Student Curriculum Club
Student Member Guide

SUNNYSIDE
Unified School District

Contents

Preface

About this Guide

The Digital Promise Center for Inclusive Innovation supported the co-design and development of this guide with students, community members and teachers from the Sunnyside Unified School District in Tucson, AZ, as part of a national initiative to tackle pressing challenges in adolescent writing for historically and systematically excluded students. The initiative addressed the challenges in secondary writing by providing an opportunity for students to have a voice in selecting social studies inquiry topics, which have social, cultural and historical relevance to their lives, and choice in exploring those topics from multiple perspectives using accessible, diverse sources and varied assignments and formats. This student advisor guide is designed and intended to be used to support teachers in the implementation of a student curriculum club.

Acknowledgements

We recognize and celebrate the Inclusive Innovation team from the Sunnyside School District and community who committed their time and creativity to creating models and resources to ensure historically and systematically excluded students are heard, seen and valued in adolescent writing.

The creation of this guide was made possible through the dedication of:

- **The Team Leads:** Sunnyside School District lead, Frank McCormick, community co-lead, Darlene Cortina and CTE teacher, Elizabeth Skeggs

- **The Phase 1 Team:** Manny Leon, Diana Jimenez-Young, Sarai Juarez, Kathy Dong, Michele Kelly-McDonough, Stephanie Ponce, and Ricky Echanove

- **The Teachers:** Andrea Aguiar and Rene Teyechea

- **The Student Intern Team:** Judith Balsadua, Angelica Martinez, Citlalli Navarro, and Iracema Simental

Welcome to the guide for creating and running a Student Curriculum Club!

This guide will provide you with a step-by-step plan for designing your club—from writing club goals to working with a teacher advisor to recruiting students and launching your club!

Let's get started.

## What is the Student Curriculum Club?

A Student Curriculum Club (SCC) is a student-led group that collaborates with district curriculum leaders and teachers to advise, inform, and contribute to the curriculum that guides the knowledge and skills students are expected to learn. The SCC helps districts and schools create curriculum that is reflective of your needs and interests. In this club you are valued as collaborators for your voice, ideas and creativity to the curriculum process— and are cheerleaders for your peers in creating engaging learning experiences.
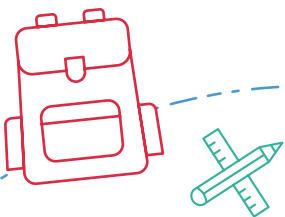
Why create a Student Curriculum Club?

Generally, students are not involved in the process of informing, designing or writing curriculum.

While the curriculum developed by districts and schools is of high quality, without students at the table as collaborators, the connection to your world and life experience is a challenge. Students today want learning experiences in school that are meaningful, connected, and reflective of their vibrant and diverse worlds.
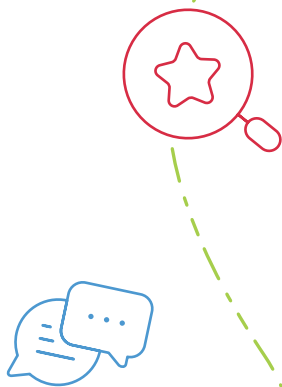
By inviting you to participate in informing students' learning experiences, selecting the topics for discussion, and creating writing assignments, students like you will become more engaged because your voice and perspective are needed and valued.

Why is this important to ME?

- Serve as an expert to teachers on creating useful learning experiences that are engaging to you and your peers.

- Build your knowledge on how to design a curriculum that teaches skills you want to learn that can be applied to life after high school.

- Be recognized for the contribution of your voice and perspective to curriculum development.

Can all students participate?

The Student Curriculum Club welcomes all voices and perspectives. To be successful and impactful, it is important for the SCC goals, values and student membership to reflect the diversity of the student body. Good grades are not required to be part of the SCC. We want to make sure we hear all of your voices, especially those we don't always hear. This is the perfect opportunity for you to shape your learning experience to be more engaging.

Roles

The success of the SCC is rooted in the people who are participating and their roles. To ensure every voice is heard and valued, it is important to consider the following roles:

Students

- You are leaders of the club.

- You will create the meeting plan, work with the teachers to determine the projects, build the project plans and work collaboratively to ensure the work is completed.

- Your main role is to provide input, feedback, advice and guidance to the curriculum leaders and teachers.

- You will work with your advisors to create project plans.

- You will meet on an ongoing basis with your advisors to inform the work and be accountable for completing your responsibilities.

- You will also be an advocate with your peers by sharing about their contribution to the curriculum and inviting students to engage in research and feedback opportunities.

Advisor

- The teacher advisor is responsible for keeping students engaged and on track with the club's mission, values and goals.
- The teacher advisor leads the communication and promotion of the SCC within the district or school, as well as the student recruitment and selection process.
- The advisor will coordinate the meeting schedule with student members and the lead process for working with the classroom teachers.
- The advisor will mentor the students on the process of curriculum development and guide them in providing feedback to peers and teachers.
- The advisor is a champion of the SCC with their administrator and teacher peers to ensure universal support and recognition for the students' work.

School Leadership

- The school leader is the primary supporter of the teacher advisor in ensuring that the SCC is productive and successful.
- The school leader ensures that the time and space is available for the SCC to meet, confirms the budget and resources for the SCC.

Curriculum Leadership

- The curriculum leader's role is to ensure students can be recognized and rewarded for their participation through credit recovery, internships or other means.
- The curriculum leader is the district-wide champion who is responsible for sharing the SCC's work and celebrates the students, teachers and school leadership across the district.
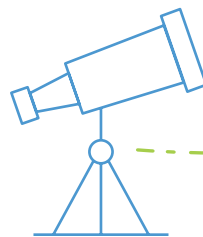
Student Members

Who can be a member?

Students who are interested in participating in informing their learning experiences, selecting the topics for discussion, creating writing assignments and having their voice and perspective heard and valued.

Your Role in Depth

Serving as a member of the Student Curriculum Club is essential to raising student voice and empowering priority students to have input into their learning. Here are some tips for pursuing the mission of this club.

Be a Leader

- **Be an active listener:** When participating in a group discussion, focus on what is being said by the speaker. If thoughts or questions come up, write them down in your notes and bring them up after the speaker has finished speaking.

- **Value your peers' input:** Your peers may be interested in topics that you are unaware of or are not directly related to any of the current curriculum in place. Individuals may surface topics that you or others in the group have no prior knowledge of. When a peer brings up a topic that no one understands or can relate to, dig deeper. Ask exploratory questions to find out what it is and encourage others to engage in discussion.

- **Maintain privacy:** During group discussion other members or peers may bring up topics that require maintaining privacy of a student's identity. It is important to honor and respect the students if they choose to remain anonymous.

Engage

Actively participating in the weekly SCC meetings is essential to achieving the goals of the club. Below you will find information on how to run the SCC, engage in tasks and communicate with your peers.

Club Operations

Club Agreements

Establishing agreements is one of the first activities that club members participate in. Even though it is created on the first day it can be added onto throughout the school year. Here are some tips for establishing norms as a club.

Step 1: Think about a time when you felt really successful in a group.

Step 2: Take notes of what made that experience a success.

Step 3: Share out in a group and summarize the statements into a set of agreements.

Step 4: Consider a time when you had the worst experience working in a group.

Step 5: Write down some ways that could have made the experience better.

Step 6: Share out in a group and summarize the statements into additional agreements.

Step 7: Review the agreements as a group and discuss whether there is anything else the group can add or change to the set of norms.

Rotating Tasks:

At each session of the SCC, you will rotate tasks that need to be completed. You will work in pairs.

- The first pair will gather the topics and themes suggested by their peers. This could be done by writing suggested topics on post-its.

- The second pair will then begin to sort the post-its into categories. This could be done on a whiteboard or poster board that they keep in the classroom that they work in.

- The third pair will act as note takers. They write down the minutes of each session, note the topics suggested and discussed, and summarize the decisions made along with the reason why the decisions were made.

- The last pair will work on crafting suggestion prompts that tie into an ongoing theme or topic in a classroom that a teacher could easily include in the lesson plan that week. *(See Table 1 on page 24, Item 1)*

- As a group, you will keep track of the topics, themes and suggestions that may be too broad and will need more planning time for teachers to include in their lesson plans. These topics, themes or suggestions should be brought up during the spring curriculum meeting in a formal presentation to the curriculum committee.

Responsibilities

Gathering, Cataloging and Analyzing input from your peers.

- **Gathering data:** How will you collect your peers' input? Will you have a suggestion box for students to submit suggestions? Will your club develop an online space for students to share their thoughts? Whichever method you choose it is important to let students feel safe about submitting their thoughts and that your club is consistent with managing the data. *(See Table 1 on page 23, Item 2.)*
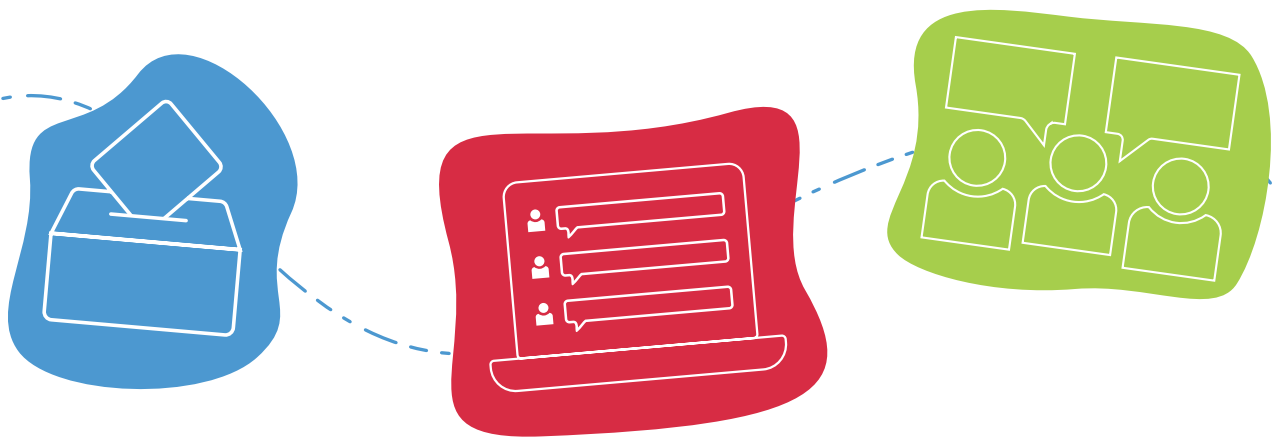
- **Cataloging data:** Think about how you will organize information you received and archive decisions that were made during each club meeting. Where will you store the information? Would it be on a shared digital document or on a whiteboard in a classroom where your work could go undisturbed?

- **Analyzing data:** Participate in the discussion about which topics to suggest to curriculum leads or teachers. Ask questions and provide helpful advice to other members' thoughts and opinions.

Here are some steps for engaging in the discussion.

Step 1: A speaker will present a suggested topic or idea for discussion.

Step 2: Students silently review the topic by listing their thoughts on the following aspects.

- Appropriateness — Is the topic that was suggested appropriate?

- Student interest in the topic — Do you think this topic is interesting or do you think your peers would be interested in this topic?

- Teacher willingness to engage in the topic — Do you think the teacher whose class this topic was suggested for would want to engage in this topic?

- How the topic might be related to a subject? Think about how this topic could tie into something you have learned in a specific subject matter.

Step 3: Use these sentence starters to engage in the discussion:

Start with strengths

- I really like _____ because _____ .

- I think students will like this topic because _____ .

- I think this could be relevant to our peers because _____.

Make connections

- This makes me think of _____ in _____ .

- This topic relates to _____ .

Discuss why the topic is not appropriate

- Think this topic is _____ because _____ .

- This is counter to _____ that we have discussed _____ .

Full guide on page 22

Discussion Guide

STEP 1

A presenter will suggest a topic or idea for discussion.

STEP 2

Students silently review the topic by listing their thoughts on the following aspects:

- Appropriateness
- Student interest in the topic
- Teacher willingness to engage in the topic
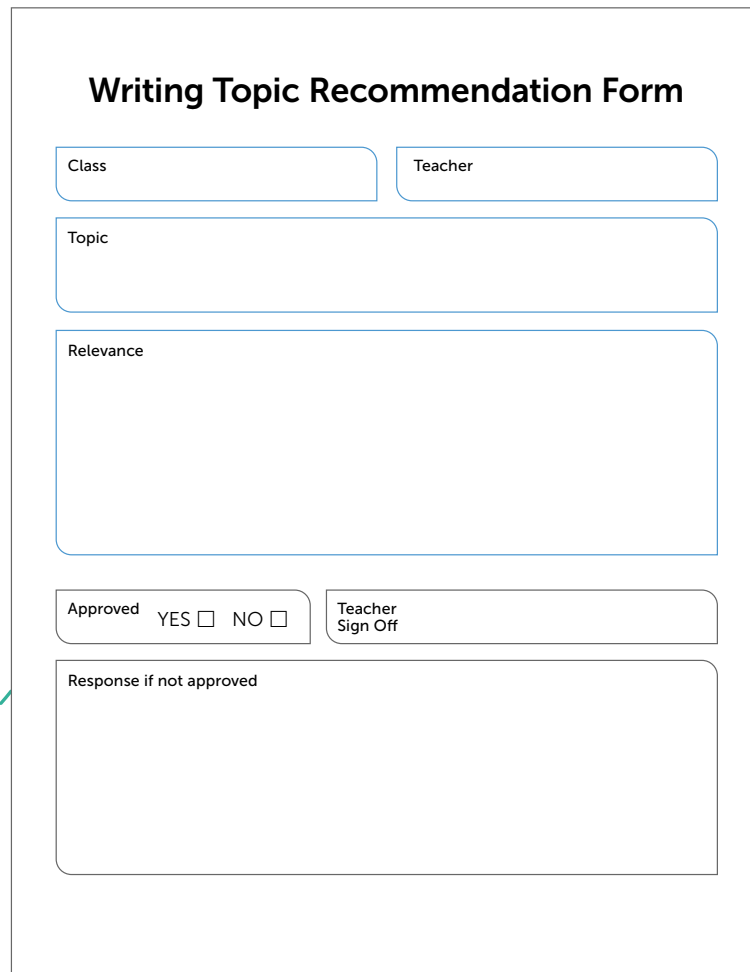- How the topic might be related to a subject matter or concept

STEP 3

Open up the group for engaging in discussion

- Start with strengths
  - I really liked _____ because _____.
  - I think students will like this topic because _____. (give students some thinking points about why they may like a topic or may not like a topic)
  - I think this could be relevant because _____.
- Make connections
  - This makes me think of _____ in _____.
  - This topic relates to _____.
- Discuss why the topic is not appropriate
  - Think this topic is _____ because_____.
  - This is counter to _____ that we have discussed _____.

Recommend chosen topics/themes, inquiry questions, and text sources or writing prompts to curriculum leads.

- As a group, draft a list of topics, prompts or questions that can be submitted to content area faculty that could be assigned to classes in the form of short writing assignments that are engaging and relevant to your classmates' lived experiences. *Use the recommendation template in the member tools section.*

- As a group, craft a recommendation presentation for topics that would be submitted to the Spring Curriculum planning meeting. *Use the presentation template in the member tools section.*

Writing Topic Recommendation Form

Class

Teacher

Topic

Relevance

Approved   YES ☐   NO ☐

Teacher Sign Off

Response if not approved

Writing Topic Recommendation Form on page 19

Communicating recommendations back to peers (closing the loop)

- After you have discussed as a group which topics, suggestions or questions to recommend or not to recommend to the curriculum leads, it is important to notify the students of the status of their suggestion. This lets them know that their voices have been heard and that their thoughts matter. We recommend using the response samples, in the member tools section of this guide, for notifying your peers that their suggestions were approved or if you have any feedback for changing or improving their suggestion.

Notification Response Template

☐ **Approved**

Thank you so much for suggesting your topic: _____.

This is a notification that it has been approved by the SCC and we will forward it to (*teacher*) for their final approval. Please keep an eye out for this topic to be brought up in class over the next few weeks.

☐ **Under Consideration**

Thank you so much for suggesting your topic: _____.

At this time we are not able to approve the your suggested (topic or question) because
_____
_____
_____

We recommend these changes to your suggestion:
_____
_____
_____

- If you would like to appeal this decision, please submit a "Suggestion Appeal Form" to the SCC.

Notification sample responses on page 21

- If a student would like to re-submit their suggestion they can appeal or request that the SCC have a second review of their suggestion. We recommend an appeal process wherein the student can attend a meeting with evidence showing that their suggested topic or question would be interesting and engaging to their peers. This can be a signed petition form with a good amount of signatures from their peers showing an interest in the topic or question they are suggesting. Please see the sample petition form in the member tools section.

Suggestion Appeal Form

Please use this form if your suggestion has been denied and would like to have the Student Curriculum Club reevaluate your submission.

Class

Teacher

Topic

Relevance

Student signatures who would also like this topic recommended
(please have at least 10 signatures)
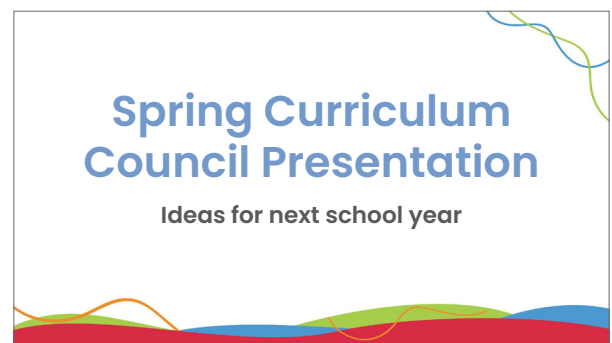
Suggestion Appeal Form on page 22

Actively participate and prepare for the recommendation sessions

- The most important event of your club will be a formal presentation of your recommended curriculum topics and research questions for the incoming school year to the curriculum committee. It is important to actively participate in the session by effectively communicating to the curriculum committee that these topics you are suggesting will engage your peers and be relevant to their lived experience.

- To prepare for this, we recommend crafting the presentation slide deck and practicing your presentation amongst the group. Be sure to include evidence from the data you have gathered over the course of the semester and connections to themes and/or topics previously discussed in your classes. If you would like to enhance your presentation, we encourage you to look at your state standards and see if any align with your suggested topics or questions.

Writing Topic Recommendation Form

Class

Teacher

Topic

Relevance

Approved   YES ☐   NO ☐

Teacher Sign Off

Response if not approved

Topic Recommendation Template on page 19

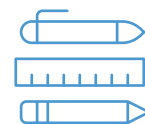**Spring Curriculum Council Presentation**

Ideas for next school year

All slideshow templates on page 20

SCC Member Tools and Resources

Sample Agenda

Student Curriculum Club Sample Agenda

Date:

Time	Task
2 mins	**Ice Breaker**
3 mins	**Rotate Task Assignments** • The first pair will gather the topics and themes suggested by their peers. This could be done by writing suggested topics on post-its. • The second pair will then begin to sort the post-its into categories. This could be done on a whiteboard or poster board that they keep in the classroom that they work in. • The third pair will act as note takers. They write down the minutes of each session, note the topics suggested and discussed, and summarize the decisions made along with their rationale. • The last pair will work on crafting the topic/question or theme suggestion prompt and codifying suggestions to be brought up during the spring curriculum meeting. ☐ Review last week's member roles. ☐ Assign roles for this week. ☐ Get settled and begin tasks • Pair 1: Gather data • Pair 2: Set up post its and whiteboard • Pair 3: Gather materials for note taking or sign on to digital note taker • Pair 4: Pull up ongoing suggestion template
20 mins	**Discussion** ☐ Review suggested topics ☐ Ask questions
12 mins	**Decide and Craft** ☐ Decide which topics to recommend to the subject matter teacher for upcoming writing assignments and craft recommendation ☐ Decide which topics to recommend to the curriculum council during spring semester and add to the presentation slide deck **Close the loop** ☐ Follow up with students who submitted suggestions, using the approved and denied notification templates
3 mins	**Meeting wrap up**

Agenda

Student Curriculum Club

Date: _____

Time	Task
2 mins	**Ice Breaker**
3 mins	**Task Rotation**
20 mins	**Discussion**
12 mins	**Decide and Craft** **Close the loop**
3 mins	**Meeting wrap up**

Writing Topic Recommendation Form

Class	Teacher

Topic

Relevance

Approved   YES ☐   NO ☐

Teacher
Sign Off

Response if not approved

SUNNYSIDE
Unified School District

Presentation Guide

Spring Curriculum Council Presentation

Ideas for next school year
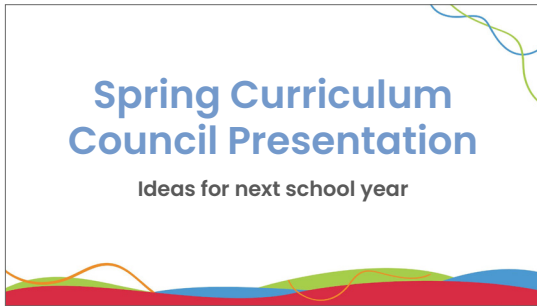
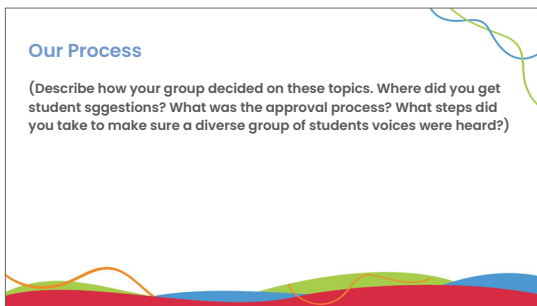**This is the title slide of the presentation.**
Add your school district's name and the date of your presentation.

The Student Curriculum Club

(Introduce yourselves to the council. Maybe add your names, pictures and grade levels.)
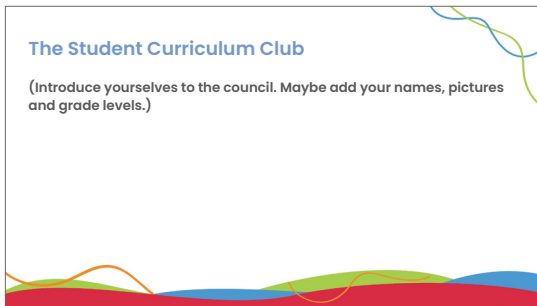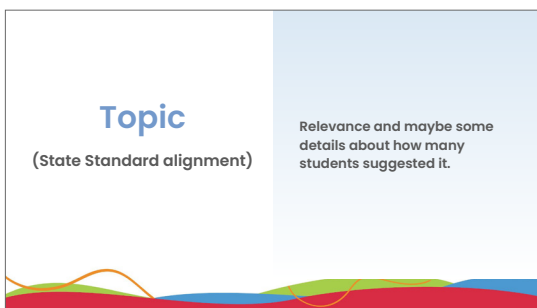
Use this slide to introduce each of the members of the club to the curriculum council.
Make sure to include your name, pictures, grade levels and school that you are from. Decide on how to present this slide. One person could introduce each member or each person could introduce themselves.
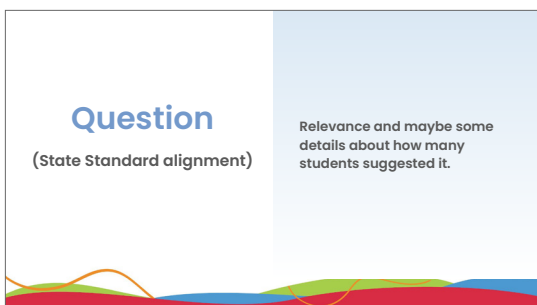
Our Process

(Describe how your group decided on these topics. Where did you get student sggestions? What was the approval process? What steps did you take to make sure a diverse group of students voices were heard?)

Use this slide to describe your club's process.
Talk about how you gathered information, analyzed the data and how you came to a decision on the topics. This could include describing the criterias that lead the club discussions.

Topic
(State Standard alignment)

Relevance and maybe some details about how many students suggested it.

Use these "Topic" slides to suggest a topic to the council. Include any state standards that it may align to beneath the suggested topic. On the right side describe how this topic is relevant to your lived experience and learning.

Question
(State Standard alignment)

Relevance and maybe some details about how many students suggested it.

Use these "Question" slides to suggest an inquiry question for the next year's research topic. Include any state standards that it may align to beneath the suggested question. On the right side describe how this question is relevant to your lived experience and learning.

Notification Response Template

☐ **Approved**

Thank you so much for suggesting your topic: _____ .

This is a notification that it has been approved by the SCC and we will forward it to (*teacher*) for their final approval. Please keep an eye out for this topic to be brought up in class over the next few weeks.

☐ **Under Consideration**

Thank you so much for suggesting your topic: _____ .

At this time we are not able to approve the your suggested (topic or question) because

_____

_____

_____

We recommend these changes to your suggestion:

_____

_____

_____

- If you would like to appeal this decision, please submit a "Suggestion Appeal Form" to the SCC.

Suggestion Appeal Form

Please use this form if your suggestion has been denied and would like to have the Student Curriculum Club reevaluate your submission.

Class

Teacher

Topic

Relevance

Student signatures who would also like this topic recommended
(please have at least 10 signatures)

Discussion Guide

STEP 1

A presenter will suggest a topic or idea for discussion.

STEP 2

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- Teacher willingness to engage in the topic
- How the topic might be related to a subject matter or concept

STEP 3

Open up the group for engaging in discussion

- Start with strengths
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  - ☐ I think students will like this topic because _____. (give students some thinking points about why they may like a topic or may not like a topic)
  - ☐ I think this could be relevant because _____.

- Make connections
  - ☐ This makes me think of _____ in _____.
  - ☐ This topic relates to _____.

- Discuss why the topic is not appropriate
  - ☐ Think this topic is _____ because_____.
  - ☐ This is counter to _____ that we have discussed _____.

Table 1. Sunnyside Unified School District SCC

Item 1: What form would recommendations from the SCC look like?	Compact Writing Assignment (CWA) Recommendations could be delivered to teachers in the form of a template for compiling CWA writing prompts per grade level or subject area, to email to teachers every two weeks.
Writing Topic Recommendation Form Class · Teacher Topic Relevance Approved YES ☐ NO ☐ · Teacher Sign Off Response if not approved Full template on page 18	Inquiry Unit Recommendations will be in the form of a pitch presentation for curriculum leads during the Spring Semester planning session. This is a larger project that would require a method for codifying recommendations and feedback for specific aspects of the curriculum over the course of the first semester.
Item 2: How to gather and analyze input.	Students will be gathering input from their peers through the Digital Village Square (DVS). Once they have gathered the data they will analyze which topics should be recommended for Compact Writing Assignments (CWA's) and which topics should be codified Inquiry Unit recommendations. Setting up data gathering intervals may be helpful, so as not to overwhelm the students.

Designed by Winter Group