

Memo

To: Rochester Board of Education
From: Mrs. Suzanne Keller, Director of Educational Services
cc: Mr. Dan W. Cox, Superintendent
Date: October 18, 2023
Re: Curriculum and Instruction Council

The Curriculum and Instruction Council approved three curriculum proposals on September 28, 2023 from Rochester High School. The proposals came from the Social Studies, English, and Science Departments.

The Social Studies Department at RHS recommended the addition of an AP Government Course. This course would allow students the opportunity to take a more rigorous civics course. In addition, it would be an option for those students who have an interest in government and policy. The course would “foster a deeper level of learning and cover current concepts along with advanced inquiry, reasoning skills, analyzing data, and connecting concepts.” Civics is a graduation requirement and the course would be offered to seniors.

The English Department at RHS recommended adding the novel, *Refugee*, written by Alan Gratz to the English 224 course. This novel will provide the course a needed update and provide RHS students with an engaging novel and reading experience, as well as the opportunity to practice the highest level of critical thinking. As outlined in the proposal, “*Refugee*, published in 2017, includes three different perspectives from three different time periods. The characters seek some of the same things our high school students seek: acceptance and belonging, safety, familiarity, and family. Students will analyze how

the historical context impacted refugees over the course of history, and use the text, personal experiences, and outside research to determine what shapes our identity.”

The Science Department at RHS proposed the addition of a Dual Credit Environmental Science Course. This course would be a year long course and would include Botany. Environmental Biology and Botany are currently each semester-long courses. Environmental Science would be a five weight course offered to juniors and seniors who have completed BIO 125 or 224. This course would be reflective of Lincoln Land Community College's, BIO 104-Life in the Environment Course. The Science Department reflected upon the District Strategic Plan and the goal to, “update and align curriculum, materials, instruction, and assessments to ensure a rigorous and relevant learning experience for all students.” The science department does not currently offer any dual credit options, just accelerated placement courses. In addition, as the district continues to focus on career pathways this course will open up an avenue to grow students' capacity related to environmental science and whether it is an avenue they would like to pursue in the future.