

Meeting Minutes

May 29, 2018

Instructional Materials Committee

Facilitator: Fred Rundle, Assistant Superintendent of Learning Services • Secretary: Vanessa Adams, Learning Services

Present:

Ahisha Avant
David Baxter
Jackie Brown
Lauren Dolby
Kristin Kim
Creighton Laughary
Matt Lavigne
Rohan Tatum
Laura Totten
Kelly Tran

Absent:

Carol Best
Kelsey Cochran
Andrea Dunbar
Alice Finch
Jeff Geoghagan
Channing Martin
Ursula Panagiotou
Jamie Prescott
Anne Rubin
Kathy Shaner
Lisa Stewart
Scott Weiss
Brigit White

The meeting was called to order at 4:04 pm. Fred welcomed participants to the final meeting of the year.

Essentials of Comparative Politics with Cases (Sixth AP edition)

Gr. 12 AP Comparative Government — core material for 2018-2019 and beyond

Written by: Patrick H. O'Neil, Karl Fields, and Don Share

Published by: W. W. Norton and Company, 2018

Proposal submitted by: MIHS AP Comparative Government teachers Dino Annest, Eric Ayrault, Alex Baker, and Social Studies Chair, Ed Puchalla

Fred shared that the Gr. 6-12 social studies team has worked for several years to align social studies and civics to the district vision and mission.

MIHS Social Studies teacher Ed Puchalla noted the flaws in the current Gr. 12 textbook, including being outdated and hard to read. The team believes the new text would provide students with superior support. It would also better prepare them for the AP exam as it links AP learning objectives to topics covered on the test. It also integrates civics. Other qualities are an easy-to-use online study space with review material and quizzes (that integrate with Schoology), a wealth of supporting materials, and iPad compatibility. The reading level for this text may challenge some students. Although it contains high quality graphics, there are not as many as desired.

Note: David Baxter motioned to approve *Essentials of Comparative Politics with Cases (Sixth AP edition)* as core material for MIHS 12th grade AP Comparative Government starting in the 2018-19 school year. Kristin Kim seconded the motion. There were no abstentions. The motion passed.

**Mercer Island School District
Learning Services**

Parable of the Sower

Gr. 9 - English 9, English 9 Honors, English 9/BTC, English 9 Honors/BTC— core material for 2018-2019

Written by: Octavia E. Butler

Published by: Grand Central Publishing, 1993

Proposal submitted by: MIHS English Dept. Sub-Committee members Creighton Laughary, Hannah Robinson, Daniel Melgar, Dani King, Kati McConn

Social Justice League (SJL) Members Carina Williamson, Emi Olson, Eden Voss, Mash Batalov, Claire Molina, Cole Galando, Katy Spencer, Jasmine Zou, Sarah Abreu (staff adviser) were advocates for a more diverse set of texts.

Creighton noted that the five Gr. 9 required texts are all written by male authors, with only one author of color. The protagonists are mostly male, and the messages on relationships are heteronormative. To counter this, the team co-chairs met several times with a student group, the Social Justice League. The SJL was planning to protest the lack of diversity on the required texts list. Instead, the team collaborated with them to brainstorm, read, review, and select texts to propose for approval. They collected ten titles which they narrowed down to two: this text, and *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe* (see below).

Parable of the Sower is a Gr. 9 reading level, coming of age story written by a widely published, black female author. The protagonist is an adolescent female person of color within a strong, diverse group. Also, Octavia Butler lived in the northwest, providing relatability with Northwest references peppered throughout her books. The text will help teach the concept of allegory, and the team hopes it will address MISD Fundamentals 3 and 7.

The team noted some potentially controversial subjects, including drug use and sexuality. Fred suggested that these might offer teaching opportunities in Personal and Family Relationships and Image classes. The book contains religious allusion, which the team will continue to discuss over the summer.

Vote: Jackie Brown motioned to approve *Parable of the Sower* as core material for MIHS 9th grade; English 9, English 9 Honors, English 9/BTC, English 9 Honors/BTC starting in the 2018-19 school year. Kelly Tran seconded the motion. Creighton Laughary abstained. The motion passed.

Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe

Gr. 9; English 9, English 9 Honors, English 9/BTC, English 9 Honors/ETC— core material for 2018-2019

Written by: Benjamin Alire Sáenz

Published by: Simon & Schuster, 2012

Proposal submitted by: MIHS English Dept. Sub-Committee members: Creighton Laughary, Hannah Robinson, Daniela Melgar, Dani King, Kati McConn

Social Justice League (SJL): Carina Williamson, Emi Olson, Eden Voss, Mash Batalov, Claire Molina, Cole Galando, Katy Spencer, Jasmine Zou, Sarah Abreu (staff adviser) were advocates for a more diverse set of texts.

This novel would be the first Gr. 9 required text by a Latinx author. It is a coming of age novel about two Mexican American youths, Aristotle and Dante, who are part of a cast of characters of color. Dante has a strong sense of identity, Aristotle does not. Dante is gay, making this the first required text in which 9th graders read and discuss gay relationships in English class. Creighton feels that Dante's homosexuality is an honest portrayal, without pushing any agenda. It would complement the health curriculum and allow teachers to talk about relationships. Drug and alcohol references would provide an opportunity for health and counseling faculty to address those issues with students. The team believes that literature in which characters of similar age face big decisions will model good and bad examples for students. This book is realistic and like most Young Adult literature, has a happy ending. It, like *Parable of the Sower*, will help teachers meet MISD Fundamentals 3 and 7.

The current plan is for all Gr. 9 English teachers to meet for two days this summer to read and assess both books if both are approved. If they decide that two new novels are too much, they may pilot *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe* in 2018-2019, with the intention of requiring it the following year.

Fred commented that we might expect criticism whenever we make curriculum changes. Responsiveness to student learning is a constant evolution. He commended the Gr. 9 English team for their dedication and urged them to keep moving forward. He thanked the IMC for their thoughtfulness and the robust conversation around these texts.

Vote: David Baxter motioned to approve *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe* as core material for MIHS Gr. 9; English 9, English 9 Honors, English 9/BTC, English 9 Honors/ETC. Matt Lavigne seconded the motion. Creighton Laughary abstained. The motion passed.

End of year issues and planning for next year

This meeting marks the end of David Baxter's third year on the committee so he will rotate off. Kristin Kim, Rohan Tatum, and Ahisha Avant are completing their second year. Everyone else on the committee is finishing up their first year.

Fred outlined curriculum reviews that the committee may see next year. These may include social studies, English, math, and world languages.

Fred discussed potential meeting dates for October, January, March, and May of next year. After he finalizes the dates, he will send out an announcement to committee members in August. He thanked committee members for their time and wished them all a great remainder of the school year.

The meeting adjourned at 5:45 pm.