

**ALBANY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD AGENDA BACKUP**

Regular Meeting of June 8, 2021

ITEM: ADOPTION OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS FOR ALBANY HIGH SCHOOL UNITED STATES HISTORY COURSE

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TYPE OF ITEM: REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this item is to review and discuss the proposal to adopt instructional materials for Albany High School's United States History course.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

In the Fall of 2020 the AHS Social Studies department began a process to replace the current United States History course textbook, American Odyssey, which was written in 1999 and is extremely outdated. The book enthusiastically proclaims the coming of the "world wide web" and, because it was copyrighted in 1999, does not cover current events in American History, including 9/11, making it difficult to address California State standard 11.1-"Students analyze the major social problems and domestic policy issues in contemporary American society".

In mid October 2020, the Social Studies department began the process of evaluating new instructional materials. Texts considered included the following: The American Yawp: A Massively Collaborative Open U.S. History Textbook: Volume 2: Since 1877, History Alive! Pursuing American Ideals, and both the brief and full editions of Give Me Liberty! 6th Edition.

DETAILS:

A committee of US history teachers including Ms. Hudson, Mr. Mink, and Ms. Pulido reviewed three possible textbooks for the course:

- A. **The American Yawp: A Massively Collaborative Open U.S. History Textbook: Volume 2: Since 1877** published in 2021 by Stanford University
- B. **History Alive! Pursuing American Ideals** published in 2008 by Teacher's Curriculum Institute.
- C. **Give Me Liberty!-6th Edition** published in 2019 by W.W. Norton & Company, both the condensed and full versions.

All United States History teachers evaluated the textbooks and unanimously agreed to adopt the brief edition of Give Me Liberty! The text is high interest, informative, and presented in a very accessible manner. We opted for the brief edition because we believe the size makes it more appealing and easier to carry. Furthermore, several teachers have firsthand experience using the textbook in class and have reported success in using the chapter queries.

Observations about the other texts: Based on our review, we ultimately decided on the Brief 6th High School Edition of Eric Foner's Give Me Liberty! The appealing layout, smaller size, and accessibility of high interest information are some of the features that went into our decision. While the content of American Yawp is engaging we found the lack of visual information to present a challenge to accessibility. The most appealing aspect of TCI's Pursuing American Ideals was its robust online support feature. The textbook itself suffered from a lack of visual components which we believed hampered accessibility.

The American Yawp: This text is a free collaborative online and print textbook that is available for free online. Unlike other textbooks it does not have an online support page. It does have an online teacher materials page (<https://www.americanyawp.com/text/teaching-materials/>) which is very comprehensive. Regarding the text itself, while it does have the occasional black and white image, most of it is text-based. There are no diagrams, timelines, or charts to convey relevant information.

History Alive! Pursuing American Ideals: This text has a strong online support presence, including web-based lesson plans, powerpoints, and short videos. The placard-based lessons of previous editions have been replaced by an online repository of lessons. While the online lesson support was appealing and the text itself has more color charts, maps, and historical photographs, the book is still very much text-based.

Give Me Liberty!-Brief 6th High School Edition: This textbook, which we ultimately recommend has digital resources, including quizzes, analysis of primary source documents, mapping activities, and other historical study skills. The text itself grapples with issues of inclusion and exclusion and incorporates previously marginalized voices. The author, Eric Foner, is one of the preeminent historians of the Reconstruction Era, and the book reflects his focus on the centrality of race relations in US history. Each chapter begins with focus questions to guide student readers. In addition to timelines and color maps, the book includes vocabulary definitions and makes information accessible to students. A sample chapter is available to peruse here; <https://digital.wwnorton.com/83913/r/goto/cfi/66!/4>. As you can see, in addition to the focus questions, each chapter has a short video introduction that provides a brief overview of the more salient features included in the chapter. The Voices of Freedom feature provides insight into the experience of people who lived through the events described in the chapter, including people of color, women, and other marginalized voices.

One of the teachers used two chapters (Progressivism and American Imperialism) in their three USH classes in Spring Semester 2021, and had a very positive response from students. In general, the students found that the reading was challenging yet accessible, of a manageable length, and considered different

perspectives while maintaining a coherent focus. End-of-section questions and the aforementioned Voices of Freedom primary sources were excellent supplements for instruction and provided strong material for quickwrites, class discussion and document-based queries.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION: The approximate cost for purchasing 300 copies is between \$22, 000 and \$32, 000 depending on the exact purchase terms. A final cost estimate will be provided at the June 22, 2021 meeting when the instructional materials are presented for adoption. Restricted lottery funds will be used to purchase these materials.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES ADDRESSED:



***Objective #1:** Assess and Increase Academic Success. **Goal:** We will provide a comprehensive educational experience with expanded opportunities for engagement, assessment, and academic growth so that all students will achieve their fullest potential.*

RECOMMENDATION: REVIEW AND DISCUSS INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS FOR ALBANY HIGH SCHOOL UNITED STATES HISTORY COURSE