

Fwd: No Honors for 6th Talking Points

From: Pumilia, Tracy <tracypumilia@ccusd.org>

Tue, Sep 28, 2021 at 11:10 AM PDT (GMT-07:00)

To: Lisa Cooper <lisacooper@ccusd.org>; Tarvyd, Kelli <kellitarvyd@ccusd.org>; Baxter, Angela <angelabaxter@ccusd.org>

FYI

Tracy Pumilia

Assistant Superintendent, Educational Services

Culver City Unified School District

(310) 842-4220 ext. 4355 Office

tracypumilia@ccusd.org

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Pumilia, Tracy <tracypumilia@ccusd.org>

Date: Thu, Jan 30, 2020 at 9:43 AM

Subject: Re: No Honors for 6th Talking Points

To: Villafranca, Elsy <elsyvillafanra@ccusd.org>

Cc: Lisa Michel <lisamichel@ccusd.org>

Love this start. Now it's a matter of stakeholder engagement at every opportunity. I'm glad to know your team is ready to bring this idea forward - next steps include identifying those meetings that have to take place, generating the presentation, and preparing an FAQ document of questions/answers that will help for those who don't go to the meetings. Make sense?

With this in mind, I have a bit of trepidation for a 20/21 start. It's possible to start now —but in general I like to have a year to prep for changes that will undoubtedly be big for some groups. So let's move forward with a hope that it can happen next year, assuming we message it well and help educate those families who will not like the idea initially.

On Thu, Jan 30, 2020 at 9:28 AM Villafranca, Elsy <elsyvillafanra@ccusd.org> wrote:

Hey Tracy and Lisa,

Here's a brainstorming document from my ELA department about strategizing to remove 6th grade honors for next year. The entire department is behind this and want to see it happen. At all of my 5th grade parent events, I have intentionally not talked about honors. I'd like to know, however, what parent/community groups we should best target since this isn't about my current students but incoming ones. Any feedback or guidance that you can provide would be greatly appreciated.

Elsy Villafranca, Principal
Culver City Middle School
[4601 Elenda Street](#)
[Culver City, CA 90230](#)
(310)842-4200 x3323



----- Forwarded message -----

From: Leah Thomasson <leahthomasson@ccusd.org>

Date: Wed, Jan 29, 2020 at 3:29 PM

Subject: No Honors for 6th Talking Points
To: Elsy Villafranca <elsyvillafanra@ccusd.org>

Hey Elsy!

We had a focused discussion about this again today.

We would like to have a group of us present at the PTSA meeting AND ANY OTHER COMMUNITY THINGS necessary to meet this requirement.

I wanted you to also have our data backup in favor of removing honors from 6th grade:

- Rigor
- fundamental skills
- Social-emotional skills
- No incoming data from elementary to justify an honors placement
- We are an INCLUSIVE district. If we have Inclusion classes AND honors classes AND regular classes, then it becomes more of a true tracking situation. Not where the district is headed.
- Historically, 6th grade teachers have taught all classes at high-achieving level of rigor
- Quote from a 6th grade teacher "Personally, my curriculum is 100% the same for honors and non-honors and differentiate for specific students / student groups
- Current education is geared toward leveling and differentiating within the class, rather than “tracking” BY class
- Honors at the middle school level creates homogenized grouping
- Research suggests lack of equity in honors vs. regular classes privilege: Access to test prep, parent education level, social capital, implicit bias
 - "Research suggests that, aside from their academic preparedness and ability, students' degree of privilege 3—in the form of families' resources, access to test prep, and social capital, as well as the implicit biases of staff and teachers—may come into play.⁴ Second, data shows that academic tracking harms students assigned to lower tracks, who show reduced achievement and increased gaps over time as compared with peers with similar initial achievement assigned to the higher-level courses.⁵ Third, when classrooms are skewed by race and class, students are robbed of some of the peer interactions and access to social networks that diversity can provide.⁶ Finally, when rich and poor students, white students and students of color, are by and large in different academic programs, the equalizing power of integration—which helps to promote equitable distribution of resources—is weakened" ([Potter](#))
- Zone of proximal development inaccessible with tracked classes
- Not HUGE difference between honors and “regular” ELA that cannot be offered within the general education classroom
- Kids are in a major developmental stage in middle school and deserve equity in an age that is so centrally focused on social-emotional development
- Gives us time to fill in educational gaps before we assess who REALLY benefits from the extra rigor of honors before going to the high school level
- Students regardless of class level (honors or non-honors) can enroll in whatever classes they would like once they go to high school
- National Association of Secondary School Principals position statement on tracking and ability grouping in middle and high school levels ([Evidence nassp](#))
- [Stanford](#) evidence

Hope this info isn't too overwhelming. We are a passionate group and want to support you at a district level in whatever way we can.

Leah

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Leah Thomasson

8th Grade English Language Arts

ELA Department Chair

Culver City Middle School

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Tracy Pumilia

Assistant Superintendent, Educational Services

Culver City Unified School District

Sent from Gmail Mobile

Re: Bio Honors Class

From: Baxter, Angela <angelabaxter@ccusd.org>

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 6:01 PM PDT (GMT-07:00)

To: Tarvyd, Kelli <kellitarvyd@ccusd.org>

Cc: Elsy Villafranca <elsyvillafanra@ccusd.org>; Lisa Cooper <lisacooper@ccusd.org>; Sarah Slemmons <sarahslemmons@ccusd.org>; Tracy Pumilia <tracypumilia@ccusd.org>; Young, Erica <EricaYoung@ccusd.org>

Thank you for the update.

Angela

On Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 5:57 PM Tarvyd, Kelli <kellitarvyd@ccusd.org> wrote:

She has 36 chairs...so moving one is fine. Just confirmed.

Kelli Tarvyd, Ed.D.

Assistant Principal, Curriculum and Instruction

Culver City High School

(310) 842-4200 ext 3301

Preferred Pronouns: She/her/hers

On Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 5:57 PM Tarvyd, Kelli <kellitarvyd@ccusd.org> wrote:

Cap for the class is 35. But, her room is smaller than others and she uses tables to set them up in groups. I believe her room is set up for 32 - which many Science classes are set up for that number.

Kelli Tarvyd, Ed.D.

Assistant Principal, Curriculum and Instruction

Culver City High School

(310) 842-4200 ext 3301

Preferred Pronouns: She/her/hers

On Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 5:40 PM Young, Erica <EricaYoung@ccusd.org> wrote:

Afternoon all,

I wanted to take a moment to gather all the facts in order to help us create some solutions around balancing the Bio Honors Classes.

Background:

8th grade students at the middle school have the opportunity if they meet the criteria and apply to take a zero period honors biology course. Currently we have 37 students signed up for this class, which is one over the cap.

I know high school has asked middle school to identify 6 students who can take the class during their 6th period instead of zero period.

After talking with Sarah Slemmons, if an 8th grade student takes the Biology class at the high school they will miss like 5-10 minutes of their 6th/5th middle school classes (middle school is a block schedule and their day ends at 2:30 which is when the high school starts their 6th period class).

Questions to Kelli

Kelli: I know in the past for the most part the zero period class has been populated with 8th grade students. If there are extra spots sometimes high school students end up in the same class. Currently we have 37 students, so we are one over. Is there a reason we need to identify 6 students instead of 1? Is 6 a solid number or is there some flexibility?

Solutions that Angela came up with:

Angela came up with the idea of sending out a letter/reaching out to families letting them know that we are trying to balance classes, there has been a change in high school/middle school schedules etc. In the communication asking families if they prefer to take the class during zero period or 6th period (missing part of the middle school 5th/6th).

This way we are not picking and choosing, but we are being as transparent and allowing families flexibility. This way we can better balance classes too.

Thoughts?

If you are fine with this I can work with Angela to contact families tomorrow so we can get this handled.

Best,
Erica Young
TK-12 Science and Teaching Learning Partner



Angela Elizondo Baxter, Ed.D.

Director of Teaching and Learning, Educational Services
4034 Irving Place
Culver City, CA 90232-2848
(310) 842-4243 Ext. 4215

Re: Bio Honors Class

From: Young, Erica <EricaYoung@ccusd.org>

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 5:54 PM PDT (GMT-07:00)

To: Kelli Tarvyd <kellitarvyd@ccusd.org>; Elsy Villafranca <elsyvillafanra@ccusd.org>; Sarah Slemmons <sarahslemmons@ccusd.org>

Cc: Lisa Cooper <lisacooper@ccusd.org>; Angela Baxter <angelabaxter@ccusd.org>; Tracy Pumilia <tracypumilia@ccusd.org>

Correction: I just re-looked at the principal notes and the cap size is 35 not 36. So we are 2 over.

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Erica Young
TK-12 Science and Teaching Learning Partner
