



State of Arizona
Department of Education

October 3, 2013

Dr. H. Sanchez
Tucson Unified School District
1010 E. 10th Street
Tucson, AZ 85719

Dear Dr. Sanchez,

On behalf of the Arizona Department of Education team who visited two of your high schools on October 1, 2013, we would like to present this follow-up summary. Thank you for the opportunity to observe culturally relevant Social Studies and English classes at Cholla and Pueblo High Schools. Our goal was to observe the curriculum which we have previously reviewed in writing. What follows is a summary of the information discussed during our debriefing session with Dr. Vega and Mr. Holmes at the end of the day.

At Cholla High, two of my ADE colleagues, Associate Superintendent Kathy Hrabluk and Director Lacey Wieser, observed two Junior English classes, one from the Mexican-American perspective and one from the African-American perspective. They noted a focus on literary analysis and argument that is connected to the intent of Arizona's College and Career Standards. However, the use of the five paragraph essay format lacks the rigor required by these standards. Visuals, including posters, in the classrooms reflected appropriate connections to the curriculum. In addition, my colleagues observed one U.S. History class, taught from an African-American perspective. The bell work was relevant and appropriate given the recent news surrounding the federal government shutdown. The teacher used the textbook for reference. There was good use of a video documentary which presented students with opposing viewpoints, although we are unsure of the connection between illegal immigration and the African-American perspective of U.S. History.

Sarah Galetti, Deputy Associate Superintendent for K-12 Academic Standards, and I observed three classes at Pueblo High School: a U.S. History course, a senior English course and a Government course, all from the Mexican-American perspective. The rigor and intent of the literacy standards was not modeled or evidenced by the lessons or the student products we witnessed. For example, groups of senior students were each asked to define a single word, political cartoons were assigned without explanation or example and the writing assignment for the senior Government class was a 3 paragraph journal/diary entry or personal letter. The

alignment to Arizona's College and Career Standards appeared insufficient. We observed three questionable posters in the Senior English class and in the Social Studies classroom, references to levels of oppression and liberation were problematic, particularly in light of the written feedback we have provided in our previous curriculum review. These materials raise concerns insofar as they reflect past practices that caused the Department to find the District in violation of ARS 15-112. At this time we do not find any specific teaching practice or instructional material that would cause the Department to take further action to enforce 15-112.

The Arizona Department of Education remains committed to working with you and your staff to ensure that both the legal and pedagogical requirements for your culturally relevant courses are satisfied. There are numerous resources available to your leadership team and your teachers. Please let us know how we can assist you. We look forward to observing the progress of the pilot culturally relevant courses when we visit the campuses again and would like the opportunity to review lesson plans and interview your teachers regarding the curriculum development process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jennifer Johnson". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Jennifer Johnson, Ed.D.

Deputy Superintendent for Policy and Programs

CC: Dr. Adrian Vega, Tucson Unified School District
Steve Holmes, Tucson Unified School District
Elliott Hibbs, Arizona Department Of Education
Kathy Hrabluk, Arizona Department Of Education
Sarah Galetti, Arizona Department Of Education
Leslie Cooper, Arizona Attorney General's Office