

Mendham Borough Public Schools
Mendham, New Jersey

Curriculum and Instruction

Course of Study

Social Studies: Grade K

August 23, 2016

I. RATIONALE, DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE

The circumstances, challenges and promise of the modern world, as well as our nation’s collective intent to perpetuate the ideals of the Republic of the United States, mandate a new vision for social studies education. This vision illuminates the essential connection among social studies learning, democratic values, and positive citizenship. The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) advocates the “development of students who can assume the office of citizen.” The vision of the NCSS Curriculum Standards Task Force is the following:

The informed social studies student understands and applies to personal and public experiences the content perspectives of the several academic fields of the social studies. Equally important, the informed social studies student exhibits the habits of mind and behavior of one who respects the relationship between education (i.e., learning) and his or her responsibility to promote the common good.

The Mendham Borough Schools seek to cultivate students’ habits of mind and sense of individual responsibility through a program of social studies education that is grounded in the social sciences and their foundational perspectives (see “District Objectives”). The mission of middle school social studies education in Mendham Borough is the following:

Learners will employ structured methods and processes to analyze and synthesize the multiple disciplines of the social sciences and humanities, and connect human activity across time and place in order to ultimately evaluate the nature of humankind and how people should behave in relation to one another.

The elementary school social studies program guides students through a developmental sequence of overarching themes that shape each yearlong course of study and ultimately provide a four-year sequence of study in the social sciences:

Grade K: Human Commonality: Reflections on peoples' place within the world

Grade 1: Human Commonality: Reflections on peoples' place within the world

Grade 2: Human Connection: Reflections on peoples' relationships to others

Grade 3: Human Expression: Reflections on peoples' relationships to ideas

Grade 4: Human Kind: Reflections on the nature of being human

Kindergarten Social Studies learners will discover the principles by which they may evaluate contemporary and historical decisions made by individuals, by communities and by nations. In order to accomplish this, they will engage in inquiry and research with a focus on understanding themselves, other cultures, societal structures and economic interaction. They will travel to all corners of the globe and the far reaches of man's past to connect the world and its history to their lives today.

II. DISTRICT OBJECTIVES

The district adopts the objectives for social studies education established by the National Council for the Social Studies according to the developmental needs of grade K students.

Through the study of culture and cultural diversity students will understand

- Human beings create, learn, share, and adapt to culture.
- Cultures are dynamic and change over time.

Through the study of the ways in which human beings view themselves in and over time students will understand

- Studying the past makes it possible for us to understand the human story across time.
- Knowledge of the past enables us to analyze the causes and consequences of events and developments, and to place these in the context of the institutions, values and beliefs of the periods in which they took place.

Through the study of the interactions among people, places and environments students will understand

- The relationship between human populations and the physical world.
- Spatial perspectives and changes in the relationship between peoples, places and environments.

Through the study of individual development and identity students will understand

- Personal identity is shaped by an individual's culture, by groups, by institutional influences, and by lived experiences shared with people inside and outside the individual's own culture throughout her or his development.
- Questions related to identity and development, which are important in psychology, sociology, and anthropology, are central to the understanding of who we are.
- The study of individual development and identity will help students to describe factors important to the development of personal identity.

Through the study of interactions among individuals, groups and institutions students will understand

- Institutions are the formal and informal political, economic, and social organizations that help us carry out, organize, and manage our daily affairs.
- It is important that students know how institutions are formed, what controls and influences them, how they control and influence individuals and culture, and how institutions can be maintained or changed.

Through the study of how people create, interact with and change structures of power, authority and governance students will understand

- The development of civic competence requires an understanding of the foundations of political thought, and the historical development of various structures of power, authority, and governance. It also requires knowledge of the evolving functions of these structures in contemporary U.S. society, as well as in other parts of the world.
- Through study of the dynamic relationships between individual rights and responsibilities, the needs of social groups, and concepts of a just society, learners become more effective problem-solvers and decision-makers when addressing the persistent issues and social problems encountered in public life.

Through the study of how people organize for the production, distribution and consumption of goods and services students will understand

- People have wants that often exceed the limited resources available to them.

Through the study of relationships among science, technology and society students will understand

- Science, and its practical application, technology, have had a major influence on social and cultural change, and on the ways people interact with the world.

Through the study of global connections and interdependence students will understand

- Global connections have intensified and accelerated the changes faced at the local, national, and international levels.

Through the study of the ideals, principles and practices of citizenship in a democratic republic students will understand

- An understanding of civic ideals and practices is critical to full participation in society and is an essential component of education for citizenship, which is the central purpose of social studies.
- Learning how to apply civic ideals as part of citizen action is essential to the exercise of democratic freedoms and the pursuit of the common good.

III. ALIGNMENT TO STANDARDS

Social studies instruction in grade K aligns with the following **New Jersey Student Learning Standards:**

NJCCCS 6.1 U.S. History: America in the World

- A. Civics, Government, and Human Rights
- B. Geography, People, and the Environment
- C. Economics, Innovation, and Technology
- D. History, Culture, and Perspectives

NJCCCS 6.2 (N/A for grades K -4)

NJCCCS 6.3 Active Citizenship in the 21st Century

- A. Civics, Government, and Human Rights
- B. Geography, People, and the Environment
- C. Economics, Innovation, and Technology
- D. History, Culture, and Perspectives

IV. CONTENT, SCOPE AND SEQUENCE, LEARNING OUTCOMES

Grade level benchmarks in kindergarten Social Studies are built into the following units:

U.S. History: America in the World

All students will acquire the knowledge and skills to think about how past and present interactions of people and culture shape the American heritage. Such knowledge and skills enable students to make informed decisions that reflect fundamental rights and core democratic values as productive citizens in local communities.

Students will know

- Rules are developed to protect people in the classroom and the community
- The world is comprised of nations that are similar to and different from the United States
- Everyone is part of a larger neighborhood and community

- School and the community have physical and human characteristics
- Spatial relationships can be used to describe the classroom organization
- People have needs and wants
- Technology has improved transportation
- Individuals and families have unique characteristics
- There are different cultures and traditions within the classroom and community
- Immigrants came to America and led a different lifestyle than people today
- America has historical symbols and leaders
- The role of the President
- The President lives in the White House

Students will understand

- Citizens, civic ideals, and government institutions interact to balance the needs of individuals and the common good.
- Economic, political, and cultural decisions can promote or prevent the growth of personal freedom, individual responsibility, equality, and respect for human dignity.
- Citizenship begins with becoming a contributing member of the classroom community.
- Physical geography, human geography, and the human environment can interact to influence or determine the development of cultures, societies, and nations.
- Individuals, groups, and societies apply economic reasoning to make difficult choices about scarce resources. All of which, have consequences.
- Scientific and technological developments over the course of history have changed the way people live, as well as how governments and economies function.
- Interpretations of past events inform our understanding of cause and effect, and continuity and change, as well as influence our beliefs and decisions about current policy issues.

Students will be able to

- Demonstrate an understanding of rules by following most classroom routines
- Demonstrate responsibility by initiating simple classroom tasks and jobs
- Demonstrate appropriate behavior when working with others
- Illustrate how rules protect people and help resolve conflicts
- Identify the roles of people in school and the community
- Illustrate that there are many nations in the world that have their own traditions
- Identify the physical features surrounding the school
- Identify and discuss the duties of school and community workers
- Use direction words (next to, above) to locate places in the classroom.
- Describe different types of weather (appropriate clothing and activities)
- Distinguish between and identify needs and wants
- Identify different transportation systems on land, in water, and in air
- Identify how people traveled long ago
- Describe characteristics of oneself and one's family
- Identify roles of family members
- Identify family traditions
- Express individuality (e.g., through dramatic play)
- Learn about and respect other cultures within the classroom and community
- Compare and contrast the life of pilgrim and native American children to today's children
- Identify some historical symbols, monuments and holidays in America (i.e. American Flag)

Active Citizenship in the 21st Century

All students will acquire the skills needed to be active, informed citizens who value diversity and promote cultural understanding by working cooperatively to address challenges

Students will know

- Characteristics of a good rule
- Strategies to reach consensus and resolve conflict

Students will understand

- Active citizens exercise their rights and responsibilities by participating in democratic processes.
- Active citizens recognize the consequences of human interactions with environment and take actions to promote positive outcomes.
- Active Citizens make informed and reasoned economic decisions and accept responsibility for the consequences of their actions and/or inactions.
- Active citizens respect different viewpoints and take actions that result in a more just and equitable society.

Students will be able to

- Demonstrate understanding of the need for fairness and take appropriate action against unfairness
- Identify actions that are unfair, such as bullying, and solutions to address such actions

V. INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNIQUES

Social studies education relies on a variety of instructional techniques to meet the continuum of learners' interests, learning profiles and readiness levels. Differentiation is the commitment and mechanism through which the developmental needs of a range of readiness levels are met. Differentiated instruction is accomplished through pre-assessment and ongoing formative assessment. Differentiation in content, product and/or process addresses the needs of exceptionally able students, and scaffolding of varying degree is provided to support less ready students in meeting worthy and appropriately rigorous learning outcomes. Instructional objectives, strategies and materials emphasize relevance, authenticity, and student-centered learning.

Instructional techniques in social studies education include the following:

- Direct instruction and modeling/thinking aloud of social studies skills
- Direct instruction and modeling/thinking aloud of applications of social studies skills
- Partnership talk
- Whole class discussion
- Small group strategy lesson
- Individual or group conferencing
- Inquiry based experiences

VI. ASSESSMENT

Assessment in science instruction is anchored by formative and summative assessment that provides both timely and relevant feedback to students and staff. Best practices in the science classroom are numerous and may include:

- Pre-assessment of skills, knowledge, and understandings
- Formative (ongoing) assessment through regular checks
- Periodic teacher-student conferences to assess development of skills, knowledge, and understandings
- Teachers' observation of students' independent inquiry skills
- Teachers' observation of students' independent problem solving
- Performance assessments that require students to apply concepts, skills, and problem-solving strategies to real-world problem-based scenarios
- Written responses to unit questions
- Summative assessments such as quizzes, tests and projects