

LAS VIRGENES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

4111 LAS VIRGENES ROAD  
CALABASAS, CALIFORNIA 91302  
Telephone: (818) 880-4000  
Fax: (818) 880-4200  
www.lvusd.org



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

January 18, 2022

**Present:** Emily Austin, Su Baird, Bella Bernt, Melissa Brennan, Kirby Brock, Marnie Davis, Karrie DeMarco, Marlene Didierjean, Dr. Clara Finneran, Willow Gavin, Sheri Given, Dr. Ryan Gleason, Jessica Guenther, Nicole Goldstein, Robin Hassen, Lisa Hatfield, Jeannie Hoffman, Tina Johnson, Paula Johnson, Laura Kintz, Doug Kohno, Leslie Martinez, Pam McDonnell, Linda Menges, Darci Miller, Hannah Mogul, Michael Robkin, Allison Stein, Lesli Stein, Amy Strachman, Courtney Peoples, Lila Rahimi, Sandra Ritvo, David Rivas, Amy Rosen, Pamela Rudy, Carrie Trupp, Heather Wassenberg, Adam Weinstein, Emily Wigger

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 p.m. by Dr. Finneran, who welcomed the Committee and introduced Board of Education Member Linda Menges as this year's new Board representative, in addition to Ms. Stein. Ms. Menges welcomed everyone and thanked them for their time and effort. Ms. Stein added how appreciative she is for everyone's participation.

Dr. Finneran relayed a few updates related to COVID:

- LVUSD distributed test kits to families at all our campuses last Friday.
- We've scheduled immunization clinics at each of our schools for all COVID immunizations, as well as flu shots.
- We've hired about 40 substitute teachers since the school year started. This has helped, however, the District is still stretched thin with staff members who have to stay home or care for sick family members. Dr. Finneran acknowledged the work staff is doing to keep our students learning.

Universal TK Planning

Dr. Finneran explained that the Council will likely be seeing a Universal TK curriculum presented to them for review in May. By the 2025-26 school year, all California schools will be expected to have Universal TK available for all 4-year-old students. The District has started to prepare for this because there are a lot of pieces that need to be put in place. Dr. Finneran introduced Ms. Kintz to share more about the efforts currently underway to prepare for this process.

Ms. Kintz shared that some organizations refer to the Universal TK rollout as Universal PK for Pre-Kindergarten. We have been able to clarify that the UPK that is referred to includes Headstart, Public Preschool, and family, neighbor, and friend preschool programs. Our district rollout includes TK programs only and current committees are meeting from January - May, We're hoping to be able to bring a Pre-K Curriculum to the Committee for approval during the May 17 meeting.

Senate Bill 130 offers Pre-kindergarten to all of our 4-year-old students by the time it is completely rolled out. It will be a game-changer for all children because it will address achievement gaps caused by lack of access to free Pre-K. Birth date requirements for our existing TK will shift each year until 2025. Currently, any student that turns 5 years old between Sept. 2-Dec. 2 is eligible to now enroll in our existing TK classes. That birthday window will add on two more months each year until it is completely rolled out and PK is offered to every 4-year-old in California. The District will need to adjust for this. There is a plan for teacher development and we're tracking enrollment to determine our facilities needs and as well as fiscal impact. Research says that more students take AP classes if they've had a preschool experience so the benefits to students are exponential and long lasting. There's also research that fewer students are retained when they have a preschool experience. One of the requirements is that we will need to have low student-teacher ratios. This will start out as 1:12 so 1 adult to 12 students and this is still up in the air, but the state has indicated they would like to reduce this to 1:10 with one adult being a certificated teacher and the other adult a classified staff instructional assistant (aide).

Dr. Finneran added that there's research that supports the 3rd grade reading metric of success for when students have attended quality preschool programs. It is students who are impacted by poverty and other dynamics who have less access to high quality preschool, so the District is very excited to be able to offer this universally.

Ms. Kintz held two think tanks in December to get staff feedback and share information. One was with only TK teachers, and the other was comprised of kindergarten, first grade, and upper-level elementary teachers. Having 4-year-olds on campus will change dynamics and the culture and we certainly want everyone to be preparing for this. Currently, LVUSD has four-year-olds on campus for only a few months until they turn 5 (by December 2nd) and in the coming years we will have more 4-year-olds on campus. We need to adjust our program accordingly, and we will need to be aligning with the rigorous preschool standards, to be able to offer a high-quality experience.

Additionally, Ms. Kintz added that by the 2023-24 school year there is a requirement for all of our TK teachers to have multi-subject credentials as well as an ECE (Early Childhood Education) permit, which is an additional 24 units of instruction. We are going to be offering those courses free for our teachers starting this spring, through Center EdX.

Two new committees have been formed and are being fine-tuned: a TK Curriculum Adoption Committee and a Universal TK Task Force. The Curriculum Adoption Committee's focus will be curriculum, aligning to standards and piloting a couple of programs for adoption. The Universal TK Task Force will look at a wide range of elements including programming, assessments, standards alignment, report cards, and facilities, etc. These committee meetings will be running from February-May.

**Question:** Will this require hiring new teachers?

**Answer:** Yes. Not for the first year, but we do have some schools that are smaller and currently have a TK/K class combined. So we expect we will have to have both a TK and a K teacher so we may be adding staff every, or every other year, as we look at our enrollment projections.

**Question:** Is this mandatory?

**Answer:** It is not mandatory yet, but we certainly anticipate that almost all of our LVUSD families will be enrolling.

**Question:** Will this impact our enrollment at Buttercup?

**Answer:** Yes. Now that we will be offering TK at all of our elementary schools for general and special ed students, we are aware that there will be impacts to our learning staff specialists because there will be more on their caseloads and there will be younger students.

**Question:** What are the current TK hours?

**Answer:** TK classes start at the same time as the other grades start and they're usually dismissed around 1 or 1:15 (same as Kindergarten). There are a few sites whose Kindergarten goes longer, so TK may go longer. The short answer to this is that it will be a 7:45 drop off and 1-1:15 dismissal. We will be working with our child care providers to expand our before and after care options.

We've started to look at our facilities needs and have asked all of our sites to provide maps of their current TK classrooms. The state requires that if we build new TK classrooms - we'll have to make sure they have bathrooms attached and that the playground is within easy supervision of the classroom. However, if we use existing classrooms, those requirements will not be in effect. Most of our sites have enough classrooms but we are keeping a close eye on this, as well as enrollment, to make certain we have enough space.

**Question:** What is the process with the curriculum?

**Answer:** We are going to look at a couple of programs to start with. We plan to choose two to pilot using our rubric aligning the programs to the standards. We have a start/end pilot date for one with a debrief and then a start/end pilot date for the second one with time to make a decision to bring a curriculum proposal to the Council.

Dr. Finneran reiterated how important the Curriculum Council Committee will be to this process. She said we will keep bringing updates and the selection of the curriculum will be one of the most important pieces. Additionally, aside from the ability to expand ways in which we serve students and families, Dr. Finneran shared another exciting related aspect is the involvement of Center EdX and the District's ability to offer the ECE Permit to our staff. We will also likely have enrollees from other districts and that is a wonderful opportunity for our own staff to grow together.

### Professional Development Overview & Outcomes

Dr. Finneran shared some updates on professional development. Center EdX is looking at offering Classified staff micro-credentials or certifications. More about this will be forthcoming. Dr. Finneran directed the Council to the CenterEdX.lvusd.org website and our staff PD portal to highlight the many professional development opportunities that are currently available to both our classified and certificated staff, which include:

- Social Justice Standards Series
- Cognitive Behavioral Coaching Series
- Student Behavior sessions
- Mastery Based Grading Series
- Mathematical Practices Series
- Mindfulness & Wellness Series
- LGBTQ Sessions

Additionally, we are working with our 6-12 grade ELA staff and middle school math to develop PD. There is a new state math framework coming out and there has been a bit of controversy around it. About 1,000 professionals in the STEM field came together to write an open letter. Dr. Finneran said she would bring more about this to the Council as it unfolds. In the meantime, the District is working with UCLA to gain a better understanding of the new framework and to make sure we have standards alignment and a vertical collaboration conversation happening.

Ms. Kintz added that they are working on a couple of GoMath PDs (grades K-2, 3-5) and there are a couple of Google Classroom series that teachers have expressed interest in, which will be added too.

### Library/Virtual Field Trips and Other Creative Activities

Dr. Finneran invited the District library coordinator, Ms. Tina Johnson to provide a library update. Ms Johnson shared that she and her team have been working hard to find new ways to support students and teachers by providing meaningful and entertaining content to their students. Many of the ideas she shared have come directly from staff members and Ms. Johnson invited everyone to reach out if they have ideas or suggestions of how her team could provide more support. Some of the initiative's Ms. Johnson shared were:

- Virtual Field Trips (daily at 10am) - LVUSD has a partnership with the Center for Interactive Learning which provides opportunities for virtual field trips right from the classroom. The Center for Interactive Learning is partnered with some powerful organizations such as The California Parks, Penn State Museum, and the Smithsonian and they want to push these out to students in an interactive way. Ms. Johnson said, "We have been having a lot of fun auditing these and have created a calendar for teachers."
- World Read Aloud Day on February 2. The media team is trying to work as a group to highlight literary events that are happening to enhance curriculum in the classroom. Every grade level student will be reading the same book titles. These books will expand on topics such as SEL, Digital Citizenship, and the social justice lens to compliment the curriculum being covered in classrooms.

- We are coordinating group reads which inspire artistic projects (i.e., Explore the Arts and Express Yourself).
- Read Across America Day -The team is working on programming and securing mystery readers to culminate in a virtual reading experience from an author visit. These will be available for classes to join and are scheduled for Thursdays at 1pm during February.

Ms. Johnson also shared that our state library of California decided last year that there was a crisis in information, and they were going to attempt to address this by paying for databases. Databases can cost up to \$5,000 for an annual subscription. Last year, they purchased Britannica and ProQuest for elementary students and they were so widely used, the state extended and enhanced them. They've also tied them into our college programming - some of our UC's and state schools. This year they added National Geographic and Environmental Science and Context. These have all been added to our library research databases links and our students are automatically authorized to access these through our library website.

Calabasas Library Connection is still strong. Student ID cards are their library cards and these provide access to curriculum supplemental materials.

Lastly, Ms. Johnson shared some of the ways our media centers are engaging in initiatives to support our efforts in SEL, the arts and literacy. She highlighted examples of these which include unifying our spaces with infrastructure, hosting student book talks, and hosting student author events. TVs have been installed and utilized to enhance these events in all of our media centers.

### Summer School Planning

Over the past few years LVUSD has offered some successful summer school opportunities including credit recovery at the high school level. Last summer and the summer, the District offered some credit recovery and SEL for a small portion of middle school students and that is in the works now again, for this summer. In addition, through supplemental funding, we've offered a couple of programs at the elementary level geared towards students who were struggling. And we have worked with the YMCA's Find My Genius program, which has been very successful for our students. We are now looking at expanding this for students who are below grade level or "at promise." We track/follow these students, so we can bring information at a future meeting about how these students are doing. We're coordinating with Megan Glynn at the YMCA to develop a 5-week program and looking at utilizing the resources that we have to potentially double the number of students we are serving.

Ms. Stein thanked everyone. Ms. Menges added how excited she is to be back on the committee and reiterated appreciation for the Committee members.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30pm.