School Information

County: Orange County  
District: Anaheim Union High School District  
School: Savanna High School

Civic Coor: Steve Little  
Email: little_s@auhsd.us  
Site Admin: Nabil Slim  
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Principal: Carlos Hernandez  
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Site Validation Team

Date of Visit: April 4, 2016  
Team Leader: Michelle Herczog  
Signature:  
Agency: Los Angeles County Office of Education  
Phone: (562) 922-6908  
Member: Rob Vicario, Orange County Dept. of Ed.  
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, parents, and community stakeholders, it is abundantly clear that Savanna 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.

The team at Savanna High School has provided ample evidence that high quality civic inquiry and investigation is occurring for all students in a strategic, powerful way. It is embedded across 11th grade history classes and all 12th grade government and economics courses. Evidence was also provided to demonstrate long-term commitment and capacity beyond the conclusion of the grant project through

Members and guests included:
Steve Little, Civic Learning Coordinator
Nabil Slim, Asst. Principal
Carlos Hernandez, Principal
Jackie Counts, Program Administrator, Professional Learning, District Office
Ruben Patino, Ed Tech Coach; History-Social Science Coordinator, District Office
Araceli Portillo, World Languages Teacher
Erika Koyayashi, Science Teacher
Rojelio Avarado, AVID teacher
Brian Cortes, US History Teacher
Diana Donnelly-Toscano, Director, Curriculum and Instruction
Michael Matsuda, Superintendent, Anaheim Union High School District
Manual Colon, Director of Instruction
Brad Jackson, Asst. Supt., Human Resources
Jason Fried, Asst. Supt, Educational Services

Classrooms visited
• Erika Koyayashi, Science Teacher
• Rojelio Avarado, AVID teacher
• Brian Cortes, US History Teacher

Evidence of Institutionalization and Sustainability:
• Civic Inquiry and Investigation is implemented
  • All 11th U.S. History classes and all 12th Government/Economics classes now implement civic inquiry and investigation
    o Progressive Era/Wal-Mart
    o PSA’s, websites, podcasts, letters to Wal-Mart
  • All 10th grade World History classes will implement civic inquiry and investigations by 2017.
  • School is looking at introducing civic inquiry and investigation in all ninth grade health classes
  • 40 hour community service requirement to be adopted by board of education
• Evidence of sustainability found in:
  • AUHSD board policy
  • AUHSD District Mission and Vision Statement
  • AUHSD Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP)
  • Single Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA)
  • School Accountability Report Card (SARC)
  • Capstone Portfolio includes elements of civic learning to be demonstrated by students
• Evidence can be found at https://drive.google.com/folderview?id=0ByUY7WMGKjyxSjFTWGtwQlczS0E&usp=sharing_eid&invite=CMDlo6kH&ts=57027dd7

Educational Leadership:
• Consistent Professional development
• Parent Center and learning walks
• Supt. Michael Matsuda is a strong supporter and champion for districtwide civic learning.

Partnerships include:
• City of Anaheim
• CSUF Gear Up
• Orange County Athletic Directors Association (OCADA)
• Constitutional Rights Foundation, Orange County (use of peer court)

Student interviews: 7 students representing 11th and 12th grade. General comments included:
• Teachers encourage us to participate, to help make a change and not just listen.
• It’s happening in AP English. Our teacher lets us learn about environmental change, write different pieces about it and then actually do something about it. One example of book read: Ethics of What We Eat: Our Food Choices Matter. One presentation to the district was about students’ lack of understanding of the environment and what can be done to change that.
• I know what it means to be a civic participant – we learn what happens throughout history and apply it to today. Knowing what you want to get yourself into is important. It is our responsibility to be engaged in what the community is trying to do. Don’t just know, but do something to be part of what is going on. It may not always work but we know what to do. They’re just not teaching us academics; they’re teaching us about the world.
• In my classroom…
  o Mr. Cortes asks us to come up with our own research question. What or why are they doing what they’re doing? It’s not cookie-cutter. We can place our own individual values and perspective of life to be ready to look at problems in the world.
  o In AP History class, we were allowed to do that too.
  o In Spanish class our book is based on problems. We looked up organizations that deal with some of the same problems to learn more.
  o In math we just completed a global warming project and we talked about what we can do to make a change. We used math to measure world populations, carbon dioxide emissions, and temperature changes.
• Socratic Seminars – students reported they had participated in Socratic Seminars 3-5 times.
• Structured Academic Controversy – students reported they had participated in a Structured Academic Controversy 5 or more times.
• What one word would you describe your experience for preparing you for civic life?
  o Diversity – so many clubs and ways to learn different ways of thinking. To interact with all types of groups will help us in the real world.

Teacher Interviews: AVID and science teachers provided general comments below:
• Challenges – for ninth and tenth graders it’s helping students feel empowered to solve problems; not just look up answers in the textbook. This is very challenging, particularly in AP classes.
• AP classes – “Global Challenges” is a world languages AP theme. Students discuss the various challenges, ask inquiries, and prod students to offer solutions. We try to make it relevant. The College Board is making AP more flexible – allowing options for teachers to focus on different topics/directions to allow more time to dig deep. However, time must be used efficiently to allow
ample time to cover curriculum. Because so many other (non-AP) teachers are also implementing civic inquiries and investigations, it allows the AP teachers to use time efficiently.

- **US History** focuses on the American Dream as defined in the past but are relating it to the perceived “American Dream” in today’s world.

- **What is the impact on students?**
  - Empowerment – they know they can do something and make a change.
  - Ownership – THEY are responsible for their education; it’s not just on the teacher.
  - Voice – they feel they have a voice.
  - In the past, students have felt “government is happening TO me” but now they feel they are part of the process to be engaged and to have voice.

Interviews with district administrators - general comments below regarding the impact of civic learning on students and the school community:

- **To see kids engage in issues that are localized and taking a stand based on their own investigations is powerful.** Human trafficking, homelessness, environmental issues are among the many issues being addressed. Is education working for you or are YOU working for education?

- Michael Matsuda: Supt. Matsuda provided an example of an issue posed to students: “What would happen if a major earthquake occurred here? In Japan, there was no looting that occurred after the earthquake. Why? Would that happen here?” A former foster child’s explanation was, “I think they (in Japan) have high trust.” To Supt. Matsuda, the student’s response reflects the power of the work of civic learning, the capstone work, and deep reflection on a number of social issues. He believes, “You need to have a critical mass of interest and commitment at schools. This is essential and needs to happen in all public schools. This project has allowed us to do this. Intentional inputting has resulted in reflective qualities of students and improved sense of community. Support for English Learners and long-term English Learners is a huge piece – we need to have a safe place for these students to find their voice. This work is an example of an educated community.”