



CASCADE SCHOOL DISTRICT #5
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DARIN DRILL, SUPERINTENDENT

To: Mr. Brian Fenderson, Global Studies; Matt Thatcher, CSH Principal; Carol Fleenor, Language Arts; PTO representative

From: Ms. Jenny Gapp, Library Media Teacher
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Date: October 2008

RE: Collaborative Unit of Study on Contemporary Issues and Comparative Religion in the Middle East

The existing Contemporary Issues class has experienced success in improving student comprehension of terrorism, and the Social Studies Department as a whole has received National attention; however, the sensitive nature of the topic and the reluctance of the greater learning community to address these issues have led to ignorance, misunderstanding and incidents of bias and hate within the student population. Inter-department solidarity and cooperation of the greater community is essential to limiting incidents of censorship, parental requests to opt out of units of study, and hate motivated behavior.

Problem: Departmental isolation and limited availability of teacher prep time and resources limit student learning. Comprehension is further impeded by limited access to well-rounded media in the greater learning community. Parental involvement at the secondary level is far below that at the elementary level.

Proposed solution: A collaborative unit between the Global Studies Instructor, Language Arts Instructor(s) and the Library Media Teacher. Culminating community event.

Resources needed: Periodic access to classroom computer lab. See attached for proposed resources. These resources are readily available for review. Joint planning and evaluation time for instructors and assessment team (see Evaluation). Administrative approval of culminating after school activity.

Timeframe: One week for deliberation on the proposed collaboration. Three one-hour meetings for teacher/librarian preparation. One month for proposed unit of study.

Organizational benefit: To stimulate critical thought and analysis in secondary students attending Cascade Senior High School. Cascade School District's mission is to produce global citizens with an aptitude for life-long learning. The greater learning community will benefit from culminating "Taste of the Middle East" event. This event will be marketed to staff, students, parents and community members.

Possible outcome if supplementary materials are not utilized: Students remain ignorant of "both sides of the story" as regards contemporary issues in the Middle East. Greater learning community retains stereotypical view of the Middle East.

Evaluation: Using student data from pre and post unit evaluation and bias questionnaire, a collaborative team composed of three instructors, one administrator, three students, and two community members, will assess the effectiveness of the unit on promoting tolerance and discussion in the greater learning environment.

Next step: Notify the Library Media Center of your interest. Review attached materials and reply by the end of one week from the date of this proposal.

Attachments (2): Bibliography of proposed materials, Outline of Web Quest