



A Community of Learners

Informational Item: Social Studies Curriculum Implementation Update

TO: School Board
Superintendent Kocanda

From: Barry Rodgers, Director of Innovation, Teaching and Learning

April 24, 2018

Background

In August of 2017, the District initiated a curriculum review cycle for the area of Social Studies. A committee was formed with representation of teachers from each grade level and representation from all five schools in the District. Brad Rice, teacher at Washburne School was chosen as the Chairperson to help steward the curriculum review and development process. The timing for the curriculum review process is warranted as new State standards for teaching Social Studies were released within the past two years. With the adoption of new standards, schools are now actively redesigning teaching and learning to best meet the needs of students through the lens of the new standards.

Formal Curriculum review cycles have been designed to occur within a six year time period for Winnetka schools based on the following template:

Year 1

- ☐ Research, development and design

Year 2

- ☐ Develop and design course expectations and materials

Year 3

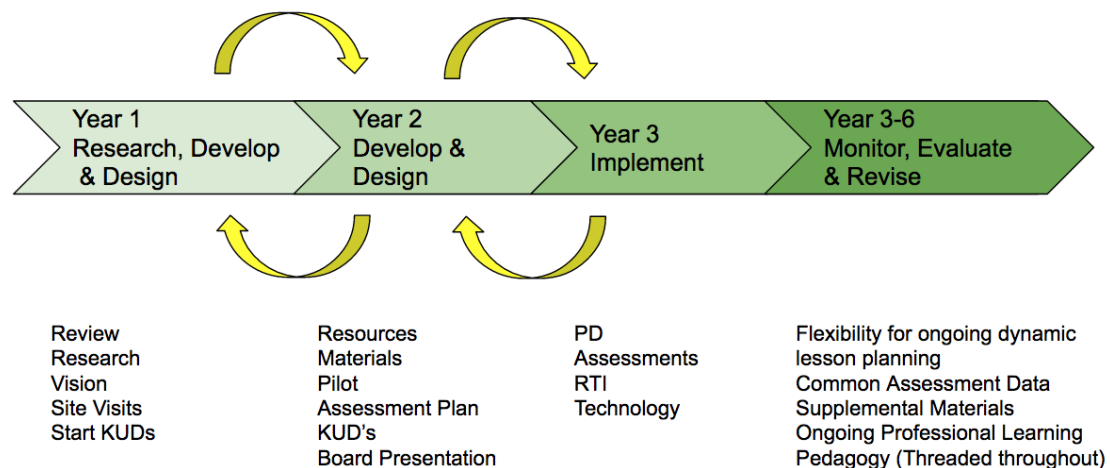
- ☐ Implementation and alignment

Year 4-6

- ☐ Monitor, evaluate and revise

The Social Studies began the curriculum review team in August, starting with a subgroup of teachers examining the current standards and the existing curriculum review cycle

process. It was determined by the full Committee that the development of new curriculum and the implementation of the new state standards with fidelity would be better served by revising the curriculum review cycle to be more agile and dynamic. In doing so, the District will continue to follow the same general time frames, but has modified the review cycle to move away from the lockstep nature of curriculum development. This approach will allow the teachers to examine new materials and digital resources, pilot lessons, and review pedagogy as needed throughout the curriculum review cycle. A schematic of the the modified process is illustrated below:



Illinois Social Studies Standards

The new standards have been welcomed by the Committee as the student expectations have been updated to meet the needs of today's citizens while aligning with progressive pedagogy. Moreover, the standards promote the acquisition of knowledge, but also promote students participation as active members of our democracy. To this end, the standards document has been organized into two complementary categories to provide a framework for student success in the modern world:

Inquiry Skills

- ☐ Developing Questions and Planning Inquiries
 - ☐ Constructing Essential Questions
 - ☐ Constructing Supporting Questions
 - ☐ Determining Helpful Sources
- ☐ Evaluating Sources and Using Evidence
 - ☐ Gathering and Evaluating Sources
 - ☐ Developing Claims and Using Evidence
- ☐ Communicating Conclusions and Taking Informed Action
 - ☐ Communicating Conclusions
 - ☐ Critiquing Conclusions
 - ☐ Taking Informed Action

Disciplinary Concepts

- ☐ Civics
 - ☐ Civic and Political Institutions
 - ☐ Participation and Deliberation: Applying Civic Virtues and Democratic Principles Processes, Rules, and Laws
- ☐ Geography
 - ☐ Geographic Representations: Spatial Views of the World Human-Environment Interaction: Place, Regions, and Culture
 - ☐ Human Population: Spatial Patterns and Movements
 - ☐ Global Interconnections: Changing Spatial Patterns
- ☐ Economics and Financial Literacy
 - ☐ Economic Decision Making
 - ☐ Exchange and Markets
 - ☐ The National and Global Economy
- ☐ History
 - ☐ Change, Continuity, and Context
 - ☐ Perspectives
 - ☐ Historical Sources and Evidence
 - ☐ Causation and Argumentation

The Illinois State Board of Education has clearly articulated that inquiry and disciplinary topics are complementary and should be taught simultaneously whenever possible. The state standards also encourage integrated/interdisciplinary learning involving other disciplines. This approach will serve as a key driver in the curriculum cycle process and should facilitate deeper understanding and application of knowledge for students.

Timeline of Committee Work

The Committee has met throughout the year during three Institute Days and four after school meetings. Below is a list of topics covered in the initial year of the process.

August

- ☐ Envisioned ideal Social Studies graduate outcomes
- ☐ Examination of Illinois and National Standards
- ☐ Conceptualizing lesson design
- ☐ Inquiry and interdisciplinary learning

September

- ☐ Examined current/past curriculum

- ☐ Reviewed/revised curriculum cycle
- ☐ Exploring digital tools and resources for inquiry

October

- ☐ Reviewed mandated areas of study
(Constitution, African American Experience, The Holocaust)

November

- ☐ Examined inquiry projects by grade level
- ☐ Utilized rapid prototyping to design inquiry based lessons

January

- ☐ Developed exemplars of integrated/project based learning
- ☐ Explored project based learning ideas at Winnetka and schools visited through the Future Ready D36 initiative
- ☐ Review of content standards

March

- ☐ Continued review of content standards
- ☐ Examination of scope and sequence for content and vertical alignment
- ☐ Brainstorming of major themes

April

- ☐ Examination of external curriculum documents from other districts
- ☐ Developing themes and inquiry questions by grade level bands

Alignment with the District 36 Shared Vision

The Social Studies Curriculum Review Cycle supports the goals outlined in our shared vision by providing opportunities for every student to flourish in an innovative experiential learning environment that supports students understanding and application of social studies to be successful and confident. Our approach fosters students' ability to be able to make real world connections while providing the framework for lifelong inquiry and civic responsibility.

Next Steps

The committee will be meeting on April 25 to continue their work on developing themes and essential questions. On June 12, teachers will meet for a full day of collaboration and curriculum development. Topics to be covered will include the defining of key understandings connected to essential questions and themes. In addition, the group will

continue ongoing work to conceptualize and create inquiry based learning units and projects.

Year two of the curriculum review cycle will focus on continued development of themes and units, assessment, and the exploration of digital tools and resources. The committee will also continue to explore current best practices including participation in the National Council for the Social Studies Conference to be held in Chicago this November. Year two will culminate in the writing of KUD documents. At the end of the 2018-19 school year, the committee aims to provide their recommended KUD curriculum documents for Board approval.