



Process and Protocols for Cultural Activities

CHARGE TO THE DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEE/CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

January 15, 2009

Mission

The committee will develop recommended procedures and/or process for schools and the District to follow when students, staff, Parents or community members raise a concern regarding school/district cultural activities.

Objectives

1. Development of protocols for communication amongst all participants- students, staff, Parents and community members.
2. Development of process for determining historical accuracy of cultural activity.
3. Development of process for determining authenticity of cultural activity.

Assumptions

1. The Committee may choose to include the following in its work:
 - * Focus and vision
 - * Standards and expectations
 - * Approach to decision-making
 - * Collaboration
 - * Professional development for staff
 - * Parent involvement
2. The Committee will consider student equity and access to a quality education across the District.
3. The Committee's role is advisory to the CUSD Board of Education. The Board will have the final decision regarding the Committee's recommendations.
4. The Committee will encourage frank and open discussion. The Committee is encouraged to obtain feedback throughout the CUSD community through whatever means determined feasible.
5. The Committee will be subject to the requirements of the Brown Act- California OpenMeetings law.

Composition

The Committee membership will include at minimum:

- * Student representatives
- * CUSD teachers representing primary and upper elementary grade levels and secondary teachers representing the intermediate and high school levels.
- * CUSD administrators representing elementary, intermediate and high school levels
- * CUSD Parents representing the elementary, intermediate and high school levels.
- * Representatives from the Claremont community and from a range of demographic backgrounds

Per past practice, Board members and district level administrators will be appointed to provide liaison and resources to the Committee but will not serve as committee members.

COMMITTEE COMPOSITION and MEETINGS

The District Committee on Cultural Activities met six times from March 23, 2009 to June 8, 2009. The committee members were:

Socorro (Tania) Pantoja	Parent/Community, Co-Chair
James Wilbur	Parent /Community, Co-Chair
Katie Gerecke	Parent/Community, Secretary
Patti Amaya	Elementary Teacher
Steve Boyd	Administrative Staff
Michael Callahan	Secondary Teacher
Wesley Chang	Student
Leslie Corcoran	Parent/Community
Judith Daley	Administrative Staff
Ann Hardy	Elementary Teacher, Claremont Faculty Association
Sue Hensley	Secondary Teacher
Karen Kellner	Elementary Teacher
Michael Lawshe	Administrative Staff
Siobhan McVeigh	Parent/Community
Michelle Raheja	Parent/Community
Diane Rus	Elementary Teacher
Kim Sapienza	Elementary Teacher
Ana Tinker Valle	Student
Alfonso Villanueva	Parent/Community
Mary Caenepeel	Board of Education Liaison
Beth Bingham	Board of Education Liaison

The committee recommends the following Focus and Vision, Protocols for Communications, and Historical Accuracy and Cultural Authenticity guidelines to be used when a Parent has concerns about a cultural activity at a school site within the District.

FOCUS and VISION

The District Advisory Committee on Cultural Activities recognizes the fluidity of culture and the importance of understanding that the presence of many cultures within a society can shape and influence mainstream values and norms. Yet, we would be remiss in our charge had we chosen to ignore the value in establishing a framework upon which to build. While noting that the term culture is not static, we have adopted as our guideline for defining culture the following text from the California Department of Education History-Social Science Framework. The indented text below is found in the Curriculum Frameworks and Instructional Materials, Goals and Curriculum Strands on page 15.

To develop cultural literacy, students must:

Understand the rich, complex nature of a given culture: its history, geography, politics, literature, art drama, music dance, law, religion, philosophy, architecture, technology, science education, sports, social structure, and economy. Cultural literacy includes but is not limited to knowledge of the humanities. True cultural literacy takes many years to develop, whether one is a student of a foreign country or a student of one's own society. Students should not be under the illusion that they truly know another society as a result of studying it for a few

weeks or even for a year. At the very least they should learn how difficult it is to master a culture and should be encouraged to recognize that education is a lifelong process.

Recognize the relationships among the various parts of a nation’s cultural life. Mature students should come to appreciate the ways that a nation’s literature and arts react to and comment on events in its political and social development and also should study and appreciate the interactions among a nation’s governmental system, economic structure, technology, arts, and press. None of the elements of a culture exists in a vacuum, and students will come to understand the connections as they develop a deeper knowledge of the constituent parts.

Learn about the mythology, legends, values, and beliefs of a people. Ideas are important; to understand a society, students must perceive what its members believe about themselves, what stories and tales explain their origins and common bonds, what religious tenets embody their ethical standards of justice and duty, what heroes capture their imagination, what ideals inspire their sense of purpose, and what visual images portray their idea of themselves as a people.

Recognize that literature and art shape and reflect the inner life of a people. Artists and writers tend to have sensitive antennae. In their work artists and writers record the hopes, fears, aspirations, and anxieties of their society. A culture cannot be fully understood without knowledge of the poems, plays, dance, visual art, and other works that express its spirit.

Take pride in their own cultural heritages and develop a multicultural perspective that respects the dignity and worth of all people. Students should learn from their earliest school years that our nation is composed of people whose backgrounds are rooted in cultures around the world. They should take pride in their own cultural heritages, and should develop a multicultural perspective that respects the human dignity of all people and an understanding of different cultures and ways of life.

Goal of Knowledge and Cultural Understanding: Students should develop respect for the human dignity of all people and understanding of different cultures and ways of life.

Definition of “Activities”: The committee also recommends that “activities” within our purview are understood to include curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular activities initiated, sponsored, and/or supported by the Claremont Unified School District.

PROTOCOLS for COMMUNICATION

These Protocols for Communication will serve as a step-by-step guide for Parents with concerns about a cultural activity. It is anticipated that most Parent concerns will be resolved at the first point of contact, the classroom teacher. The committee encourages continued efforts to provide school-to-home communication regarding cultural activities as far in advance as practical.

If at any time in this process a concern is validated, changes may include: changes to the cultural activity; professional development; and communication with stakeholders.

Privacy and confidentiality is of the utmost importance for the protection of the children involved while the communication protocol is in process.

Parents are encouraged to refer to the *Validation Process for Historical Accuracy and Cultural Authenticity*, pp. 5-6.

The committee recommends that information about this document and its availability be communicated to district stakeholders on an annual basis.

1. The first level of resolution is the **TEACHER** of the Parent’s child.
The Parent should contact the Teacher to discuss his/her concern about a classroom cultural activity or school cultural activity. It is hoped that most concerns will be resolved at this level. One resolution option at this level may be a viable and meaningful alternative assignment with similar instructional goals. If a resolution cannot be agreed upon, the Parent will be directed to the Principal of the school and provided with a copy of this report or the location of the report on the District website.
Suggested timeframe to arrange meeting: One Week
Suggested timeframe to formulate response: One Week
2. The second resolution level is the **PRINCIPAL** of the school. In the case of a secondary school, the second level may begin with the child’s **COUNSELOR** and an **ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL** before the **PRINCIPAL’S** involvement.
The Parent should contact the Principal of the school to discuss his/her concerns about a cultural activity. At this point the Parent should be prepared to validate the accuracy and authenticity of their cultural concerns. If the Principal verifies the accuracy and authenticity of the concerns, the principal will ask the teacher to make the appropriate changes to the cultural activity. If the concern is not resolved at this level, the Parent will be referred to the next level at the District should he/she wish to continue to pursue a resolution.
Suggested timeframe to arrange meeting: One Week
Suggested timeframe to formulate response: One Week
3. The **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, EDUCATIONAL SERVICES** at the District office level is the third resolution level. Depending on the topic of the Parent’s concern, the **ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT, HUMAN RESOURCES** may also be involved at this level.
The Parent should contact the Executive Director, Educational Services for an appointment to discuss his/her concerns about a cultural activity at a school. The Parent should be prepared to validate their cultural concerns. If the Executive Director, Educational Services and/or the Assistant Superintendent, Human Resources verifies the accuracy and authenticity of the cultural concerns, the school site will be asked to appropriately change the cultural activity. If the concerns are not resolved, the Parent will be referred to the Superintendent should he/she wish to continue to pursue a resolution.
Suggested timeframe to arrange meeting: Two Weeks
Suggested timeframe to formulate response: Two Weeks
4. The fourth resolution level is the **SUPERINTENDENT**.
The Parent should contact the Superintendent for an appointment to discuss his/her concerns about a cultural activity at a school. The Parent should be prepared to validate their cultural concerns. If the Superintendent verifies the accuracy and authenticity of the cultural concerns, the school site will be asked to appropriately change the cultural activity. If the concerns are not

resolved, the Parent may request a determination by the Board of Education and the addition of the topic on an agenda item for the next possible Board of Education meeting.

Suggested timeframe to arrange meeting: Two Weeks

Suggested timeframe to formulate response: Four Weeks

5. The last resolution level is the **Claremont Unified School District BOARD OF EDUCATION**. The Board of Education President in conjunction with the Superintendent may schedule an agenda item for discussion of the Parent's concerns regarding a cultural activity at a school. The Board of Education President may also decide to call a special Board meeting if timing is critical. Per the Brown Act, the Board of Education can only discuss and make a decision or vote when an item is on the meeting agenda. If the item is placed on the Board agenda, the Parent or Parents may speak to the Board at the meeting. The Board of Education makes the final determination of accuracy and authenticity of the cultural activity and determines the action to be taken. The Board also has the option of appointing a District Advisory Committee for a specific concern.

HISTORICAL ACCURACY and CULTURAL AUTHENTICITY

When a Parent or student has a concern regarding a cultural activity taking place at a school within the District, the Parent should follow the protocols under the Communication Protocols section. The Parent or student should also be prepared to present valid documentation for the concern based on the activity's lack of historical accuracy and/or cultural authenticity.

Validation Process:

The process below will provide the Parent, student and District with guidelines to evaluate documents used to determine the historical accuracy and/or cultural authenticity of the cultural activity. This process is based on the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Program's process for evaluation of outside research sources. IB History student research papers must evaluate primary or secondary sources. This process is called OPVL for Origin, Purpose, Value and Limitations.

Origin

- Who created the source?
- When did they create it?
- Where were they from?
- Who is the author and what are his/her credentials? (Secondary Source)

Purpose

- Why did they create the source?
- Was it created through a spur-of-the-moment act, a routine transaction, or a thoughtful, deliberate process?
- Was the source meant to be public or private?
- Did the recorder produce the source for personal use, for one or more individuals, or for a large audience?

Value

- Is what you learned from this document significant?

- What question does this document shed light on? What does this help us answer?
- Was the recorder a *neutral* party?
- Did the recorder have firsthand knowledge of the event?
- Does the author place her/his book in the “big picture”? (Secondary Sources)
- The author discusses others’ interpretations of the topic.

Limitations

- Did the creator have opinions or interests that might have influenced what was recorded?
- Was the information recorded during the event, immediately after the event, or after some lapse of time? How large a lapse of time?
- Did the recorder wish to inform or persuade others? (Check the words in the source. The words may tell you whether the recorder was trying to be objective or persuasive.)
- Did the recorder have reasons to be honest or dishonest?
- Did the recorder report what others saw and heard?
- The document does not build her/his argument.
- The document does not add to the question at hand.

Research Sources:

In order to research the historical accuracy or cultural authenticity upon which the cultural activity is based, the Parent or student should refer to valid and well-recognized sources. Information from two or three sources should agree. The list of suggested sources below is a sample of possible research resources.

California Department of Education Resources

California Department of Education	http://cde.ca.gov
California Curriculum Frameworks	http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/allfwks.asp
California Content Standards	http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/index.asp
California Adopted Instructional Materials	http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/
California Recommended Literature	http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/rl/ll/
California Three R’s Project: Rights, Responsibility, and Respect	http://score.rims.k12.ca.us/score_lessons/3rs/index.html
Schools of California Online Resources for Education (SCORE)	http://score.rims.k12.ca.us/

United State Government Resources

United State Education Department	http://www.free.ed.gov/
United States Library of Congress	http://www.loc.gov/index.html
Smithsonian Museum of American History	http://americanhistory.si.edu/

National Organizations

Anti Defamation League	http://www.adl.org/
Museum of Tolerance	http://www.museumoftolerance.com/site/c.juLVJ8MRKtH/b.1580483/k.BE32/Home.htm
NAACP	http://www.naacp.org/
National Council of Churches	http://www.nccusa.org/
National Museum of the American Indian	http://www.nmai.si.edu/subpage.cfm?subpage=education&second=dc&third=general
History Channel: History of the Holidays	http://www.history.com/genericContent.do?id=53343

Local Resources

Claremont Unified School District Website	http://www.cusd.claremont.edu
Claremont Unified School District Essential Standards	website URL TBD
Related Claremont Unified School District Board Policies	

- BP 0410 Nondiscrimination in District Programs and Activities
- BP 5137 Positive School Climate
- BP 5145.2 Freedom of Speech
- BP 5145.3 Nondiscrimination/Harassment
- BP 5145.7 Sexual Harassment
- BP 5145.9 Hate-Motivated Behavior
- BP 6141.2 Recognition of Religious Beliefs and Customs
- BP 6141.6 Multicultural Education

Inland Valley Hope Partners