

The Bay Area School of Enterprise - “The BASE”

A Public Charter High School

The Bay Area School of Enterprise is the product of a team of 10 youth members of the HOME Project who set out to design a high school that would suit the way young people learn best.

MISSION STATEMENT

We are intelligent and committed youth who want to see change in our world and are assertive about achieving it. We see that traditional high schools do not meet the needs of all teenagers. We are providing an innovative alternative learning environment that will better serve today’s youth. At the Bay Area School of Enterprise, each youth will create an individual plan incorporating enterprise, project-based learning, internships, small group instruction, and independent study, as appropriate to the way each individual best learns. Because learning occurs everywhere in the real world, our school will seek learning opportunities throughout our neighborhood, community, region, nation and world. Our school will graduate powerful new citizens who are ready to take responsibility for the future. It will be a model of what is possible in education when youth are empowered to take charge of their own learning.

The educational program at the BASE is based on “enterprise learning” - a project-based, hands-on approach that allows students to learn academic subjects and real-world skills through work on enterprises that they create and grow. By the opening of the BASE this fall, the following enterprises will be in place to provide learning opportunities: Home Sweet Home childcare center, WAY youth employment center, Youth Media Studio, ‘Spessed Out Café, and a technology business. The day-to-day operation, governance and financial management of the school will also serve as learning projects for students. Enterprise learning will be supplemented with small group instruction, educational software and distance learning opportunities as needed to meet the needs of individual students. Courses offered at the BASE will be submitted to the University of California and California State University for A-G approval, ensuring that all BASE students will be able to meet college entry requirements.

In keeping with the HOME commitment to youth empowerment, the governance structure for the BASE will be democratic. Although a non-profit Board of Directors must have final say on major financial and personnel decisions, democratic teams of youth and staff will have authority to make many decisions on school operations and program. Youth, staff and parents will also advise the Board on important issues. Standards of behavior will be enforced by a peer discipline group that will develop and monitor school rules.

In its first year, the BASE will operate as a “pilot” with a small enrollment of approximately 25 9th graders and 15 11th and 12th graders. The calendar and hours of operation will be similar to local traditional high schools. However, individual student schedules are likely to vary, depending on each student’s areas of interest and personal learning plan.

The BASE will be headquartered at the HOME building at 2750 Todd Street in the Civic Core of Alameda Point. Students will take advantage of various other facilities in the area, including the gymnasium, athletic fields, parks and performance space as part of their learning. It is also expected that BASE students will participate in projects and internships involving local businesses and government agencies in Alameda and Oakland.

Frequently Asked Questions about the BASE

What is a charter school?

A charter school is a public school with specific goals and operating procedures detailed in an agreement (or “charter”) between the charter organizers and a sponsoring school district. It is not subject to specific mandates of state education law and regulations, so a charter school has more freedom to be innovative.

How is it different from a private school?

Charter schools may not charge tuition or use discriminatory admissions criteria.

Why is the BASE being developed?

The BASE is the creation of a group of youth who believe that the traditional high school is an ineffective learning environment for many students. The “enterprise learning” approach of the BASE is a better fit with the way young people learn.

Will students at the BASE be able to get into college?

The BASE will offer a college-preparatory program. Courses will be approved by the University of California and California State University A-G system for college entry.

Will the BASE be accredited?

After 3 years of operation, the BASE will be eligible for accreditation.

What grade levels will the BASE serve?

The BASE plans to grow to serve 150 students with a program equivalent to grades 9 through 12.

Are there admission requirements for the BASE?

No. Any high school age student may apply. Admission will be based on available space, established priorities and random draw.

What qualifications will teachers at the BASE have?

Charter school law requires that certificated teachers be employed for core academic, college-preparatory instruction. Because of its “enterprise learning” approach, the BASE will place a priority on hiring adults with real-world experience.

How is the BASE funded?

Charter schools receive their funding from the state, based on per-student allocations approximately equal to those provided to all other public schools in the state.

Will it take money away from local public schools?

Charter schools are funded by the state. They do not take money away from local school districts.

Why is the BASE located at Alameda Point?

The BASE will be headquartered at the HOME Project’s building at Alameda Point. This provides the school with low cost facilities, coordination with HOME’s youth enterprises, access to recreational facilities and room to grow.

What transportation will be available to the school?

AC Transit currently operates two bus lines to Alameda Point, running approximately every half hour.

Will students be able to enroll in classes at the BASE and other public high schools?

The BASE is negotiating arrangements with AUSD for concurrent enrollment, allowing BASE students to take some classes in the traditional high schools and AUSD students to take some courses at the BASE.

Will students at the BASE be able to take physical education and play competitive sports?

The BASE will have access to facilities for physical education and may eventually form its own sports teams. Statewide rules for high school sports also allow charter school students to play for local public schools with the consent of the school administration. The BASE is seeking approval for its students to play for Alameda high school teams.

What about social activities?

The BASE will not be isolated from the social life of Alameda youth. Students at the BASE will be able to take advantage of HOME’s existing project promoting city-wide youth social activities.