

LAS VIRGENES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

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



BOARD OF EDUCATION

ANGELA CUTBILL
DALLAS LAWRENCE
LINDA MENGES
LESLI STEIN
KATE VADEHRA

DANIEL STEPENOSKY, Ed. D.
SUPERINTENDENT

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

April 6, 2022

Present: Susana Baird, Bella Bernt, Chad Bloom, Melissa Brennan, Marnie Davis, Karrie DeMarco, Dana Dickson, Dr. Clara Finneran, Willow Gavin, Sheri Given, Dr. Ryan Gleason, Nicki Goldstein, Ashley Goulet, Jessica Guenther, Robin Hassen, Lisa Hatfield, Christy Heredia, Amber Juarez, Tina Johnson, Laura Kintz, Kelly Lampert, Thomas Liu, Kristen Marsilio, Linda Menges, Courtney Peoples, David Rivas, Michael Robkin, Amy Rosen, Allison Stein, Lesli Stein, Amy Strachman, Adam Weinstein

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

Academic Support

Dr. Finneran reminded the Council that the District had made an investment to have full-time intervention specialists at each school. She shared that Ms. Kintz has been doing a wonderful job working with elementary school specialists to ensure consistency, and that she and Dr. Gleason have been working with the middle and high school principals for consistency among secondary intervention specialists. Ms. Kintz added that elementary intervention is focused on ELA, literacy and math, and the specialists typically work with small groups of 4-8 students. The specialists also engage in pre-teaching so that students are familiar with upcoming concepts. Dr. Finneran shared that at the secondary level, intervention specialists focus on credit recovery and on students that may need increased individual attention for various reasons. Staff and student feedback as well as formative assessments demonstrate that the intervention specialists have been beneficial.

Civic Engagement

Dr. Gleason shared that the option for students to earn the State Seal of Civic Engagement was approved by the Board of Education. The graduation requirement for all students to fulfill a certain number of service learning hours to graduate has been replaced with this optional Seal of Civic Engagement. The next steps will be communication and implementation. The District is working with the high school administration to identify the leaders at each site who will execute the next steps. Communication is being prepared that will include video and websites. Dr. Finneran expressed her thanks to the Committee and the Board for their questions and their feedback. She emphasized how helpful this is when implementing a shift or change in policy.

LVIS 2022-2023

Dr. Finneran explained that coming out of the pandemic, districts were required to continue to provide independent study as an option in particular circumstances, and LVUSD responded by creating Las Virgenes Independent School (LVIS). These learning environments have evolved from what they used to look like during the pandemic, to a model that has worked well for about 200 LVUSD students and families. LVIS is housed at AEW middle school. Dr. Roberts is the principal and Gia Jantz is the assistant principal. Next year, LVUSD will be pursuing accreditation for the high school (they are accredited already for K-8) so LVIS can be a distinct school. The District is aiming to have this process completed by next spring so that the first class of LVIS seniors would be able to graduate in Spring 2024.

Dr. Gleason added that the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) accreditation is the first step in this accreditation process. Step two and three involve A-G submissions to the University of California Office of the President (UCOP). All courses need to be submitted so students can graduate with A-G eligible status.

Preparing for the May 17 Meeting

- **6-12 ELA Core Book Additions** - Dr. Finneran shared that a group of about 15 teachers have co-constructed a checklist to be used as the group considers books to add to the 6-12 core book list. They were able to utilize resources from the American Libraries Association and from some other school districts as they created the checklist, which was recently finalized. Multiple teachers are reading each book that has been suggested for addition, and the list will be brought to the next Curriculum Council meeting. Ms. Davis added that the ELA teachers are hopeful that teachers could use this process annually in order to regularly update the book list.
- **TK Curriculum** - Dr. Gleason reminded the Committee that TK will be available to all four year olds by the 2025-26 school year. The District is in the process of looking at facilities, staffing, and several other categories of needs in order to fully implement TK. Center EdX has developed and will be offering a permit program because the state is requiring that all TK teachers have ECE permits and multiple subject credentials, and that classes are staffed at a 12:1 average. Thirteen school districts statewide and one county office of education will be participating in this new Center EdX ECE permit program.

Ms. Kintz introduced Ms. Johnson who is on the TK Adoption Committee. She reminded the Council about the two TK committees who are engaged in this work, the TK Taskforce, and the TK Curriculum Adoption Committee. LVUSD has developed a rigorous rubric which addresses all the state requirements that will be used as they evaluate TK curriculum. The Committee reviewed two programs:

- SAVAS Three Cheers for TK: The team was positive, however they felt they wanted more materials than were offered.
- Creative Curriculum: The Committee found this to be very comprehensive and high quality. It is currently leading.
- There is one more program the Committee will be reviewing, however, the team feels that it is not likely it will be as comprehensive as Creative Curriculum.

Ms. Kintz explained how well aligned Creative Curriculum is with our PreK standards. PreK standards are different than Kindergarten standards, which focus more on Kindergarten

readiness. The Adoption Committee has been thorough, and even visited Buttercup Preschool to see the progression from three and four-year-old Buttercup to TK to Kindergarten. A question was posed regarding what parents can expect if they have a four-year-old going into TK, and Ms. Kintz explained that the learning will be play-based, integrated, differentiated, and comprehensive. For example, math and science topics can be explored together through block building and measuring.

- **Student Leadership** - Dr. Gleason shared that the District is currently in the process of working with high school administration on recommending a potential adoption of a curriculum for our ASB Leadership classes. He shared that as leadership continues to evolve and become more complex, our goal as a community is to continue to make sure we offer a contemporary curriculum. Ms. Wenter at AHS, and Ms. Johnson at CHS, have started to look at the standards that are issued through California Activities Directors Association, and will potentially bring a recommendation to the Council for approval in May.
- **Broadcasting Engineering Pathway** - Dr. Gleason shared that next year both high schools will be launching a broadcasting engineering pathway that will leverage the technical capacity of our Performing Art Education Centers (PAECs) to support students in understanding how light, sound, and engineering come together. Currently IB Film (at Agoura) and the AME Academy (at CHS) both focus on long form film. Given that short film formats, telling one's story and being able to market yourself through video are powerful modern skills, next year the plan is to launch two co-seated broadcasting classes that combine English and broadcasting. A question was asked regarding use of the word "academy," and Dr. Gleason explained that there would be courses in the coming years that could include both broadcasting and other subjects, such as history, which would provide interdisciplinary and career-focused opportunities for students. Another question was asked about the performing arts spaces, and if there is enough space, and Dr. Gleason assured the group that there is enough space, and that it will be maximized.
- **Sources of Strength** - Dr. Gleason explained this item is an update to an item that was shared at the previous meeting. Students are demonstrating needs in unprecedented ways. For example, suicide risk assessment numbers are going up and our social emotional screener shows a sharp increase in the students demonstrating at least one mental health risk factor. Over the past few years the Board and District have implemented systems to proactively address mental health needs. They've invested in the restructuring of counseling around wellness efforts, expanded elementary and secondary counseling, and opened up the parent education dialogue into the community to raise overall mental wellness awareness and support.

To expand these ongoing proactive efforts, the District is exploring the implementation of a system called Sources of Strength, which is being used in many school districts across the nation. It's an asset building approach, an upstream student-led prevention that focuses on developing assets such as physical health, spirituality, generosity, mentors, positive friends and family support. When those sources are well cultivated and understood, students develop a resilience to the challenges of life. Students and staff receive training that addresses these "sources of strength," the importance of them, and how to find them. Conversations around mental health are also normalized through the program. Research demonstrates that 10% of students trained and engaged in the work provides a strong network of connections and support for students. A question was asked regarding support for the students who are trained, and Dr. Gleason explained that the highly trained staff we have (such as LMFT and LCSW staff members) would be significant to this work. Another question was posed

regarding whether or not this is a class, and at this time it is not a class. Dr. Gleason informed the group that Sources of Strength is a K-12 program, and if the Council and the Board adopt it, and LVUSD finds it successful at the high school level, involving our K-8 schools would be something to explore. An additional question was asked regarding bullying and Dr. Gleason explained the importance of being articulate with emotional vocabulary as well as remaining aware of the current context in which we are living. A follow up question regarding the needs of Afghani and Ukranian students to have counseling in their native languages, and Dr. Gleason assured the Council that many supports are in place for these students and also shared that the District is exploring a partnership with Daybreak Health of Simi Valley who could provide supplemental counseling in various languages. Dr. Gleason encouraged the Committee to reach out to Veronica Esqueda in the Family Resource Center if they find they have a student in need. Veronica has provided a conduit for all of these families. She is connected to our homeless, foster, income challenged and multilingual families and is finding ways for support for them from things you wouldn't think a school district could such as backpacks, glasses, meals, gas money, etc. He shared that more information about the family resource center can be found at LVUSD.org on the far right hand tab. The Council will receive more information regarding the Sources of Strength program in May.

Dr. Gleason thanked everyone for their time. Ms. Menges shared her gratitude to everyone for their time as well. She shared how valuable it is to help the Board make sure they are implementing programs that are the most beneficial. She shared that it is helpful to hear the process and the questions. Ms. Stein echoed those sentiments and commended the Council for their questions. She shared that eventually these items get moved to the Board level and are adopted, so they are around for a long time. She thanked the Council for their eyes, their ears, and their voices and wished everyone a good break.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:45pm.