

CURRICULUM UPDATE

Teaching about Martin Luther King, Jr. and Preparing for Black History Month

Orinda USD continues our diversity, equity, and inclusion work on many fronts, including teaching about the life and legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr. All staff members were provided resources to help teach the important lessons of Dr. King and are finding ways to share his impact with their students. This includes reading his writing and listening to his notable speeches, along with learning about his work as a part of the Civil Rights movement.

Some students will get to hear from Orinda USD's own Stuart House, our Director of Maintenance and Operations, who was also a Civil Rights pioneer and worked directly with Dr. King. Last year Mr. House spoke at all five Orinda schools about his experiences as a part of the Civil Rights movement.

Orinda USD schools are also making plans to celebrate Black History Month with a focus on different themes and activities at each grade level. Stay tuned for more details about this work in February! Our work is part of a larger year-round effort to develop and emphasize inclusion and equity for all students and staff, and involves the work of our Community Coalitions, the Wellness, Inclusion, Student and Staff Equity (WISSE) committee, and Orinda USD's partnership with the City of Orinda. We understand that this work is ongoing and essential to ensure that "Everyone Belongs Here."

Partnership With the Anti Defamation League

Our partnership with the Anti-Defamation League continues as we look forward to our next parent event on January 27 from 7:00-8:30. Our first event of the series was held on December 9, 2020, and was well attended. For our second session, we intend to go deeper into our conversations and how to develop a language and lens to recognize bias and make an impact in our community. The goal of these sessions is to continue to help create more safe, inclusive, and respectful communities.

We also look forward to an ADL training session next month with leaders from the Orinda Union School District and the City of Orinda.

Trainings and Professional Development/Work of the TOSA Team

Despite the challenges and work of delivering a comprehensive distance learning program, teachers in Orinda continue to find ways to improve and hone their instructional practice. At Orinda Intermediate School, mathematics teachers have been working with Sarah Schuhl, a content expert and a part of the Solution Tree Group, which focuses on developing professional learning communities. Ms. Schuhl will be meeting with the entire math department this month to look at how we can better align our math content and help support a wide range of student learning.

Additionally, OIS staff were trained this month on live streaming and how to effectively use technology when student cohorts return for live instruction on campus. This training was led by

Technology Director Bobby Bardenhagen and OIS science teacher Marshall Sachs who has been piloting cameras in his classroom.

The small group of Teachers on Special Assignment (TOSAs) continue to support classroom teachers with lesson demonstrations, creating resources to support distance learning, and managing OUSD's Teacher Resource site. In addition, teachers new to OUSD work closely with the TOSAs to plan curriculum and participate in coaching cycles. The TOSA team also hosts weekly office hours to support all staff with curriculum needs.

The TOSAs have played a lead role in developing OUSD's distance learning infrastructure. This includes providing training on heavily used apps (e.g., Zoom, Seesaw, Google Classroom, Jamboard, Flipgrid), modeling best practices for distance learning instruction, and building the Distance Learning website to support families.

In recent months, the TOSAs have been integral in establishing the district's reopening plans, working alongside elementary principals and OUSD's directors to develop health and safety protocols and logistics.