



# RISE SAN LUIS

Newsletter No. 2  
July-August 2021

**Dear San Luis Community,**

Thank you for your interest and investment in the **RISE San Luis initiative!**

This is the first monthly newsletter we are sending out to summarize community meetings and resources to-date. Follow along here as we address questions and share updates in the curriculum development. We will also be featuring student work and stories once the course kicks off to celebrate their progress. Please feel free to email [contact@risesanluis.org](mailto:contact@risesanluis.org) with any questions, concerns, or if you'd like to be added to the mailing list.

We're excited to have you aboard.

Sincerely,  
the RISE Team

**Project Lead**  
**4th Grade Curriculum**  
**High School Digital Arts Curriculum**

Kimba Rael, Principal of Centennial High School  
History Colorado, Eric Carpio & April Legg  
Sarah McCormick & Kevin Sweet





## MEETING #4

July 10, 2021

*In Attendance: Shirley Romero Otero, Dennis Lopez, Dakota Rael, Audrey Rael, Damicio Rael, Junita Martinez, Chris Rodriguez, Curtis Garcia, Charlie Jaquez, Cathay Serna Egaña, Kimba Rael, Alejandra Cortes, Becca Chickadel, Jenny Pettit, Kevin Sweet, Sarah McCormick*

### **The broader RISE team provided progress updates on their respective projects including:**

- History Colorado presented an overview of the current state of the 4th grade curriculum Scope & Sequence and lesson development (discussion and feedback noted below). • Digital Art Curriculum Team discussed collaborating with History Colorado to create mentorship and collaboration opportunities between the 4th grade and high school curricula.
- Toby Melster announced additional funding for the communications network through a connectivity grant, raising the total to approximately \$2.8mil to bring wireless internet to Centennial School District R-1 students. The school is in conversations with Jade Communications and will be performing on-location assessments to determine tower locations.
- Stakeholders voiced concerns regarding line-of-sight connectivity and equity of access due to existing issues caused by geographic topography.

### **History Colorado and Stakeholders began to walk through units, lessons, and core concepts in the 4th grade curriculum's Scope and Sequence. Discussion and questions regarding each unit include:**

Introduction: Exploring Cultural Identity and Building a Sense of Belonging

- **"Knowledge of Self and Family"** is taught through lessons and projects such as creating 'I am' poems, viewing media and discussing genealogy, and creating oral histories with community elders.
- Stakeholder questions included how one brings in the influence of religion as one of the threads that makes up the community.

Concept 1: Geographic and Cultural Diversity within a sense of place

- **"Knowledge of Place"** is taught through student engagement with what makes the community unique, including colcha embroidery making, local mural projects, and geographic features.
- Stakeholder feedback included a conversation around incorporating student experience in the locations discussed to provide context for questions such as 'why this place was settled.'

## Concept 2: Indigenous Groups in the Past and Today

- **“Knowledge of Original Peoples,” “Knowledge of Indigenous Science” and “Knowledge of Native Homeland”** focus on how Indigenous Peoples interact with the land past and present using tribally-vetted educational materials. Students will learn through lessons and projects such as creating and discussing land acknowledgements, engaging in archaeological practices, and discussing what traditions and practices connect us to indigenous ancestry today.
- Stakeholder feedback included directing additional attention to hyper-local content such as local experts and practices such as chicos and medicinal herbs, ditch work and hieroglyphs, horno construction and repair, and the Pueblo weavers and dancers that would participate in Santana. In addition to these resources, stakeholders stressed this section as an opportunity to bring in the critical lens towards history and narrativity, and bringing out the complexity of historical conflict, conquest, and oppression

## Concept 3: The Movement of People

- Units such as **“Knowledge of Ancestors,” “Knowledge of Communities,” “Knowledge of Agriculture,”** and **“Knowledge of Mining”** focus on the social and economic decisions that cause people to locate in the community. Students will learn through lessons and projects such as engaging with primary sources (i.e. the Las Castas Chart), the analysis of architecture (i.e. Cordillera homes), creative projects around ancestral resistance, and questions surrounding local communities and practices (Sephardic Jewish, Mormon, Amish, Maya, etc.).
- Stakeholders offered additional questions and concepts for students to engage with such as local adobe architecture and historical contexts for architectural names and design, questions around contemporary urban diaspora and ‘brain drain,’ and the role of isolation in the development of culture (language and practices such as sweeping direction). Additionally, questions of labor, politics, and industry could be addressed through student analysis of King Turquoise Ranch, Orindolph Lavarock Mining, Battle Mountain Gold, and the meatpacking industry.

Feedback from the stakeholders that may apply to the curriculum as a whole includes ideas such as:

- Focus student activity and evaluation on experiential learning as much as possible rather than pen-and-paper methods.
- Having students demonstrate mastery of both subject and technological skill by engaging with historical research and presenting that research on media platforms such as ArcGIS, facebook, youtube, instagram, etc. This work should be outward-facing for those they consider their community to create a more genuine and personal engagement.
- Focus student engagement through a personal lens, such as having students contextualize and reflect on practices, artifacts, tools, etc. from their own families.

**Stakeholders in attendance were provided the 4th Grade Curriculum Scope and Sequence draft to continue to review for feedback and discussion in the next community meeting.**



## **MEETING #5**

**August 14, 2021**

*In Attendance: Charlie Jaquez, Shirley Romero Otero, April Legg, Eric Carpio, Kimba Rael, Rebecca Chickadell, Curtis Garcia, Sarah McCormick, Kevin Sweet, Cathay Cerna Egaña (some in attendance may not be listed)*

### **The broader RISE team provided progress updates on their respective projects including:**

- History Colorado revisited their overview of the current state of the 4th grade curriculum Scope & Sequence and lesson development (discussion and feedback noted below).
- Digital Art Curriculum Team discussed potential models for finding and connecting with community members who may be interested in participating with students in upcoming projects.
- Stakeholders voiced concerns regarding cultural acknowledgement and the inclusion of smaller, surrounding villages of San Luis within the historical content of the curriculum.

### **History Colorado and Stakeholders walked through units, lessons, and core concepts in the 4th grade curriculum's Scope and Sequence. Discussion surrounding these topics included:**

- "Agency" as a term of empowerment with regards to student approach to curriculum.
- A "nontransactional" approach to cultural knowledge and community stories refers to a student interest and investment beyond assignment requirements.
- The curriculum should encourage students to be nonconformists.
- The curriculum should prioritize geographic and cultural diversity of the region beyond San Luis specifically.
  - Emphasis on the concept of "querencia" - a sense of place, home, familiarity, and environment. This is developed through family and community.
  - Sense of place is demonstrated through rituals and practices such as the desire for community members to return to and be buried in this region.
  - There are many smaller villages around San Luis that are even older and have rich history and records. These histories should be prioritized as well.
  - Region-specific cultural practices include many food-related traditions such as the use of hornos, chico-making, and the preservation of many heirloom seeds. The learning of these traditions

should include their indigenous roots.

- The curriculum may want to tackle more civics-oriented concepts such as:
  - The politics behind San Luis being the county seat and the fact that towns like Fort Garland are eager to shift those dynamics.
  - What are the benefits to the San Luis community that the districting exists as it is currently?
  - Is San Luis unique in being totally run by members of the Chicanx community?
  - What roles have race and religion played in the political dynamics that exist in the region?
- The learning of tribally-vetted indigenous histories will be prioritized such as:
  - The stories of Ute and other nations' movement through this region, both past and present.
  - Not glazing over tensions that have existed and still do exist between the indigenous and settler communities.
  - Traditional architecture.
  - The movement of borderlands and tracing of genealogy.
  - Social capital of the "how light are you" question to biracial folks. We should avoid "softening language" on these topics.

**Stakeholders in attendance were provided with an updated 4th Grade Curriculum Scope and Sequence draft to continue to review for feedback and discussion in the next community meeting.**

## **Upcoming Scheduled Events**

**Next Monthly Meeting:** Saturday, September 11th 9:00am-11:30am, Centennial High School, 14644 CO-159, San Luis, CO 81152 (We meet on the second Saturday each month)

**Digital Art Curriculum Team Office Hours:** 6-7pm 1st and 3rd Tuesday of every month

Join us on Zoom: <https://cuboulder.zoom.us/j/92382349655>

Join us via Phone: +1 (346) 248-7799 (meeting id: 92382349655)

Contact Kevin & Sarah via email: [contact@risesanluis.org](mailto:contact@risesanluis.org)

Questions, Comments, Suggestions?

**contact@risesanluis.org**