

Social Studies Program Evaluation of the West Windsor-Plainsboro Regional School District

INTRODUCTION

This document constitutes the final report of a Social Studies Program Evaluation of the West Windsor-Plainsboro Regional School District. The evaluation was conducted during the time period of December 14, 2000 and March 2, 2001. The bulk of this document was completed in collaboration with the district's internal evaluation team.

This document contains four sections. The first two sections represent the work developed so far by the Internal Evaluation Team, consisting of West Windsor-Plainsboro staff members and supervisors. Section I explores the social studies program philosophy and goals, and Section II offers a description of K-12 instructional content. Section III represents the findings and recommendations of the study, and Section IV contains budgetary implications, a summary, and addenda.

The major data sources for this program evaluation were as follows:

¥ Documents. These sources consisted of curriculum guides, program goals and philosophy, or any other source of information that would reveal elements of the written, taught, and tested curricula and the linkages among these elements.

¥ Interviews. Over the course of three days, the team met with 149 teachers, students, parents, administrators and Board of Education members. During a fourth visit, the NCHE team met with 18 district representatives to review the first draft of this report. Interviews were conducted to shed light on the same elements often included in written documents and to reveal contextual understanding.

¥ Site Visitations. The NCHE team toured all building sites. Site visitations reveal the actual context in which curriculum is being designed and delivered in a school system. Contextual references are important as they indicate discrepancies in documents or unusual working conditions.

This report contains findings and recommendations based upon these major data sources. A finding within this document is simply a discrepancy. As a general rule, a program evaluation study by an external team does not issue commendations, though observations may be made regarding exemplary practice if the occasion merits it.

Unlike accreditation methods, a program evaluation does not have to reach a summative judgment regarding the status of a school district or a specific academic discipline being analyzed. The program evaluation simply reports the discrepancies and formulates recommendations to ameliorate them.

The NCHE team of visitors wishes to thank the members of the Internal Evaluation Team for their review of the first draft, for subsequent discussion and revisions, and for their contributions to this penultimate version of the report.

I. PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

As formulated by the district's internal review team (see p. 50), these are as follows:

A meaningful social studies program should provide a balanced foundation of social science knowledge and skills including history, geography, economics and government. A K-12 social studies program should develop critical thinkers by sharpening the skills of: interpretation, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. It should attempt to foster responsible citizenship through developing a sense of understanding of rights established in our democracy along with accompanying responsibilities toward: oneself and others; honoring one's own and other's cultures; the environment; active participation in the community; and ethical decision-making. Toward this end, we offer the following vision statement:

Vision Statement

Our social studies program will provide all students with a foundation of knowledge and skills that will empower them to become critical thinkers and responsible citizens of a culturally diverse democracy in an interdependent world.

Definition of Social Studies

According to the definition adopted by the National Council of Social Studies, "Social studies is the integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence. Within the school program, social studies provides coordinated, systematic study drawing upon such disciplines as anthropology, archaeology, economics, geography, history, law, philosophy, political science, psychology, religion, and sociology, as well as appropriate content from the humanities, mathematics, and natural sciences. The primary purpose of social studies is to help young people develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world."

Essential Questions

The following are samples of recurring "essential" questions that enable students to build a more sophisticated understanding of important concepts as they progress through the social studies program.

¥ How can people today learn from the past?

¥ What factors influence the success and failure of civilizations?

¥ How are we connected to and different from those who have come before us?

¥ What does all humankind have in common?

¥ Who are we as a nation, and what are our values and traditions?

- ¥ What are our great achievements and shortcomings as a nation?
- ¥ How have we found unity in the midst of our diversity?
- ¥ How has geography influenced past and future settlement?
- ¥ How have political systems allocations of natural resources affected social and economic life?
- ¥ How are goods and services distributed?
- ¥ How can we coexist with our environment and protect its future?
- ¥ How are governments created, structured, maintained, and changed?
- ¥ How can we learn about a culture or political system from studying its leaders, heroes, history and ideas?
- ¥ How have individuals shaped society and how can we as individuals affect our world?

District Effective Practices of Teaching and Learning

Elements of effective instruction are embedded in what we teach, how we teach, and how we assess student learning. The social studies program in the West Windsor-Plainsboro Regional Schools has worked toward identifying core content, essential skills, as well as appropriate instructional strategies that best serve the learners in the community. While specific content and skills are found within grade level curricula, elements of effective practice within the district are noted

below:

Effective practices across disciplines

¥ Student centered learning (e.g. opportunities to choose and investigate topics, explore challenging open-ended questions and participate in a variety of cooperative and independent learning activities)

¥ Integration of speaking, listening, reading, writing, and viewing

¥ Differentiated instruction and accommodations for multiple learning styles

Effective practices specific to social studies (in no particular order)

¥ Providing forums for public speaking such as discussions, debates, and role-play

¥ Historical research and note-taking skills

¥ Collecting, organizing, and interpreting data

¥ Consideration of perspectives, relationships, and connections

¥ Promoting civic responsibility through reasoned decision-making on local, state, national, and international levels

¥ Using a range of instructional materials (e.g. primary source documents, CD-Rom, Internet, maps, newspaper, photographs, textbooks, monographs, and related works of art and literature)

¥ Middle school social studies program integrated with language arts curricula

- ¥ Building empathy toward people across different cultures and time periods
- ¥ Integrating language arts/literature to the social studies content curriculum
- ¥ Developing metacognitive awareness (i.e. an awareness of how one processes information such as difficult text, or artifacts from an unfamiliar time period)
- ¥ At all levels there is emphasis on the establishment of relationships and connections between significant historical and contemporary events. The inclusion of current events throughout the K-12 program builds students repertoire as informed and responsible citizens in our democratic society
- ¥ Utilizing the above practices requires a combination of formative and summative assessment strategies in order to capture evidence of student understanding. Examples include: role plays, simulations, debates, presentations, analysis of primary source materials (e.g., photographs, letters, documents, art work, etc.), time-period/on-going journals, field experiences, scrapbooks, expository and reflective essays, and timed exams.

The following are examples of the above practices found throughout the district:

Elementary Level

- ¥ Family origins research project
- ¥ Weekly geography Internet exercise

¥ Town meeting forums

¥ Mock student elections

¥ Sharing multi-cultural perspectives on holidays and traditions

¥ Infusion of mathematical skills using charts, graphs, and timelines

¥ Economic simulations such as "Minitropolis" and "Stock Market Adventure"

¥ Use of biographies to teach about certain time periods

Secondary Level

¥ Role playing activities and portrayals of historical people and events

¥ Student simulations and debates: Trial of Columbus, Greek Olympics, Model

United Nations, Civilization Creation, Mock Trial, Model Congress

¥ Inquiry learning and class discussion based on essential questions

¥ Integration of charts, documents, graphs and map interpretation skills into classroom instruction

¥ Employment of computer technology to enhance student learning (e.g.,

PowerPoint presentations, Internet research, course web pages and learning links, etc.).

¥ Student Voter Registration Drives

¥ Expression of research in a variety of formats (e.g. American Studies I

Compendium, portfolios, thesis paper)

II. DESCRIPTION OF INSTRUCTIONAL CONTENT

The district's course offerings are summarized by the internal review team as follows:

Synopsis of K-5 Social Studies Program

Community and culture are the gateways to learning throughout the K-3 curriculum. The elementary curriculum builds on the diversity of the West Windsor-Plainsboro community. Students' knowledge is developed through a study of literature, family experiences, and oral history. Students compare and contrast a variety cultures and communities, leading to a study of people who immigrated to the United States. Students use a variety of geography skills which include: reading and making maps and globes; using a scale to compute distance; and examination of topography, climate, and other geographic phenomena/patterns. In fourth and fifth grades students learn the history that has shaped our state and our nation, as well as the impact that geography has had on their historical development. Both grade levels draw from the themes of exploration, independence, revolution, national development, and civil war.

Synopsis of 6-8 Social Studies Curriculum

The sixth grade curriculum is focused around studying the people and events that

ushered in the dawn of the major Western and non-Western ancient civilizations. The course challenges students to discover why civilizations developed when and where they did, what caused the rise and fall of certain civilizations, and establish the link between the contemporary and ancient worlds. Students learn the development of the human story through the study of geography, the study of civilizations social, economic, and political structures. Students also study the establishment and spread of ideas that transformed the world.

The seventh grade curriculum is focused around three essential questions: Are we the nation that we set out to be? Is active citizenship necessary for a democracy to function well? How does where you are shape who you are? From the Constitution to modern America, students study the ideas, issues, people, and events that support and guide their understanding toward answering the above questions.

Students in grade eight study the historical, cultural, and technological changes that occurred in Europe, Africa, Asia, and Latin America in the years 500-1700 A.D. Students study the history, geography, and culture of great civilizations that were developing concurrently throughout the world during medieval and early modern times and examine the transfer and exchange of ideas (secular and non-secular),

technology, and commodities. The students relate present conditions in these geographic regions to the past evaluating the consequences of earlier events and decisions.

Synopsis of 9-12 Social Studies Curriculum

9th Grade:

World History provides a survey of the significant time periods of human development from the Renaissance to the present. Focusing on the basic elements of all societies through the study of the institutions of civilization - family, religion, education, economics and government -- the course offers an historical perspective for today's world. This historical perspective is presented chronologically.

Research, reading, writing, geography, oral presentation, and document analysis and interpretation skills are developed and reinforced using the historical content.

Current events are integrated into the curriculum in order to bridge past and modern events.

10th Grade:

American Studies I is an interdisciplinary course that is taught in conjunction with Language Arts II and has a dual focus. First, this course examines the rich multicultural heritage of the United States in a chronological manner as it develops from colonial times, revolution, governmental and constitutional development,

territorial expansion, rise to industrial and international power, economic depression, the New Deal, and finally World War II, which is the connecting point with American Studies II and modern history. Secondly, this course focuses on class, gender, and racial issues and their significance in our nation's history, the placement of American history in its global context, the constant dialectic of change and continuity, and the rights and responsibilities of citizenship in our democratic society. Research, reading, writing, geography, oral presentation, and document analysis and interpretation skills are developed and reinforced using the historical content. Current events are integrated into the curriculum in order to bridge past and modern events.

11th Grade:

American Studies II offers a survey of four basic aspects of society in the United States from World War II to the present. Specific units of study focus on the philosophy and mechanics of government, foreign policy, the economic system, and current societal issues. Research, reading, writing, geography, oral presentation, and document analysis and interpretation skills are developed and reinforced using the historical content. Current events are integrated into the curriculum in order to bridge past and modern events.

Electives:

Advanced Placement History (U.S. and European) Courses offer the student a college level experience according to the curriculum of the College Board.

Through an examination of primary and scholarly historical sources, students will learn how to analyze and assess a variety of documents, interpret cause and effect relationships, draw conclusions based upon informed judgments, and write document-based and expository essays. Research, reading, writing, geography, oral presentation, and document analysis and interpretation skills are developed and reinforced using the historical content. Current events are integrated into the curriculum in order to bridge past and modern events. Students are prepared to take the College Board A.P. Examination.

Advanced Placement American Government and Comparative Politics offers the opportunity to study the institutions, groups, beliefs, and ideas that embody the American political reality as well as other selected nations' governmental principles and political institutions that significantly impact on our global society. Research, reading, writing, geography, oral presentation, and document analysis and interpretation skills are developed and reinforced using the course content. Current events are integrated into the curriculum in order to bridge past and modern events. Students are prepared to take the College Board A. P. Examination.

Human Behavior is an introduction to sociology and psychology, including the foundations, history, and methods of the two disciplines. Students analyze, assess, and apply what they have learned in discussions of current issues and dilemmas, psychological research studies, and a variety of mental health topics. Students are required to complete a survey-based report in sociology and a research paper in psychology.

Legal and Political Experiences offers an opportunity to examine political concepts and practices on the federal, state and local government levels. Participation in law-related activities is an essential component of the curriculum. Students are required to become involved in community projects, voter registration, observance of court and municipal proceedings, and attend legal and political workshops. Topics for study are based on historical, landmark Supreme Court decisions as well as contemporary political and legal trends.

Economic and Social Problems in American Society takes an analytical approach to the study of public policies in the United States and the economic and social forces that shape them. The emphasis is on economic analysis through the lens of resource allocation. In order to provide a more thorough understanding of public

policy, course topics include crime, discrimination, economic growth, health care, big business, income distribution, and narcotics. Research, writing, and oral presentation skills are enhanced and reinforced in this course.

International Business and Cultures focuses on global marketing, cultures, customs, and telecommunications. Students will learn about international trade and finance, economics, communications, and travel and money around the world as well as career opportunities relating to international business in business, government and other professions.

Multicultural Studies offers students an opportunity to investigate and learn significant aspects of the history, culture, and contemporary experiences of a variety of racial and ethnic groups of people. Its primary purpose is to promote an appreciation of unity and diversity within American society. An emphasis is placed on the universals of all cultures. Through investigative study the student will be expected to analyze and assess the contributions to American society by such diverse groups as Africans, Asians, Europeans, Latinos, Native Americans, and others.

III. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

From its visits, readings, and discussions with the internal review team and the social studies supervisors, and from information furnished by them and by other teachers, students, parents, and Board of Education members, the following findings and recommendations emerged:

Finding 1: The written curriculum needs some redesign in scope and sequence, and articulation across the grades for the information of all teachers.

Considerable work has already been done on the grade-by-grade articulation of course content and skills. Several recently written course guides are marked improvements over what preceded them. It is slow work, demanding much teacher time, and more remains to be done to address both gaps and duplication of content and skills across K-12 grades, particularly in the required history-centered courses from Grades 4 through 11.

a) The Elementary Grades. The K-3 program in particular lacks a clear, articulated scope and sequence and a written curriculum available to teachers in all the schools. Without a curriculum to guide them, teachers were left on their own

and sometimes devoted too much time to units or projects that may be appealing, but take time away from more essential learning. We found unanimous agreement among teachers interviewed that a K-3 common core of essentials should be identified and set forth across the four grades. Several teachers said that inconsistency in K-3 programs was the subject of concern in a teacher survey a few years ago. Parents, administrators, and Board of Education members also worried over discontinuities and duplications.

On the positive side, they and teachers saw strengths in the present offerings, such as emphases on diversity and multiculturalism, and cited exemplary examples such as the Festival of Lights and studies of immigration. It was also heartening to the NCHE team to find that K-3 teachers are making special efforts to integrate social studies with Language Arts instruction. To take full advantage of present strengths and an articulated scope and sequence, new teachers need to be given full course descriptions, ample materials to choose from, and regularized assistance from experienced colleagues.

As to historical, biographical, and geographical content in the earliest grades, recent cognitive research and developmental studies of the last two decades show that young children are capable of understanding concepts of time or distance,

history and geography. This opens up new possibilities for how the district can support a content-rich curriculum at the elementary level. New research aside, it has long been clear that myths, legends, true stories of people's adventures in other times and places have great appeal for children, and are ideal materials for the elementary reading programs.

At the Upper Elementary grades, scope and sequence are better articulated in that Grade 4 students study New Jersey history and Grade 5 students study United States history, from the colonial period to the Civil War. However, the curricular guides for both grades need to be coordinated and put into consistent practice so that all teachers in all schools, though no doubt in varied ways, offer a common core of the most important learning.

As in the K-3 grades, teachers may now focus on very different topics depending on their own interests and the resources they have at hand. One Grade 5 teacher said they needed to know more about what the U. S. history course in Grade 7 expected of them. Lack of communication across grades, even in the same grade within the same school, can result in waste or inequity. For example, it has been possible for some students to take the much-appreciated field trip to Ellis Island two or three times, while others never went at all.

b) The Middle School Grades. Here the program is more coherent, though it too needs refinement. The course guide for Grade 6 follows familiar lines for ancient World history at this level, from human origins through the fall of the Roman Empire in the West. But it is over-loaded with topics and activities, leaving teachers to wonder what and how much to "cover" in the 160 or so instructional days they have each year. Its seven units have 40 "Course Understandings," 40 "Essential Questions," and some 85 "Essential Content" topics, many of which are vastly sweeping, plus a "Culminating Activity," specifying a "Debate, Mural, or 'Create a Civilization' Project," each with 8 components. The guide also opens with 38 "Course Essential Skills" for students to exercise as they go along. These last could profit from pruning and reordering. For example, the skill of "Reading for Understanding" comes last, though educators more usually put it at the very top, from the earliest grades through the college years.

The Grade 7 course in United States history, from the framing of the Constitution through to the present day, is similarly overloaded, with 30 "Essential Questions" and 170 "Essential Content" topics, again many of which are broad and complex, hardly to be "covered," much less probed, in 42-minute periods. Its "Course Understandings" have yet to be added. This course and the high school Grade 10

American Studies I also represent duplication, the latter surveying U. S. history from explorers to 1945, all in one year.

The Grade 8 course guide, "World Cultures," has 35 "Course Understandings," 34 "Essential Questions," some of which are over-demanding (e.g., "How did a European person's identity and life experience evolve over the period from 500-1700?"), as are some of the 118 "Essential Content" topics (e.g. "Spread of Christianity and its role in Europe" and "Philosophies and religions of Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism and the impact these philosophies/religions have had on society." Again, this course ostensibly covers 1200 years of World history, overlapping with the high school Grade 9 (1400 to the present) course by 300 years. It also lacks a clear internal coherence. One text used is not a history book, but one of the several "world cultures" texts on the market, all of which lack an inclusive chronology of World history to reveal interactions among civilizations. The course is thus segmented by world regions rather than by era, and with the exception of Europe, its focus tends to be on contemporary world societies, with little explanation of fundamental ideas, traditions, and the historical forces shaping them to the present.

The district is applying Grant Wiggins' idea of "Essential Questions" across the K-

12 spectrum. We found that this very good idea, like many effective pedagogical strategies, is itself endangered by being overdone. Parents were concerned that this version of "less is more" was pressed too far down into early grades, where ambitious, abstract questions and premature emphasis on "critical thinking" use up time better devoted to engaging stories and biographies. In middle and high schools, the judicious use of "Essential Questions" can surely make effective openings and continuing discussions for courses, but several course guides tend to overdo them, listing too many questions, likely to fragment teacher/student attention rather than promoting the focused study Wiggins stresses in his writings. Also, teachers well-versed in their subjects should be free to devise essential questions for themselves, and to select from other people's compilations of pre-digested units, or to construct their own. Grant Wiggins says "let less be more," aim at depth of understanding only part of the time, and use a diversity of methods. It is well to recall, for example, that Wiggins applauds the U. S. history books of Joy Hakim, which get at young children's understanding via true and lively stories. Again, we fear that a number of the questions and topics posed are, in effect, over-reaching since they cannot be answered or their implications understood within the limits of time teachers have at their disposal. And nothing is more important to the social studies than to avoid tempting future citizens--whose maturation is our central concern--to think they know more than they really do.

c) The High School Grades. In the Grades 9-12 curriculum, problems appear in the American Studies (AS 1) and American Studies (AS 2) programs. While there are teachers who expressed satisfaction with the status quo, there were just as many who wanted change. Some found the starting date (1945) for AS 2 not early enough. Themes and issues were not well-rooted in the great changes of American domestic and foreign affairs since the 1890's, and were thus dealt with superficially, in a presentist mode. Students in particular saw needs for change in both courses.

All students interviewed said that AS 1 fell short of full coverage to 1945. Its great span of years was their main complaint. The course guide for AS 1 lists 49 "Knowledge Objectives" (many of them so sweeping as to be unrealistic), 38 "Procedural Objectives" (essays, interviews, charts, primary sources, chronologies, debate, discussion, research, analyses), 190 "Unit Content" topics, more than one day in the usual 160 or so yearly instructional days. The course also seemed unfinished, having 8 "Affective Objectives," though none yet on imperialism, labor, Populism, the Depression, or either world war.

In American Studies 2, some students liked the course better because they had more time to debate/discuss issues, and topics were more current. A small sample of students divided over whether its content and assignments were too demanding or too easy. As opposed to teachers of AS 1, who were grateful for common planning time with English teachers for their integrated course, the teachers of AS

2 complained that their lack of planning time kept them from doing fruitful interdisciplinary work. Some teachers also questioned the current practice of requiring students wishing to take Advanced Placement U. S. history to first complete American Studies 1 and 2, thereby limiting participation in the AP programs to senior year. Allowing students to take AP U. S. history in Grade 11, they said, would open opportunities for them to take additional AP courses in Grade 12. Several high school teachers would also like to see a change in current elective offerings for students, including a broader range of courses for non-honors and AP students alike.

For the first high school year, Grade 9 World history teachers are working out the first offering of a revised course. Teachers and students interviewed were pleased with changes from previous years. Without doubt, shifting its starting point from prehistory and human origins to 1400 was a much needed move. Given the critical importance of World history in the last half millennium to the education of American citizens, the old survey was not nearly adequate. But like its middle school counterparts, the course guide remains overloaded, often with over-ambitious topics and questions that cannot be dealt with in the time at hand. Arranged for 165 teaching days, it lists 181 major topics, 19 "Essential Questions," 144 "Focus Questions," plus papers, a "research portfolio," speeches, skills, and

technological exercises. It will take considerable paring to achieve a teachable common core of learning that later high school instruction in American history, ideas, society, politics, and foreign relations can depend upon.

In sum, the NCHE external team found several of the curricular course guides in the West Windsor-Plainsboro School District to be of limited help for instruction in the classroom, or for articulation and coordination of curriculum among schools and across grade levels. Beyond scope and sequence of content, a clear delineation of K-12 skills is needed. For example, writing assignments do not appear to ensure progression of sophistication across the grades or horizontal collaboration among classes within grades. There is a perception among certain parents that non-honors students do not get sufficient writing experience. Several students also said they thought they had been asked to do relatively little writing.

Finally, the NCHE team was struck by the 42-minute length of class periods.

Given the propensities of middle and high school students, teachers are lucky if only the first and last five minutes are unusable, unhearable, on the day's topic.

The resulting half-hour is not "best practice" even in the United States, and students abroad commonly get 60-minute hours, in fewer classes each day, and are able to focus on core academic subjects (see the 1994 report, **Prisoners of Time**,

done by the National Commission on Time and Learning, pp. 23-25). Moreover, a hectic day of brief periods on seven or eight subjects/activities does not accord with the district's aspirations that the social studies be inclusive, be done thoughtfully, often in some depth, and integrated with the arts and literature.

Recommendation 1: Greater resources are needed to achieve K-12 curricular articulation, to ensure internal consistency and best practice.

Unquestionably, all items in the Request for Proposal deserve attention, but the heart of the matter is the need for the social studies departments in West Windsor-Plainsboro to be supported in their present efforts to decide a) what are the very most important things all American students, regardless of their backgrounds or likely future employment, need to know and b) how to distribute that body of knowledge across the K-12 grades. All else follows to implement these two decisions: skills and the order of their introduction and practice; a range of pedagogical methods teachers are free to choose for themselves (no "one best way"); professional development for teachers; teacher loads, schedules, and planning time; and, ultimately, ways of testing students that are both fair and supportive of the instructional program. Of these, the most immediately critical is

time to plan together, generous time in amounts comparable to that common in schools in other countries, where schedules are arranged so that teacher of the same and related subjects can count on regular hours to work together whenever necessary.

A K-12 set of curriculum guides needs to be easy to use, realistic in demands on teachers and students, present a coherent progression of learning, minimizing gaps in, and needless duplication of, content taught and skills exercised. In social studies particularly, the need to combine and alternate depth and breadth is obvious, for neither is comprehensible without the other. Revising current guides and writing new ones needs doing by teacher teams collaborating across K-12, with teachers from each grade having full understanding of the work and expectations of teachers in grades below and above their own. University scholars of each major discipline important to social studies need to take part, in a collaboration of equals informing each other. As we all know but rarely admit, teachers know things scholars do not and vice versa. As in school districts nationwide, the entire K-12 spectrum requires attention. But from our findings above, we would place first priority on close planning between Grades 4 and 5, among the U. S. history teachers in Grades 5, 7, 10, and 11, and among World history teachers in Grades 6, 8, and 9.

The NCHE team was particularly encouraged to hear that plans have already been set for intensive work on these very pieces of curricular refinement during the coming summer months. We hope that the district will arrange its budgetary priorities to support this essential work. It is also important that the district reserve funds to buy much-needed new textbooks, monographs, documentary sources, and other print materials.

a) **The Elementary Grades.** The "expanding environments" approach to social studies has been widely criticized in the professional literature over the last fifteen years as not rich enough in content to shape instruction at the elementary level, and contrary to studies of how children learn. See, for example, Beverly J. Armento, "Research on Children's Learning History: Issues and Implications," Proceedings: 1993 Conference of the National Council for History Education, (Westlake, OH: NCHE, 1993), pp. 50-55; Charlotte Crabtree, "Returning History to the Elementary Schools," in Paul A. Gagnon, ed., **Historical Literacy: The Case for History in American Education** (New York: Macmillan, 1989), pp. 173-187; Kieran Egan, "Teaching History to Young Children," in **Phi Delta Kappan**, (March, 1992), pp. 439-441, and **Teaching as Story Telling: An Alternative Approach to Teaching and Curriculum in the Elementary School** (Chicago: University of Chicago

Press, 1986); Linda S. Levstik and Keith C. Barton, **Doing History: Investigating with Children in Elementary and Middle Schools**, 2nd edition (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Earlbaum Associates, 2001); Diane Ravitch, **Left Back; A Century of Failed School Reforms**, (New York, Simon and Schuster, 2000), pp. 242-258.

For some 50 years, however, the "expanding environments" approach has dominated the preparation of elementary teachers, and the design of textbooks and materials across the country. We hope West Windsor-Plainsboro teachers will review this summer the three optional patterns for elementary social studies in the 1988 Bradley Commission report, **Building a History Curriculum** and in NCHE's guidelines for building U.S. and World history curricula in the schools. Those patterns do not press a single approach, but strike a balance between expanding environments in the present and good stories about families, schools, communities, adventures, and personalities of the past and elsewhere on earth.

In regard to K-5 articulation, the curriculum mapping now being pursued by Ms. Shari Goldberg in her meetings with K-5 teachers should help in developing a sequential content and skill matrix for K-5 programs. The same process can be used to assign appropriate field trips and other special activities to certain grade levels, to avoid repetition and ensure equal access to good learning experiences.

b) The Middle and High School Grades. In avoiding needless repetition across the middle and high school grades, the key word is "needless." Obviously, some fundamental topics must be revisited. For example, the Constitution needs to be re-examined in each grade in which U. S. history is taught, in this case Grades 5, 7, 10, and 11. For example, in World history, the religious, ethical, philosophical, and political ideas of the ancient World need to reappear in Grades 6, 8, and 9, and U. S. history courses as well. For another example, medieval and early modern origins of limited, representative government need to reappear, especially in U. S. courses. Many topics studied in earlier grades can briefly be reviewed when needed to solidify learning in later grades. Just as important in the other direction, teachers of earlier grades who are well-versed in their subjects can easily make engaging links between issues of our day and events, persons, and ideas from the past (that is, current events should not be limited to separate, self-contained exercises, but ceaselessly related to the main studies at hand. Thus selected reviews and cross-grade connections allow middle and high school courses to be segmented by era.

We strongly recommend some version of scopes and sequences quite common across the country: U. S. history through 1800 or so in Grade 5; from the

Constitution to late 19th century in middle school; industrialization to the present in high school. In World history, the ancient era in early middle school, followed by two later courses divided at 1750 or so. West Windsor-Plainsboro could segment its courses roughly this way, while leaving them in their present grades. Provided the two consecutive years of high school U. S. history (AS 1 and AS 2) are properly segmented, there are advantages to having two consecutive years of World history in Grades 8 and 9, again provided that middle and high school teachers collaborate on these years as though joined at the hip. Segmented courses allow more time for inclusiveness, for alternating studies in depth and breadth, for connections with the arts and literature, and for exercising grade-appropriate skills. None of this is possible in hurried surveys. And we believe that nothing makes serious students (and teachers) more weary of history, and cynical about schooling, than pretending to do things that can't be done, or to answer questions impossible to be answered honestly, with the time and materials at hand.

As suggested above, we strongly urge the social studies faculty to review its course guides for Grades 6 through 11, to the end of reducing the number of listed topics and questions and setting out an agreed-upon common core of required essential topics and questions, few enough in number and scope so that all can be touched upon--some in depth, others more briefly (as individual teachers may choose)--in

roughly three-quarters of the time available in the customary school year of 160 or so instructional days. The rest of the time may be left to teachers' options. We realize that this recommendation runs counter to the common practice--in the national history, geography, civics, economics, and social studies standards, and in many state standards and frameworks--of extended "menus" from which teachers may, in theory, select topics and questions to deal with. Our recommendation is consistent, however, with the practice in most democratic school systems abroad, where a common core of academic learning is thought indispensable to ensure equal opportunity for all students to learn.

From our point of view, there are two serious problems with the unprioritized menu approach, most especially in history. One is the danger posed to both teachers and students by district or statewide testing, neither of which is likely ever to allow markedly varied choices of topics from the endless possibilities on the menus. The other problem, far more important, is the menu's effect on equality of opportunity to learn. A wholly teachable common core of learning can not be derived from the national standards documents, or from any set of state standards put together up to now. Which means, in turn, that teachers and schools are allowed to persist in the century-old American practice of intellectual segregation--giving substance to students perceived as predictably "good" and whatever passes

time for the rest, perceived as incapable, or "non-academic" or "not needing" what in fact every citizen does need.

By its nature and its declared aspirations, social studies should not indulge in such triage. To decide on a common core of the most vital knowledge is not easy (or standards-writers would have done it), but neither is it rocket science. Most other countries' teachers and scholars have done it, and so can we.

Apart from a general paring-down that is both realistic and respectful of the rights of all students, we recommend that the overlaps among the Grades 5, 7, and 10 U.S. history courses be reduced, and the overlap between the Grades 8 and 9 World history courses. Also, we recommend that the district revise its current American Studies 1 and 2 courses, to allow the AS 2 course to deal with the whole 20th century, not begin only with 1945. Since the current AS 1 course does not seem able closely to examine American history between 1900 and 1945, change is needed in both courses.

In accordance with the statement of philosophy and goals at the top of this report, we urge increased emphasis on political history throughout the middle and high school years. The avoidance of political history as "elitist" is directly contrary to

the ideals and deepest needs of a democratic society. The central concern of the social studies is preparing sophisticated citizens, who know what has happened in the past, why and how it has happened, what people have done or failed to do, what obstacles they have faced and either overcome or been beaten down. That is, citizens who know enough to perceive what is in, and what is being left out, of any given political speech, claim, accusation, promise, or platform. There are no formulas or shortcuts to take the young to good judgment about politics. If school and college students are now found to be politically apathetic, part of the answer is that they have rarely been asked to learn and think about the historical battles and human consequences of political life.

In sum, effective instruction results from courses of study and curriculum guides that are user-friendly, that identify essential learnings and priorities settled upon by the district, that make it easy for teachers to collaborate across and within grades, and that suggest useful interventions based on information from assessment data.

Criteria by which to evaluate course guides include

- 1) the validity and clarity of learning objectives;
- 2) teachability in class time at hand;
- 3) description by grade of essential knowledge, skills and activities;
- 4) suggested instructional tools in the form of textbooks and supplementary

materials;

5) direct exercise of skills on important topics; and

6) devices to ensure that test designs and contents are aligned with the written curriculum.

Finding 2: The West Windsor-Plainsboro District would profit from a collaborative, continuing process to refine curriculum and course guides.

Given the issues raised above, the NCHE team concludes that the district could use a more collaborative structure for curriculum review, design, and delivery. There has been impressive progress in the past year or so, but administrators and teachers interviewed were still not aware of an inclusive plan or systematic procedures to set guidelines and schedules for curricular review and revision. We believe, however, that the internal team's current work and intentions will respond to these concerns, again if more planning time not only for the team itself but for most teachers in the system is provided. Board of Education members and parents also suggested that effective "flow" of educational development as students rise through the grades from school to school fosters smooth transitions and higher achievement over time for students. We agree that the better the articulation, or coordination

across grade levels and in separate buildings, the better the curriculum works in an orderly fashion. Where there is no articulation, students find their high school programs to be disjointed, duplicative, or discontinuous with their elementary and middle school experiences.

As suggested above, concurrent steps need taking to create a continuum of social studies skills. According to some teachers and parents, two areas appear to need attention now: geography and research skills. Geography teaching was called uneven at best by several interviewees. While it seems to happen in many Grade 4 and 5 classrooms, its place in the middle and high school courses is difficult to assess. Students, parents, administrators and Board members all saw a need to do more work in geography, and a rising progression of skills across the K-12 grades. As for research skills, it was evident to us that there are many teachers who do the hard work always necessary to develop them, but there are others who find little time for them or for instruction in persuasive writing and speaking.

Recommendation 2: A comprehensive process for curriculum redesign should be developed, being necessary for good quality and staff acceptance of curricular changes.

The West Windsor-Plainsboro District evidently recognized the problems and needs, taking the first step by appointing three social studies supervisors to begin the process of articulation. It appears to us that over the past year measurable progress has been made to increase communication within and among the district's schools. Teachers interviewed welcomed this change, while admitting that much work remains to be done.

A curriculum development plan needs to embrace a number of components:

- ¥ The philosophical approach or, as is especially true for the different disciplines making up social studies, the combination of approaches, to be used;
- ¥ The timing, scope, and procedures for curriculum review;
- ¥ Procedures for establishing or revalidating goals and objectives;
- ¥ Criteria for evaluating instructional resources, including textbooks and technology;
- ¥ How to ensure a common core of learning for all students (equality of opportunity to learn), while leaving pedagogy and added content for teachers to decide;
- ¥ Means of making sure that student tests and assessments are made congruent with the written and taught curriculum;
- ¥ Means of using assessment data to strengthen the curriculum and its delivery.

As said above, curriculum redesign needs to be worked on by teachers and supervisors from all three levels--elementary, middle, and high school--meeting together, and that university scholars of the central subjects and of specialized subject-matter pedagogy round out the teams, for the mutual education of all participants. In its own work, the NCHE finds that this kind of tripartite alliance of equals is necessary to the sensible design of state and local standards, curricular frameworks, teacher education and professional development, and assessment systems. Again, each professional--teacher, scholar, learning specialist--has important things to remind the others about. The use of subject-matter scholars from nearby colleges and universities may, like other costs of curricular reform and professional development, require new district budgetary priorities.

Finding 3: Professional development is encouraged but still appears to be underfinanced and somewhat fragmented.

Effective staff development enhances implementation of curriculum. By interviews with teachers and administrators, the NCHE team gathered information on availability and type of development possible. There is a clear spoken commitment to staff development in the West Windsor-Plainsboro system from

teachers, administrators, and Board members. The district tries to respond to teachers' needs to refine and renew their knowledge, but the program itself still appears underfunded, with components variable in quality and widely divergent in the nature of target audiences for it.

Several teachers spoke of attending conferences and workshops outside the district. But until now, there has seemed to be too little systematic effort to tie staff development to the academic content of the K-12 curriculum. As is common throughout the country, many offerings tend to be process or pedagogy-based, lacking focus on subject matter. There is unquestionably some value in the district's professional development efforts as they now exist, but without clear-cut, needs-based goals and direction, current practices will not suffice for K-12 social studies teachers across the grades, especially as new content is added, some of which requires presenting in depth. A well-rounded development effort connects its own curriculum, instruction, and assessment to direct improvement of student learning. At the meeting of our two teams, the social studies coordinators announced that a plan was being drawn up for extending professional development, and aligning it more closely to the academic content of the K-12 curriculum.

It was recognized that new elementary teachers, for example, frequently have little preparation in history or the social studies. In addition, many new teachers have been appointed in recent years as student population has increased. West Windsor-Plainsboro teachers and administrators all cited needs for professional development at the K-3 level. Without a defined program, focused on content and content-related pedagogy, it will not be possible to implement the curricular changes contemplated. It is an old adage, but true, that "you can't teach what you don't know." The West Windsor-Plainsboro teaching staff is beyond question the most valuable educational asset in the community. The NCHE team was most impressed with the professionalism of its members and their devotion to the welfare and success of students. Regular staff development will give them the added power to carry out their mission.

Recommendation 3: Pursue the staff development plan centered around imaginative teaching of subject matter content.

The NCHE team applauds the district's direction toward more content-based studies for teachers in service, particularly in the central subjects of history and geography, which provide the matrix of time and place in which the other social sciences, the arts, and literature are most memorably taught. To the student

complaint that history and social studies are irrelevant and dull, the main answers are teachers who know their subjects intimately enough to be confident, and to take evident pleasure, in making instructive and engaging connections with other subjects, with earlier learning, books and films, current events and ideas, and student questions. Facility with a wide array of pedagogical methods is important, and teachers should always be encouraged to play to their own strengths in this regard. But no method can substitute for mastery of subject matter when interdisciplinary (and inter-era) imagination is called for.

We wish to stress that professional development should not be limited to out-of-school conferences or institutes, or one-shot lectures by visitors. Imagination is something to be shared. A staff development plan to ensure good teaching of new curricular content must include time, support, and incentives for teachers to work and study together, and plan changes with other teachers in grades above and below them and in their own grades at different buildings. These matters involve, of course, teacher loads and schedules, and thus imply substantial redirection of budgetary priorities. Schools in other countries are well ahead of the United States in the time and support teachers have to focus together on content to be taught, and ways to teach and test it. For example, French middle school teachers are in the classroom itself for no more than 18 hours a week, high school teachers for only 15 hours, and are responsible for 75 to 85 students overall. The West Windsor-Plainsboro district has a chance to look "outside the box," as the jargon goes, and consider redesigning teacher time. For example, other countries do not teach every core academic subject every day, but four times a week in 50 to 60 minute periods. Compared with West Windsor-Plainsboro's 210 minutes a week on a given subject, four 50-minute periods yield 200 minutes, better concentrated, while 55-minute periods (common abroad) would yield 220 minutes, while freeing teachers' schedules for study and planning. Such patterns are supported by European teacher unions, generally more powerful than in the United States.

Finding 4: Change, or the prospect of change, here as elsewhere, is always accompanied by a certain level of anxiety.

The NCHE team recognizes the commitment to change demonstrated by the Board, school administrators and teachers by their readiness to invite this study, asking an outside agency to look closely at their curriculum and voice candid views based on interviews with all stakeholders. At the same time, we heard that past studies and committees had left teachers doubtful and wary. As one observer said, "When suggestions were given to the district in the past, they were received as criticisms of the status quo." Another said, "A little over two years ago, we had this large committee that tried to deal with gaps and duplication; some good work came out of that group but nothing happened." Others said the earlier committee had as many as 55 members and did do useful work, but ultimately dissolved over hard feelings on issues of "territoriality." We found admirable collegiality among faculty members, but also disagreement over the need for change. Teachers were very open in expressing their views to the NCHE team. Some were content with things as they are. Others repeated the need to modify existing courses and to add new ones.

For K-3, some teachers strongly supported the "expanding environments"

approach, and feared that "teacher creativity" would be threatened by a "regimented curriculum," in one teacher's words. A curriculum which has a common core need not be "regimented," or interfere in the least with teaching methods. Other democratic countries combine a national common core of substance with teacher choice of methods and of content beyond the core. The former is prescribed, the latter are not. Others, including parents and Board members, saw a need for more direction and a well-articulated K-3 program. The NCHE visiting team also found tension between what some teachers called an excellent program that had been in place for many years, and what others perceived quite differently. For example, a majority of parents and Board members interviewed saw a lack of intellectual substance in social studies. They saw students in numberless activities and projects, but little systematic study of content, making them unable to articulate and defend a position based on fact or bodies of thought. One parent described her son's critical thinking as nothing more than unsupported opinion.

**Recommendation 4: Design and implement a system for change that
 increases the involvement of stakeholders.**

Much has already been said above about the collaborative nature of acceptable

change. All stakeholders need patiently to work together to find common grounds (in the plural) of agreement focused on what is best for students in the long run, not on issues of who may teach what at which level. To the NCHE team, there appeared to be such a commitment from all of those interviewed. We are, of course, under no illusions that all will easily agree on what they believe is "best" or ought to be "core" or that the final decisions, whatever they may be, will bring the Peaceable Kingdom. An open and continuing conversation about goals and objectives, about the preparation of the district's students for the future, and an inclusive review of the present social studies program can provide necessary support for change. The teachers, administrators, Board members, students and parents interviewed by the NCHE team expressed optimism that this study would be different, with the help of leadership and guidance from the three supervisors

The district decision to create three supervisory positions to coordinate and manage the social studies curriculum and assessment was widely praised by teachers interviewed. In addition, a "systemic" curricular management structure for decision making should recognize the fundamental core values represented in the district's schools and in the families and communities they serve. Such a system needs to invite and respect real participation by all those directly affected by the decisions to be taken. Wider clientele involvement would give the district "another set of

eyes" to determine whether changes in the curriculum eventually approved by the Board satisfy the six criteria outlined near the end of Recommendation 1 above, or other valued criteria.

In this regard, we propose that the district consider a Curriculum Advisory Council, to connect the district with the community at large and the needs of its clientele in particular. A balanced membership would have members representing the district office, social studies supervisors, teachers from each of the elementary, middle, and high school levels, parents, and students. The Council would be charged with reviewing and commenting upon curriculum revisions before they are presented to the Board for approval.

Recommendation 5: Develop and implement a comprehensive student assessment process to ensure use of meaningful data in decision-making.

It is difficult to make sound judgments about the effectiveness of the curriculum and its delivery without good assessment data. The district should make clear to the community that it will conduct frequent diagnoses of student instructional needs using system-wide and teacher-generated information on student

achievement, sufficient in depth and scope so as to permit monitoring of programs, courses, classes, and student performance, as well as strengths and weaknesses of instruction.

Once the written curriculum has been in force for a reasonable length of time, teachers should use test results to assess achievement of individual students, to regroup students for instruction when necessary, and to consider modifications in curriculum and/or its delivery. Comprehensive assessment programs should serve at least four purposes:

- ¥ To determine if the curriculum meets district and state standards [we realize that both are in flux];
- ¥ To determine if student achievement meets or exceeds district expectations related to specific curriculum objectives;
- ¥ To determine if the instructional programs and services are effective in meeting the curriculum objectives and the district's goals;
- ¥ To determine whether the testing program itself has negative effects on delivery of the curriculum and student learning.

A comprehensive student assessment program may include, but not necessarily be

limited to, the following components:

- ¥ A pre- and post-test criterion-referenced assessment system that evaluates, records, and reports student attainment;
- ¥ District-level criterion-referenced tests for selected, significant core objectives across all levels;
- ¥ Assessment and program timetables coordinated with program needs so that curriculum decisions will be appropriate and timely;
- ¥ Assessment strategies designed for teachers so that they may diagnose and set instructional assignments for individual students within class groups;
- ¥ Feedback on the quality of the social studies program from graduates;
- ¥ Assessment information which guides curriculum redesign and instructional planning for better meeting learning outcomes.

The NCHE team was much encouraged by the internal review team's determination to find a range of effective assessment instruments to be used within the district's schools, rather than waiting for developments on the state level. National experience so far tells us that statewide assessments are stuck at a primitive stage, so hurried and oversold, so full of confusion and inner contradictions that they threaten to discredit the standards-based effort at school reform itself. Potentially, the fair and focused in-school assessment of student achievement in a substantial

common curriculum could slow the rush to mass testing and, in our view, ultimately render it superfluous. No other modern country does nearly so much out-of-school testing as the United States.

Recommendation 6: Design and implement changes in an efficient and effective way, to ensure long-term effects.

A frustration expressed by all groups in the district was the sense that past interventions recommended by district curriculum committees lacked sustained support to be put into action. Hence the need to forge widely-accepted designs and to gather early support for implementation of change in social studies programs.

To this end, we recommend the following actions for consideration by the Board of Education and the Superintendent:

¥ Connect the school system with the community at large by establishing a

Curriculum Advisory Council (Recommendation 4);

¥ Set explicit expectations for extensive, detailed planning for any change and

recognize that change requires a process, not merely a series of separate events;

¥ Provide resources for planning before change is entered into and provide

sustained support, not least ample time for teacher participation, until the change is established;

¥ Pilot test new curricula, with well-defined mechanisms for monitoring results;

¥ Design and implement a long-term staff development program that is content-based and rich with an array of subject matter related teaching practices.

IV. BUDGETARY IMPLICATIONS

The internal team's teaching and administrative members will have better, necessary knowledge of present budget numbers and allocation by line items. The NCHE team does not see its recommendations markedly raising the district's overall spending, but they could well alter budgetary priorities. We had, of course, very good impressions of the district's general funding of schools. Physical plant, furnishings, certain teaching materials, and classroom technology would impress any visitors, not to mention stir a certain envy. We were not concerned with issues of teacher pay, but whatever that situation may be, we found a very high level of energy, competence, and dedication--and morale--in faculty members. However the written curriculum is altered, we have every confidence that West Windsor-Plainsboro teachers will present it very effectively indeed. So most recommendations in this report have little to do with money. They focus on academic decisions, how to use the time and resources at hand.

On the other hand, we were surprised by old and/or low-quality textbooks (and too few of them, e.g., in the critical Grade 8 World Cultures course). We had numerous teacher reports of too few other books available--paperbacks for supplementary reading, biographies, and relevant monographs--as well as limited access to primary source documents, serious newspapers and periodicals, and other

print material. A major shift of resources is needed to support regular and predictable--as opposed to episodic--planning time for teachers within and across the grades, both during the school year and in summer months, and for other forms of professional development, including post-graduate subject-matter studies at neighboring universities. Imaginative scheduling on European models may help release teacher time to a certain extent, but the amount of time needed to plan and sustain vertical and horizontal articulation--for example, interdisciplinary planning between social studies and the humanities--will require considerable added funding. Finally, in allocating money, attention could well be paid to the relative worth of technology versus paper. We did not have the opportunity to evaluate the uses of technology in West Windsor-Plainsboro's social studies programs. But from teacher reports across the country, it is plain that most technology-based social studies materials are still not well-aligned to central topics, not yet worth the time they take, or the money they drain from other school needs (including up-to-date software for seniors about to enter the job market!). Not a few teachers say they would swap half their school's computers for a good copy machine, on which they could make their own materials, better suited to their students and their curriculum. The central issue is budgetary priorities, and we value investment in people--teachers and students--over wares, whether hard or soft.

V. SUMMARY

The NCHE team found in the West Windsor-Plainsboro Regional School District a social studies program that has great promise for the future. The Board is characterized by unity and agreement to seek quality instruction. There is an apparent readiness for improvement in the district's governance and administrative leadership. School facilities are excellent, and the parents and community members are supportive of the school district. Students are very capable of substantial academic and practical achievement. Moreover, a number of teachers and administrators possess motivation and skill adequate to serve the district well.

However, there is room for improvement. Greater resources are needed to achieve K-12 curricular articulation; a comprehensive process for curriculum redesign should be developed; a staff development plan that focuses on teaching subject matter content should be pursued; there is a need to increase stakeholder involvement in designing a system for change; and there is a need to develop and implement a comprehensive student assessment process to ensure use of meaningful data in decision-making.

Once the board, administration and staff address these issues and implement appropriate action and change, the social studies curriculum of the West Windsor-

Plainsboro Regional School District will be a vital and valuable asset to the community for many years to come.

¥¥¥¥¥

ADDENDA:

Selected Bibliography on Recent Research, Standards, and Practices in Social Studies

Alleman, Janet and Jere Brophy. "The Changing Nature and Purpose of Assessment in the Social Studies Classroom. **Social Education**, October 1999, pp. 334-337.

In the past several years, the conception of learning social studies has evolved from doing and knowing to experiencing and making meaning." This article focuses on the changing nature of social studies assessment and its importance, as a major curriculum component."

American Federation of Teachers, Making Standards Matter 1998, Washington, DC. 1999.

Provides a state-by-state analysis of standards, with findings and recommendations in English, Math, Science, and Social Studies, and includes a section on assessments.

Arizona Department of Education, Arizona Social Studies Standards, Phoenix, 2000.

Includes social studies standards for Grades K-12.

Bradley Commission on History in Schools, Building a History Curriculum: Guidelines for Teaching History in Schools, Westlake, OH. 2nd edition, 2000.

Includes 9 recommendations for teaching U.S. History, Western Civilization, and World History at Grades K-12.

Brophy, Jere. "The Development of Knowledge and Empathy." **Social Education**. Jan/Feb 1999, pp. 39-45.

Information is offered for teachers on how to encourage the development of knowledge and empathy, particularly when teaching the history of Native Americans."

California State Department of Education, Updated History-Social Science Framework, Sacramento, CA. 2000.

Contains both grade-by-grade standards and the framework document in history and the allied social sciences.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Education, History and Social Science Curriculum Framework, Malden, MA. 1997.

Contains core knowledge and learning standards for grades PreK-12.

Commonwealth of Virginia Board of Education, Standards of Learning for Virginia Public Schools, Richmond, VA. 1995.

Includes the History and Social Science standards for the core disciplines of History, Geography, Civics, and Economics.

Fairey, Chad, John K. Lee and Clifford Bennett. "Technology and Social Studies: A Conceptual Model for Integration. *Journal of Social Studies Research*. Winter 2000, pp. 3-11.

The purpose of this paper is to develop a comprehensive rationale for integrating technology with social studies instruction."

Fonte, John D. and Robert Lerner. "History Standards Are Not Fixed." *Society*. Jan/Feb 1997, p. 20-26.

"Discusses the debate on the setting of standards in the teaching of history in the United States. Standard for world and American history; Anti-Western bias in the revised version of the standards."

Foster, Stuart J. and Padgett, Charles S. "Authentic Historical Inquiry in the Social Studies Classroom." *Social Studies*, July/August 1999, Vol. 72 Issue 6, p. 357.

"Discusses an inquiry-based social studies program at the middle school level. Makes the point that children need to be actively engaged in their learning."

Hoge, John D. "Achieving the History Standards in the Elementary Schools," ERIC Clearinghouse for Social Studies/Social Science Education, Bloomington,

Indiana. 1994 ED373020

"Synthesis of research surrounding teaching history to young children. Most interesting is the following: "Downey and Levstik (1991) conclude that history instruction should (1) begin in the early grades, (2) focus on in-depth, sustained study of significant material rather than shallow coverage, and, (3) make use of age-appropriate learning strategies."

Hoge, John D. "Teaching History in the Elementary School." Clearinghouse for Social Studies/Social Science Education, Bloomington, Indiana. March, 1988 ED293784

"Advocates for strong, purposeful history education in the elementary school. Refutes the notion that young children are limited in their ability to think historically. Offers a few suggestions for teacher mediation of developmental differences among K ÷ 3 children."

Hootstein, Edward W. "Differentiation of Instructional Methodologies in Social Studies at the Secondary Level." Journal of Social Studies Research. Spring 1999, pp. 11 - .

"Discusses the need for instructional practices to address the increased academic diversity within many classrooms. This study examines how social studies teachers use instructional methods to meet students' diverse academic needs."

Laney, James D. "Economics for Elementary School Students," Meeting the Standards, Mary E. Haas and Margaret A. Laughlin, ed. NCSS, Washington, D.C. 1997, pp. 176-179.

"Makes the point that young children can learn economic principles, but that they need to experience a variety of approaches in order to do so. Describes successful methods and strategies."

Lee, John K. "Conceptualizing Social Studies and Technology: An Essay." Journal of Social Studies Research, Spring 1999, p. 24- .

"How does technology fit with the goals of social studies instruction? By using technologies that allow teachers to make social studies more authentic, critical, and active, social studies will become more powerful and meaningful for students."

Levstik, Linda S. "Narrative Constructions: Cultural Frames For History," *Social Studies*, May/June 1995, Vol. 86 Issue 3, p113.

"Discusses the impact of narrative on historical understanding in children. Discusses the usefulness of using literature as a tool in Social Studies instruction, particularly in first and sixth grades. Warns against an overuse of literature in social studies instruction without teacher mediation and active student participation."

London, Herbert. "National Standards for History Judged Again." *Society*. Jan/Feb 1997, p. 26-28.

"A revision of the national standards for teaching of history in the United States."

Manzo, Kathleen Kennedy. "Missed Opportunities." *Education Week*. Oct. 4, 2000, p. 15-19.

In their attempts to make learning relevant to students, many middle schools have created shallow, fragmented, and unchallenging curricula." The curriculum has become a hodgepodge of teacher-developed units that appeal to kids, but that are disconnected from the larger purposes of the K-12 curriculum. Higher academic standards, as well as American students' disappointing performance on state and national tests and international comparisons" are forcing a reexamination of social studies curricula.

Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning, A Distillation of Subject-Matter Content for the Subject Areas of Geography and History, Aurora, CO 2000

This is a technical study that was submitted to the Office of Educational Research and Improvement at the U.S. Department of Education.

Morris, Ronald Vaughan. "The Clio Club: An Extracurricular Model for Elementary Social Studies Enrichment. *Journal of Social Studies Research*, Spring 2000, p. 4-.

Discusses middle school and high school students' recollections of their experiences in an elementary age social studies extra-curricular experience."

Murphy, Sue and Janet Walsh. "Economics and the Real Life Connection," *Meeting the Standards*, Mary E. Haas and Margaret A. Laughlin, ed. NCSS,

Washington, D.C. 1997, pp. 176-179.

"Advocates the teaching of basic economic concepts such as scarcity, choices, opportunity cost, indirect cost and decision-making. Provides a few examples of strategies and instructional methodologies."

National Council for History Education, Building a United States History Curriculum, Westlake, OH. 1997.

Guidelines for Grades 5-12 specific to U.S. History courses.

National Council for History Education, Building a World History Curriculum, Westlake, OH. 1997.

Guidelines for Grades 5-12 specific to World History and Western Civilization courses.

Nelson, Lynn R. and Nelson, Trudy A. "Learning History Through Children's Literature," Clearinghouse for Social Studies/Social Science Education, Bloomington, Indiana. October, 2000 ED435586

"Discusses the use of children's literature in social studies education among young children. Presents some research and offers a few strategies for effectively using the literature."

Often, Evelyn Holt. "Using Primary Sources in the Primary Grades." Clearinghouse for Social Studies/Social Science Education, Bloomington, Indiana. May, 1998 ED419773

"Discusses the use of broadly defined primary sources in social studies education among the young. The term "primary source" refers to print documents, electronic media, art, folklore, mythology and built culture."

Risinger, C. Frederick. "The Core Ideas of Lessons From History: Essential Understandings and Historical Perspectives Students Should Acquire." Clearinghouse for Social Studies/Social Science Education, Bloomington, Indiana. June, 1993 ED363527

"Provides a rationale for the study of history K ÷ 12. Discusses the program Lessons From History, developed by the Center for History Education in the

Schools."

Saxe, David Warren, Editor, Middle States Council for the Social Studies 2001 YEARBOOK Essential History Content for K-12, Paul Gagnon, pp. 47-63; Essential Geography Content for K-12, Pat Gober, pp. 64-.

Presents a common core of vital topics in United States and World History, and Geography.

Strahan, David, Jewell Cooper and Martha Ward. "Middle School Reform through Data and Dialogue: Collaborative Evaluation with 17 Leadership Teams." Evaluation Review. Feb. 2001, pp. 72-99.

This report describes a 2-year, longitudinal study of one school district's effort to link site-based, collaborative evaluation with formal, centralized program evaluation. Team members assisted leadership teams in identifying issues for informal, site-based assessments and then used the information to monitor progress toward established goals."

Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, The State of State Standards 2000, Washington, DC. 2000.

Contains reviews of standards in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Included are ratings of standards in English, History, Geography, Math, and Science.

NCHE Social Studies/History Evaluation Team
External Team Members
Biographical Sketches
West Windsor-Plainsboro Evaluation

Paul A. Gagnon: historian emeritus at Boston University. Prof. Gagnon is not only a scholar (PhD., Harvard, Modern European History) and author (**France since 1789**), but has been involved in curriculum issues for the past 20 years. He was Chief of Staff for the Bradley Commission on History in Schools, a consultant to California in the development of their History-Social Science Framework, has written many articles on school history education issues for magazines and scholarly journals, and has served as a consultant to twenty-four states (including New Jersey) on History/Social Studies Standards since 1995.

Henry G. Kiernan: Superintendent, West Morris Regional High School District (NJ), holds a doctorate from Rutgers University. Before becoming Superintendent at WMRHSD he was Director of Curriculum where he developed social studies curriculum and implementation, provided professional development, coordinated testing and assessment, and won four ASCD Awards for Innovative Curriculum. He established the International Baccalaureate Program in his district and is thoroughly familiar with its requirements and programs. He has pioneered the implementation of computer technology (he negotiated an IBM Partnership Program to equip all district teachers with IBM Thinkpads, and district classrooms with Internet connections). He was a member of the Task Force, National World History Standards. Dr. Kiernan is a Trustee and President-Elect of the New Jersey Council for History Education and an editor of its publications. He also serves on the Editorial Board of the *Magazine of History* and the *Journal of Asian Studies*.

John M. Pyne: Social Studies Supervisor, K-12, for West Milford Township Public Schools (NJ), holds a doctorate in U.S. History from the University of Notre Dame. In addition to curriculum, instruction, and professional development work in his district, he helped to develop national and state standards for teaching history and social studies. He was a member of the Task Force to draft the National United States History Standards and served on the Education Commission of the States Team to evaluate the Virginia Social Studies Standards (Dec. 1999-Feb. 2000). He is Executive Director of the New Jersey Council for History Education, a current member of the Teaching Division of the American Historical Association, and serves on the Executive Board of the Organization of History Teachers. Formerly a classroom history teacher for 24 years at Park Ridge and Glen Rock High Schools (NJ, he is also an accomplished writer and editor.

Internal Team Members

Elementary School

Grades K-5

| | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| Tom Barclay (Grades 4/5) | Upper Elementary School |
| Connie Beadle (Media Specialist, Grades 4/5) | Upper Elementary School |
| Shari Goldberg | Elementary Supervisor |
| Ellen Hansen (Grade 2) | Village Elementary School |
| Kristi Mattingly (Grade 1) | Dutch Neck Elementary School |
| Elaine McWilliams (Grade 2) | Maurice Hawk Elementary School |
| Sharon Refsin (Grade 2) | Wicoff Elementary School |
| Legia Shulan (Grade 1) | Dutch Neck Elementary School |

Middle School

Grades 6-8

| | |
|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Trish Buell | Grover Middle School |
| Eileen Chubik-Kwis | Community Middle School |
| Shelly Horowitz | Community Middle School |
| Barbara Paterno | Community Middle School |
| Mark Wise | Middle School Supervisor |

High School

Grades 9-12

| | |
|--------------------|------------------------|
| Judith Marcus | High School South |
| John McNamara | High School Supervisor |
| Deborah Peel | High School North |
| Bruce Salmestrelli | High School North |
| Elizabeth Welsh | High School South |