

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

MATHY WASSERMAN

DANIEL STEPENOSKY, Ed. D.
SUPERINTENDENT

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

January 19, 2021

Present: Jenny Angel, Emily Austin, Susana Baird, Melissa Brennan, Kirby Brock, Jason Busby, Hazelle Cato, Darlynn Childress, Karrie DeMarco, Sara Exner, Dr. Clara Finneran, Rochelle Gagliardi, Ryan Gleason, Nicole Goldstein, Jake Goodman, Lisa Hatfield, Mary Hazlett, Craig Hochhaus, Tina Johnson, Paula Johnson, Laura Kintz, Kiyomi Kowalski, Kelly Lampert, Thomas Liu, Dr. Stephanie McClay, Nadia Rizk, Amy Rosen, Vanessa Savich, Lesli Stein, Monette Thomas, Dr. Kate Vadehra, Adam Weinstein, Melanie Wright

The meeting was called to order at 3:30 p.m. by Mr. Gleason.

Mr. Gleason explained to the Committee that the Board of Education reorganizes every December, which can impact which committees board members will sit on. He introduced the new Board member and committee representative, Dr. Kate Vadehra, and welcomed returning member, Ms. Lesli Stein. Mr. Gleason thanked them for their participation.

Mr. Gleason shared with the committee that these meeting agenda items had been informed by the District's developing Social Justice Three Year Plan and cultural proficiency roadmap which had been vetted through multiple District committees, including Curriculum Council, over the past few months. The draft plan will be presented as an information item to the Board of Education at their next meeting and will outline the work of the next three years.

Ryan noted that it's easy to make progress with important work and not take the opportunity to pause. He wanted the committee to acknowledge what their work is helping achieve as well as summarizing some of the work ahead:

- The District will be launching a spring Level III Social Justice Leadership course for staff, using three guiding texts. Sixty staff members have registered.
- LVUSD has adopted Board Policy 0415- Equity, and committees are moving forward with reviewing and aligning discipline practices.
- The committee will review the Teaching Tolerance Social Justice Standards and adopt a LVUSD K- 12 progression of standards to promote informed conversations about where to integrate different texts and where they're best placed as part of a K-12 continuum.

- Once adopted, the Committee will begin conversations about English and social studies curricula and determine if we need to supplant different titles or different supplemental resources to achieve those standards.

Approval of Social Justice Leadership in the United States Course

Mr. Gleason introduced two of LVUSD’s high school social studies teachers, Melissa Brennan and Adam Weinstein, to share their proposal for an 11th grade elective class. He explained that Melissa and Adam both brought a unique expertise to be able to develop this course, and utilizing the skeleton of existing approved UC A-G elective courses, have developed the tentatively titled Social Justice Leadership in America course. Mr. Gleason invited them both to share briefly about their background and passion in this subject area. They shared the following about the course:

- Will provide an outlet for students to engage in difficult topics and conversations, which are particularly relevant with what is happening in our country.
- Will cover topics with a level of detail they deserve which traditional history courses don't have the time to delve into.
- As a junior and senior elective, students who are interested and highly engaged by this material can opt in, and have an outlet and opportunity to learn how to communicate with empathy and compassion, even when saying or hearing heard things.
- The course will use the following texts:
 - *Stamped: Racism, Anti-racism, and You* by Jason Reynolds and Ibram X. Kendi
 - *A Different Mirror* by Ronald Takaki, adapted by Rebecca Stefoff

Approval of the Social Justice Leadership in the United States

Motion to Approve: Kiyomi Kowalski

Second: Amy Rosen

Passed Unanimously

Teaching Tolerance Social Justice Standards Review

Mr. Gleason shared that English and social studies teachers periodically reach out, and have more frequently following the murder of George Floyd, inquiring about how they might obtain specific book titles or supplemental resources for use in their classes. These requests would typically be vetted through Curriculum Council, and if approved, sent to the Board of Education for their approval and recommendation for implementation. To facilitate approval of these investments, LVUSD needs to ensure cohesion of K-12 resources in addition to ensuring alignment with the actions in the Social Justice Three Year Plan. The best way to achieve this is to have standards, however, there are currently no state adopted social justice standards. Teaching Tolerance has put together a set of anchor standards and age-appropriate learning outcomes divided into four domains: identity, diversity, justice and action (IDJA). LVUSD can adopt these standards if they are determined to be appropriate and approved by the Council and the Board of Education. Mr. Gleason asked the committee to break into groups to review these standards and their efficacy to inform our vision of what happens per grade level. The goal would be to determine where things fit over the course of the next five years within our grade level curriculum and to set up the foundation to fulfill faculty requests.

The results of the breakout sessions follow:

1. The CC members all provided feedback on the Social Justice Standards in small breakout rooms.
2. Feedback centered around the need for Professional Development as to "how" some of the standards can be addressed.
3. Council members reflected back that many of the standards reinforce ideas already taught in the classroom.

Freshman Seminar Discussion

Mr. Gleason explained that four-five years ago, the Council and Board worked to revamp the existing freshman Health and Geography graduation requirement courses into an updated and more contemporary class called Freshman Seminar. A challenge experienced with that course has been that although great educators have put their fingerprints on it, a really skilled social studies teacher who can teach the cultural proficiency side of the course may not necessarily be as comfortable teaching about sexual health and wellness.

Additionally, in 2020, the state board adopted a brand new comprehensive health education framework, which is one of the most progressive in the country. It addresses issues such as sexual health and wellness development, consent, gender identity, and many more topics that had not previously been covered in standards. At the same time, the state IQC (Instructional Quality Commission) just approved the last draft of an ethnic studies model curriculum to go before the state board. We can anticipate in 2021 or 2022, that the state board of education will adopt an ethnic studies model course or model program outline, and may even go as far as to make it a high school graduation requirement. The ethnic studies originally came before the state board about a year ago, however it was pulled off the table for revision. The revised version has a focus on four main groups of people: African American, Asian Americans and Pacific Islander, Chicana/Latina, and Native American. The framework will focus on the following themes: identity, history and movement, systems of power and social movements, and equity.

In summary, we have a Freshman Seminar course which was developed from a health and geography foundation. Now five years later, the policies are shifting and there is a healthy strong vision to not only promote health, but also cultural proficiency in high school. We see this as a way to evolve Freshman Seminar further, to meet these anticipated needs.

Mr. Gleason shared the CDE Health Framework brochures which were created for community and parents to offer a snapshot of the different elements that are recommended by grade level. He also shared an overview of an excerpt from the ethnic studies model curriculum that will be coming forward and asked that the Council review both of these, prior to the next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.