



A handwritten signature in green ink, likely belonging to Daniel Stepenosky, the Superintendent. The signature is cursive and stylized, written in a dark green color.

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

January 16, 2019

Mr. Scifres welcomed everyone and explained the meeting would extend until 5:30 to enable the Council to cover six agenda items, some of which had been carried over from the canceled November meeting.

Grades 6-8 History-Social Science Adoption

Mr. Scifres thanked the grades 6-8 social science team for their work on the pilot project. The process started in the spring of last year. This pilot included vertical articulation, and building philosophy and pedagogy. The group met and developed their own rubric last year to make certain they were on the same page.

H-SS in middle school was only impressed with what they saw with one curriculum: Teachers Curriculum Institute (TCI). They piloted for a 10-week period. On December 5, the team convened and deliberated. They reached a decision to bring the TCI curriculum to the Council for their recommendation to bring to the Board of Education. The pilot was designed with 4 teachers from each of our 3 middle school sites; a sped teacher, and a 6th, 7th and 8th grade teacher. The vote was 11-1 to bring forward to Curriculum Council. Mr. Scifres introduced the social science team to provide background for the Council, starting with A.E. Wright Department Chair Lisa Hatfield:

- We have been working on this for 4 years.
- Missed an adoption period. Getting the framework took three additional years for the state to determine what they wanted to include.
- The framework is a 900-page framework document. Lisa broke it down to the basic elements. It is students engaging with content through inquiry, with citizenship as the background coming forward and a real focus on literacy. Within the framework we see the Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts for the History-Social Studies, so ideas like argumentative writing are imbedded throughout the content itself. A major shift in this framework is to look at things through their interconnectivity. How are things integrated within society? What was going on in this interconnectivity?
- They break it down into 4 specific pieces:

- Content: Interconnectivity; TCI worked closely with the state of California and the H-SS Project which are the UC schools who wrote this adoption. They integrated all the particular examples that are in this framework.
- Inquiry: Exacting questions are built into the frameworks.
- Literacy: This is within every part of this curriculum. The book and the digital materials are broken down into lessons. There are 45 lessons instead of chapters. Each of these have a literacy piece.
- Citizenship: This is related to the Fair Act that's been enacted in the state of California. What does it mean to be a citizen, tolerant, inclusive? This is a big part of the adoption. TCI provides many opportunities to allow students to assess the ideals of democracy within the units they are studying.

Darcy Miller cited specific examples of how TCI implemented the frameworks into their curriculum and shared that they found TCI to be the only program that follows the new framework. Other programs incorporated new content but did not change how the content was delivered. Some positive attributes to TCI:

- For new teachers, there are many more resources in the digital version that support teachers and learning.
- The Media Library has far more resources than a teacher would be able to access on their own.
- Interactive maps are available for students to use with their touchscreen Acer.
- The writing and reading skill tool book shows teachers what they should be looking for based on the frameworks and helps inform what to look for when grading the writing students are being asked to do.
- Geography units are far better than anything teachers have ever seen. Provides questions which include cause and effect; comparing and contrasting; and as a teacher, you also have the ability to include these lessons in a presentation format.
- The California framework partnered with California Education and Environment Initiative so every unit and essential question goes back to how the environment was treated, and how it has changed.

Andrew Bourman shared some areas the pilot team would like to see improved by TCI:

- Glitches in technology.
- Merging the grades from the TCI program directly into Aeries.
- Challenges keeping students engaged on their computers.
- Some of our 8th grade teachers felt the program may lack the rigor to get students prepared for 9th grade. Teachers are looking at ways to take this curriculum and increase the rigor.

Andrew then shared the aspects of the program that students expressed they liked:

- The kinesthetic activity: kids like to move around.
- Premade flashcards they can easily print out.

- Digital mapping – students can draw routes on maps.
- Real-world analogies – much of the content is actually connected to real-world events.
- Students can have the text read to them. It can be easily translated to another language so EL students benefit and content is more accessible to students with different needs. The text looks exactly the same as their peers, so they may feel less isolated.

Mr. Scifres mentioned an important component of an adoption is to make sure that it fits within our budget. They have been very cooperative to work with and came in under budget. Another component they liked is the supportive nature of TCI and their willingness to offer ongoing professional development, almost on-demand.

Question: Are there any books?

Answer: Our plan is to have one set of textbooks for each classroom and additional textbooks will be available to check out in the media center. PDFs can also be downloaded to students' laptops if they do not have access to internet at home.

Question: I have a question about the EL. Since the feature is available, would that delay language acquisition?

Answer: We have a small and divergent EL population. We have multiple languages. We are not typical, like the state of CA. It is exciting that we will now have something that is easily translated into any language. This is a move forward for EL students. One of the things that the frameworks encourages you to do is to choose pieces where the culture is relevant so students can feel more connected to the content.

Question: Were there any assessments given during this time?

Answer: There are assessments in every unit. We have the databank and can drag and drop questions into a test.

Question: Did you assess the pilot group? I am wondering because part of the learning process is taking notes, writing down, so I am wondering if that impacts learning with everything being digital?

Answer: Not everything is or has to be digital. It is our choice. We did not compare students who were doing the pilot with the students who were being taught the other materials.

Approval of the TCI History-Social Science Adoption

Motion to Approve: Megan Holman

Second: Dilek Mir

Approved Unanimously

English IV

Mr. Scifres shared the next agenda item had also been almost two years in the making. Two years ago the District went through a 9-11 ELA pilot because the English team had the vision to change the way English IV would be taught. The idea was to incorporate choice into the senior year of English. When students have choice in their literacy experience, they are more successful. Over the course of the past 2-3 years, the high schools have been developing new English IV course options. The idea behind this is options and opportunity giving seniors choices to texts with high interest. Currently there are five English IV classes available:

- Sci-Fi and Fantasy
- Sports Medicine and Psychology
- Creative Writing
- Senior Project
- ERWC Expository Reading Writing & Curriculum

With your vote today, English IV will be sun setting. The English IV course that students have taken in the past will no longer be offered.

English IV: Young Adult Literature Course Proposal

Christina Heredia presented Young Adult (YA) Literature to the Council. Young Adult literature is literature targeted specifically to teenagers. If we can find a book students are really interested in, they are more likely to read. Literature right now is so rich and diverse that every student will be able to find something that interests them. Teachers would like to spend time in their courses, focusing on that.

Marnie Davis explained that the essential question teachers are going to be asking students is, "Is YA Literature reflecting changes in society or is it actually pushing the boundaries to affect those changes." They are going to be looking at former YA books and how they treated certain topics. For example, when talking about mental health and the stigma that has been attached to it in past literature, or looking at the research in society and how mental health has been addressed. Then looking at today, seeing that growth and asking if some of that growth is due to the younger generation embracing new ideas. Are they getting those ideas from some of the YA literature or is the YA literature reflecting those ideas?

An additional point is the difference between quantitative and qualitative. Reading levels (lexile) are sometimes lower, however, if we look at the qualitative information, the concepts in the texts students

will be using are bringing up the level of reading. For example using modern texts and applying it in the real world in advanced ways.

Three of the units will cover mature topics, so teachers would like this course to require a parent permission slip.

Question: Are we asking if they reflecting a change that has already happened or effecting a change? How would they prove the causal relationship between the text and change? How would they make that case?

Answer: We are going to look at past books, compare it to current texts, and look at the changes, policies, and the laws.

Ian Godburn explained that sometimes the exploration is not exactly causal, but it's correlative and we analyze those correlations and ask our ourselves why those correlations are out there? The important piece is that the student is able to contextualize that piece of text within the media around it for its time and that is a valid critical lens through which a student may look It's a lens that a student may be asked to look through as they move on to college. This type of analysis and how a texts feeds, or feeds off, a culture is a current question. I think you are right – exploring the causal link is incredible difficult, but not impossible, and it opens the doors for our students to find contextual links all over the place that can be used to explore in class.

Question: Do you think we can change the word effecting to impacting, would that read better?

Answer: I think we take it stripped down; it is either reflecting or intending to effect that change.

Agreed.

Question: How flexible are you with the texts?

Answer: We have a long list of possible readings, but we will have an anchor text. If a student has read the text before, it may not be a problem because they will be applying different skills to the text and looking at it in a new way.

Question: If these are contemporary issues and texts you are proposing, I assume you are going to make changes often? Some of these topics are hot issues now but may not be in a few years?

Answer: Yes. We have said to Curriculum Council that we would like an easier way to add titles. Keep in mind, it cannot be changed too much, because this will be sent into UC doorways.

Mr. Scifres added that the middle school teams have expressed the same sentiment about desiring a way to be able to add texts, explained the challenges associated with that, and offered two different lenses to look at:

1. We want to make sure teachers have the flexibility to do this because these titles are adaptive and what is relevant now may not be as relevant as years pass.
2. The challenge is with content is pushing the envelope a little bit, we also want to make sure it goes through a process and we reach consensus among community and staff before we put it in a classroom.

Question: What is the plan for teacher training for this course? Will teachers select for this class and will there be some sort of onboarding?

Answer: This process started by asking students what they want to read. The teachers proposing the course typically end up teaching the course the first few years, flushing it out. In order to run as a class, we need to have the number of students who are interested in it and a teacher who wants to teach it. If we don't have either of those pieces, the course will not be offered.

To add to that, there is actually a training through BER Education, it is called What's New in Young Adult Literature. We are in the process of getting a team together to attend that.

Mr. Scifres added that the District also offers 6.5 hours of professional development that can be used for these purposes.

The Curriculum Council student representative offered feedback, sharing he thought the class sounded amazing and it will be very interesting to students.

Question: I've been thinking about the question and asking to what extent can art be a medium for social change? Maybe that question opens up the discussion of, historically, has art catalyzed things? And where are we now with that topic and these books? I'm trying to find more clarity around the question so students can provide a more sound response.

Answer: Yes, I think that question is more open ended, so that would be good.

Approval of English IV: Young Adult Literature

Motion to Approve: Kendra

Second: Lauren Freedman

Approved Unanimously

English IV: Pop Culture and Literature Course Proposal

Ian Godburn reported this course was designed with two things in mind:

1. Retain the core of what was strong about the now sun setting English IV class, which was the literature that was part of that class and has found its way into the world literature camp. They are all important texts, but the reality is there are now barriers to accessing, using, and applying these texts stacking up quickly in a world that is super fast moving. What Chimei Fregoso and Marissa Groper have designed is a course that understands that the way we can best understand these texts is through an understanding of our own contemporary culture. While the texts are valuable, we need to shift the lens, which gives us an opportunity to better understand ourselves. We use film, television, music videos, perhaps even a study of gaming to understand the roots in these classic texts. And then we will have a better understanding of the contemporary media students are studying at the time.
2. The classic design is to get students to improve their written and oral communication along these fields, to make connections between different eras, to do research and projects designed to articulate those connections - all to the point of developing students' skills in studying and understanding intertextuality and how themes go across texts and mediums throughout time. It retains what we loved about the old English IV curriculum, while understanding that to make it relevant for students and to invigorate and engage them, we must contextualize it within contemporary culture. And it gives our students the opportunity to actually understand the things that are right in front of them, as those things are coming faster and with a higher volume.

Chimei Fregoso and Marisa Groper presented specific examples of text units:

- Hamlet is a unit that can be frustrating and overwhelming for kids. This course will try to modernize it by asking how a 21st century teenager relates to Hamlet. There are a lot of connections, surprisingly. We try to modernize it, so it is still relevant but they'll find it to be engaging.
- Dante's Inferno is the idea of salvation, the idea of redemption, the idea of divine justice (or injustice) and place it within a contemporary sitcom, The Good Place. Those themes are parallel. The kids love studying ancient literature and then seeing something on television and making those connections.

Marissa and Chimei went on to cite additional examples of texts and how they've developed course content and connected it to contemporary culture.

Ian Godburn shared that this content has been road tested and it has the buy-in from students. From the standpoint of what we teach when we teach English, it is not only themes but also how different media use the same devices throughout, how it crosses genres, and how we can make better meaning of it.

Question: I think a teen's idea of pop culture is very different from an adult's idea of pop literature. How do you keep up with that? Will you make sure that everything that your making connections to, between the past and the present, still holds up with kids? For instance, The Breakfast Club to me, I know it's famous, but it feels like more of a classic.

Answer: Mr. Godburn explained that a lot of the contemporary work has been student vetted and they are the ones who have brought it to the class.

Question: To build on that, I am curious if other people think that calling it Pop Culture may be an issue? Are you going to get kids showing up and asking, "Why are we watching/listening to classic 90's movies, instead of modern things?"

Answer: Actually, the name was the one thing we were not sure about. The kids will know more about current pop culture than we do. The student's will bring the currency of the moment into the classroom.

Question: It sounds like it is really Ancient Literature in the Modern World?

Answer: I think we can revisit the name.

Ms. Stein suggested that the course proposal sounded great and everyone in the room would probably love to take this course. Perhaps they move forward with approving the course, understanding there may be a possible name update.

Approval of English IV: Pop Culture and Literature (content; potential name change)

Motion to Approve: Casey Rogers

Second: Michael Fienberg

Approved Unanimously

English IV: Search for Self Course Proposal

Marnie introduced the English IV: Search Self as another English class version which incorporates the desired elements of the old English IV into a new class. The focus is more on identity. It combines world literature with high interest contemporary titles and the themes are updated looking at today's society/issues and how those affect the building of one's identity. In the course description, it says it is designed for students who are interested in examining identity formation and the factors that contribute to it. There will be a minimum of 4 units taught. It will be a combination of full text, high interest articles, Ted Talks, songs, video clips and connecting classic literature with contemporary issues. College and career readiness is emphasized throughout. They will be working on their college essay as part of the course, and will be doing a resume and cover letter. They will be taking critical theory and applying it within these issues, i.e.; looking at things from a feminist's point-of-view, a Marxist point-of-view, and a historical point-of-view and how these affect the

writing, and for the people who are reading it, their identity. There is an impact of media and assumptions; for instance when you watch a movie, what assumptions are being made about love, gender, or family? They'll be really analyzing these things. Looking at past and present texts (King Lear and Cirino de Bergerac) and also applying them to more modern examples. We are still in the process of incorporating the research project and critical essay.

Question: Are there any other classes that incorporate writing into their college essays?

Answer: There are. There are some that start working on that in 11th grade.

Question: Where is the borderline because these essays are supposed to be written by the students. How much input do they get from the teacher? How much is it authentically their work?

Answer: It is their work. The teacher looks at it and provides feedback. A lot of students pay to get people to help them and this provides support to all students. Most students write a very surface level essay, but if you are taking a class that is about the search for self, it is more guided questions from the teacher to get more out of the student to dig deeper.

Question: Do you have any examples of the full text that you are going to be using in this class?

Answer: They can choose between Hamlet and King Lear, Cirino de Bergerac, The Little Prince. For each unit, there is a lot to choose from.

Approval of English IV: Search for Self

Motion to Approve: Jackii Duncan

Second: Laila Jorns

Approved Unanimously

Mr. Scifres took a moment with the Counsel to champion the work of the IB Program at Agoura High School that Ms. Kestenbaum leads, and along with other educators at the sight. Mr. Deloma is a big part of. He explained that it is an incredible amount of work and a lot of training goes into it. It has been at Agoura for 10 years. It is entirely teacher driven, something the group came to on their own and they run an incredible program. IB is a global curriculum to develop culturally aware citizens across the world. Because of Ms. Kestenbaum, Mr. Scifres shared he attended an IB training this summer and it was quite possibly one of the best trainings he'd ever attended. Mr. Scifres introduced Jen Kestenbaum to talk more about the International Baccalaureate Program.

Cambridge University Press - Manana Curriculum Proposal

Jen Kestenbaum explained that part of the beauty of IB is that the curriculum is ever changing. Every five years, courses are in different cycles to undergo a review. The organization collects feedback

from all of the teachers who teach these courses. They take that feedback and their goal is to figure out exactly how the world has changed and how they need to revise courses and assessments that really fit in with the core values of IB. With that, often comes changes to the curriculum. This year, AHS had five language B teachers (Language A = English Language Arts teachers and Language B teachers teach Spanish and Mandarin) attend a training to determine the newest forms of assessment and curriculum for Language B course. Every Language B course uses the same themes in its core curriculum: Identities, Experiences, Human Ingenuity, Social Organization & Sharing the Planet. They are driven and focus on conceptual understandings. There is a new heavy focus on listening assessments. With the new listening assessment, comes the need to update textbooks.

Walter Del Olmo introduced the new text being proposed, called *Manana*. He shared that IB is trying to emulate what AP does, in reference to lesson components, which they have not required before. They do speak Spanish in class, but the way that IB formats their tests is very specific. *Manana* will benefit not only IB students, but also the higher-level Spanish IV and Spanish V students, as they are co-seated in class. The new text will also help with:

- Listening activities, which are the hardest for students. The new book has a multitude of them. The current book has only one per unit.
- One-on-one interviews. Students sit in a room with their teacher for eleven minutes participating in a 1:1 interview.

Manana is up to date and refreshing. They hope to be able to collaborate with some of the English classes around events that are happening in Spanish and Chinese culture.

Question: Can you explain what you mean by listening activities?

Answer: It is normally a recording that plays for 2-5 minutes that students will listen to, and there are various questions, which need to be answered in specific IB ways. For example, an answer would be true or false with a justification. In previous years, this component was not on the test in order for students to earn an IB diploma, but it will be required now and implemented next year.

Question: Have you pushed for professional development to get the IB assessments to other school sites? They ask questions of kids in ways that AP doesn't, that really develops kids.

Answer: That is part of my 5-year plan and was already presented to the Pathways Committee. I would like to provide this to the District as a whole because I love the assessments and the approach to the learning.

Approval of the Cambridge University Press - *Manana*

Motion to Approve: Laila Jorns

Second: Lauren Walsh

Approved Unanimously

Culinary Arts III Course Proposal

Mr. Scifres provided some background on our CTE Pathways and our focus on college and career. The key word here is career. We are all about options and opportunities and not all students are going to go to college. We want to support and encourage them if they choose to go right into a career. One of the routes to do this is through our CTE pathways, which are:

- o Arts, Media, and Entertainment
- o Sports Medicine
- o Robotics
- o Careers in Education
- o Culinary Arts

Currently, we have culinary arts programs that are thriving at both AHS and CHS, due in large part to the fine work of Ms. Alderton and Chef Allen. There are a lot of great things going on including prepping & preparing foods, and planning menus and evaluating the tastes of foods. Both rooms are designed very uniquely; half classroom and half full kitchen environments. Some of the concepts covered are sanitation, safe food handling, etc. We are looking to deepen the pathways that are thriving, and for this pathway the next step is a Culinary Arts III level course.

Chef Allen presented the content of the CA III course. It would take things a step further. CA I and II students are doing a lot of catering. They are running restaurants, hosting on and off-site banquets. The level III class would become the owners of that business and do the bookkeeping, the shopping, meeting with the client to plan the events, etc. They would determine what the client's needs are, and work within budgets that are proposed to them.

Ms. Alderton added they would be enhancing more of their culinary skills. In CA I or CA II, they prepare for groups of 4, but in CA III, they would be preparing for a group of up to 15 to groups of 300 i.e.; they are planning to cater Murder Mystery Night (300) two nights in a row.

Students will employ deductive reasoning using their math skills, explore nutrients and diets, and plan and prepare complicated recipes for events. It's really good practice for them to work with the CA I and CA II students, so they can see where they might want to go with the class.

Question: Would there be an opportunity for a student to skip levels I and II if they are experienced in culinary arts?

Answer: No, not in either program. You are also learning safety and sanitation skills, so students may think they have a foundation, but they do not. We prepare students to be

certified in Servsafe, which is certification of the industry standards. We took the Servsafe class and implement/teach those skills to the students.

Question: Which level would get their Servsafe certification?

Answer: CA II would be very close to it and it would be covered in the 1st semester of CA III. You have to take the certification in front of an instructor who is Servsafe certified so they would elect to do that on their own. We can prepare them for it, but we cannot provide the certification.

Approval of Culinary Arts III

Motion to Approve: Mariann Pall

Second: Lisa Hatfield

Approved Unanimously

Meeting was adjourned at 5:30pm.