

Executive Summary: **Social Studies Curriculum**

Actions to Date:

All social studies teachers in grades 6 – 12 were offered the opportunity to participate in after school workshops and on some professional development days to review the current planed instructions and make recommendations for changes and revisions. Mr. Morrison worked with social studies teachers throughout the district to examine what we are doing currently. Then, the group looked at the Standards Aligned System located on the Pennsylvania Department of Education website to ensure that all of the skills that we expect students to learn were accomplished in keeping with the Academic Standards. Finally, the group considered what additional items should be included to ensure a well-rounded education in social studies and suggested items for deletion.

Here are a few highlights of our revamped social studies curriculum for grades 6-12:

- We have placed more emphasis on geography. Most of the new courses, especially those in history, incorporate concepts of geography. Sixth-grade students will have a semester of instruction in geography skills and a semester of studying world regions. We also have a geography elective for high school. Using Google Earth and other technology, we hope to improve our geography instruction considerably.
- Our high school sequence of required social studies courses has changed. Freshmen will take World History II, thus getting their world history in back-to-back years. US History I and US History II are to be bumped up to 10th and 11th grades, respectively. (With Keystone Exams on the horizon, we realize that the sequence is subject to change.)
- Students will get more exposure to documentary history in our new curriculum. Research shows that documents-based instruction is highly effective, particularly the use of primary sources. We have written this strategy into many of our new courses, and we will be looking for textbooks that are compatible with the strategy.
- Our menu of high school electives has been overhauled. New offerings include Popular Culture, 1950s to the Present; History in Film; and Forensics. We plan to eliminate Constitutional Law and Contemporary American Problems, believing that concepts from these electives can still be included in our required courses.

The elementary school will begin working on planned instruction over the next couple of months with courses to be brought forth for approval in the Spring of 2011.

Financial Implications:

Money has been reserved in the 2010-2011 budget for the purchase of materials to support the implementation of these curricula. A search for materials will be begun once the planned instructions are approved.

Recommended Motion:

That the Board of School Directors adopts the planned instructions as presented, with textbook titles to be inserted when books are adopted by the Board in the spring of 2011.