Site Validation Report

School Information

County: Los Angeles  CDS Code: 19753416022081
District: Redondo Beach USD
School: Nick G. Parras Middle School
Principal: Lars Nygren  Phone: (310) 798-8616

Site Validation Team

Date of Visit: April 20, 2017
Team Leader: Michelle Herczog  Signature: 
Agency: Los Angeles County Office of Education  Phone: (562) 922-6908
Member: James McKenna  Signature: 
Member:  Signature: 

Site Validation Team Recommendation

☑ The Site Validation Team has validated the information in the California Democracy School application and recommends that this school be selected as a 2017 California Democracy School.

☐ The Site Validation Team was unable to validate the full implementation of the model practice and cannot recommend that this school be selected as a 2017 California Democracy School.

County Superintendent’s Assurance

The Los Angeles County Office of Education has reviewed this report and supports the findings of the Site Validation Team.

__________________________  ______________________
Signature of County Superintendent or Designee  Date
Validation Strategies

Indicate all validation strategies that the Site Validation Team used to validate the information in this school’s California Democracy School application.

1. Constituency Group Interviews

   Formal or informal interviews were held with the following groups:

   - [ ] Classified Staff (aides, custodians, etc.)
   - [ ] Community liaisons, representatives of organizations, business partners, etc.
   - [ ] District Administrators/Staff
   - [ ] Parents and Families
   - ☑ School Administrators
   - ☑ Students
   - ☑ Teachers
   - [ ] Technology Staff
   - [ ] Others

   Were the students and parents interviewed representative of the school population?

   - ☑ Yes
   - [ ] No  (If “No,” explain) ____________________________________________________________________________________________

2. Classroom Observations

   What percentages of classrooms were observed if applicable for civic learning practice? 100%

3. Document Review

   The materials will be defined by the content of the model practice submission. Documents must reflect and validate the information presented in the model practice submission. Materials may include, but are not limited to: assessment materials; assessment data, action plans, classroom/school displays, and curriculum materials; single school plan; minutes of meetings; project or activity scrapbooks; surveys; newsletters; volunteer logs or statistics; and other relevant data. Please briefly describe the documents reviewed.

   A. Please describe the qualitative and quantitative documents and data reviewed.

      Lesson plans, instructional units, student projects, and documentary/PSAs created by students were reviewed.

   B. Please briefly describe additional documents reviewed that document and validate the content of the materials.
Model Program/Practice

Site Validation Team Findings

As a result of the validation strategies used on page 2, it is important to indicate the degree to which the information in the application is Consistent, Understated, or Overstated.

- **Consistent** is the expected and most common designation for the validation of a school’s application.
- **Understated** may be used to indicate elements of the school’s practices that were found to be richer than described in the application.
- **Overstated** must be used if critical elements of the signature practices cannot be validated and is required as support for the team’s decision if not recommending the school (see Additional Comments below).

1. **Description of the Program**
   - Information in the application is: ☒ Consistent ☐ Understated ☐ Overstated
   - Information was validated by: ☒ Interviews ☒ Observations ☒ Document Review

2. **Implementation and Monitoring of the Program**
   - Information in the application is: ☒ Consistent ☐ Understated ☐ Overstated
   - Information was validated by: ☒ Interviews ☒ Observations ☒ Document Review

3. **Results of the Program/Practice/Strategy**
   - Information in the application is: ☒ Consistent ☐ Understated ☐ Overstated
   - Information was validated by: ☒ Interviews ☒ Observations ☐ Document Review

**Additional Comments**

If the Site Validation Team is recommending the school receive the California Democracy School Award, please describe one or two highlights of the validation visit.

If the Site Validation Team was unable to validate a comprehensive implementation of the model practice(s) as described in the school’s application, please write a detailed description of the elements not validated.

The *Democracy in Action* program at Parras Middle School has engaged students in high quality civic learning for over twelve years. Integrated into the course of study of all eighth grade English classes, students identify issues that are relevant and important to them, investigate causes and multiple perspectives, engage in meaningful dialogue through socratic seminars, communicate conclusions, and take civic action. Examples of civic action include letters and interviews with local, state, and national policymakers, and public awareness PSAs and presentations.
Novels are used to contextualize a number of current issues and controversies around the year-long theme, “The world we want to live in.” For example, after reading Fahrenheit 451, students engage in socratic seminars to address the following questions:

- What is the role and responsibilities of citizens?

Each year, the school conducts a film festival to showcase the documentaries created by students to heighten awareness of contemporary issues. Topics have included Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome, homelessness, and CTE. Below is a listing of the videos created by students in 2016-17 for their film festival entitled, “Create the World I Want to Live in.”

**Barefoot** (Helping the Homeless)
https://youtu.be/ILBMy5bdV3U

**Hate and Discrimination – Beauty Has No Race**
https://splice.gopro.com/v?id=7gK3wE

**A Ripple – Where Kindness Touches the Heart**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QTIsj0_qa1c

**Blue** (Understanding Homelessness)
https://youtu.be/EHoml9hyFAE

**More Than Just a Number** (Understanding Homelessness)
youtube.com/watch?v=Cx2RkyiE9XA

**Road to Nowhere**
www.youtube.com/watch?v=IraFyryL5w

**The World That Could’ve Been**
https://youtu.be/G9HukchYk9A

**Hurt But Not Broken** (Understanding Homelessness)
https://youtu.be/VhC5mXTaAD4

**A New Beginning: The Story of a Former Homeless Drug Addict**
youtu.be/8TpydquyWHS

**All or Nothing** (Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy – brain trauma among athletes)
https://youtu.be/uc0c1k8wEPA

**Willpower 3.0 – A Film About Gender Discrimination**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HGtnGmrauI4

**My Movie 21** (Understanding Homelessness)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rhb_QtY5xSI
Civic engagement is evident in the culture of the school and school community. The Redondo Beach Education Foundation, Toyota, and other local businesses have provided grants for technology, supplies, and other resources to grow the program.

Willingness and enthusiasm for embracing the program is an important factor in the decision to hire new teachers. Students in grades six and seven are anxious to participate in the program when they reach grade eight. Once students leave Parras Middle school, many continue to be civically engaged and return to share their experiences.

When asked, “What is the role of citizens in a democracy?” various student responses included:

- *Everyone gets to have a voice; to be in control of their own lives.*
- *One day, we don’t know when, but we will make a change in the world.*
- *EVERYONE has a stand in this democracy.*