



MEMORANDUM

To: Utah Commission on Civic and Character Education

From: Ginger Rhode, PhD, Deputy Superintendent and Chief Academic Officer

Subject: 2012 Civic and Character Education Report from Canyons School District

Canyons School District (CSD) has recognized the vital role of civics and character education in schools and welcomes the responsibility to educate our students to graduate fully prepared to engage in our democratic society. Over the course of 2012, CSD schools have shared successful milestones in our efforts to continue to create an educational community that prepares young people to successfully serve as “future guardians of the liberties of our country” (George Washington):

Civics

- Focus on Citizenship Readiness: In 2011, our district vision was purposefully expanded to include citizenship-readiness in equal footing with college- and career-readiness as the ultimate goals for graduating seniors. During 2012, our academic staff convened forums for community, business, city, and school leaders to discuss the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for success in today’s world. During these forums, we were fortunate to have representation from each of the city governments within our district boundaries, representatives from key community groups (e.g. ecclesiastical leaders and community organizers), Utah State Office of Education personnel, parents, school administrators, classroom teachers, and students. As an outcome from the forums, our district is now in the process of developing a graduate profile that clearly articulates broad categories of skills that are necessary for the success of our students. Once the drafting process is complete, the profile will be shared with teachers and parents to guide instructional decisions kindergarten through 12th grade.
- Focus on Effective Instruction: The Utah Core Curriculum provides standards for social studies Instruction each year. Key standards focus on civics education in elementary, middle and high school grades. During the past year, the district has convened a team of teachers from across the district and facilitated development of common curriculum maps with pacing guides that address deliberate focus on civics education.
 - In the elementary setting the curriculum teams have developed lessons that are embedded within the literacy instruction block to ensure that every student will receive the opportunity to learn civics content with particular attention focused on the American Constitution and the responsibility of citizens to uphold it. These lessons are currently being implemented in our elementary schools.



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- In the middle schools, the curriculum teams have fostered a culture of teaming between English and Social Studies teachers. Maps have been developed to support bolstered instruction and new, supplemental, materials have been recommended for grade 7 Utah History, and grade 8 U.S. History. The middle school Social Studies and English teachers will participate in professional learning in June 2013 and will implement the new lessons during the 2013 school year.
- In our high schools, curriculum teams have focused on bolstering Geography instruction to include a greater focus on Utah's vital role in the global economy and have developed common expectations for instruction in World Civilizations. Our focus for the high school curriculum team will shift to U.S. History and U.S. Government and Citizenship during the 2013 calendar year.
- Face to Faith: Canyons continues to serve as the regional leader for *Face to Faith*, a globally implemented curriculum sponsored by the Tony Blair Faith Foundation to promote understanding and civility. Each of our high schools has implemented this curriculum and engaged in international video conferencing to provide students and parents an opportunity to engage with students and others across the world.
- Constitution Day: To acknowledge Constitution Day 2012, the Office of Civil Rights created a digital media presentation for schools to teach students about our constitution. The essential question that was utilized for this instruction tool was, "Why does the Constitution include three branches of government?"

Character Education

- Mix It Up At Lunch: In 2011, Canyons District formed a partnership with the Southern Poverty Law Center to support character education by reaffirming values and qualities that promote an upright and desirable citizenry (as defined by Utah Code 53A-13-109). This partnership has continued with each of our secondary schools participating in the national challenge to, "Mix It Up At Lunch" on October 30th, 2013. Students practiced leadership skills by developing inclusive activities to help students eat with and talk to other students with whom they don't ordinarily interact at their schools.
- Professional Development for Administrators: Our district prioritized character education for professional development of district and school administrators during the 2012 year. All administrators participated in a leadership conference in August where they learned about Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS). The content of this conference included learning activities where administrators discussed the rationale for a focus on character education and planned for ways to improve the civility in their schools. Our elementary and middle schools continued their professional learning in October through Building Leadership Team



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(BLT) training that focused on continued implementation of PBIS and ways to measure the effectiveness of social instruction in our schools.

- On-going Character Education: Each of our schools have plans in place to teach character education on a on-going basis using the Utah State Office of Education's Life Skills resources and other supplemental materials selected by the Building Leadership Teams (BLT) in each school.

