



**IOWA CITY
COMMUNITY
SCHOOL DISTRICT**
Child-Centered : Future-Focused

Self Study of the Social Studies Program

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Equity Statement

It is the policy of the Iowa City Community School District not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, creed, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity and socioeconomic status in its educational programs, activities, or employment practices. There is a grievance procedure for processing complaints of discrimination. If you have questions or a grievance related to this policy, please contact Jeremy Tabor, Director of Equity and Employee Relations, 1725 N. Dodge St., Iowa City, IA 52245, 319-688-1000, Tabor.Jeremy@iowacityschools.org.



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Curriculum Review Process: Overview

The Iowa City Community School District curriculum review process provides a systematic procedure to study existing curriculum areas and programs relative to internal and external standards as well as data from the curricular program.

Each year, at the district-wide level, a self-study committee is appointed for the areas under study for that particular school year. A curriculum review self-study committee has three primary tasks:

1. Review and affirm or modify the program's mission statement.
2. Analyze relevant data related to the program.
3. Use the data analysis to determine program strengths and limitations, and develop a recommended action plan based on that analysis.

External standards utilized extensively by the self-study committee included state and national curriculum standards such as the K-12 Iowa Core Standards in Social Studies and the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework from the National Council for Social Studies. The Iowa City Community School District's Comprehensive Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan was also used as an internal standard for the work of the team.

Social Studies Self-Study Committee:

Forty-one people served on the social studies self-study committee. Committee members included current ICCSD students, community members, a member of the ICCSD Board of Directors, professors from the University of Iowa Social Studies Education Department, elementary and secondary social studies teachers, teachers from the ICCSD special education, library, & ELL programs, members of the cultural proficiency team, and administrators from the central office as well as the elementary, junior high and senior high schools.

Applications to participate on the self-study team were sent to district families in October 2020 and were reviewed in early November. The application process followed ICCSD School Board policy by including an item on the application process that read: "According to board policy, 'to the extent possible, advisory committee membership shall have balanced representation with regard to race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, creed, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity and socioeconomic status.' Please provide any information relevant to these identifiers that you feel comfortable sharing."

The self-study committee met via Zoom on three separate occasions. Committee members were also given opportunities to provide feedback or ask questions outside of those meetings.

In addition to the tasks enumerated above, the self-study team analyzed and revised the survey questions that were used to gather input about the social studies program.

Social Studies Curriculum Review Survey:

The Iowa City Community School District Social Studies Survey asked families, district staff, and students in grades 5-12 for feedback on the Social Studies program.

The survey included the following topics:

- General Perceptions
- Instructional Time and Materials
- Cultural Responsiveness
- Inquiry Standards
- College & Career Readiness

The survey was open January 11th to 20th, 2021. Email invitations were sent to families, staff members, and students in grades 5-12. The link was anonymous and not tied to an individual. A reminder was sent on January 14, 2021.

The survey was translated into Arabic, French, Spanish, and Swahili.

Survey Participation Totals, By Group:

	Total	Elementary	Junior High	Secondary
Students	570	166	175	230
Parents	692	394	95	203
Staff	189	128	31	30

Student Participation Totals, By Self-Identified Race/Ethnicity

	Total	Elementary	Junior High	High School
Asian	35	<10	12	14
URM*	82	30	32	20
White	281	63	92	126
Prefer Not to Respond	58	36	6	16
Missing	114	28	32	54
Total	570	166	175	230

Family Participation Totals, By Self-Identified Race/Ethnicity

	Total	Elementary	Junior High	High School
Asian	40	27	<10	<10
URM*	43	32	8	3
White	413	221	57	135
Prefer Not to Respond	88	39	16	33
Missing	108	75	10	23
Total	692	394	95	203

*Underrepresented minority (URM) includes participants who reported being of American Indian, Black, Hispanic, or Native Hawaiian descent.

Iowa City Community School District Social Studies

Mission Statement:

The mission of social studies education is the promotion of civic competence— the knowledge and intellectual processes required of students to be active, empathetic participants in public life who are committed to the ideas and values of democracy.

Civic competence requires that students have the ability to

- apply inquiry processes;
- think critically as they gather and use knowledge about their community, nation, and world;
- seek, acknowledge, and value diverse perspectives;
- employ skills of data collection and analysis, evidence based argumentation, informed decision-making, and collaborative problem-solving in the pursuit of a more just and equitable global community.

Belief Statement:

Inquiry is at the heart of social studies education.

An inquiry framework in social studies education centers on the student’s ability to:

- Construct compelling and supporting questions
- Gather and evaluate sources
- Develop claims and use evidence
- Communicate and critique conclusions
- Take informed action

An inquiry framework for social studies education centers “on the use of questions to spark curiosity, guide instruction, deepen investigations, acquire rigorous content, and apply knowledge and ideas in real world settings” to help students become active, informed, and engaged members of our interconnected, 21st century global community. (National Council for the Social Studies College, Career, and Civic Life [C3] Framework)

In so doing, social studies education will develop active and responsible global citizens who are able to identify and analyze public problems, deliberate with other people about how to define and address issues, take constructive action together, reflect on their actions, create and sustain groups, and influence institutions both large and small. (NCSS C3 Framework)

Iowa City Community School District Strategic Goal for Social Studies:

Students will over time develop the knowledge and the skills of the core discipline of social studies and apply this knowledge to their lives as citizens.

K-12 Iowa Core in Social Studies: Overview of Standards

Inquiry Anchor Standards

Each grade level within the Iowa Core in Social Studies K-8 standards includes a set of inquiry standards. At the 9-12 level, there is one set of inquiry standards. These inquiry standards define key disciplinary skills within social studies. The inquiry anchor standards are the same throughout the Iowa Core in Social Studies, but the standard that flows from each anchor standard is more complex as students move through the K-12 social studies experience. The inquiry standards should be taught in conjunction with the content standards.

The K-12 inquiry anchor standards are:

- Constructing compelling questions
- Gathering and evaluating sources
- Communicating and critiquing conclusions
- Constructing supporting questions
- Developing claims and using evidence
- Taking informed action

Content Anchor Standards

Each grade level within the K-8 standards includes a set of content standards that encompasses the key disciplines that make up social studies. At the 9-12 level, these content standards are pulled out by the discipline. The content standards should be taught in conjunction with the inquiry standards.

Grade Level	Overview of the grade level content standard
Kindergarten: Spaces & Places	Students will engage in learning about themselves, their school, city and state. They will have opportunities to compare how life in the past is different from life today with respect to their own experiences.
1st Grade: Community & Culture	Students explore the culture of their own communities by examining leadership in their community, the role goods and services play in a community, and the history of diverse cultures over time.
2nd Grade: Choices and Consequences	Students will learn about choices and consequences. They will engage in thinking and conversing about their own responsibility to take care of their community, focusing on cooperation and citizenship. They will also learn about how the government plays a role in establishing and maintaining local community spaces.
3rd Grade: Immigration and Migration	Students study how and why people move from one place to another with the theme "Immigration and Migration." Students look at the geographic, political, and cultural reasons that people move to a new place as well as what they experience during the transition. They understand that a society is a complex and changing place shaped by laws and the civic virtues of the citizens who live there.
4th Grade: Change and Continuity	Students focus on how society has changed and stayed the same over time. Students see how change is inevitable and the patterns/consequences of change across different historical eras.
5th Grade: Rights and Responsibilities	Students learn about how the Founding documents of the United States were developed and how these documents guide decisions. Students explore the multiple perspectives people have regarding their rights and responsibilities.
6th Grade: World Regions and Cultures	Students focus on geography, history, and culture in global regions. Students analyze regional, physical, and cultural characteristics of places. The analysis will show how factors influenced people who lived there and how the people and characteristics have changed over time.

Grade Level	Overview of the grade level content standard
7th Grade: Contemporary Global Studies	Students will explore global perspectives on contemporary issues and worldwide interdependence. The interconnected world we live in today requires that Iowa students be well-educated about worldwide issues to cultivate diplomacy, effective citizenship, and global competitiveness. Students could examine challenges facing the world community such as hunger, population, conflict, global environmental challenges, human rights, poverty, energy scarcity, global health, education, immigration, globalization, and other political, economic, social, and ecological concerns.
8th Grade: U.S. History and Civic Ideals	Students focus on the history of the United States including the American founding and establishment of democratic principles. Students will analyze the powers and civic responsibilities of citizens and examine the origins, functions, and structure of the U.S. government. As a result, students will gain an understanding of historical events in early American history, democratic principles, individual rights, and government institutions.
Grades 9-12: Behavioral Sciences	The behavioral sciences standards are laid out into two strands- psychology and sociology, giving districts flexibility to choose to focus on one or both strands. The goal is to encourage students to see, think, and act, in ways that reflect the paradigm of behavioral scientists. In addition, these standards provide a rigorous framework to prepare students for work in the behavioral sciences
Grades 9-12: Civics and Government	The civics and government standards promote knowledge of the historical foundations and principles of American democracy and emphasize productive civic engagement. Additionally, the standards focus on understanding the unique processes of local, state, and national institutions
Grades 9-12: Economics	The economics standards promote the concepts and tools necessary for economic decision making in order to help understand the interaction between buyers and sellers in markets, workings of the national economy, and interactions within the global marketplace.
Grades 9-12: Financial Literacy	The financial literacy standards promote the goal of financial capability. The standards focus on setting goals, saving and spending, credit and debt, investing, and measuring financial risk.
Grades 9-12: Geography	The geography standards emphasize the human and physical characteristics of geography. The standards promote the use of multiple geographic tools in order to frame issues and solve problems in both a local and global context.
Grades 9-12: United States History	The U.S. history standards promote both historical content and historical thinking skills to prepare students with a strong foundation in significant historical content and with the skills necessary to apply historical thinking to any historical context. These are the skills required not only for college and career success, but for effective democratic citizenship.
Grades 9-12: World History	The world history standards promote an emphasis on both historical content and historical thinking skills to prepare students with a strong foundation in significant history content, and with the skills necessary to apply historical thinking to any historical context. These are the skills required not only for college and career success, but for effective global citizenship.

ICCSO Social Studies Program Strengths

Program Strengths
K-12 ICCSD staff, families, and students agree that social studies is an important part of learning.
Elementary, Junior High and High School families and students agree that the social studies teachers are knowledgeable in the subject area they teach.
The social studies program offers a multitude of Advanced Placement courses and has few formal prerequisites for student enrollment in those courses.
The greater Iowa City CSD community provides many collaborative opportunities.
Social studies teachers indicate their desire to change the program to make it more equitable and inclusive.

ICCSO Social Studies Program

Limitations and Recommendations

Program Limitations	Recommended Plan of Action	Contact(s)	Timeline
<p><u>CURRICULAR MATERIALS - CORE</u> District provided curricular materials are out of date and do not help teachers provide culturally responsive instruction.</p>	<p>Adopt instructional materials with a specific focus on ensuring materials help teachers provide culturally responsive instruction.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow district procedures for materials adoption and replacement. Significant consideration should be given to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Adaptability of materials ○ Connection to inquiry and content standards ○ Support of culturally responsive teaching practices • Provide staff with sustained professional learning opportunities, training, and support for the use of the new materials. • Adopt elementary materials for use starting in fall 2021 • Adopt secondary materials for use starting in fall 2022 	<p>Executive Directors of Teaching & Learning; Social Studies Coordinator(s)</p>	<p>Spring, Summer 2021 (Elementary); Summer 2021 and 2021-2022 School Year (Secondary)</p>
<p><u>CURRICULAR MATERIALS - SUPPLEMENTAL</u> Widespread use of supplemental materials by secondary teachers could lead to equity concerns as not all students are engaged with supplemental materials that are inclusive, diverse and/or representative.</p>	<p>Conduct an audit of supplemental curricular materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with District equity teams to ensure supplemental materials are aligned with Strategy 3C in the District’s Comprehensive Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan: “Incorporate a more inclusive and representative curriculum.” • Review protocols for supplemental material purchases and use • Determine what course/grade level provides the best fit for supplemental materials. • As needed, provide professional development for a culturally responsive use of supplemental materials. • Seek opportunities to partner with the University of Iowa Social Studies Education Department. 	<p>Executive Directors of Teaching & Learning; Social Studies Coordinator(s); Director of Diversity and Cultural Responsiveness; Secondary staff</p>	<p>2021-2024;</p>

Program Limitations	Recommended Plan of Action	Contact(s)	Timeline
<p><u>CURRICULAR UNITS</u> The social studies curricular materials do not adequately help students understand that different people have different ways of interpreting historical events nor are they representative of diverse races, cultures, genders, and sexual orientation.</p>	<p>Analyze and revise existing social studies curricular units to ensure the units are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Aligned with the K-12 Iowa Core Social Studies Inquiry and Content Anchor Standards; ● Aligned with Strategy 3C of the ICCSD Diversity, Equity, Inclusion plan to “incorporate a more inclusive and representative curriculum”; ● Designed to help students better understand that historical events affect and can be interpreted differently by different people; ● Designed to provide opportunities for students to use curricular materials from a variety of perspectives written by diverse populations. <p>Seek partnerships with community partners in the analysis and revision process and use collaborative professional learning groups to support the analysis and revision.</p> <p>As possible, utilize teacher quality money and district professional development time.</p>	<p>Executive Directors of Teaching & Learning;</p> <p>Social Studies Coordinator(s); Director of Diversity and Cultural Responsiveness</p>	<p>2021-2024</p>
<p><u>K-6 SOCIAL STUDIES TIME ALLOTMENTS</u> The time devoted to elementary social studies each week is too limited.</p>	<p>Revisit instructional time allotments at the elementary level to protect time for social studies; explore incorporating social studies and ELA.</p>	<p>Executive Directors of Teaching & Learning;</p> <p>Social Studies Coordinator(s); Elementary Administrators</p>	<p>2021-2022</p>
<p><u>K-6 SOCIAL STUDIES PROGRESS REPORTS</u> Elementary progress reports do not always match curriculum or state standards.</p>	<p>Align current elementary progress report criteria with Iowa Core Social Studies standards.</p> <p>Create a position for a K-6 Social Studies curriculum coordinator.</p>	<p>Executive Directors of Teaching & Learning; Social Studies Coordinator(s);</p>	<p>Summer 2021</p>

Program Limitations	Recommended Plan of Action	Contact(s)	Timeline
<p><u>PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ON CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING</u> Staff identifies a need for professional development to increase the ability of social studies teachers to implement engaging and culturally responsive teaching methods related specifically to social studies classrooms.</p>	<p>Provide professional development focused specifically on culturally responsive instructional strategies and content in social studies. As possible, this professional development should be developed and offered in coordination with community partners such as the University of Iowa College of Education and the ICCSD Equity Department.</p> <p>Consider the following for professional development on culturally responsive teaching in social studies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Specific training on how to facilitate discussions about difficult or controversial topics; ● Utilization of existing professional learning groups to provide peer support throughout the year; ● Use of strategies such as book studies and/or contracts with outside agencies with expertise in culturally responsive teaching in social studies classrooms. 	<p>Executive Directors of Teaching & Learning;</p> <p>Social Studies Coordinator(s);</p> <p>Director of Diversity and Cultural Responsiveness</p>	<p>Professional development priority #1; 2021-2022, ongoing.</p>
<p><u>PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ON DIFFERENTIATION</u> Social studies teachers identified a desire for professional development to help them meet the needs of struggling students while also providing extension opportunities for students who demonstrate a mastery of learning goals.</p>	<p>Utilize district-wide professional learning communities to provide professional development and training opportunities focused on differentiated instruction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide ongoing academic and social-emotional support for historically underrepresented students in AP social studies classes. ● Continue the development of common formative assessments within secondary courses. ● Seek opportunities to strengthen K-12 articulation of critical thinking skills. 	<p>Executive Directors of Teaching & Learning;</p> <p>Social Studies Coordinator(s)</p>	<p>Professional development priority #2.</p>

Program Limitations	Recommended Plan of Action	Contact(s)	Timeline
<p><u>PROGRAM OF STUDIES</u> Survey data indicates a need to review the scope and sequence and the course offerings of the social studies program.</p>	<p>Create a district team to review the scope and sequence and the course offerings of the social studies program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Utilize Strategy 3C of the ICCSD Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion to “incorporate a more inclusive and representative curriculum”. ● Review current curricular and course offerings related to social justice and ethnic studies. ● Review the sequence of 9-12 course offerings. ● Review existing or potential course offerings related to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ American history ○ Black history ○ Civics ○ Indigenous history ○ Iowa history 	<p>Executive Directors of Teaching & Learning;</p> <p>Social Studies Coordinator(s);</p> <p>Director of Equity and Engagement;</p> <p>Secondary administrators, staff</p>	<p>2021-2024</p>
<p><u>PROGRESS MONITORING</u> Determining the effectiveness of the improvement plan requires ongoing feedback mechanisms and processes within the eight-year curriculum review framework.</p>	<p>Consider creating and/or implementing an ongoing progress monitoring system that could include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A student leadership and advisory team for the social studies program; ● Regularly scheduled feedback protocols for students, staff, and families (e.g. bi-annual district survey; end-of-trimester feedback forms for students and staff) ● Annual review of the improvement plan and accompanying data to determine appropriate adjustments to the recommendations in the improvement plan. 	<p>Executive Directors of Teaching & Learning;</p> <p>Social Studies Coordinator;</p> <p>Director of Equity and Engagement;</p> <p>Secondary administrators, staff</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>