

LAS VIRGENES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

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**LAS VIRGENES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
CURRICULUM COUNCIL MEETING**

February 22, 2022

Present: Emily Austin, Bella Bernt, Melissa Brennan, Marnie Davis, Karrie DeMarco, Dana Dickson, Marlene Didierjean, Dr. Clara Finneran, Willow Gavin, Dr. Ryan Gleason, Jessica Guenther, Robin Hassen, Lisa Hatfield, Christy Heredia, Tina Johnson, Laura Kintz, Doug Kohno, Kelly Lampert, Kristen Marsilio, Leslie Martinez, Pam McDonnell, Linda Menges, Darci Miller, Courtney Peoples, Michael Robkin, Amy Rosen, Allison Stein, Lesli Stein, Lila Rahimi, Sandra Ritvo, Amy Rosen, Pamela Rudy, Adam Weinstein, Emily Wigger

The meeting was called to order at 3:33 pm by Dr. Finneran.

TK Curriculum Adoption Update

Ms. Kintz shared the District's excitement about the new TK rollout, which will begin in LVUSD with the 2022-2023 school year. Currently to qualify for TK, students must turn five between September 2 and December 2. Next year, this window will be extended from September 2 to February 2, so LVUSD will have more students eligible to enroll in our TK programs. The birthdate span will continue to extend incrementally until 2025-26, when public schools will be required to offer TK programs to all California four-year-olds turning five. To plan for this rollout, Ms. Kintz has been meeting and working with two groups, a *TK Task Force* and a *TK Curriculum Adoption Committee*.

The *TK Task Force* is comprised of parent representatives, administrators, TK teachers, kindergarten teachers, a first grade teacher, a special education teacher, District Librarian Tina Johnson, and Val Louthian representing Buttercup. This committee has met once already and plans to meet three more times this spring to discuss overall rollout aspects such as facilities, training for staff, and any changes that need to happen logistically to our sites in order to gear up for having more younger students on campus.

The *TK Curriculum Adoption Committee* has also met once and are scheduled to meet an additional five times to review curriculum adoption options. The majority of committee members are TK teachers who will be teaching to these standards, including special education teachers. They have conducted research to identify high quality programs currently available for Pre-K. The Committee will be working to identify additional components and rigor they'd like embedded to best serve our students, and are working to develop a rubric to align these with the

Pre-K state standards (which are different from kindergarten standards). The state is recommending programs provide experiential and play-based curriculum as studies conducted through programs, such as Head Start, show students who learn through more comprehensive, experiential curriculum are more successful as they progress in public school, through 12th grade. The Curriculum Committee will be reviewing their two top curriculums in a showcase and plan to bring a review along with a recommendation to the May 17, Curriculum Council meeting.

Question: Will the TK schedule be the same as the current Kindergarten schedule?

Answer: The District is currently reviewing instructional minutes. The aim is to have alignment and a progression from PK - Grade 3 in programming, how the standards progress, and how they build upon each other. Currently, TK and Kindergarten minutes are the same. They may be different next year.

Question: As the program grows and Pre-K becomes something of the past, will Pre-K teachers be able to teach TK or do they still need a multiple subject credential?

Answer: Next year teachers will not be impacted. Starting with the 2023-24 school year, they will need to have a permit to teach early childhood education. This permit is an additional 24 hours of either child development or preschool early childhood classes. Our Buttercup teachers currently need to have a multi-subject credential, so they can teach next year. For the following year, we will make sure that all of our teachers have a permit in place to teach our new TK state requirements. LVUSD will be offering the opportunity to earn this permit for free to our teachers through Center EdX.

Additions to Core Literature Process Update

Dr. Finneran explained that at least for the last few years, we've been working on additions to our core literature. We've had processes in place for grades K-5 and 6-12.

Ms. Kintz shared an update on the K-5 Core Literature additions process. The elementary level Social Justice Supplemental Materials Adoption Committee converged with the Curriculum Alignment Committee, and as a first step, reviewed the current board adopted English Language Arts curriculum, Center for Collaborative Literacy. They cross referenced those selections with the four domains of the board adopted Social Justice Standards to determine what might be missing and where they want to build those resources by adding supplemental materials. Currently, each grade level is choosing high quality, inclusive texts to review with their peers. They will choose a few to use in the classroom and following that, share what they would like to have considered for adoption. These will be brought to the Curriculum Council in November or December of next year.

Dr. Finneran shared that the 6-12th grade ELA teachers worked last year expanding library collections, and they began the process of reviewing literature circle and core books. They met once last week, and will be meeting at least four more times. They will be working to confirm their rubric for adding books, and will agree upon suggested book titles to add to the core list. The District will be simultaneously working with a representative from CSUN, who is affiliated with the Writing Project at UCLA, to support this work as it will be helpful to have a professional outside resource. The Committee hopes to bring recommendations for titles they would like to add to the 6-12th grade core literature list in May.

Service Learning/Civic Engagement Update

Dr. Gleason reminded the Council that due to the pandemic, and with the Board of Education's approval, the service learning graduation requirement had been suspended the past few years. That break provided time for reflection to consider unintended challenges and consequences resulting from the requirement. Dr. Gleason shared the following data points:

- For the last eight years, the district had a high school graduation requirement of 60 hours of service learning that all graduates must complete.
- This requirement came out of a value that still very much exists - that service, community engagement, and civic involvement are a healthy and important part of the student's learning.
- The District looked at the pre pandemic data, from 2018-2019, the last complete year with access to data.
- 50% of students were on track for that requirement at the end of their junior year and 33% were deficient by more than 15 hours.
- Subgroups were most impacted across our district which means this policy has been disproportionately impacting students from low income backgrounds, students with disabilities, or students whose parent education is less than a college graduate.
- 80% of Juniors from low income backgrounds were deficient at the end of their junior year.
- Simultaneous to this pause, the state of California introduced The State Seal of Civic Engagement. This special diploma seal honors students who give back to their community. It is an opt-in program awarding a special diploma seal to any student who completes locally developed requirements.

Through multiple committees over the past six months, the District has arrived at a recommendation to remove service learning as a graduation requirement. Dr. Gleason shared a replacement program that allows interested students to obtain a State Seal of Civic Engagement with the Council, for feedback and questions. This would be implemented in two different service models. The first model would afford students 30 hours if they completed a year of either tutoring or peer support. The second model would be for students to develop a mentor supported civic engagement project. Under this model, a student would propose a project and then be assigned a faculty mentor who would receive a form of compensation to support the student's efforts in completing and achieving their goal. Students could do this in a group, or individually.

Dr. Gleason shared a draft website that will be rolled out, if the plan is approved by the Board of Education, to help students and families understand these new requirements. The plan is to bring this to the Board for approval in early March. This will also help create the systems for faculty mentors and launch the tutoring/peer counseling systems before next fall.

Question: Are these new projects on top of the previous way students used to earn hours, or instead of?

Answer: Instead of. There were pockets of students engaged in the prior model that really weren't service. They were opportunities for other individuals to get free work. This is about a service and project based model.

Question: Can you help me understand the process for a student?

Answer: We would designate someone at the school to be a civic engagement advisor. Students would submit an application through the website that would trigger a meeting to schedule an appointment with the designated faculty. The faculty would help vet the project according to the State Seal requirements and provide approval or coaching for revisions.

Question: Is this something that students can choose to not do? Does this go on college applications?

Answer: Yes. It's a more formal designation. They would also be able to wear a designated cord during graduation.

Question: Has there been any thought of how to promote this because when you take away requirements, it often takes away that talk and the visibility. I'd want to be sure that all kids know that they'd be supported. Especially if it was harder for kids that may have different disadvantages. It may only be an option for really privileged kids that have the support to go after that type of project?

Answer: There are multiple ways we've looked at potentially communicating about it. One model, for example, has us talking about this in Freshman Seminar, as a part of the conversation about service to one's community. There's also been conversations about other ways to roll it out. I agree the access piece is so important to ensure we do not revisit or end up in the same circumstances.

Question: As a community, how are we going to do our best to ensure equity of rigor of both the approval of projects, and the evaluation of the process?

Answer: I don't think your question can be answered in the short term. I do think one thing I would suggest is to have this brought back to the Curriculum Council and other committees annually, for review. It's a great question - I don't think we will know what criteria or type of rubric we might need, until we have some of these case studies to test.

Ms. Stein added that there will be somebody at each high school in charge, and the Board will be monitoring this, as well. Dr. Gleason oversees both high schools, so he will be very closely involved. Ms. Stein thanked everyone for their great questions, and added they're the same questions the Board has been asking as well.

Question: I know myself and a lot of my peers have been going for either the silver, bronze, or gold service learning award. For people who are in the class of 2023, or 2024, or who have already been toward our original service learning awards - will they still be able to get this? When is this planning to go into effect?

Answer: We need to look at how many students are pursuing those awards. The intent is not to not acknowledge. We need to determine how many students and at what level we will need to grandfather these students in, or recognize their hours, as they proceed. If necessary, we will work with those kids individually. We just need the data.

Question: What are the guidelines for the State Seal of Civic Engagement?

Answer: CDE has guidelines that you can find online that will provide some criteria. There are other districts that have gone this direction, and we can learn from them. The goal is to encourage inquiry, and to encourage students to contribute in a civic way that

supports their community, but to do this in a way that provides every student involved the coaching and support to navigate any challenges that arise.

Question: Is there going to be any fiscal impact? What if every kid wants to do this? Will there be enough mentors to be able to compensate? Down the road, could there be an impact on resources we need to be thinking about?

Answer: The current service learning program has resources already aligned to it. We'll just reappropriate them to this. My sense is that those that pursue this will go for the tutoring and peer support side, it's more linear. And there won't be as many that opt into or pursue the more abstract projects.

Question: Is there currently time in the master schedule for the teacher mentoring?

Answer: If we recommend this to the Board and it is approved, we will work with the high schools to allocate those resources. I've asked the high school principals to be thinking about who on their campuses may be a good fit to lead this. The structure would be to appoint someone who has a partial release from teaching to support this. Depending on how many students are involved in service projects, we would compensate those faculty mentors with stipends to help coach kids.

Dr. Gleason added that he understands when these shifts launch, there may be a little turbulence. He thinks they have the construct of a better system that will serve our community and give students choice and support. He hears there's a concern about tutoring, but there are a lot of kids K-12 right now, they could really benefit from it. And the District now has an automated system to facilitate this.

Peer Support: Curriculum and Approach

Dr. Gleason shared the following for the Council's benefit:

- LVUSD has added counseling resources across the district overall.
- LVUSD has restructured high school counseling to have two wellness focused counselors at both Agoura and Calabasas High Schools.
- LVUSD now has a grant funded Counseling Center.
- 4-12 Grade students take a quarterly mental health diagnostic assessment called Rally and staff respond to the results.

Dr. Gleason shared that whenever a student expresses a desire to harm themselves or assault self or others, the District does a formal risk assessment and he shared some district data. LVUSD is experiencing two and a half times the amount of risk assessments compared to pre-pandemic. Continuous support is given to students through and following the risk assessments. Across the country, there's been a new approach emerging as a response to student mental health needs, that is assets based, and one example is called Sources of Strength. This program trains students to recognize and share assets, "sources of strength." We'd like to pursue this training, and would aim to have 10% of high school age students trained. Research on this program shows that student peer leaders who've been trained to know risk factors are four times more likely to refer a suicidal friend than if they had not been trained. This model is a strength focus model that would utilize adult advisors who are caring connected positive individuals, working with peer leaders, i.e.; kids who have influence across all the social groups. So every student has someone who might be connected to them. Ultimately, this leads to positive change in the form of a couple a couple of things:

- Positive social norming. How do we talk about mental and social emotional health?
- How do we take a strengths and abundance framework to it, rather than a scarcity framework?
- How do we create a community where we recognize leadership comes in all pockets and all sectors and all GPAs, across all ability levels, making sure that everyone leaves that school as healthy as possible?

Going through this training and being involved in these campaigns would be another way for students to achieve the State Seal of Civic Engagement on the peer counseling, peer support side, in a way that would really support our efforts .

Question: Are there training or precautions that adults can take to make sure that these students are not sharing information about students they've counseled, their like personal issues, making them sign something saying that they will not discuss any of this outside of that safe space.

Answer: Really, this is trying to train over time. Most of the time they're just existing in their natural habitat bouncing around the social groups they are in. When a student's struggling, they're trained to know the signs, help triage, get that student to the right support so that they can normalize the dialogue around mental health on their campus. So their job is really to be trained, to exist, and to know when a crisis emerges how to hand it off. Then additionally, they're supporting a lot of messaging and strength building campaigns. They're never in a position of having to field crises and then intervene directly - to help make sure that students get the support they need from the individual who has had the years of training to do that.

Dr. Gleason shared that next steps will be to continue to vet this through several committees and to continue to hone it for the District's needs, and for pairing it with the State Seal of Civic Engagement requirements.

Ms. Menges thanked everybody for their time, and great questions. She mentioned that this had been a first exposure for her to this program, and it was really helpful.

Other Business

The meeting was adjourned at 4:53pm.