School Information

County: Los Angeles County
District: Pomona Unified School District
School: Village Academy High School
Civic Coor: Williams Brogie
Email: William.Brogie@pusd.org
Principal: Marco Sanchez
Email: marco.sanchez@pusd.org

Site Validation Team

Date of Visit: April 13, 2016
Team Leader: Michelle Herczog
Signature: _______________________
Agency: Los Angeles County Office of Education
Phone: (562) 922-6908
Member: James McKenna, 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 student work, and interviewing students, teachers, and school principal, it is clear that Village Academy 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:
- Marco Sanchez, Principal
- William Brogie, Civic Learning Coordinator

Evidence of Institutionalization of Civic Learning:
- William Brogie is the only 11th grade history teacher at Village Academy High School. He is implementing civic inquiry and investigation; hence all students at the school site participate in this activity.
- William Brogie is one teacher (of two) who teaches government and incorporates civic learning.
- The English department is supporting civic inquiry and investigation process in Mr. Brogie’s class by assisting with research component.
- All English teachers are trained and using different components of the civic inquiry and investigation in their courses. Examples include:
  - One 11th grade English teacher implements civic learning with her students in periods one and six (Ms. Contreras).
  - English teacher, Mr. Guerrero conducts civil dialogue with all his English and AVID classes.
- District-wide “bridge” elective “Civic Engagement and Literacy” one-semester course includes civic learning components based on the five steps of the California Democracy School civic learning model. Course will be required of all incoming ninth grade students at Village High School beginning summer 2016 as approved by Board of Education. Course and curriculum have been approved by the district’s Curriculum Committee and Pomona Board of Education. Village Academy will likely invite an English teacher to teach the course. Course is available as an option at other schools.
- Intervention class at Village Academy High School also includes elements of the civic inquiry and investigation process.
- The Single Plan for Student Achievement includes language to support civic learning. School culture is also identified in the plan.
- The Civic Action Club was established this year for students who want to work with students at other schools to address problems in the school community.
- District “Seal of Service” awarded to graduating seniors who have demonstrated high quality service-learning.

Three Pathways exist at Village Academy: Digital, Video Media Production; Computer Programming and Game Design; and Digital Art and Graphic Design.

Principal perspectives:
- The initiative has built a consciousness among students to improve their own self-efficacy. If they are actively engaged in changing their community, they begin to take initiative to improve their own circumstance and feel empowered to achieve in school. Kids are becoming more actively engaged in improving their own learning success.
- Superintendent’s Office and Board of Education are preparing responses to proposals submitted by students.
Teacher Perspectives:
- Students feel empowered. They are starting to feel they can change things if they know how.
- They’re not just helpless victims of society but agents of change.
- I’m excited about the program and what the kids are excited about.

Student Perspectives:
- Student conducted a project about animal testing. As a result:
  - I learned that a lot of people think differently. I put myself in other people’s shoes and it made me look at different people’s views so I can better understand. You need to learn from others. I didn’t really pay attention to animal testing before. But once I started studying it, I became more interested and learned more about it.
  - I’m now trying to make a change in the world but I need more people to help me.
  - This taught me that I “made a mark” by doing something.
- Student conducted a project on homelessness. As a result:
  - I had helped homeless people before by volunteering at my church but had never done anything to solve it (homelessness). I wrote a letter to our state assemblyman with ideas to help homeless people.
  - This made me understand how our community can help itself and help others.
  - When I have a career, I can help others by donating money.