enrollment at Hoover between 2015-2018.



Source: California Department of Education DataQuest

## Hoover High 2017–2018 AP Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity

**TABLE 2**

Illustrates Hoover’s AP course enrollment by ethnicity for the school year 2017-2018.

| Category                             | Total School Enrollment (in %) | Students Taking at Least 1 AP Course |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| American Indian/<br>Alaskan Native   | 0.2%                           | 0.2%                                 |
| Asian                                | 12%                            | 18%                                  |
| Black                                | 9%                             | 10%                                  |
| Hispanic                             | 75%                            | 70%                                  |
| Native Hawaiian/<br>Pacific Islander | 0.2%                           | 0%                                   |
| Two or More                          | 3%                             | 2%                                   |
| White                                | 8%                             | 0.2%                                 |

Source: Office for Civil Rights (OCR) Data Collection



