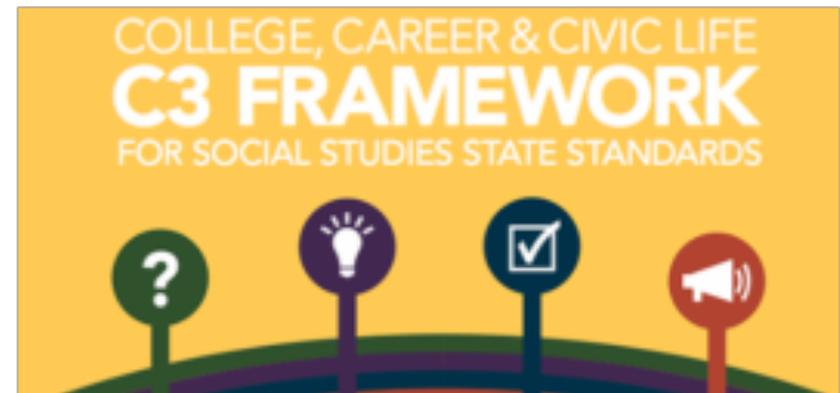


District 23 – Social Studies Curriculum Development 2016

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Purpose of the Science Curriculum Committee:

The committee of administration and teachers worked collaboratively during the 2015-16 school year to evaluate current curriculum goals and materials, identify gaps, and vision for the future of this curricular area. This will be a continuous improvement process as the standards, technologies, materials, faculty, and students are always variables in the equation. This document, however, is a starting point for curriculum planning, collaborative lesson development, and for articulation in our District.

The new Illinois Learning standards for Social Science were adopted by the General Assembly in January of 2016 with full implementation expected by 2017-18 school year. The current climate of “college and career readiness” has been broadened to include “civic life” as part of the C3 framework. The new standards are built upon the Common Core and include ELA and math skills and content relevant to social studies. It is imperative that “social studies” no longer be viewed as a stand alone subject, disconnected from the content and skills taught through Literacy and Math.

As part of the District 23 Curriculum Adoption cycle, current subscriptions to Social studies materials expire at the end of the 2015-16 school year. As such, a deliberate and purposeful search for new or renewed materials that will meet the instructional needs of our teachers, match the new Illinois Learning Standards, and engage students was conducted this year.

This committee of professionals is to be commended for their time and dedication to reflecting, creating, and writing this update to the Social Studies curriculum in Prospect Heights School District 23.

Visions and Values:

The C3 framework, the document upon which the new Illinois Learning standards for social studies, summarizes the importance and need for social science instruction and prioritization:

NOW MORE THAN EVER, students need the intellectual power to recognize societal problems; ask good questions and develop robust investigations into them; consider possible solutions and consequences; separate evidence-based claims from parochial opinions; and communicate and act upon what they learn. And most importantly, they must possess the capability and commitment to repeat that process as long as is necessary. Young people need strong tools for, and methods of, clear and disciplined thinking in order to traverse successfully the worlds of college, career, and civic life.

The study of “history” or “social studies” in District 23 provides students with broad exposure to foundational concepts and skills central to developing an understanding of the world around us and an inquisitive mindset. Gaps have been identified, however, between current practices and the newly adopted Illinois Learning Standards for social science.

- We believe that understanding key historical concepts and the process of inquiry and investigation are essential components of college and career readiness.
- We believe that we should minimize the extent to which Social Studies is taught as a “stand alone” subject. Rather, we seek opportunities to embed skills and concepts across the curriculum.
- We believe that research and inquiry are foundational skills that we must teach so that students are effective “consumers” and “creators” of information, especially in this digital age.
- We believe that history should be linked to relevant current and future issues and taught through an engaging, application based process.
- We believe that teaching civics requires a close connection to our homes, community, state and federal government. To that end, continued trips (both physical and digital) are encouraged as a foundational component of the curriculum.

It is the recommendation of the committee to adopt the following materials as a foundation for instruction and to encourage teachers to utilize primary and secondary sources whenever possible to supplement instruction:

Grades K-1: Teacher created curriculum tied directly to Literacy series and daily activities.

Grades 2-3: Pearson 2013 myWorld Social Studies

Grades 4-8: TCI 2013-2017 Social Studies Alive and History Alive

Illinois Social Science Standards:

The Illinois Social Science Standards are designed to ensure that students across Illinois focus on a common set of standards and have the opportunity to develop the knowledge, dispositions, and skills necessary for success in college, career, and civic life in the 21st century. The vision supporting this design is to produce Illinois graduates who are civically engaged, socially responsible, culturally aware, and financially literate. Teachers can facilitate this process by giving students opportunities to work collaboratively as well as individually.

In the last 20 years, the curricular demands on elementary teachers have shifted to a focus on mathematics and English language arts. The task force recognized that thematic lessons often drive many curricular decisions. Authentically trying to find a place for the social sciences in a busy school day has resulted, at best, in “covering” content—at worst, in students not being taught social studies content at all. Neither of these outcomes works toward the achievement of the levels of citizenship development necessary to sustain and build a healthy democracy. Thus, the task force elementary team decided to develop standards on themes and aligned to the disciplinary concepts.

The themes are:

- Kindergarten: My Social World
- First Grade: Living, Learning, and Working Together
- Second Grade: Families, Neighborhoods, and Communities
- Third Grade: Communities Near and Far
- Fourth Grade: Our State, Our Nation
- Fifth Grade: Our Nation, Our World
- Grades 6-8 are not theme based, but embed the C3 framework through the study of Ancient Civilizations and American History.

Mandated topics of study are required by Illinois State Code and are embedded within each grade level as appropriate. Specifically, the study of the Illinois Constitution, U.S. Constitution and U.S. History are included in the middle school curriculum as required components of entry into high school.

Additionally, the C3 framework organizes the standards into the following five disciplines:

- 1) Inquiry: Questions, and the desire to ask them, give life to inquiry and thus to the C3 Framework. Questions arise from students' innate curiosity about the world and from their efforts to make sense of how that world works.
- 2) Civics: In a constitutional democracy, productive civic engagement requires knowledge of the history, principles, and foundations of our American democracy, and the ability to participate

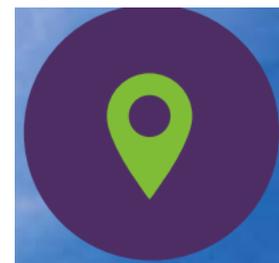


in civic and democratic processes. People demonstrate civic engagement when they address public problems individually and collaboratively and when they maintain, strengthen, and improve communities and societies. Thus, civics is, in part, the study of how people participate in governing society.

- 3) Economics: The study of economics provides students with the concepts and tools necessary for an economic way of thinking and helps students understand the interaction of buyers and sellers in markets, workings of the national economy, and interactions within the global marketplace.

- 4) Geography: Geographic reasoning rests on deep knowledge of Earth's physical and human features, including the locations of places and regions, the distribution of landforms and water bodies, and historic changes in political boundaries, economic activities, and cultures.

- 5) History: Historical thinking requires understanding and evaluating change and continuity over time, and making appropriate use of historical evidence in answering questions and developing arguments about the past. It involves going beyond simply asking, "What happened when?" to evaluating why and how events occurred and developments unfolded. It involves locating and assessing historical sources of many different types to understand the contexts of given historical eras and the perspectives of different individuals and groups



within geographic units that range from the local to the global. Historical thinking is a process of chronological reasoning, which means wrestling with issues of causality, connections, significance, and context with the goal of developing credible explanations of historical events and developments based on reasoned interpretation of evidence.

Resources:

http://www.isbe.net/ils/social_science/standards.htm

http://www.isbe.net/ils/social_science/pdf/ss-stds-eff012716.pdf

<http://www.socialstudies.org/system/files/c3/C3-Framework-for-Social-Studies.pdf>

<http://www.illinoiscss.org/>