

LAS VIRGENES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

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**LAS VIRGENES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
CURRICULUM COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEETING
February 27, 2019**

Mr. Scifres welcomed the Council and shared that the Grades 10-12 History-Social Science Curriculum Adoption would be up first on the agenda. This adoption was for grades 10-12 because students take Freshman Seminar in the 9th grade. There were four different recommendations for this adoption. Mr. Scifres also shared that before a group moves into an adoption process, a lot of teachers have already been preparing for it. In this particular instance, a lot of the work took place in the previous year among grades 6-12 before the high schools formed their committees. Each grade level had two different teachers represent their curriculum. The committees had to agree on a 100% consensus. Mr. Scifres said they were amazing to work with and he thanked them for their work.

Grades 10-12 History-Social Science (H-SS) Curriculum Adoption

CHS Social Science Chair Lance Novak reiterated how the committees really worked together. They chose two separate publishers for different grade levels, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt and Pearson.

Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (HMH) had great resources to reach sub-populations, such as ELL, and special education students. Their online resources were good, such as the online history channel which they can bring into the classroom, and the company was also very responsive to their requests.

With Pearson, they liked the economics simulations and felt they could make the process more personable to the individual 12th grade student.

Question: Can you explain SPED?

Answer: For the resources, it breaks down the content for them in a more accessible manner so they are better able to process the information.

Mr. Busby stated two areas of concern with the recommended curriculum, both of which they were working to address. They are excited that this will be the first time they will be using digital copies across the board. This will be a transition for teachers and a transition for students. They experienced some issues with accessing the digital copies, and some issues with the students'

comfort levels using the technology. There will be a learning curve that in the long run will bear a positive outcome. It will be challenging in the short term. The second challenge is that teachers would like more assessments than what comes with the curriculum. The History Project at UC Davis, coming out next year, will allow LVUSD to supplement curriculum at no cost.

Agoura High School history teacher Casey Hambly teaches 5 periods of World History. She piloted with all 170 of her students and appreciated the following about the HMH textbook:

- Helpful planning materials and instructional ideas
- The new HMH textbook reflects the History-Social Science framework changes.
- The supplementary materials, i.e.; SPED and ELL are good.
- They provide a DBQ (document based question) workbook.
- Each chapter begins with an inquiry-based question. Throughout the lessons, it prompts the teacher to ask questions which work back to the essential question asked, at the beginning.
- When students were asked to read on their own at home, it was very accessible to them.
- Lower level readers were able to read it.
- The online textbook was appealing and could be translated into any language Google Translate has the ability to translate to.
- The HMH website is visual pleasing and offers a lot of resources for students, such as quizzes, videos, flashcards, etc.

Christie Shields shared:

- Materials were very well organized.
- Our previous books didn't really do enough to include the LBGTQ community and this one does.
- Her students really liked it. Between the two publishers, they preferred HMH.

American Government teacher Carrie Klienberger, piloted the American Government curriculum. She explained the overall objective is learning what it means to be a citizen, how the mechanism of our government works, and how students are going to participate within that mechanism. The HMH book did a good job with the following:

- Making the information about how the mechanism works accessible for all students.
- Providing opportunities to access materials that are differentiated for different types of students with lots of opportunities for application.
- Beyond just learning the content, it provided types of issues students can debate and scenarios to apply their information to, in the future.
- It offered really clear organized instructional materials packaged in an accessible way.
- A lot of the questions provided were open-ended and there were a lot of opportunities to connect to Student 360.
- Students' experience was accessible in terms of layout and content. The online platform provided opportunities for kids to see a great video or dive into an issue and see both sides.

Calabasas Economics teacher Bart Goldman said he was the one person who wanted the Pearson book. He really liked the online resources and the interactive elements of the Pearson book such

as the 3-minute videos to introduce subtopics. They also have a way to connect assignments to Google classroom. The students had an equal experience with both books, but he felt he would use the Pearson online resources more.

CHS special education (SPED) teacher and department chair, Andy Falk, explained that he and Bart co-teach a class in Economics and Government. They have a mixture of general and SPED students and were able to see how they interacted and how received materials. SPED students have two major issues: motivation and entertainment value (meaning if they are not engaged, they will not absorb the material).

The feedback from teachers on Pearson was that the program did a good job with multiple learning modalities, such as chunking and scaffolding. Chunking is a huge part of SPED, so if materials are un-chunkable or not “scaffoldable”, those students will be left behind. Pearson had better alternative instruction supports established, such as scaffolded literacy integrated into the materials, and they had nice video and interactive animation.

The feedback for HMH said that their primary source materials were highly accessible, had high interest content, and all students were able to access the curriculum. An example of this was how two Spanish-speaking students were able to access the curriculum because of the translator.

Mr. Scifres shared the total curriculum cost: \$207,481.63. The District will provide four hours of training for teachers and the intention is to train the trainers, so teachers can facilitate H-SS trainings next year.

Question: Was this a digital only textbook or was there a supplement?

Answer: It is both digital text and paper. My understanding is there will be class sets of physical books as well as library textbook access.

Question: Did the Agoura Economics teacher prefer Pearson also?

Answer: Yes, that is why we are asking for the Pearson book for Economics but the HMH for History–Social Science. Pearson said we can also have online access to other subjects, in addition to Economics, so we will be able to pull additional resources for world or US History.

Question: Do you feel like students are more engaged using these new programs?

Answer: Some disliked it and some liked it more. They liked that they were able to engage more in the reading as they were doing it, with the graphic organizer. For the teacher, there is more engagement in class because the students can do the reading at home.

Question: Steve talked about four hours of training. Is that enough for the rest of the year?

Answer: Jason Busby answered that was a good starting point. There will be additional training and the departments are very supportive of, and will work with, each other.

Mr. Scifres clarified that the four hours mentioned were for the current school year. If the curriculum is approved by the Council and the Board of Education, there will likely be talent development hours available. Also, the pilot teachers had already received three hours of training.

Question: You mentioned in US History there is a bit more emphasis on sub populations, such as LGBTQ. We have heard a lot about the how but not the what? What is included in that?

Answer: There is a reason for that. This is reflective of the new state standards. The middle schools had some substantial changes to their content. The big changes for high school is more in the expectation of students' understanding of the material, how they access, process and synthesize information and apply it, as well as building the skill sets that are required in the frameworks.

Mr. Scifres reiterated the four major shifts incorporated into the frameworks are:

- Content
- Literacy – there's a lot more writing
- Inquiry – that form of instruction has changed
- Citizenship – there is a lot of material exploring others' perspective, diversity and cultural elements. This is work we identified as being important last year in middle school classes, as well.

Question: I do not understand what the LCAP alignment is, but looking at the proposal, as an economist myself, I see that it says, "empathize with people of different backgrounds and experiences. I'm trying to understand how that fits into economics?"

Answer: We have a much more diverse community and the world is a much smaller place than it used to be. It is important we give attention to all of the aspects of social science.

Approval of 10-12 History-Social Science Curriculum Adoption

Motion to Approve: Jason Rosenthal

Second: Kristen Lapiner

Approved unanimously

Question: I have a question for maybe a different meeting. I'm wondering if some of these adoptions are based on the assumption that all our students have access to the internet, to computers. Has the District done an audit and really surveyed what student access is?

Answer: We debated that a lot. To your point, a lot of our adoptions are shifting to digital. We have not done an audit, however, we do have a means to support students who don't have access. For example, with TCI, on campus all of our students have access to a computer at school. They can download the entire textbook onto their laptop and be able to take it home with them.

Question: I am not sure how to lodge a formal request to the Board, but I would like to see some sort of audit asking about access. Students may have a computer but without

connectivity, how are they getting on Google Drive? I think it is important that we know where students stand across the district.

Answer: To your point, how many students are we talking about and how can we support them? I am happy to look into this and happy to report back.

Mr. Scifres asked Mr. Klein if he could comment. Mr. Klein stated that the District surveyed families when they were rolling out the 1:1 program, and did not find families with connectivity issues. However, it has been a few years.

Dr. Finneran offered an answer from a policy perspective. If students only have digitally-based content and they don't have internet access, and we expect them to access that content at night, we would be in violation of the Williams Act. The majority of adoptions are some blended means where there is matching content of digital, paper and/or textbook. You ask a great question and we should certainly continue to explore it.

Mr. Scifres reiterated that he would be happy to report back to the Council.

Another Council member requested the District consider providing newer technology to the high schools. She felt the high schools were getting shorted because when the middle or elementary schools receive new equipment, those older machines typically go to the high schools.

Question: As we are looking at digital, has the school board given much thought to how much is being done digital? NIH just came out with the first 300 million dollar comprehensive study with 10,000 students over 10 years and found that those who spent two or more hours on electronics started having deterioration of the outside of the brain. What is the district considering regarding the health and well being of a lot of screen time for young adult minds?

Answer: Mr. Scifres agreed that it is a balance. Not all of our adoptions are digital. Let's take our K-5 ELA adoption, for example, it is based on actually putting books in students hands. I wouldn't say that students are spending two hours a day of screen time in LVUSD classrooms. That said, it is a growing portion of the curriculum and worth looking in to the study you mention and if there is a tipping point where we give kids too much screen time. We have not done a study or tracked how often our students are using screens.

Approval of Computer Science: Python Course Proposal

Mr. Scifres explained that they have seen huge interest in computer science courses in LVUSD. LVUSD was recognized as an AP Honor Roll school in 2018, which means we had simultaneously increased access to AP courses, as well as increased or maintained AP pathways. This was in large part due to the work of the AP computer science courses. The interest in this area has been growing, as is the profession of Computer Science. They presented this course proposal to complete the computer science pathway.

CHS computer science teacher, Yasaman Alamdari, explained that CHS has offered Computer Science A for a very long time. It remains a high level course. Once the AP Board came out with

the Principles course, they were very quick to offer it. It is an introductory course to learn about computer science and where and how it is used in the world. The Principles class has grown and they have had a lot of students asking, "What should I take next year?" Since LVUSD doesn't offer another level for them, they're going to community colleges or they have to wait until they get to college to take the next course. Python seemed like a good place to start. Joe Keays completed a survey which he'll share. We wanted to introduce students to new languages. Computer science is writing software, writing programs, it is a great way for students to practice what they are learning in math.

Joe Keays shared a few personal student success stories about how the computer science classes at Agoura have opened his students thought processes and provided new opportunities for them which extend into college. He thanked the Council and expressed how proud he was that they had approved adding a computer science class three years ago. He reiterated that the Council has the ability to impact our students' experiences with the courses they approve.

He shared that right after Computer Science Principles came out, people wanted more, so he started doing research, buying books and reading, easily spending 300 hours trying to map out what kids want and what they need? He spoke with parents, his students, administrators, and Jim Klein. He felt Python would be an easy language for students to take in. It has lots of applications, especially in the data management world, where we take information, process it, and give it back. When he evaluated the curriculum there were many benefits such as: the length, the quality, the teacher platform, the depth, the format, the assessments that are built in and the professional development. There are lots of resources out there. He applied for a sponsorship through Amazon and received news that LVUSD had been approved. After 2-3 years, this course should be like Principles and not cost the district a penny because there will be enough sponsorships for the infusion of computer science. The curriculum he was asking for is called Adhesive.

Mr. Scifres shared that we currently have a course I and a course III, so this course will fall right in the middle as a bridge course.

Question: I have a question for suggested prerequisites for students. For Principles, it is to already to have completed Algebra I, correct? So what is it for Python?

Answer: It is the same exact requirement. Students will need to pass Algebra I with a B, although we have taken a few students who did not get a B.

Question: How many sections of I do we have right now?

Answer: We have two.

Question: So are we going to offer 1 of 1 and 1 of 2?

Answer: Over the next two months as the registration process solidifies, we will know the demand.

Question: So if you do feel like you'll need to add another section, where is that going to come from?

Answer: Joe said that Dr. McClay is very excited about the pathway and she has assured him that she will do her best to balance the master schedule. They will know more after they see the demand.

Steve reminded the Council that we would only fly a section if the enrollment met the aggregate. We respond to student demand. If that was misinterpreted, the class would not fly.

Question: Understanding the historical context of the lack of female and minority participation, especially in programming and higher technology, what can you or are you doing to recruit females and underserved minorities?

Answer: I am so proud that one of our students just started a Women in Computer Science club. I help sponsor that class. It is blossoming and helping more females get into computer science. I am an advocate for all things being equal. Everyone should have their fair shake getting into classes like this.

Yasi added that it helps that they both teach math and shared this is the first year she has more females in her class than males. They started a club called, Girls Who Code. There are a lot of jobs and opportunities for girls in computer science.

Approval of Computer Science Python

Motion to Approve: Lauren Freeman

Second: Michael Fienberg

Approved unanimously

Early College Academy Curriculum Approval

Mr. Gleason shared this program will be to expand the Early College Academy into our middle schools. The program has two components:

1. The first is a dual enrollment partnership with Moorpark College. This allows for high school students to take a year of CSU and UC transferable community college classes within their high school day. They will graduate with sophomore standing and a lot of credits they can transfer to CSU or UC, or they can finish their AA at a community college and take advantage of the automatic transfer guarantee program. Community colleges have flexibility and really supportive Ed. Code requirements to allow any student in high school to take college courses for free. LVUSD has been working hard to close the gap of attendance in a four-year institution for students based on income. Our data tells us you are half as likely to go to a four year to graduate if you qualify for free and reduced lunch.
2. The second component is using Advanced Via Individual Determination (AVID). That curriculum is built on WICOR writing, inquiry, collaboration, organization and results. A day of classes for students in high school would include:
 - a. 10th Grade – taking 2 college strategy classes
 - b. 11th Grade – taking a sociology class and introductory Spanish class (that one semester of Spanish counts as a two-year minimum requirement for CSU and UC).

- c. 11th Grade – they would double up and take 2 classes per semester in anthropology, film appreciation, intercultural communication, music appreciation. All of these meet the general ed requirements at a community college.
- d. 12th Grade – taking statistics and an introductory college English course.

It has been incredible to watch the first cohort of students who didn't necessarily see themselves as being able to go to, or access college, now seeing themselves as college students. Given this, data and research tells us that students start to shape their academic identities as early as middle school. We want to create a supportive environment that is built on structure, developing executive functioning skills and college readiness skills in grades 6, 7, and 8, so that when these students get to high school, they're ready for their college coursework, even more so than the current 9th grade groups. The president at Moorpark College is interested in identifying students early and looking at potentially offering scholarships, and field trip opportunities. If the Council and the Board agree to extend this to middle school, we are opening up more opportunities to access and will provide kids structure and skill to be successful in gleaning a year of college credit, which is equal to a \$30,000 check in their pocket.

Curriculum Council will be approving AVID, although we are calling the course the pathway to the Early College Academy. We see it as a seven-year pathway for students. AVID can be for all students, but necessary for some. All can benefit from it, however priority enrollment will be given to first generation college aspiring students, low-income students, and students who are re-designated fluid English proficient. This is not a remediation program - it is a national acceleration and advancement program, to close opportunity gaps for students who have high potential, but have not necessarily been able to take advantage of their potential. Every teacher involved in the Program will attend a summer institute with Ryan Gleason. They will make sure they have a plan for the year which will be followed and nurtured throughout the whole program as the District forms and expands their Early College Academy Taskforce.

Question: Going back to the efficiency of sections. We have an issue where the AVID I course at CHS is already on the small side. And then if students drop out between the first and second years, will new students be able to join in the sophomore year?

Answer: Yes, we will always backfill if we get to a certain threshold. The CHS class is actually at a healthy size at 29. Agoura is a little high at 37 or 38.

Question: What is the additional fiscal impact on the District?

Answer: Now that we are fully funded through the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), and we have a low English Learner, low-income, and foster youth population, it has become hard for the District to spend the supplemental grant funds which are part of the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP). When you have small populations of students in a district that is largely affluent and college going, it is hard to find programs that target these student populations. This is all part of the supplemental grant expenditures. We have had to increase our supplemental expenditure annually, while we also project cuts to the base grant of our unrestricted funding over the new few years.

In other words, this would be special grant funding that can only be used to target language learners or reclassified language learners, and students on free and reduced lunch, which is why they would receive priority enrollment, from a funding perspective. Beyond that, this is an important achievement gap that we need to address and close in Las Virgenes. AVID will be a very powerful way to do that.

Question: How are kids selected, identified, invited – what is that process?

Answer: Generally speaking if this gets approved, we will have a general interest message sent out by the site principals. I've tentatively scheduled an information night in one of our performing arts centers because if this is passed we will have grades 6-10 Early College Academy cohorts across the District. We expect there will be a lot of parent interest. Students will complete an application which will be scored by a rubric, and we will try to identify the best fit and also give priority enrollment to the sub-groups that have weighted scores, given the funding source and also our gap.

Ms. Stein elaborated and shared that when the Board approved this for 9th grade last year, they held an interest night at the District office and it was standing room only.

Ryan Gleason added that there were several languages present. During the Board meeting, Mr. Gleason presented an information item where some of these students attended to share how their lives had changed, as a result of this program. It was a very moving meeting for all who attended.

Ms. Stein reiterated that she had seen first hand, what an amazing program this has been for these students.

Approval of the Early College Academy for Middle School

Motion to Approve: Casey Rogers

Second: Lauren Freedman

Approved unanimously

The meeting was adjourned at 5:05pm.