

Rumson-Fair Haven Regional High School

Course: *Current Issues*

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Section I: Course Description

Current Issues is a discussion-based, inquiry-driven course that examines the major political, social, economic, and cultural issues shaping the United States today. Students will analyze current events through historical context, data interpretation, media literacy, and diverse perspectives. Topics may include the economy, healthcare, education, the environment, civil rights, immigration, foreign policy, technology, and the role of government in modern society. Emphasis will be placed on studying current events through a research/presentation-based curriculum.

Section II: NJSLs: New Jersey Student Learning Standards/Learning Objectives:

1. **2020 New Jersey Student Learning Standards – Social Studies:**
 - "...Today's challenges are complex, have global implications, and are connected to people, places, and events of the past. The study of social studies focuses on deep understanding of concepts that enable students to think critically and systematically about local, regional, national, and global issues. Authentic learning experiences that enable students to apply content knowledge, develop social studies skills, and collaborate with students from around the world prepare New Jersey students for college, careers, and civic life. The natural integration of technology in social studies education allows students to overcome geographic borders, apply scientific and mathematical analysis to historical questions and contemporary issues, appreciate cultural diversity, and experience events through the examination of primary sources. The 2020 New Jersey Student Learning Standards – Social Studies (NJSLs-2020) are informed by national and state standards and other documents such as the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards, as well as those published by the National Center for History Education, National Council for Social Studies, National Council for Geographic Education, Center for Civic Education, National Council on Economic Education, National Assessment of Educational Progress, and the Partnership for 21st Century Skills. Social studies instruction occurs throughout the K-12 spectrum, building in sophistication of learning about history, economics, geography, and civics at all ages."
2. **2023 New Jersey Student Learning Standards English Language Arts:**
 - The ELA Standards were revised in 2023, with the recommendations of teams of teachers, parents, administrators, supervisors, and other stakeholders, and reflect the strong beliefs that, "...Literacy must be recognized and guided in content areas so that students recognize the academic vocabulary, media representations, and power of language inherent in the work of scholars and experts..."
3. **2020 New Jersey Student Learning Standards – Career Readiness, Life Literacies, and Key Skills:**
 - "Career Ready Practices describe the career-ready skills that all educators in all content areas should seek to develop in their students. They are practices that have been linked to increased college, career, and life success. Career Ready Practices should be taught and reinforced in all career exploration and preparation programs with increasingly higher levels of complexity and expectation as a student advances through a program of study."
4. **Standard 8.1 (Computer Science) and 8.2 (Design Thinking) of the 2020 NJSLs:**
 - "The 'Intent and Spirit of the Computer Science and Design Thinking Standards' is to focus on deep understanding of concepts that enable students to think critically and systematically about leveraging technology to solve local and global issues. Authentic learning experiences that enable students to apply content knowledge, integrate concepts across disciplines, develop computational thinking skills, acquire and incorporate varied perspectives, and communicate with diverse audiences about the use and effects of computing prepares New Jersey students for college and careers."
5. **Standard 9.4 (Life Literacies and Key Skills) of the 2020 NJSLs:**
 - "This standard outlines key literacies and technical skills such as critical thinking, global and cultural awareness, and technology literacy that are critical for students to develop to live and work in an interconnected global economy."
***Climate Change:** The state of New Jersey has mandated instruction in, "Climate Change across all content areas, leveraging the passion students have shown for this critical issue and providing them opportunities to develop a deep understanding of the science behind the changes and to explore the solutions our world desperately needs."
6. ***Amistad Law: N.J.S.A. 18A 52:16A-88:**
 - The inclusion of lessons and resources/texts dealing with the African slave trade, slavery in America, the vestiges of slavery in this country and the contributions of African-Americans to our society will be implemented in English and Social Studies courses in accordance with state law: "Every board of

education shall incorporate the information regarding the contributions of African-Americans to our country in an appropriate place in the curriculum of elementary and secondary school students.”

7. ***Holocaust Law: N.J.S.A. 18A 35-28:**
 - The inclusion of lessons and resources/texts that enable pupils to identify and analyze applicable theories concerning human nature and behavior; to understand that genocide is a consequence of prejudice and discrimination; and to understand that issues of moral dilemma and conscience have a profound impact on life will be implemented in English and Social Studies courses in accordance with state law: “Every board of education shall include instruction on the Holocaust and genocides in an appropriate place in the curriculum of all elementary and secondary school pupils. The instruction shall further emphasize the personal responsibility that each citizen bears to fight racism and hatred whenever and wherever it happens.”
8. ***LGBT and Disabilities Law: N.J.S.A. 18A:35-4.35:**
 - A transformative approach to the inclusion of lessons and resources/texts on the contributions and issues concerning the LGBTQ+ population and people with disabilities will be implemented across all core subjects in accordance with state law: “A board of education shall include instruction on the political, economic, and social contributions of persons with disabilities and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people, in an appropriate place in the curriculum of middle school and high school students as part of the district’s implementation of the New Jersey Student Learning Standards (N.J.S.A.18A:35-4.36). A board of education shall have policies and procedures in place pertaining to the selection of instructional materials to implement the requirements of N.J.S.A. 18A:35-4.35.”
9. ***Asian American and Pacific Islanders Legislation: N.J.S.A 4021/A6100:**
 - The inclusion of lessons and resources/texts on the history and contributions of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, will enable New Jersey’s schools to provide a curriculum that reflects the diversity of our state. In accordance with state law: “A board of education shall include instruction on the history and contributions of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in an appropriate place in the curriculum of students in grades kindergarten through as part of the school district’s implementation of the New Jersey Student Learning Standards in Social Studies.”
10. Acquisition/development/refinement of the higher-order critical thinking skills aligned with the *Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy of Cognitive Objectives*

Section III: Curriculum Modifications

The *Current Issues* curriculum is subject to case-by-case modifications to support/advance the needs of all students, including special education students, English language learners, gifted students, and those at risk of school failure. These modifications are based on Individualized Learning Programs (IEPs), recommendations made by the district’s Multi Language Learners (MLL) coordinator, feedback from members of the Intervention & Referral Services Team (*I&RS*) for at-risk students, and 504 Plans

Coursework and assessments will be modified on an individual basis for students when necessary. Modifications may include but are not limited to those outlined on the [Modifications/Accommodations for Social Studies Courses](#) chart.

Section IV: Preparation for Standardized Testing

Instruction in *Current Issues* is aligned with the requirements of state and national standardized assessments, including the *NJGPA*, *NJSLSA*, the *ACT*, the *PSAT*, and the *SAT*.

Section V: Curriculum Pacing Guide

Curriculum Pacing Guide	
Course Title: <i>Current Issues</i>	Grade Level: 10-12
Unit I: Historical Thinking in the Modern Era	Weeks 1-3
Unit II: Current Issues and American Domestic Policy	Weeks 4-10

Unit III: Current Issues and American Foreign Policy	Weeks 11-15
Unit IV: Capstone Project	Weeks 16-20

Section VI: Primary Texts and Year-Long Instructional Resources

The following texts and instructional resources are employed for all students in *Current Issues*:

- Google Classroom
- Common Sense Education (www.commonsense.org)
- The Big Project (<https://www.thebigproject.co.uk/news/index.htm>)
- Real Clear Politics (<https://www.realclearpolitics.com/>)
- Ground News (<https://ground.news/>)
- The Choices Program (<https://www.choices.edu/>)
- The New York Times Historical Database (<https://www.proquest.com>)
- PBS News Hour (<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/classroom/>)
- News Literacy Project (<https://newslit.org/>)
- AllSides.com (<https://allsideseducationfund.org/>)
- Various media outlets including but not limited to: The New York Times, CNN, Fox News, Washington Post, USA Today, Wall Street Journal, BBC News, The Guardian, MSNBC, Politico, NBC News, NPR, and Bloomberg

Section VII: Grading Formula and Assessment Modes

Marking period grades in *Current Issues* are determined via a percentage weighting model. The specific grading categories and weightings of each will be determined before the start of each academic year and will be published in the posted/distributed course syllabi.

Assessments in *Current Issues* vary greatly in format, scope/content/skills assessed, and alternative assessments; differentiation in assessments and choice will be incorporated as appropriate. Preliminary assessments of each format will be used as benchmarks, and summative assessments will be created/revised collaboratively each year and planned by members of the *Current Issues* instructional team to inform future learning and to measure student growth.

Section VIII: Unit Templates

The following unit templates have been established for the *Current Issues* curriculum by the *Current Issues* instructional team:

Unit I: Historical Thinking in the Modern Era
Unit Summary
The introductory unit in <i>Current Issues</i> will help students to understand better how to analyze and actively engage in the landscape of modern news and media in a global context. The students will evaluate the key components and terms associated with traditional “news” sources such as newspapers and broadcasts, as well as the modern contexts of social media. Students will leave this unit with the tools necessary to evaluate multiple news sources to perceive and define bias, as well as develop a strong understanding of course expectations for class discussion to be applied to future coursework.
Standards/Core Ideas/Performance Expectations/Progress Indicators
The state standards outlined below, and established by the New Jersey Department of Education, will guide instruction throughout this unit in <i>Current Issues</i> :
• 2020 New Jersey Student Learning Standards: Social Studies ○ 6.1.12.CivicsPD.16.a, 6.1.12.CivicsPR.16.a, 6.1.12.GeoHE16.a, 6.1.12.EconGE.16.a, 6.1.12.EconNE.16.a-b, 6.1.12.HistoryUP.16.a, 6.1.12.HistoryCC.16.a-b, 6.2.12.CivicsPI.6.a, 6.2.12.CivicsHR.6.a-b, 6.2.12.GeoPP.6.a, 6.2.12.EconGE.6.a-c, 6.2.12.HistoryCC.6.a, 6.3.12.HistoryCA.2 • 2023 New Jersey Student Learning Standards: English Language Arts ○ RL.CR.11-12.1, RI.CR.11-12.1, RL.PP.11-12.5, RI.PP.11-12.5, RL.MF.11-12.6, RIAA.11-12.7, RL.CT.11-12.8, RI.CT.11-12.8, W.AW.11-12.1, W.IW.11-12.2, W.WP.11-12.4, W.WR.11-12.5, W.SE.11-12.6, W.RW.11-12.7

- 2020 New Jersey Student Learning Standards: Computer Science and Design Thinking
 - 8.2.12.EC.1
- 2020 New Jersey Student Learning Standards: Career Readiness, Life Literacies and Key Skills
 - 9.4.12.CI.1-2, 9.4.12.CT.2, 9.4.12.IML.8-9

Unit Essential Questions		Unit Enduring Understandings	
● Why is it important to think for oneself and experiment with new ideas? ● *What role do multiple causations play in describing a historic event? ● What role does analysis have in historical construction? ● What defines a “news” source? ● What defines a “historical” source? ● *In what ways does the presentation of news define and alter understandings of historical and current events? ● *How do personal beliefs and biases impact how individuals perceive current events? ● Why is the United States involved in foreign regions? ● What are the international and domestic consequences of the foreign entanglements? ● How does partisanship affect domestic policy?		● Understanding how to locate and differentiate between multiple media sources is a vital life skill. ● *It is critical for students to understand that the media and news represent multiple perspectives and inherent biases when reporting on current events, and informed global citizens must adopt a holistic approach during news consumption to come to an independent conclusion. ● Exploring and defining a series of different historical lenses and applying them to a variety of situations to understand one's own perspective and the perspective of others are important historical analysis skills. ● A “news” source is any source with the explicit purpose of reporting current events and information to inform the public about a particular issue at the local, state, national, and international level. ● A “historical” source is any source that provides historical detail, insight, and background information about people, events, and ideas from the past that are relevant to the present topic. ● *It is important for students to decipher and understand the critical role that word choice has in developing an argument and controlling the perspective presented on an event. ● *A well-informed and productive discussion concerning modern issues is based on being able to support personal conclusions with accurate and effective information. ● The intended audience in the modern context (i.e., traditional news vs. social media and how the audience shapes modern perspectives and arguments) plays a large role in how news is communicated. ● The United States has grown increasingly globalized throughout the last century, and that has come with both positive and negative effects and implications in multiple regions around the world. ● The role of the United States in other countries has tangentially caused domestic events within the United States. ● In all countries, including the United States, political parties and interest groups influence policymakers in order to advance specific agendas through discussion, debate, and legislation.	
Evidence of Learning			
Formative & Alternative Assessments: ● Weekly Current Event Reports ● Map Quizzes ● Class Discussions ● Media Analysis Reports ● Individual student check-ins with teacher		Benchmark & Summative Assessments: ● World Geography Quiz (Benchmark) ● Headlines Project (Benchmark)	
		Resources Needed: ● <i>AllSides Media Bias</i> ● <i>The Big Project</i> ● <i>Real Clear Politics</i> ● <i>The Ground News</i> ● <i>Common Sense Media</i>	

Unit II: Current Issues and American Domestic Policy	
Unit Summary	
In this unit, students will analyze how American public policies, particularly domestic, are shaped, contested, and communicated. Students will understand the “human” side of policy by analyzing how state and federal decisions impact private citizens in areas such as legislation, human rights, and civic engagement. Beyond this, students will analyze how policy interacts with the digital landscape we live in today by evaluating the ethics of technological advancement, data privacy, and A.I. regulation.	
Standards/Core Ideas/Performance Expectations/Progress Indicators	
The state standards outlined below, and established by the New Jersey Department of Education, will guide instruction throughout this unit in <i>Current Issues</i>: ● 2020 New Jersey Student Learning Standards: Social Studies	

○ 6.1.12.CivicsPD.16.a, 6.1.12.CivicsPR.16.a, 6.1.12.GeoHE16.a, 6.1.12.EconGE.16.a, 6.1.12.EconNE.16.a-b, 6.1.12.HistoryUP.16.a, 6.1.12.HistoryCC.16.a-b, 6.2.12.CivicsPI.6.a, 6.2.12.CivicsHR.6.a-b, 6.2.12.GeoPP.6.a, 6.2.12.EconGE.6.a-c, 6.2.12.HistoryCC.6.a, 6.3.12.HistoryCA ● <i>2023 New Jersey Student Learning Standards: English Language Arts</i> ○ RL.CR.11-12.1, RI.CR.11-12.1, RL.PP.11-12.5, RI.PP.11-12.5, RL.MF.11-12.6, RI.AA.11-12.7, RL.CT.11-12.8, RI.CT.11-12.8, W.AW.11-12.1, W.IW.11-12.2, W.WP.11-12.4, W.WR.11-12.5, W.SE.11-12.6, W.RW.11-12.7 ● <i>2020 New Jersey Student Learning Standards: Computer Science and Design Thinking</i> ○ 8.2.12.EC.1 ● <i>2020 New Jersey Student Learning Standards: Career Readiness, Life Literacies and Key Skills</i> ○ 9.4.12.CI.1-2, 9.4.12.CT.2, 9.4.12.IML.8-9		
Unit Essential Questions		Unit Enduring Understandings
● How do media and technology influence what becomes national policy priorities and public opinion? ● To what extent does American public policy dictate an individual's own lifestyle and choices? ● How should the government balance the rapid growth and expansion of A.I./technology with the need for ethical guardrails and personal privacy? ● To what extent is domestic economic policy an extension of social and political policy? ● How do public policies impact individuals differently across society? ● What are the ethical responsibilities of governments when making policy decisions? ● How do global issues influence domestic policy decisions? ● What skills are necessary to be an informed and active participant in a democracy? ● *How does race, ethnicity, gender, and orientation influence domestic policy and vice versa?		● Media and technology shape public opinion and influence national policy by affecting how information is shared, interpreted, and consumed. ● Public policy impacts individual lifestyles, freedoms, and opportunities while trying to balance the needs of society with the rights of citizens. ● Governments need to balance innovation in A.I. and technology by utilizing ethical responsibility, privacy protections, and public safety. ● Economic policy reflects social values and political priorities because decisions about taxes, government spending, labor, and trade affect different groups within society differently. ● Public policies do not affect all individuals equally; factors such as income, geography, access to resources, and education influence outcomes and opportunities. ● Ethical policy creation requires governments to consider fairness, justice, accountability, and the long-term impacts of decisions on society and its citizens. ● Global issues such as trade, climate change, migration, conflict, and technological development influence domestic policy decisions and national priorities. ● An informed and active democracy depends on citizens who can think critically, evaluate sources, communicate effectively, collaborate with others, and participate responsibly in a democratic society. ● *Race, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation influence domestic policy by shaping debates about rights, equality, and access to opportunities, while domestic policies can either reduce or reinforce social inequalities affecting these groups.
Evidence of Learning		
Formative & Alternative Assessments: ● Weekly Current Event Reports ● Map Quizzes ● Class Discussions ● Media Analysis Reports ● Individual student check-ins with teacher	Benchmark & Summative Assessments: ● Technology Today Poster ● Domestic Issue Research Presentation (Benchmark) ● Deep Dive Historical to Modern Analysis Project	Resources Needed: ● <i>AllSides Media Bias</i> ● <i>The Big Project</i> ● <i>Real Clear Politics</i> ● <i>The Ground News</i> ● <i>Common Sense Media</i>

Unit III: Current Issues and American Foreign Policy
Unit Summary
In this unit, students will analyze how American foreign policies are proposed, drafted, and carried out around the world. This includes both peaceful policy (such as economic agreements, diplomacy, and humanitarian aid) and policy surrounding conflict (such as military intervention, economic sanctions/tariffs, and diplomatic disputes). This unit will include historical analysis of conflicts around the world, examining how past events have shaped present conditions.
Standards/Core Ideas/Performance Expectations/Progress Indicators

The state standards outlined below, and established by the New Jersey Department of Education, will guide instruction throughout this unit in *Current Issues*:

- *2020 New Jersey Student Learning Standards: Social Studies*
 - 6.1.12.CivicsPD.16.a, 6.1.12.CivicsPR.16.a, 6.1.12.GeoHE16.a, 6.1.12.EconGE.16.a, 6.1.12.EconNE.16.a-b, 6.1.12.HistoryUP.16.a, 6.1.12.HistoryCC.16.a-b, 6.2.12.CivicsPI.6.a, 6.2.12.CivicsHR.6.a-b, 6.2.12.GeoPP.6.a, 6.2.12.EconGE.6.a-c, 6.2.12.HistoryCC.6.a, 6.3.12.HistoryCA.2
- *2023 New Jersey Student Learning Standards: English Language Arts for Grades 11-12*
 - RL.CR.11-12.1, RI.CR.11-12.1, RL.PP.11-12.5, RI.PP.11-12.5, RL.MF.11-12.6, RI.AA.11-12.7, RL.CT.11-12.8, RI.CT.11-12.8, W.AW.11-12.1, W.IW.11-12.2, W.WP.11-12.4, W.WR.11-12.5, W.SE.11-12.6, W.RW.11-12.7
- *2020 New Jersey Student Learning Standards: Computer Science and Design Thinking*
 - 8.2.12.EC.1
- *2020 New Jersey Student Learning Standards: Career Readiness, Life Literacies and Key Skills*
 - 9.4.12.CI.1-2, 9.4.12.CT.2, 9.4.12.IML.8-9

Unit Essential Questions		Unit Enduring Understandings
● To what extent is foreign economic policy an extension of social and political policy? ● How do global issues influence foreign policy decisions? ● *What ethical and legal responsibilities does the United States have when confronted with human rights abuses, genocide, and oppression around the world? ● To what extent is immigration both a foreign and domestic policy in a globalized modern world? ● To what extent should the United States act as the global police, and when should it maintain neutrality in international disputes and conflicts? ● How should the United States manage its relationships with other world powers while balancing its economic interdependence against military and technological competition? ● How have historical events affected modern circumstances in regard to current geopolitical tensions around the world?		● Foreign economic policy reflects geopolitical priorities and circumstances because decisions about tariffs, sanctions, trade disputes, and agreements are determined by the political climate of the countries participating. ● Global issues such as trade, climate change, migration, conflict, and technological development influence domestic policy decisions and national priorities. ● *The United States has ethical and legal responsibilities to promote human rights, support international law, and respond to serious abuses while balancing national interests and global stability. ● Immigration is both a foreign and domestic policy issue because it is shaped by international events and agreements while affecting a country's economy, security, and society. ● The United States must balance intervention and neutrality by considering humanitarian concerns, national interests, international law, and the potential consequences of its actions. ● The United States should pursue cooperation on shared challenges while protecting its economic, military, and technological interests through diplomacy and strategic partnerships. ● Historical events continue to shape modern geopolitical tensions by influencing national identities, territorial disputes, alliances, and relationships between countries.
Evidence of Learning		
Formative & Alternative Assessments: ● Weekly Current Event Reports ● Map Quizzes ● Class Discussions ● Media Analysis Reports ● Individual student check-ins with teacher	Benchmark & Summative Assessments: ● Global Policy Analysis ● Foreign Issue Research Presentation ● Deep Dive Historical to Modern Analysis Project	Resources Needed: ● <i>AllSides Media Bias</i> ● <i>The Big Project</i> ● <i>Real Clear Politics</i> ● <i>The Ground News</i> ● <i>Common Sense Media</i>

Unit IV: Capstone Project

Unit Summary

The final unit in *Current Issues* is a summative project and seminar in which the students will utilize their learned research skills to prepare and create a personal understanding and narrative of any current situation facing the United States and world today. This understanding will be communicated to the class through presentation, finally culminating in a classwide discussion. The students will ultimately discuss their personal beliefs and ideas on the causes of the situation, the challenges the United States faces, and the role they believe the United States should play in addressing them.

Standards/Core Ideas/Performance Expectations/Progress Indicators

The state standards outlined below, and established by the New Jersey Department of Education, will guide instruction throughout this unit in *Current Issues*:

- *2020 New Jersey Student Learning Standards: Social Studies*
 - 6.1.12.CivicsPD.16.a, 6.1.12.CivicsPR.16.a, 6.1.12.GeoHE16.a, 6.1.12.EconGE.16.a, 6.1.12.EconNE.16.a-b, 6.1.12.HistoryUP.16.a, 6.1.12.HistoryCC.16.a-b, 6.2.12.CivicsPI.6.a, 6.2.12.CivicsHR.6.a-b, 6.2.12.GeoPP.6.a, 6.2.12.EconGE.6.a-c, 6.2.12.HistoryCC.6.a, 6.3.12.HistoryCA.2
- *2023 New Jersey Student Learning Standards: English Language Arts*
 - RL.CR.11-12.1, RI.CR.11-12.1, RL.PP.11-12.5, RI.PP.11-12.5, RL.MF.11-12.6, RI.AA.11-12.7, RL.CT.11-12.8, RI.CT.11-12.8, W.AW.11-12.1, W.IW.11-12.2, W.WP.11-12.4, W.WR.11-12.5, W.SE.11-12.6, W.RW.11-12.7
- *2020 New Jersey Student Learning Standards: Computer Science and Design Thinking*
 - 8.2.12.EC.1
- *2020 New Jersey Student Learning Standards: Career Readiness, Life Literacies and Key Skills*
 - 9.4.12.CI.1-2, 9.4.12.CT.2, 9.4.12.IML.8-9

Unit Essential Questions		Unit Enduring Understandings	
- What values determine and define the issues most important to an individual? *How do personal beliefs and biases impact how individuals perceive current events? - To what extent can being informed and engaging in activism impact current situations at the local, state, national, and international level? - How are current events the product of historical events and processes? - How are current events interconnected regarding national and international policy, geopolitics, and the emerging trend of globalization?		- The issues individuals see as most important are shaped by their core values, including their cultural background, personal experiences, and priorities such as fairness, security, or economic opportunity. *A well-informed and productive discussion concerning modern issues is based on being able to support personal conclusions with accurate and effective information. - Being informed and engaging in activism can significantly impact current situations by raising awareness, influencing public opinion, and prompting policy changes at local, state, national, and global levels. - Current events are the result of past historical events and processes, as long-term developments, conflicts, and decisions continue to shape present-day circumstances. - Current events are interconnected through national and international policies, geopolitical relationships, and globalization, meaning that actions in one region can have widespread effects across the world.	
Evidence of Learning			
Formative & Alternative Assessments: - Weekly Current Event Reports - Map Quizzes - Class Discussions - Media Analysis Reports - Individual student check-ins with teacher	Benchmark & Summative Assessments: - Capstone Project (Summative) - Capstone Presentation (Summative) - Capstone Seminar (Summative)	Resources Needed: - AllSides Media Bias - The Big Project - Real Clear Politics - The Ground News - Common Sense Media - The New York Times Database - ABC-Clio - Facts on File	

Section IX: Unit Reflection

The *Current Issues* instructional team must confer upon the completion of each instructional unit in the *Current Issues* curriculum and rate the degree to which the instructional units meet performance criteria established by the New Jersey Department of Education using the Unit Reflection Form. Completed unit reflection forms should be used by the instructional team for future modifications within and to *Current Issues* curriculum.

Unit Reflection Form: <i>Current Issues</i>			
Lesson Activities:	Strongly	Moderately	Weakly
Foster student use of technology as a tool to develop critical thinking, creativity, and innovation skills;			

Are challenging and require higher-order thinking and problem-solving skills;			
Allow for student choice;			
Provide scaffolding for acquiring targeted knowledge/skills;			
Integrate modern, global perspectives, especially those regarding diversity, genocide, global issues, and historical ones regarding racial relations;			
Integrate 21 st century skills;			
Provide opportunities for interdisciplinary connection and transfer of knowledge and skills;			
Are varied to address different student learning styles and preferences;			
Are differentiated based on student needs;			
Are student-centered, with the teacher acting as a facilitator and co-learner during the teaching and learning process;			
Provide means for students to demonstrate knowledge and skills and progress in meeting learning goals and objectives;			
Provide opportunities for student reflection and self-assessment;			
Provide data to inform and adjust instruction to better meet the varying needs of learners.			

Appendix ***Writing Instruction and the RFH Community***

Writing instruction should happen across the RFH Community. Writing across the curriculum is a philosophy that advances the belief that writing is a method of learning. Since all departments are committed to helping students learn, writing must be used as a methodology to advance student learning.

Each academic discipline has its own unique conventions, formats, and structures. It is the responsibility of each department to agree upon domain-specific writing praxes, model them for students, and require them to utilize them on a consistent basis. Students must understand that acceptable writing in one domain may not be acceptable writing in another area. The development of domain-specific writing skills supports the overall development of the student writer because all writing is grounded in the writing situation: audience, context, purpose, subject, and writer. Representatives from the academic disciplines must share their domain-specific writing praxes with each other, identify intersections, and determine how to address perceived gaps that limit student learning.

Students must experience writing situations that help them learn how to think creatively and critically and communicate effectively in the academic disciplines. Writing instruction, regardless of the academic discipline, must always reinforce student understanding of the writing situation. When students experience writing situations, they must study examples of domain-specific writing in order to understand how writers communicate in discipline-related contexts. This does not mean information embedded in textbooks. Domain-specific writing is writing that is used to inform and influence readers as it draws them into an established circle of discourse. Students must use these non-fiction texts to develop the close reading

skills that will shape their own writing. Focused engagement with domain-specific writing should not be limited to basic reading comprehension and topical understanding. It must also include the analysis of the writing situation that is represented in the text: audience, context, purpose, subject, and writer. The close reading of well-written texts—regardless of the domain—will show students the importance of writing mechanics, diction, and syntax. The development of close reading skills will also help the students grow in terms of their ability to construct and advance independent and original claims that are well-supported by evidence. Domain-specific writing is grounded in positioning of claims and the effective use of evidence.

The final written product is important; nevertheless, the learning that results in this production must not be devalued. The writing process is not limited to the basic steps of planning, drafting, revising, and editing/proofreading. It is a complex sequence of critical and creative thinking and writing that leads to the production of a text that provides evidence of learning and understanding. Students must ultimately develop the ability to self-assess the effectiveness of their writing as a representation of the writing situation. Without the use of models that evidence learning and understanding, students will not develop the ability to self-assess their own work—the true outcome of the writing process.

What types of writing situations should RFH students engage in?

RFH students should engage in writing situations across the curriculum that require them to:

- write to improve mechanical proficiency, diction usage, and syntactical sophistication
- write to narrate, describe, and reflect
- write to summarize and report
- write to classify and define
- write to explain how process leads to an outcome
- write to compare, contrast, and evaluate
- write to speculate on cause and effect
- write to propose solutions and solve problems
- write to analyze

These writing situations should be positioned in a coordinated, developmental sequence that extends across the academic disciplines.

Upon Completion of Grade 12, RFH students must be ready to transition to the following writing situations:

- write to analyze
- write to persuade (argument)

The core foci of first-year college writing courses are analysis and argument. These courses orient the students to the demands and expectations of writing for the academic culture of college. At colleges/universities with carefully coordinated writing programs, students must demonstrate proficiency in analysis and argument before they transition to upper-level courses that require them to engage in the following writing situation:

- write to investigate (research)