

Banyan Humanities Academy

San Rafael City Schools
San Rafael High School

Glenn Dennis

sanrafael.srcs.org/banyan

The Banyan Humanities Academy was created four years ago to promote academic engagement, deeper learning, and an effective transition to high school. Banyan offers students the opportunity to experience a more relevant, interdisciplinary, and project-based approach as opposed to a more traditional one. The program's strengths include community building, interdisciplinary curricular connections, and project-based learning. The transition to high school is supported by specific program elements such as the advisory class, collaborative approaches to teaching and learning, and community building activities and trips. Students are looped for two years in mixed 9th and 10th grade English and Social Studies classes, thereby creating additional opportunities to be known and for



relationships to develop. The curriculum is aligned to the Common Core English Language Arts standards, as well as the English, Social Studies, and Health content standards. Students complete a significant project and/or exhibition at least once per semester and document their learning via a portfolio. Banyan works with educational organizations such as For Words and Envision Learning Partners to create authentic, rigorous, and inquiry-based



demonstrations of student learning. The English and Social Studies curriculum meets A-G requirements for college acceptance and also offers students an honors option for increased academic challenge.

