The Los Angeles County Office of Education  
California Democracy School  

Site Validation Report  

School Information  
County: Los Angeles County  
District: Culver City Unified School District  
School: Culver City High School  
Civic Coor.: Carlos Valverde  
Email: carlosvalverde@ccusd.org  
Site Admin: Kelli Tarvyd  
Email: kellitarvyd@ccusd.org  
Principal: Lisa Cooper  
Email: lisacooper@ccusd.org  

Site Validation Team  
Date of Visit: April 12, 2016  
Team Leader: Michelle Herczog  
Signature:  
Agency: Los Angeles County Office of Education  
Phone: (562) 922-6908  
Member: Kathryn Edwards, LACOE  
Signature:  

Site Validation Team Recommendation  
✓ The Site Validation Team has validated information to confirm that high quality civic learning is institutionalized to enable every student to participate in a civic inquiry and investigation at least once during their high school career. The team, therefore, recommends that this school be selected as a California Democracy School.  

☐ The Site Validation Team was unable to validate the full implementation of high quality civic learning for all students and cannot recommend that this school be selected as a California Democracy School.
Additional Comments

After examining a great deal of evidence, observing classrooms, and interviewing students, teachers, school administrators, and community stakeholders, it is abundantly clear that Culver City High School has established systems and practices to ensure that all students engage in civic inquiry and investigation activities to prepare them for civic life in the 21st century. There is also ample evidence to confirm that the initiative will be sustained in the years to come as a result of intentional capacity building and commitment of the staff and school community.

Members at Meeting:
- Kelli Tarvyd, Asst. Principal
- Carlos Valverde, Civic Learning Coordinator
- Lucas Plotnik, Teacher
- Jenny Ta, Teacher
- Jennifer Kochiver, Teacher
- Brenna Guthrie
- Nate Kaplan, SeePolitical
- Lisa Cooper, Principal
- Katie Krumpe, Asst. Superintendent, Educational Services
- David LaRose, Superintendent

Evidence of Institutionalization and Sustainability:
- Civic Inquiry and Investigation is implemented in
  - All 12th grade government classes.
  - 9th grade Global Issues one semester required course introduces students to civic learning. Students examine current events and issues in US and world.
  - 11th grade US history has integrated mock trials of historical events in all classes.
  - Civic Learning is integrated in several classes across the curriculum:
    - Science teachers are using Socratic Seminar in classrooms.
    - English 9 Honors, Intercultural Literature and other English Classes are implementing civic inquiry and investigations.
    - AP Chemistry
    - Native Spanish 2 and 3
    - Biology
- History classes introduce units of study through an inquiry driven approach.
- English Department teachers have all been trained in use of Socratic Seminars.
- ESLR: Involved Citizens – to take the initiative to contribute their time, energies, and talents, to better the welfare of themselves and others while demonstrating understanding and respect for the people of a diverse world
- Character Counts program adopted – Citizenship is one of the six pillars
- Vibrant history of civic engagement prior to the California Democracy School Initiative – civic and service engagement, service learning, student activism, community support and partnerships.
- Civic Action Project (CAP) from Constitutional Rights Foundation is used in classrooms.
- Summer Reading required of all classes. Ninth grade classrooms engaged in Socratic Seminar when school resumed about a book they read.
- Professional development is ongoing – Socratic Seminar training conducted to entire staff.
- Administration is funding and supporting professional development for teachers.
- 12th grade project has become more meaningful and engaging – past projects asked students to attend board meetings and write a summary. NEW project requires students to engage in a
CAP project and take informed action to address issues they are interested in. Examples of policy changes led by students include:
  o Students changed the policy on use of cell phones during class
  o Crosswalk established in front of school
• CCUSD School Board Resolution supporting Civic Learning was adopted by School Board
• SARC – civic learning to be included in January 2017 SARC.
• Single Plan for Student Achievement references support for civic learning.
• LCAP for district will include language to support civic learning for 2016-17.
• School Mission Statement has embedded civic learning.
• School culture has embedded and adopted the Six Proven Practices of the Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools
  o Extracurricular Activities promote leadership to address civic issues - next year all clubs will be required to adopt a civic action project. Athletics also engage in civic action projects.
  o Civil dialogue about controversial issues across the curriculum
  o High quality service learning
  o Simulations – mock trials
  o Student voice in school governance
  o Teaching of history, government and law
• Partnerships nurtured and strengthened with
  o PTSA
  o Culver City Council member
  o SeePolitical voter education
  o LA Youth Ambassador Cohort
  o Culver-Palms YMCA Youth and Government
  o March of the Living
  o 15-25 non-profit organizations in Culver City
  o World Affairs Council
• School board, school staff and administration committed to sustaining program beyond the grant initiative.

Outcomes:
• Increased voter participation in student government elections.

Assessment:
• CAP, common formative and summative assessment developed by departments measure knowledge
• Reflection activities measure student skills and dispositions.

Stakeholder Perspective:
• Nate Kaplan, SeePolitical Partners with CCUSD to work with seniors about importance of local elections and voter registration.

Impact on Students
• Parent perspective – My daughter has become completely engaged in what is going on at the local, state and national level. And it is a result of what is going on in the classroom. She will come home from class and want to talk to me about issues. The kids see themselves as “change makers.” Kids are officially endorsing candidates on local ballots.
• Substitute Teacher perspective – I am amazed at how aware students are of current issues. There is a great deal of support from PTA members.
• Principal perspective – Students are reaching out to us to get our opinion on various issues. Students are realizing they have a voice and know the process to get things done. It’s changed
how I listen to students because they come with rationale, evidence to support their case. Students have become more aware.

- Asst. Supt. perspective – Awareness of civics is not just from honors students but all students. The maturity and civic mindedness of students’ recommendations are not self centered – they are about the good for all; not just them. I am seeing this among struggling students – all students have developed the voice and courage to speak up and work on behalf of others.

- Superintendent perspective – School culture needs to be cultivated at all levels and this is occurring at the school level with great leadership and support.