Social Studies Program Evaluation Report

Grades 6-8

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2015-2016

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The Program Evaluation began in August, 2015 and continued through the 2015-2016 school year. The period of time was approximately 12 months.

Table of Contents

Program Scope and Sequence ……...

Middle School Social Studies Staff ……..

Program Mission Statement and Vision ……...

Analysis of Current Program ……...

Survey Results: Summary and Analysis ……..

Student Survey Results …….

Parent Survey Results ……...

Social Studies Teachers Outside of District …….

Ridge Social Studies Department Results …….

William Annin Social Studies Department Results ……...

Prior Goals and Progress ……

6th Grade ……...

7th Grade ……

8th Grade …….

Program Comparisons and Best Practices …….

Analysis of Social Studies Curriculum in Relation to Standards …….

Goals and Recommendations ……...

Resources …….

Appendix A: Standards ……...

Appendix B: Survey Questions ……...

Program Scope and Highlights

This program evaluation took place for one week in August 2015 and another week in July 2016. Then we started analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of our current program by conducting surveys with staff members, students, parents, and social studies teachers from outside our district. The surveys from outside our district were completed in August 2015, while the surveys from within our district were completed from April-June of 2016. One issue that occurred while conducting the evaluation was the inherent difficulty of collecting parent responses. Despite multiple attempts to collect parent feedback, the team was not able to obtain a statistically significant number of responses and will not be able to form valid conclusions based on the responses that were received. In addition, we held frequent departmental discussions in order to obtain feedback and recommendations from the staff. The department was presented with a summary of the program review and the evaluation team solicited guidance regarding document analysis, content resources, and note taking strategies. In addition, three middle school social studies staff members visited Ridge in order to observe the high school social studies department and improve the articulation between the two buildings and to inform this program evaluation.

Based on the anecdotal and quantitative responses the team received from the students and staff members, we researched additional social studies strategies to explore and possibly incorporate into our middle school program. The focus of our research was improved assessment strategies, alternative research strategies, document and thesis analysis, note taking strategies, and the incorporation of current events throughout the middle school program. With the implementation of the New Jersey Learning Standards in ELA (formerly Common Core State Standards), the social studies department is utilizing more data driven instruction, and document based exploratory learning. This program review will provide direction to the department and specific social studies strategies that will develop life long learners in the discipline.

6th Grade Staff – American History			
Name	**Lisa Filippini**	**Melanie Dupuis**	**Dan Georgetti**
Tenured	Yes	Yes	Yes
Start Date	9/03	9/06	9/09
Experience	14 years	10 years	9 years
Education	MAT +30, Special Education certification, Orton Gillingham certification	MAT +30	MAT +15
7th Grade Staff – Geography			
Name	**Jocelyn Bizzarro**	**Bill Michaelis**	**Christian Soto**
Tenured	Yes	Yes	No
Start Date	9/05	09/10	9/13
Experience	12 years	6 years	3 years
Education	MAT	BA	MAT
8th Grade Staff – Global History I			
Name	**Karen Applebaum**	**Susan Westlake**	**Heather Ferino**
Tenured	Yes	Yes	No
Start Date	9/99	9/02	9/11
Experience	18 years	15 years	5 years
Education	MAT and M.ed Educational Leadership	MAT +30	BA

Extra Section Staff		
Name	**Christine White**	**Aileen Barry**
Tenured	Yes	Yes
Start Date	9/04	9/08
Subject Taught	3 sections 7th grade, 2 sections 8th grade	3 sections 6th grade, 1 section 8th grade, 1 section 8th grade elective – Current Issues
Experience	12 years	11 years
Education	Masters +30	MA Public Administration

Program Mission Statement and Vision

Mission Statement

The mission of the Bernards Township School District is to provide a superior education which results in academic excellence, responsible behavior, good citizenship and fosters social emotional development so that ultimately each student will be able to:

- Maximize his/her potential
- Become a contributing member of society
- Develop a commitment to lifelong learning

Vision

The Bernards Township School District prides itself on offering high quality social studies and civics education to all students throughout the middle school program. Specifically, the social studies department's philosophy states that it is ***"committed to guiding students in the acquisition of knowledge, skills and habits of mind that will enable the students to interpret and analyze the society in which they live and will inspire in students a desire to become thoughtful, reasoned and active participants in their communities."*** Added to this, the vision of the department is to enhance student's understanding of the past and draw connections to other subject areas and disciplines. Students are encouraged to think independently, form conclusions about historical events, make connections to current issues, develop a perspective or claim that is supported with evidence, and understand the values and principles of American Democracy. Throughout middle school, the social studies department fosters an understanding of the processes which are critical to solving complex problems, and engages students in the regular practice of these problem solving skills.

Analysis of Current Program

Students in grades 6-8 spend time learning and developing various skills.

Middle School goals/objectives:

Knowledge

- Students require content knowledge as a basis for developing inquiry based learning. Answering compelling questions guides the content of history, civics, economics, and geography.
- The study of history is required to explain the present, and to establish the connection of students' own lives to the past. In order to identify change and continuity over time, and to discern historical cause and effect relationships, understanding chronology of eras and pivotal events is essential.
- Students are encouraged to understand the values and principles of American Democracy and apply civic virtue in the classroom through open discussion, independent thought and respectful dissent.
- Students benefit from understanding that economic forces shape history and the present, and this is essential for students to be informed global citizens.
- Geographic knowledge and reasoning is essential to understand local, domestic, and global issues. Students need to understand the Earth's physical, human, and political features to aid them in decision making.

Skills

- Students need to seek quality sources and evidence to expand their understanding.
- Reading critically is essential in order to discern the differences between evidence, facts, and someone's point of view.
- Developing a perspective or a claim that is supported with evidence is the foundation for learning
- Collaboration enhances and develops understanding.
- Identifying and practicing strategies for tackling local, regional, and global issues is critical.
- Participation within a class culture in which each student is encouraged to find his or her voice through open discussion, independent thought and respectful dissent. Everyone is encouraged to participate, everyone is cared for, and respect for one another is fundamental.

Thinking and Questioning

- The purpose of a social studies class is to create learning experiences that foster intellectual curiosity and imagination based on disciplined study.
- Create learning experiences that foster intellectual curiosity and imagination based on disciplined study.
- Questioning is the foundation for lifelong learning with an open mind, thus the development of compelling questions and of planning inquiries underpins social studies.

What is happening now at each grade level?

In the sixth grade students focus on an in-depth study of the second half of the history of the United States. The course begins with an overview of civics and the functioning of the American government. Students learn about the fundamentals of government, specifically in how the government of

the United States is organized and functions. Students learn about the three branches of government and the rights and responsibilities citizens of this nation have. From there, 6th grade students spend time examining social, economic and military issues in American history and trace the development of the United States into a world power. In the seventh grade students focus on global issues through the study of world geography. Students study the various regions of the world examining both modern issues as well as a brief history of the region. In the eighth grade students focus on the history of the ancient world and examine many human civilizations of antiquity. Through a thematic approach, students develop an understanding of those civilizations' religions, laws, customs and beliefs. They also inquire into what factors enable a civilization to flourish and which lead to its downfall. The 8th grade course concludes with a study of the Age of Exploration, setting the stage for a 9th grade study of modern global history.

The current scope and sequence for the social studies curriculum at William Annin was implemented in September, 2013. Each curriculum was changed in order to provide a stronger curriculum bridge between district schools and a more approachable transition for our students entering sixth grade. Previously, the sixth grade curriculum was ancient civilizations through the Renaissance time period. This scope is more in line with the majority of New Jersey public school districts. However, since our 9th graders start high school with Global History II, the department felt that it would be advantageous for all students to learn Global History I in 8th grade and then transition directly to the second half in 9th grade. The rationale was that the students entering high school would be more familiar with the social studies material and their social studies teacher could build upon what they learned in 8th grade. The material would be fresh and the 9th grade staff could save time and expand their curriculum by removing a large review unit from the beginning of the year. From the 6th grade perspective, the Civics and American History course provides content that is more familiar to the students than Ancient Civilizations as well as the connections to current events makes the students form connections with the content and build confidence as they start middle school.

Over the last four years of implementing the new curriculum, the drawbacks to this particular scope and sequence have been discussed among the department. One of the concerns is that it was difficult to obtain appropriate resources for global history at the 8th grade level because very few districts teach this curriculum in 8th grade. The department selected a 6th grade level textbook as the best available and subsequently the teachers need to source additional resources and supplementals and it can be difficult for the students when the textbook doesn't anchor each unit. However, by using the 9th grade textbook,

Patterns of Interaction, the staff can source high level information to modify the current textbook as needed. The department should consider purchasing additional 9th grade textbooks to use as a resource throughout the year in order to differentiate instruction and provide a more thorough content base for the students.

Another challenge with the scope and sequence is that our district's scope and sequence is unique and we could not find another district with a similar plan and this can make it difficult to collaborate with educators outside of our district. It also came to light in anecdotal discussions with staff and open ended survey responses that the 7th and 8th grade students are learning content in an awkward chronological order. For example, the 7th graders are learning about modern Europe and Asia and then in 8th grade they go back and learn about the origins of those same regions.

What resources are we using?

The resources used in each course vary between grade level. All grade levels utilize a textbook to provide students with a general overview of the topics discussed in class. The textbook is combined with various primary sources, age appropriate video clips, and teacher-made handouts.

Textbooks:

6th- United States History: Civil War to Present; Holt-McDougal, 2012

7th - My World Geography; Pearson, 2007

8th - Discovering Our Past: A History of the World, Early Ages; McGraw Hill, 2013

How do we assess?

The Middle School Social Studies Department makes an effort to utilize common assessments in the curriculum. While traditional tests/quizzes are utilized to provide students with a form of assessment they are familiar with and to help them prepare for the various standardized tests they will take throughout their academic careers, other methods are used as well. Teachers use webquests, scored discussions, authentic assessments, document-based inquiries, and both individual and group projects throughout the year. These various assessments are intended to not only measure students' content knowledge as well as their ability to think critically on various matters related to American History.

Prior Goals and Progress

The chart below details the progress on the goals from the 2004 K-5 Program Evaluation.

6th Grade Program Analysis

Prior Goals	Progress
● Staff College course taught by supervisor offered to middle school language arts and social studies teachers to help foster greater curricular connections between the two areas. This would allow for the students to acquire new and different information and to transfer this knowledge between the content areas.	● ·No staff colleges are offered in district related to historical content, however there are several out of district opportunities provided for educators each school year and summer. For example, the Gilder Lehrman Professional Development Workshops are available in American History specific conferences.
● End the practice of giving a final exam at the end of the course since two weeks are taken from class time in preparation of the exam. (This practice was ended during the 2004-2005 school year).	● This goal has been met as final exams have been eliminated from the middle school curriculum.
● Create a culminating activity for the end of the year in lieu of the final exam. This culminating activity could include the following: ○ Geographical and map skills ○ The influence of culture on everyday life ○ Comparison of civilizations in terms of the following: ■ Timeline ■ Location ■ Geographical influences ■ Daily life ■ Religion ■ Culture ■ Food and dress ■ Traditions and rituals ■ Economics ■ Government ■ Technological advancements ■ Art ● Some possible activities could include the creation of a fictional civilization based on information learned throughout the year, a world timeline that analyzes how events are related over time, or a scored discussion on the most important issues that confronted the different civilizations or which civilization made the most impact on today's society.	● This goal is no longer applicable as the curriculum changed in the 2011-2012 school year. The 6th grade department does end with a culminating activity but it is not cumulative.
● Grade level meeting time during prep periods and meeting time between 6-8 teachers for greater articulation of goals and alignment of curriculum between grade levels and subject areas.	● Since the last program review was written, the district has adopted Professional Learning Communities as the model for department and cross curricular meetings. The 6th grade department meets bi-monthly for PLC meetings that analyze assessment results, conduct unit reviews, and discuss future projects and cross curricular opportunities with other

	departments. In addition, the 6th grade social studies team meets bi-monthly to plan, create common assessments, and develop lesson plans and activities. There is no common planning time between the grades because of schedules and duty assignments. However, time is made at department meetings to work on goals across the entire middle school spectrum.
● Look into the possibility of a humanities period, which incorporates language arts and social studies. This could be a block period, which occurs at least one time during the week. Through this period, students will acquire skills needing improvement such as critical thinking and transference of information. This will also give the opportunity for teachers to develop unique lesson plans and team-teach.	● This idea was not explored in great detail because of scheduling problems and the team model.
● Purchase of a laptop cart for use by 6-8 social studies teachers and an effort to install ceiling mounted LCD projectors, which are integrated to the teacher station.	● There was no specific laptop cart purchased for social studies specifically. Since the implementation of PAARC testing, the district has purchased many chromebook carts. WAMS has 17 chromebooks carts for teachers to sign out when standardized testing is not taking place. In addition, every single classroom has been installed with an LCD projector for teachers use. All social studies classrooms have also been given a Lady Bug Document Camera for teachers to scan in documents and project to the class instantaneously.
● Recognize the differences and similarities between the five major world religions and their part in the development of civilizations. This can be done through graphic organizers, role-play, or a scored discussion.	● This goal is no longer applicable as the curriculum changed in the 2011-2012 school year.
● Include more skill-based activities, which incorporate how to organize thoughts, select pertinent information, and use higher-level thinking skills. Also, incorporate Howard Gardner's Theory on Multiple Intelligences into each unit.	● The activities listed above are no longer relevant in terms of content due to the curriculum change during the 2011-2012 school year. However, the activities themselves have been successfully integrated into the social studies curriculum. The sixth grade social studies department incorporates multiple skill based activities throughout the year. For example, students analyze and create charts and figures, analyze primary source documents and draw conclusions about the time period, complete document based questions and thesis construction charts, utilize technology to explore content based webquests that incorporate video clips and primary and secondary sources, conduct timeline activities to understand cause and effect, explore bias and perspective through quotes and documents, and have discussions and debates about controversial historical topics.

7th Grade Program Analysis

Prior Goals	Progress

● Purchase GPS/GIS software for use by students at the conclusion of certain regions of study.	● Some GPS units were purchased but, teachers felt that they needed more training to properly utilize them in the classroom. Software for computers is very expensive and the cost was not worth the benefit to the curriculum.
● Staff college courses and grade level meetings used to increase content knowledge in other social studies disciplines.	● These types of staff meetings have not yet happened. There have been some Staff Colleges through the past ten years that have incorporated Social Studies such as DBQ and Alan Singer about thematic arrangement of World History.
● Update The Material World readers, which add depth to the cultural understanding of various regions. Purchase of three additional sets of Material World. Students can use this book to access and compare statistics, images, and verbal interviews of 30 representative statistically average families. This resource enables many useful class activities. One such activity involves the social scientific method to first form a hypothesis about the economic level of a particular region portrayed in Material World, followed by research that focuses on visual image interpretation, statistical analysis, verbal interviews, and finally evaluating the hypothesis and rewriting if necessary. An additional recommendation would be the purchase of a class set (30 copies) of Women in the Material World. This would be an excellent companion copy to Material World: A Global Family Portrait. This would enable students to establish striking similarities and differences of women at the beginning of the 21st century. Such studies could always be followed up with Venn diagram comparisons of regions and family life, the creation of sensory place images where students use their imagination and knowledge gained from Material World research activities to record what they would see, hear, feel, taste and smell in various multicultural settings.	● Material World has become outdated since the prior program evaluation. New books were ordered but, they are no longer used on a wide scale because they have lost most of their relevance. Photos are more easily obtained now on the internet for teachers use, teachers have found that they are just as useful and meaningful as “Material World”. .
● Create more staff college offerings that enable staff to focus on first finding, then discussing, and finally establishing feasible ways to implement new strategies. The following activities are suggested for inclusion in as many units of study as possible: Internet Research Presentations that direct students to established sites with research objectives in the form of a scavenger hunt. This activity would augment student understanding of regions and well as improve individual research skills. Another activity would be the creation of a brochure. Students are directed to use culturegrams (an on-line as well as printed supplemental resource of detailed place descriptions including items such as: diet, greetings, dating and marriage practices, holidays, education, etc.) and current travel guides researched on line. Students determine and record both negative and positive attributes of the region.	● There have been staff college offerings on a variety of technologies for student use. Students through the past ten years have created a variety of final products that incorporate themes of World Geography.

The students then create a brochure that would express reasons to visit the region in question. Students will include as warning some of the negative aspects that they determine through their research. Another activity would be the creation of a newsletter about a particular region. Each student or group would be responsible for researching a particular country using lonelyplanet.com, countrywatch.com, SIRSdiscoverer.com, Infotrac, and CIAfactbook.com to compile a current newsletter on a country. Students present their newsletter by employing the software program publisher.	
● Expand the unit on Sub-Saharan Africa to include more focus on the regional differences, which lead to internal strife. Also move the Sub-Saharan unit to follow the Middle East unit to create a more logical sequence order.	● The Africa unit has been expanded to five weeks, which is longer than most other units in the curriculum. The first overview units will also address issues within Africa
● Purchase up-to-date Nystrom wall maps for use in all seventh grade social studies classrooms along with classroom sets of historical atlases.	● These resources were purchased many years ago. They continue to be utilized in the classroom along with up to date internet resources.
● Purchase of effective visual materials (software, videos, DVDs, books) to augment the important visual image understandings portion of world geography.	● With the internet becoming more accessible through the past few years, the need to purchase materials has become lessened.for teachers use, teachers have found that they are just as useful and meaningful as “Material World.”

8th Grade Program Analysis

Prior Goals	Progress
● Provide common planning time between eighth grade teachers for articulation between courses. Allow for more cross-curricular applications in skill-based areas like reading, listening, and writing skills.	● Some common planning time between the English Department and the Social Studies Department was provided but few opportunities for cross-curricular readings were uncovered. Changes in the English Department curriculum and course schedules has made some cross-curricular activities more difficult to arrange. The increased use of DBQs has incorporated more writing skills in the Social Studies classroom.
● Align more topic areas into themes, which can be taught at the same time. This would allow students to make connections between large ideas and apply those across time periods. In addition, this would cut down on the time necessary to transition from one event to the next.	● Topic areas have been arranged in a more thematic manner. Students are able to make deeper connections between large ideas and apply those across time periods. Students have struggled to follow large jumps in themes and additional time and explanation has been needed to transition from one event, time period or theme.

Program Comparisons and Best Practices

The chart below is a comparison of middle school programs from schools in our New Jersey School Report Card comparative groups as well as schools we believe have high quality social studies programs.

District	6th Grade	7th Grade	8th Grade
+Chatham	World Civilizations	World Culture/Geography	Civics
+Livingston	Geography	U.S. History	World History
Montgomery	Ancient History Prehistory-Rome	World Cultures/Geography	U.S. Formation - Reconstruction
Princeton	Ancient World Cultures	World Cultures / Geography	Civics
+West Windsor	World History Prehistory Through Classical Civilizations	U.S. History Development Through WWII	World History (Fall of Classical to End of Post-Classical)
Millburn	Ancient History	World Geography	U.S. History Development to Civil War
Mountain Lakes	World Geography/ Topics of Late U.S. History	Ancient Civilizations Prehistory- Rome	Modern History Rome-Early Modern Era
Haddonfield	Ancient Civilization Prehistory-Classical	World Geography	Thematic U.S./Civics

Summary: In the middle schools that were analyzed, most cover the same curriculum as we do at William Annin. (U.S. History, World Geography, Ancient History). Most of the districts cover the first half of United States History (Development-Civil War). Civics appears to be the focus when United States History is addressed. Most districts covered World Geography in the 7th grade. Ancient History was covered in all different grade levels in the surveyed districts. Most of the districts cover Prehistory through the Classical Period for their Ancient History courses. Clearly, the scope of the curriculum is generally the same, but the sequencing is very different.

Analysis of WAMS Social Studies Curriculum as it relates to the Standards

New Jersey Standards for Student Learning Analysis:

Throughout the Social Studies curriculum, students address New Jersey Standards for Student Learning through the analysis of primary sources. This is primarily the case in standards in which text analysis is addressed. While students do spend time reading and developing their abilities to comprehend secondary sources, primary source analysis is a key goal to the middle school curriculum. Students use these documents to gain an understanding to the time periods being studied as well as to develop their abilities in contending with bias in those sources. Students use this document analysis in their developing abilities to answer more formal document-based-questions. Through guidance and scaffolding students develop their ability to use their analysis of primary source documents to answer a question related to the time period and put together a formal response with a thesis statement and textual evidence. Students are also guided through their use of secondary sources to help them develop the ability to understand and comprehend those texts as well as to develop their ability in determining the meaning of key academic vocabulary words. Secondary sources are also used to assist students in their understanding of how various events are related over time.

Vocabulary is a focus throughout all three grade levels. Students are introduced to vocabulary formally at the beginning of each unit. Through their studies, students are reminded of the vocabulary and are encouraged to utilize the words to make greater connections to the content.

Analyzing bias in text is somewhat done through all grade levels. In 6th grade it is introduced to students, but not thoroughly covered. In 7th grade with the addition of greater focus on Human Geography, bias will be more thoroughly covered. In 8th grade historical bias is more evident in the curriculum. Students discuss how different points of view can yield different historical “stories”.

The current sixth grade curriculum is centered on 20th century American History and is thus not aligned with most of the NJ Core Content standards listed above. The standards suggested for completion by grade 8 in stand 6.1 are centered around the foundation of American government, colonial history, and the Civil War. Our current scope and sequence begins post Civil War and thus most of the standard strands in 6.1 are not addressed in middle school. However, the sixth grade curriculum does begin with a civics review and we do address standards about the Bill of Rights, branches of government, federalism, and the electoral process. However, though not addressed in the middle school grades, these standards are

addressed in the elementary grade levels. Students in grades four and five focus on early American history and the formation of the U.S. Constitution. Their study typically leads them through the American Civil War. Therefore the middle school curriculum extends this study further, leading students to analyze more modern American history and gain a deeper understanding of the American government and its impact on our lives.

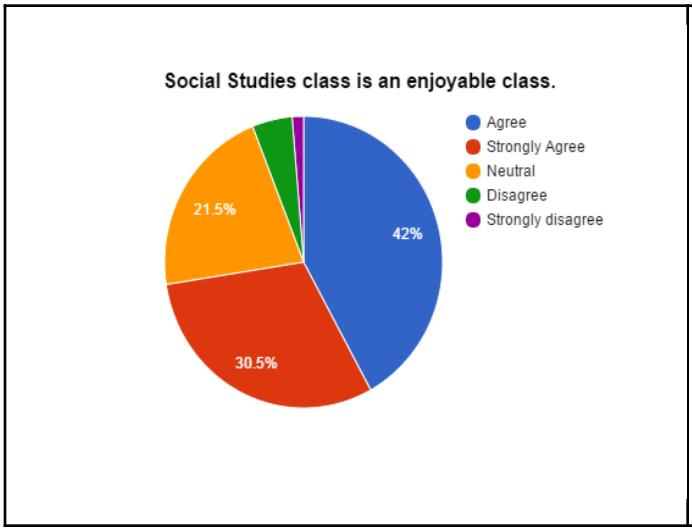
The current 7th grade curriculum is to focus on the Global Issues. The course takes a contemporary approach to discussing the world. Most of the standards are focused on historic content, rather than current issues in Social Studies. The main student learning standard addressed in the 7th grade curriculum is 6.3, "Active Citizenship in the 21st Century". The intent of the course is to inform the students about how to be better citizens in an interconnected world. By the end of the course students should view themselves as citizens of the world. While many of the specific standards relate to a local level, the 7th grade curriculum takes similar themes and make them more international.

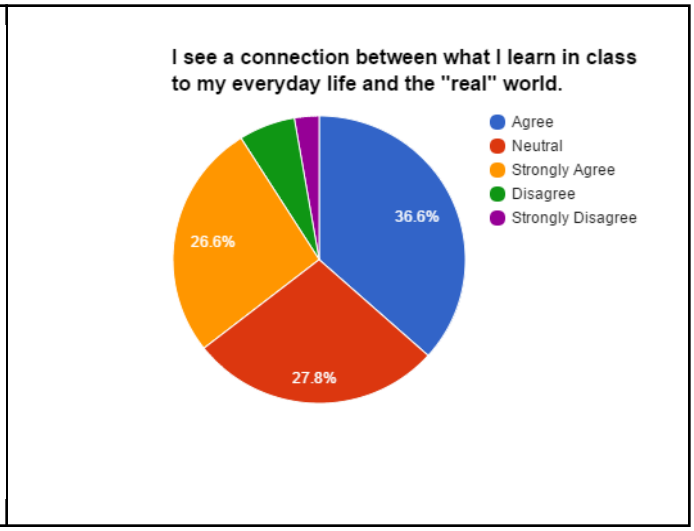
The current 8th grade curriculum is centered on global history from prehistory through 1492. Our current scope begins with the Prehistoric Era and continues to cover early civilizations and River Valley Civilizations. Then onto the Classical Civilizations of Greece, Rome, India and China. Finally Medieval Europe and the rise of European nations is covered along with the, emergence of interregional trade networks in Asia, the Middle East and Africa and the interaction of Native American groups. The course ends with Columbus' and the European settlement in the Americas. All standard strands in 6.2 are addressed with the exception of 6.2.8.A.4.b which asks teachers to compare Japanese and European forms of feudalism. Only feudalism of Europe is addressed. 6.1.8.A.1 and 6.2.8.A.2 are covered while the development of Native American cultures and the results of European settlement. 6.3.8.A.1 and 6.3.8.D.1 are covered during school elections, national election years and during the units on Classical Civilizations.

Survey Results - Summary and Analysis

Student Survey Highlights

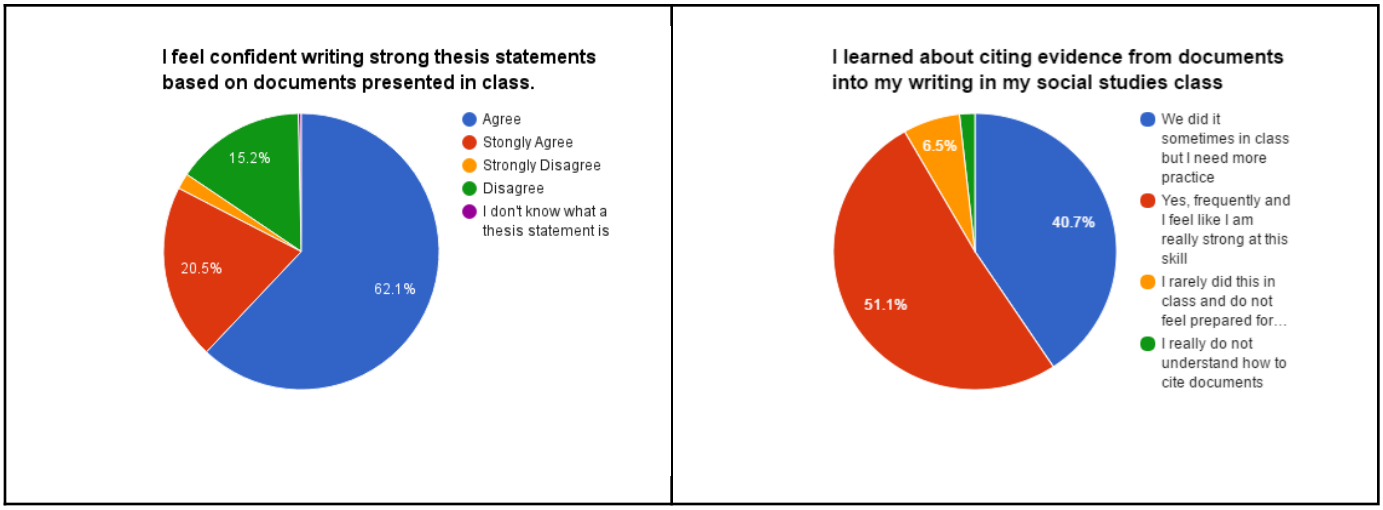
A student survey was conducted in the Spring of 2016, 1183 of the 6th, 7th, and 8th graders responded, or about 80% of the total student body. Overall, students found Social Studies classes and the curriculum enjoyable. Most also see connections to the "real world" coming from their Social Studies classes. See the charts below.



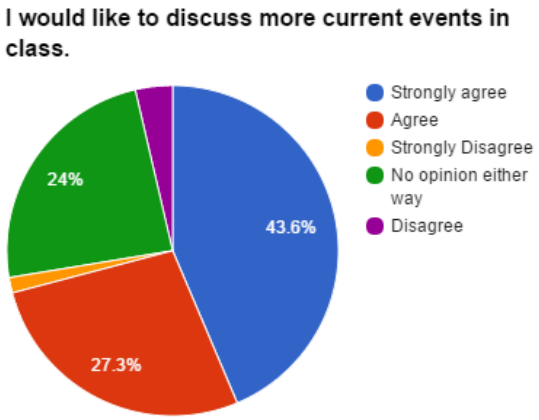


A goal of many of the teachers in the past few years was to incorporate Document-Based Questions (DBQs) in some of their units. This activity consists of analyzing documents, writing thesis statements and forming specific evidence-based historical arguments. This is essentially the task of historians when they analyze evidence to develop a narrative of the past. When involved in this activity, students are discerning between primary and secondary sources, identifying potential bias in documents, and forming their conclusions about this historical events. For students the ability to analyze, critically think and make an argument will be skills students need throughout their academic careers. Therefore, introducing students to these activities and skills as early as possible was felt to be critical. The survey asked students about their comfort level in the areas of analyzing documents, writing thesis statements, and citing the information found in the documents. Most feel confident in answering questions about primary sources and writing thesis statements. About half feel very comfortable with citing the documents in their writings. A majority of students said this skill was worked on most of the time in

class.This could be an area that the teachers could improve their instruction. As a department working on skill building in this area could be helpful.



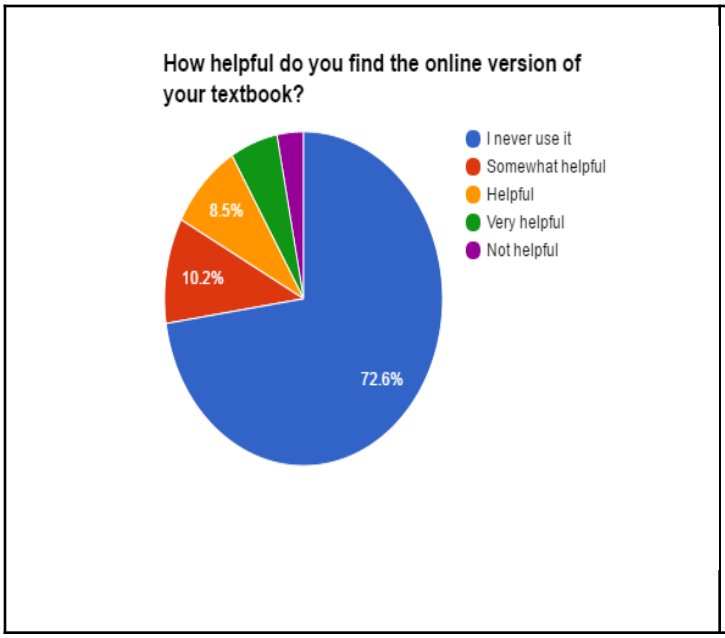
Students were surveyed about the use of current events in the classroom. Over 70% of the students feel that we should be incorporating more current events into class. In their suggestions for improvement many students wrote about placing current events into the routine of Social Studies classes. This is definitely something we should take into consideration moving forward during the next few years.

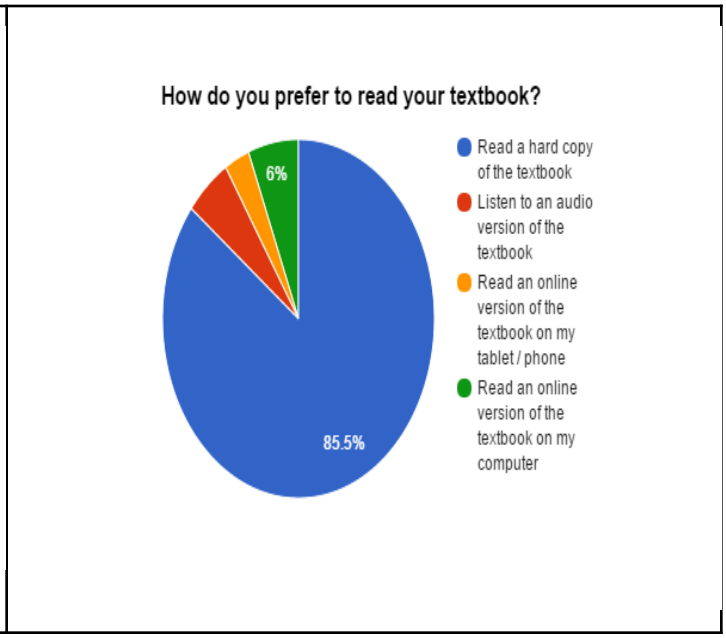


Students surveyed had strong opinions about the use of online textbooks. 72.6% never use the online textbook. 85.5% prefer to read a hard copy of a textbook. While we think that students are moving towards a more digital friendly age, in the area of textbooks our students seem to be more

traditionalist in their reading preferences. A larger issue is the lack of user friendly tools in the online versions of the textbooks, which many students stated in their open ended responses. Many students in their reasoning for not using the book online said the layouts were not similar between the online and hard copy textbooks. If we used online versions in classrooms, this may be less of an issue and students would be more open to using the online version.

It is essential to explore 1:1 technology for students in the middle school so that students can utilize the features and tools of the online textbook. By having a chromebook cart in each classroom, students would be guaranteed access to a computer for every class. Teachers could then take the time in class to explore the features of the online textbook together with the class. For example, the sixth grade online textbook includes animated maps, interactive timelines, study strategies, enrichment biographies, and modified reading guides, text to audio feature, and practice assessments. The 7th and 8th grade online textbook has text to audio, highlighting tools, and video clips. If students were provided with working time in class to utilize these features, they would be much more likely to explore these features at home.

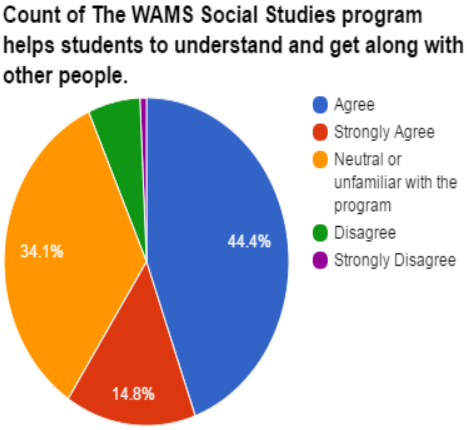




William Annin Parent Survey Highlights

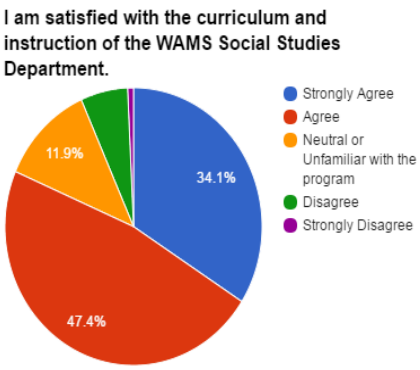
In the spring of 2016 the William Annin parent survey was distributed via Friday Folder, TAC, teacher emails and through a survey link which was posted on teacher websites. 135 parents responded which constitutes roughly 10% of total parents. The program evaluation team elected to include some of the quantitative and qualitative data offered by parents in order to highlight some of their comments and

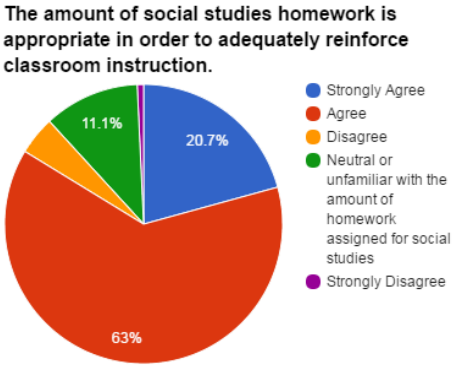
concerns. However, the dismal 10% return rate is not statistically significant enough to draw conclusions or base recommendations and goals off of the parent survey results. In addition, parent survey results most likely reflect the views of those who are either incredibly positive or incredibly negative and do not necessarily reflect the majority of the parents in Bernards Township. Therefore, the team concluded that although some data would be included as part of this narrative, the survey does not reflect a statistically valid representation of the parent population.



Half of parents who responded were the parents of 6th graders, 32% were parents of 7th graders, and 20% were parents of 8th graders. 81% of parents were satisfied with the social studies program at William Annin. Between 70-74% of parents felt the program helped students deal with issues they will face in the future, relate the content to daily life and helped prepare students to think more critically.

Approximately 60-70% of parents who responded to the survey indicated that the social studies program helps students understand and get along with others and helps students understand their moral and ethical responsibilities. Increasing the focus on current events may be a way to help continue to support students' preparation to think critically and to connect to and prepare for modern issues. The increased focus on current events may also be a way to improve student's ability to understand and get along with, or empathize with, others and understand their moral and ethical responsibilities. 84% of parents felt the amount of social studies homework was appropriate to reinforce classroom instruction.

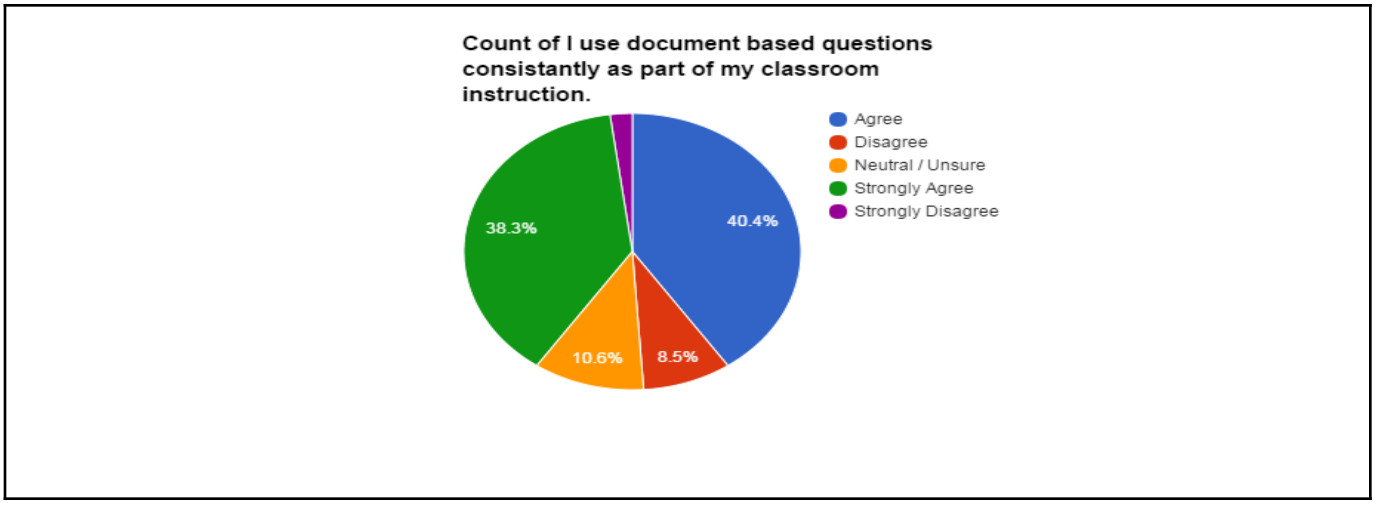




Outside District Middle School Teachers Survey Highlights

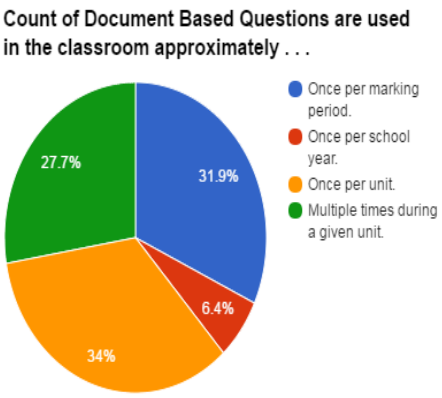
This survey included the input of middle school history teachers from districts outside of Bernards Township. These teachers were asked questions dealing about various educational strategies, including the implementation of DBQ's and inquiry based learning.

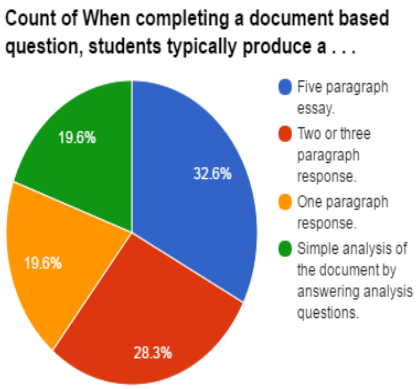
Teachers from outside districts were asked several questions regarding their use of DBQs in their classroom. This activity connects with the ELA department and builds upon students' writing skills and ability to critically think about primary and secondary sources. There was a high number of teachers, 78% of those surveyed in fact, who used DBQs in their classroom on a regular basis. The number of teachers who do not use DBQs as part of their instruction was fairly low, with only 18% of those surveyed indicating so. In general these are very positive findings as it shows that DBQs are implemented fairly regularly not only in Bernards Township, but in other districts as well.



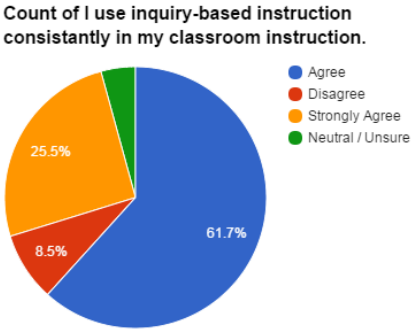
Of course the basic idea of using DBQs in the classroom needed to be investigated further, specifically in they way DBQs are implemented. It is not enough to simply be aware that teachers outside of the district are teaching students skills related to DBQs, but also how often they are doing so and in what manner. The results are telling, with 31.9% of teachers surveyed indicating that they use a DBQ at least once each marking period, with some doing so in every unit. In fact, 61% of teachers surveyed indicated that they used DBQ's at least once in every unit, some doing so multiple times in a unit. When added to the 31.9% that indicated they use DBQs once per marking period, this brings us to a favorable 93.6% that use DBQs at least once in a marking period, with some using the skill more often. This shows that teachers outside of Bernards Township are certainly including DBQs in their middle school curriculum.

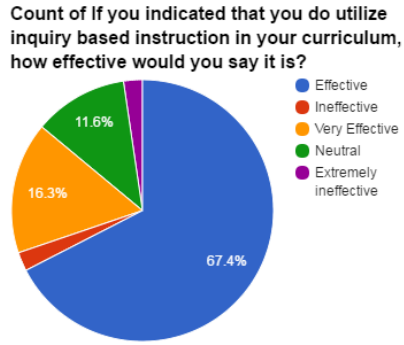
In terms of the actual implementation of DBQs in the classroom, the results were quite mixed in terms of how in depth students get in their DBQ writing. 61% of of those surveyed indicated that their students spend time writing a multi-paragraph DBQ response, with 28% of those working on a 5 paragraph response. But even the 39% of teachers whose students focused on a one paragraph response or a simple document analysis were, of course, giving their students experience working with DBQs in some way.





Teachers were also surveyed on their implementation of inquiry based learning within the classroom. This educational strategy involves providing students with the opportunity to develop and pose their own questions related to a historical topic and then allowing them to investigate and answer those very questions they have come up with. It seems to be implemented quite often and consistently in districts outside of Bernards Township with 87% of those surveyed indicated they use inquiry based learning regularly in the classroom. There was also a feeling that this educational strategy is quite effective, with 83% of those surveyed indicating that the strategy is effective and a worthwhile one to use in the classroom.

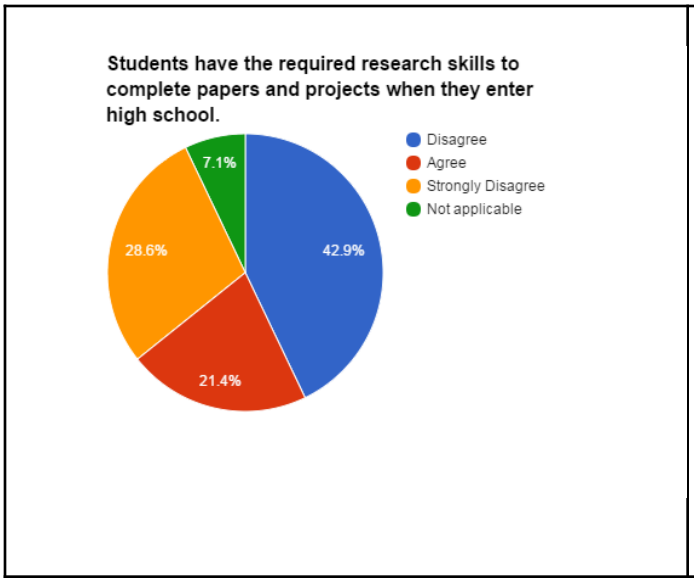


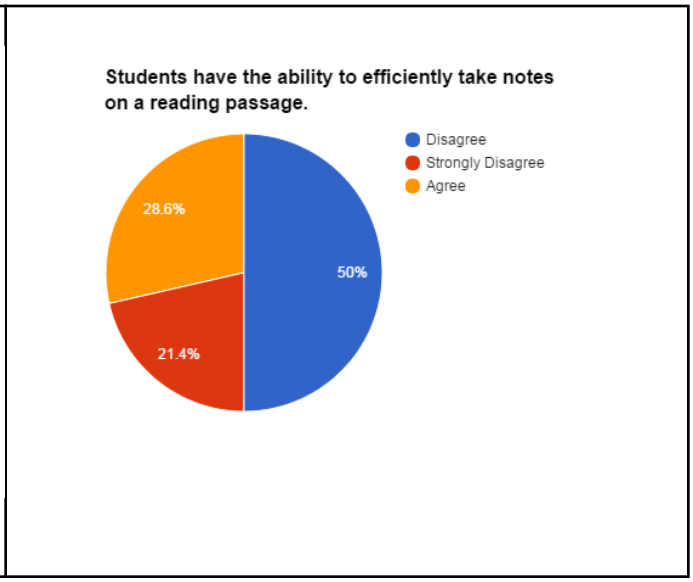


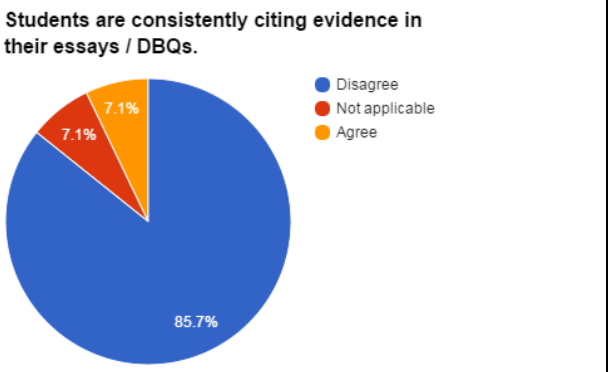
Ridge Teacher Survey Highlights

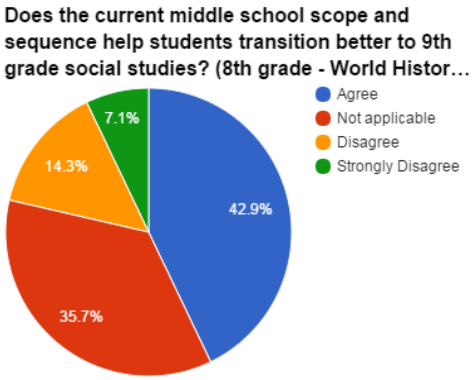
_____In most of the surveys, the teachers felt that students needed to work on skills involving studying and note taking. Teachers also felt that students did not consistently cite information for DBQs. Research skills were somewhat lacking among students at Ridge as well. We were surprised with the survey results from the Ridge teacher surveys. The skills students seem to be lacking are skills that the middle school students reported feeling confident in, such as citing information from primary source documents and studying for assessments.

As a result of this feedback, this committee recommends that more collaboration time is created between grades to bridge these skill gaps. These meetings may be most productive if done in small group settings between no more than two grades at a time, specifically between the high school and middle school. We also compared teacher resources from other school districts, North Plainfield in particular, who had created guides for teaching and scaffolding of skills from 6th through 12th grades. The creation of similar teacher resources to guide the common teaching, language and scaffolding of notetaking, research and document analysis/citation skills is highly recommended for grade 6-12. Some strengths of the program were that the "bridge courses" of American History and Global History were looked upon favorably by the high school teachers. Most teachers felt the content was retained from 6th grade American History, and that 8th grade Global History helped 9th graders transition to the high school.









William Annin Social Studies Staff Survey Highlights

According to the William Annin social studies department members, the staff feels that the strengths of the program are the frequency and depth of document analysis, accessibility of materials to enhance our instruction, and a collaborative staff. All grade levels strive to work together to improve instruction, analyze student data, and identify new technology tools and teaching strategies. However, the staff did express concerns that the department needs to ensure that the students are seeing the big picture, overarching historical themes, and are making connections to the present. The staff would like to see a more cohesive and concerted effort to implement a student driven current events platform into classroom instruction. In addition, the majority of the staff felt that there needed to be a strategy and common language for document analysis and note taking skills.

When the department was surveyed, 70% of the staff expressed interest in exploring and attending professional development related to inquiry based learning / C3 instruction and 60% expressed interest in technology integration and digital literacy. Only 30% of the staff was interested in exploring professional document opportunities related to note taking, document analysis, and research skills. It appears that the staff would like to primarily focus on cutting edge instructional strategies and technology integration when deciding how to spend valuable professional development time at department meetings and when inviting in outside educators.

One of the more interesting aspects of the survey revolved around professional opportunities and what type of training the staff would like to receive. The vast majority of the staff, 90% in fact, expressed interest in cross grade and cross school articulation and collaboration. Clearly there is a huge desire for the WAMS staff to collaborate with the Ridge staff in order to develop relationships, establish lines of communication, and articulate a common language for social studies skills so students are prepared to transition to Ridge. In addition, the WAMS staff would like to see more content-based professional development opportunities and outside lecturers to delve deeper into historical topics and expand our own knowledge base and expertise.

Goals/Recommendations

Goal 1	**To improve assessment strategies**
Goal 2	**To investigate and implement alternate grouping strategies**
Goal 3	**To develop and scaffold research strategies**
Goal 4	**To investigate and implement Inquiry Based Learning**
Goal 5	**To improve students' document analysis skills**
Goal 6	**To improve student note-taking skills across grades 6-8**
Goal 7	**To improve vertical articulation and effectively scaffold skills across grade levels**

Goal # 1: To improve assessment strategies

Problem Statement:

Teachers tend to solely rely on traditional summative assessments and do not utilize formative assessments that allow for student growth.

Supporting Data:

Anecdotal data points to the need for a more diverse assessment strategy throughout the department in order to make assessments more meaningful. In addition, the new Danielson Model observation system employed in Bernards Township includes more emphasis on ensuring that there is a more formal way to ensure student understanding of both the daily lesson and the entire unit. When analyzing district wide observations, the category that teachers score the lowest in is the category of assessment and therefore it is important to investigate more effective ways of assessing our students.

Research:

Throughout the educational community, teachers strive to have students focus on their learning and personal improvement rather than their numerical grade at the end of each marking period. However, there has been a nationwide trend that unfortunately focuses on standardized testing in order to measure

student, teacher, school, and state performance. Consequently, classroom teachers often over utilize traditional assessments that primarily serve the purpose of generating numeric grades rather than assessing for student understanding of learning objectives. When designed properly, assessments “should embody the learning target so that students can get an accurate and clear idea of what they are to learn (Brookhart & Nitko, 2011, p. 12)." There is clear evidence that traditional assessments can actually present barriers to many individuals and it is essential that teachers modify and diversify their assessments to overcome those challenges. In order to accommodate the diversity of learners in their classroom it is important for teachers to offer a variety of assessments in order to reach more students and accurately obtain data regarding their understanding of learning objectives and content goals.

There are multiple ways in which traditional assessments can be barriers to some students and teachers can be been guilty of ignoring or not recognizing these hurdles in the past. When designing an assessment, it is important to identify exactly the learning target you are addressing so that your questions are reliable, valid and serve a purpose in the classroom for both teacher and student. The purpose of an assessment should be informative and not punitive. If an assessment is going to be informative and the data obtained reliable and valid, it is important to avoid traditional testing barriers. One such barrier can clearly be found in a traditional essay or short answer test. Although this type of test allows the students to demonstrate their knowledge in an open format with more flexibility, it could still pose barriers to some students. Essays present barriers because they require the ability to write, organize thoughts, utilize grammar skills and cohesively present an argument in a limited time frame. In a history class, if the teacher is assessing the understanding of the ramifications of the civil right movement, for example, it would be a distraction and even inappropriate to assess essay writing skills in the same assessment. If the “skills and understanding required are not part of the understanding or skill being measured, they are considered construct irrelevant (UDL and Curriculum, 2009).” It is important for the teacher to be clear and consistent and identify exactly what is to be assessed when designing the assessment so that there is appropriate data and feedback for the student regarding the skill or knowledge that the student was expected to know.

If a teacher is designing an assessment in order to extract data and make informed decisions about instruction in the classroom, it is important to avoid using irrelevant methods of assessments. When designing a document based essay test, for example, teachers need to be aware that the vocabulary utilized in the document may provide a barrier to understanding for the student even though the teacher is not

testing vocabulary skills but rather the students understanding of the document in an historical context. In that particular example it may be necessary to provide the students with a definition of some of the keywords in the document in order to ensure understanding and make the assessment a valid test of what was taught in class. Another testing barrier can be found when teachers judge oral presentations as a summative assessment. These types of assessments provide barriers because they "require the ability to speak, organize thoughts, and stand and speak in front of a group of people (UDL and Curriculum, 2009)." Public speaking is an important and difficult skill to master on its own and can provoke enough fear in students to be a huge detriment to conveying their mastery of content. If the learning objective focused on public speaking then it would be appropriate, but if the oral presentation is a means to showcase knowledge of a particular historical event, then it could be a huge barrier for students.

It can be difficult to avoid barriers in assessment considering that a diverse range of students within each class that makes it challenging to address the needs of all in one given test. In addition, due to curriculum time constraints a teacher often resorts to a standard multiple choice, true false style test in order to expedite the test and quickly assess student understanding of the content. Offering one standard test to all students maintains a sense of objectivity and fairness and avoids the appearance of catering to certain skill sets of students to maintain high grades or a general passing rate. Using more common assessments helps "reduce some of the inconsistency and subjectivity that influence evaluation (Brookhart & Nitko, 2011, p. 7)." Although there are certainly challenges to offering a variety of assessment options, it absolutely has the potential to benefit more students and provide them the opportunity a more authentic and valuable avenue to showcase their understanding of the learning objectives. All students clearly have different strengths and if the goal of assessment is truly to facilitate an ongoing conversation about student growth, then we need to "offer options that avoid putting construct irrelevant barriers in the way of accurate assessment of student understanding (UDL and Curriculum, 2009)." By creating a testing environment with multiple means of displaying their knowledge, students can take advantage of the opportunity to showcase their strengths and weaknesses in an objective atmosphere that actually addresses the skills and content being assessed.

Curriculum objectives are designed to help the teachers plan backwards so that the focus is not on superfluous historical details. The assessments that are utilized in the middle school studies department should also reflect deep understanding of the content and an opportunity for student growth. It is important to vary the culminating assessment for each unit in order to demonstrate respect for the variety

of learning styles of students in a class. Students should be engaged in relevant, meaningful, and authentic tasks that are applicable to real life and current events. In addition, by differentiating the activities and assessments teachers can ensure that they are at the appropriate difficulty level for all students so that each student is appropriately challenged and afforded extra time or resources if necessary. Another important component of assessments should be the utilization of smaller assessments that are administered more frequently so the teacher can immediately recognize if individual students are struggling. As Butler & McMunn (2006) indicate, "the twin purposes are assessment are to provide feedback to students and to serve as a diagnostic and monitoring tool for instruction (p. 2)." It is important to provide remediation if necessary based on the results of the assessment.

Every child learns differently and it is important to provide students with a variety of opportunities to demonstrate their understanding of the learning objectives. Students need to be able to revise their work so that they can reflect on their individual learning process and continue to improve and showcase their growth and understanding. Performance tasks are effective assessment tools because they require students to synthesize knowledge and skills learned and apply them to construct a response, create a product, or otherwise demonstrate understanding in a real life situation. These performance tasks and cooperative learning opportunities "promotes verbalization of the content; it enables us to listen in and hear not only what our smartest students know, but what all our students know (Kagan & Kagan, 2005, 15.1)." In this way, performance tasks promote more individualized learning goals and outcomes.

The most effective grading practices provide accurate, specific, timely feedback designed to improve student performance. In the best classrooms, grades are only one of many types of feedback provided to students. Music teachers and athletic coaches, for example, routinely provide abundant feedback to students and only occasionally associate a grade with the feedback. As Butler & McMunn (2006) indicate, "research calling for changes in assessment practices emphasizes that all grading practices should enhance learning (p. 180)." Contrasting those effective practices with commonly used grading policies that are ineffective is important. For example, evidence has shown that assigning zeroes for missing work is punitive and doesn't work. In addition, the practice of using the average of all scores throughout the semester rather than the learning achievements from the end of a semester has been found to be ineffective. As Ken O'Connor articulated in his webinar series in 2012, penalties for late "work distort achievement, distort motivation, and they don't work because the same students are handing in work late." Although that may be true in some districts, teachers have found that reducing points for late

work in our extremely high performing district can be a motivating factor and can definitely curb the negative behavior and negative performance outcomes.

One potential alternative grading practice that that the department could explore is to take all formal quiz / test assessments and calculate the overall marking period average through the median, rather than through the mean. By using the median the teacher can remove outlier scores and take into consideration a student who was having a rough day or needed significant extra remediation. As Butler & McMunn (2006) discuss, "you can use the median rather than the mean to calculate grades because the use of the median has the greatest impact when performance is highly variable (p. 193)." Another alternate method of grading the department can use is to grade less frequently and allow for constant revision and reflection on growth. Too often, teachers use grades as a compliance and behavior accountability system, rather than as a tool to improve student performance. As Zmuda (2008) warns, "educators must reevaluate the degree to which compliance has affected every aspect of the learning environment, including the use of established classroom assessments and grading practices to identify success." However, consideration would need to be made for certain students in a high achieving district who use grades as a motivator and want that constant reinforcement. Formative and diagnostic assessments need to be used more frequently and as a means for collecting data, rather than as a mechanism for final marking period grades.

Proposed Solutions:

1. Staff College devoted to more effective assessment techniques
2. Department meeting discussions about smaller assessments vs. large cumulative content assessments
3. Survey teachers and other districts about punitive homework zeroes and methods for calculating final marking period scores
4. Incorporate 1:1 technology into William Annin so that teachers can utilize online assessment tools like Google Forms, and Kahoot in order to ascertain student understanding and modify instruction accordingly
5. The department should consider purchasing additional 9th grade textbooks to use as a resource throughout the year in order to differentiate instruction and provide a more through content base for the students

Goal # 2: To investigate and implement alternative grouping strategies

Problem Statement:

Students were not challenged at their appropriate level for many lessons and activities because of the wide range of abilities in the classroom and higher achieving children are often overlooked because of the need to teach a wide spectrum of learning abilities.

Supporting Data:

In June 2015, the eighth grade social studies department piloted a flexible grouping strategy that allowed for students of similar-ability levels to cross team for a document based question lesson. Anecdotal evidence suggests that students felt more successful and teachers were able to appropriately challenge their students, particularly the gifted and talented students. In addition, current trends in education speak to the need to differentiate assessments and resources. An updated policy for grouping strategies would assist teachers in that goal.

Research:

Research indicates that student motivation in the classroom is correlated to both assessment choices in the classroom and the way that students are grouped for different lessons. Throughout the year it will be important for teachers to identify lessons with collaborative opportunities where purposeful and appropriate grouping strategies can be applied. By adopting a depth over breadth strategy, students will be encouraged to select specific topics within a unit that is of particular interest to them so that they will be motivated to explore, challenge themselves, and become engrossed in the material. Teachers should avoid placing students into the same ability groups for long periods of time. They should be varied by unit so that students do not lose confidence in their abilities because of their group placement. Students "who think their teachers see them as lacking in the ability to do challenging work, or as less competent than their peers, are likely to see themselves in the same way (Anderman & Anderman, 2014, p. 98)." By varying the groups, students will feel like their voice is respected and they will have the opportunity to work with students of all ability levels and be challenged to rise to the level of their peers. Overall, the department needs to consider adopting a more balanced approach to grouping methods that includes

mixed ability, similar ability, and similar interest grouping in order to maximize motivation and achievement.

Every collaborative lesson that a teacher creates requires specific grouping strategies in order to optimize the lesson and challenge each student appropriately. It is important to identify the defining features and ultimate goals of the lesson in order to determine the appropriate grouping technique. Traditionally, "the decision about which group a student should work with usually is based on some combination of standardized and classroom assessment of the individual's achievement and instructional level" (Anderman & Anderman, 2014, p. 97). However, it is not appropriate for students to be constantly divided by ability because students will become aware of the academic groupings and lose confidence in their abilities over time. By pairing specific lessons with pre-planned grouping strategies, the teacher can direct the lesson in a way that benefits all students and provides them with opportunities to work with different students and to practice important critical thinking skills.

As Anderman and Anderman (2014) make clear, "if ability groups are used over long periods of time and are quite rigid in membership, they may have an unintended consequence related to students' interpersonal relationships with one another and the overall tone of acceptance in the classroom (p. 100). All teachers should devise lessons that utilize collaborative lessons because working in groups helps children to be independent learners and problem solvers. However, in order for these lessons to be effective, it is necessary to choose the appropriate grouping strategy so that all students feel challenged and respected as a contributor to the group. Lessons that revolve around a variety of primary documents can work best with ability groups because you can find documents at all academic and vocabulary levels. By doing this, student's motivation and confidence will improve because they will be able to contribute to small group and large group discussions and will be working towards the important skill mastery of primary document analysis. On the other hand, when conducting lessons where you want students to delve deeply into specific cultural areas, it is best to allow the class choice and flexibility in the specific subject matter they can study. Students will be more engaged and motivated to work hard because they are exploring a topic of interest. Lastly, when completing a collaborative activity where students are bouncing ideas off of each other and the subject matter is more of a review, a random group selection is appropriate and a great opportunity to work with students of various levels.

Proposed Solutions:

1. Investigate more opportunities for flexible grouping across the entire grade level department
2. Acquire and categorize relevant primary and secondary sources that are for multiple levels of difficulty
3. Identify and potentially create new data streams in order to create appropriate groups
4. Conduct training in data development, collection, application and analysis
5. The department should explore how we assess students working within groups, whether it be independent or group grades

Goal # 3: To develop and scaffold research strategies

Problem Statement:

Students need assistance in the process of conducting research on a given historical topics in terms of choosing their topics, conducting their actual research and putting together a final product.

Supporting Data:

Students should be provided with a rubric before beginning their research to ensure they know what is expected of them. They should also be provided with examples of previous year's research projects to assist them in getting started and understanding what their final product should look like (Chaplin, 76-78).

Students should have assistance and guidance in note-taking to assist them in their eventual research project. Students must be taught how to paraphrase and summarize important concepts in their notes, develop their notes over time and edit their notes as they go, and to take notes on more than a sufficient amount of material as possible so that they have enough information to work with when they actually begin creating a final product (Marzano, 43-45).

Students should be allowed to have some form of choice in the topic they are researching. Additionally students should also be creating their own questions based on the content and areas that spark an interest for them. Students should be able to explore answers to their own questions, and those posed by their classmates. A specific list of possible topic choices should be provided to students for them to choose from but students should also be made aware that they can choose another topic, provided it is

approved by the teacher and they are aware that doing so might prove to involve more work and might require more individual effort and work on their part (Chaplin 76-77).

Students should be given more choices in terms of the final product they produce. Rather than always having to a produce the typical research paper, providing students with alternate final products such as the traditional research paper, an oral presentation, a children's book focusing on a specific topic, a biographical yearbook of important figures related to a unit of study, etc. There should be variety and flexibility in the final product students are creating. Each type of product students can produce should also be equitable in terms of difficulty and the amount of time students will need to spend on the given research assignment to ensure that certain final products are inherently easier than others (Stone, 79-85).

Proposed Solutions:

1. Staff at WAMS should be provided with a list of potential resources (books, articles, etc.) that provide ideas and information on how to assist students through a research project
2. Collaborate with other staff members to develop research projects which guide students through the research process
3. A Staff College Course could be provided, in which an expert on the topic could assist teachers in guiding their students through the research process
4. Develop a social studies specific research note-taking sheet
5. Collaborate with other disciplines to identify overlap across different subject areas

Goal # 4: To investigate and implement Inquiry Based Learning

Problem Statement:

In regard to inquiry based learning students have difficulty guiding their own questions and learning. Students have difficulty creating higher order thinking questions.

Supporting Data/Research:

Through the research we have found that inquiry based learning has great effect on student achievement. According to Brigid Barron and Linda Darling-Hammond their analysis of inquiry

based learning in the article, “Powerful Learning,” studies show deep understanding derives from collaborative methods.

In a 1998 study by H.G. Shepherd, fourth and fifth graders completed a nine-week project to define and find solutions related to housing shortages in several countries. In comparison to the control group, the project-learning students scored significantly higher on a critical-thinking test and demonstrated increased confidence in their learning.

A more ambitious, longitudinal comparative study by Jo Boaler and colleagues in England in 1997 and 1998 followed students over three years in two schools similar in student achievement and income levels. The traditional school featured teacher-directed whole-class instruction organized around texts, workbooks, and frequent tests in tracked classrooms. Instruction in the other school used open-ended projects in heterogeneous classrooms.

The study found that although students had comparable learning gains on basic mathematics procedures, significantly more project-learning students passed the national exam in year three than those in the traditional school. Although students in the traditional school "thought that mathematical success rested on being able to remember and use rules," according to the study, the project-learning students developed more flexible and useful mathematical knowledge.

A third study, in 2000, on the impact of multimedia projects on student learning, showed similar gains. Students in the Challenge 2000 Multimedia Project, in California's Silicon Valley, developed a brochure informing school officials about problems homeless students face. The students in the multimedia program earned higher scores than a comparison group on content mastery, sensitivity to audience, and coherent design. They performed equally well on standardized test scores of basic skills.

Other articles also stated that there is evidence that when students are active learners they will be able to apply those skills to the future, they will develop “good habits of mind”, and will not only learn but will learn how to continuing learning past the classroom. The effect of student’s interest in History is also peaked by using the inquiry based learning.

After the committee’s discussion, we agreed that the major stumbling block to implementation of inquiry based learning is that the students lack question creating skills. As the committee has analyzed and implemented student question creation through the year, we have found that it is a process that students must engage themselves in and eventually will find improvement in the skill.

The committee surveyed the Big History project for possible implementation into the 8th grade Global History curriculum. The first three units are science based, which do not fit into the units of Global History. Units 4 and 5 fit more seamlessly into the Global History curriculum. Student would explore the evolution of tools and how that leads to better agriculture, and then into the creation of civilization. Unit 5 fits well into the Golden Age Unit and the Trade Unit, the making of empires and also the advancements of navigational technology leading to the age of exploration. These themes are already embedded in the 8th grade curriculum but could have a greater emphasis on the impact of technology.

Proposed Solutions:

1. Have staff training about different strategies for helping students create meaningful questions. Meet as grade levels to review the questions that the students have created in each class.
2. Begin to create lessons that are centered around the questions of students
3. Identify areas of curriculum revision where there is potential for this strategy
4. Infuse this model into curriculum areas to pilot this program
5. Utilize the Big History Project into the Global History curriculum where there are common themes
6. Explore the possibility of changing the Current Issues into a course that follows the Big History Curriculum
7. Explore usage of Virtual Reality in the classroom and obtain Google Cardboards for each grade level.

Goal #5: To improve students' document analysis skills

Problem Statement:

Document analysis needs to be addressed in a way that scaffolds analysis skills from the 6th through 8th grades. Document analysis also needs to be implemented in a way that improves student engagement and understanding of content.

Supporting Data:

Document analysis can address New Jersey Student Learning Standards in Language, Reading, Writing and Speaking. Students need assistance analyzing sources, identifying point of view, evaluating

evidence, balancing conflicting perspectives and claims, drawing inferences, and using evidence to write an evidence-based argument essay. Student engagement in content and ownership of one's own learning can be improved.

After analyzing the Ridge High School teachers survey, we see that there are needs for the middle school to improve this area.

Proposed Solutions:

1. Common planning time allotted to align practices and scaffold the document analysis skills from one grade level to the next, and from middle school to high school
2. The continued offering of staff college courses from within and outside the school district on document analysis and/or Document Based Questions
3. Find ways for more reliance on students to locate and provide their own documents to address a topic question
4. Collect SGO data and survey grade 9 teachers. Collect data on how students are doing (PLCs, SGOs, 9th grade surveys)

Goal #6: To improve student note-taking skills across grades 6-8

Problem Statement:

Students lack the skills to take useful and efficient notes. This is a skill they will need to master by high school where note taking is used heavily.

Supporting Data:

Note taking records information needed to learn at a later date and the act of taking notes is part of the memorization process creating a form of kinesthetic memory and visual memory. Summarization or graphic organization of notes also forces the student to re-organize, prioritize and integrate the knowledge into their memory. Note taking makes reading or listening an active, not passive, process. After analyzing the Ridge High School teachers survey, we see that there are needs for the middle school to improve this area.

Proposed Solutions:

1. More use of note taking in general, greater instruction in this area. Create common note taking formats or techniques that can be taught and used throughout the middle school that will prepare students for the note taking format and skills needed in high school. Curriculum writing time should be devoted to this goal with both middle school and high school teachers.
2. Common planning time allotted to align practices and scaffold the note taking skills from one grade level to the next. Common planning time with the high school teacher or surveys/feedback of the high school teachers to determine what note taking skills are needed by grade 9.
3. The continued offering of staff college courses on note taking skills. Cross department, work with science department for potential crossover

Goal #7: To improve vertical articulation and effectively scaffold skills across grade levels

Problem Statement:

Teachers reported gaps in skills, especially between the middle and high school, in areas where the middle school students reported feeling confident in. Areas where skills seem to have the biggest gaps are in analysis and citation of evidence and sources, note taking, and independent research. Currently there is very little collaboration time between the middle school and the high school teachers to align the scaffolding of skills and expectations of students.

Supporting Data:

Other districts were found to have teacher guides for skill building among grades 6-12 to create common language, expectations and scaffolding of skill building. Students reported feeling confident in skills that the high school teachers reported deficiencies in, showing a gap in the skills expected between middle and high school.

Proposed Solution:

1. The creation of meeting time, especially between middle and high school teachers and with no more than two grades present in each meeting, would allow teachers to create common language, teaching methods and a grade 6-12 scaffold of skills.

2. The creation of a teacher resource document and/or booklet that charts the proficiency level expected of each grade for major skills needed for high school (note taking, independent research, document analysis and/or evidence citation).
3. Summer curriculum writing allotted for grade 8 and grade 9 teachers to collaborate to improve vertical articulation of skills.

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Appendix A: Content Learning Standards Alignment

Common Core - State Standards Initiative
English Language Arts Standards
History / Social Studies
Grades 6-8

Key Ideas and Detail: CCSS.ELA – Literacy.RH.6-8.1 **Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.**			
Is this standard addressed?	**6th Grade __yes___**	**7th Grade ___yes__**	**8th Grade__yes_**
Examples	Students use primary source documents to answer document based questions related to various units of study. Students create thesis statements and identify supporting facts from primary and secondary sources.	Students view and analyze maps and statistical data of current day countries of the world.	Students use primary source documents to answer document based questions related to various units of study.

Key Ideas and Detail: CCSS.ELA – Literacy.RH.6-8.2 **Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.**			
Is this standard addressed?	**6th Grade ___yes__**	**7th Grade _yes____**	**8th Grade __yes___**
Examples	Students analyze photographs, diary entries, letters, newspaper articles and other primary sources to determine aspects of the daily life of Americans during various time periods. Students are asked to summarize and analyze primary source documents related to a given topic of study.	Students use a variety of sources to create conclusions about the well-being of a nation's people and economy. Students examine bias that certain nations may have about their own diplomatic relationships with other countries, and their own history.	Using document based questions, students analyze various primary and secondary sources to identify the main ideas and evaluate sources. DBQ topic examples: What are the primary reasons for the fall of Rome, What should the Aztecs be remembered for?, How did Islam spread?

Key Ideas and Detail: CCSS.ELA – Literacy.RH.6-8.3

Identify key steps in a text's description of a process related to history/social studies (e.g., how a bill becomes law, how interest rates are raised or lowered)			
Is this standard addressed?	**6th Grade __yes___**	**7th Grade __yes___**	**8th Grade __yes___**
Examples	Whole class discussion of how bills become laws and how the U.S. President is elected. Student created flowchart showing the process of how bills become laws and electoral college simulation about the process.	Students learn about the concepts of economics and governments of nations all over the world.	The formation of civilization lend itself to students learning about how groups need laws and create them.

Craft and Structure: CCSS.ELA – Literacy.RH.6-8.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history / social studies.			
Is this standard addressed?	**6th Grade __yes___**	**7th Grade _____**	**8th Grade __yes__**
Examples	Class discussion and practice of strategies to determine word meaning based on context clues. Illustrated definitions of important content specific vocabulary terms.	Vocabulary lists will be given at the beginning of each unit and teachers will create word walls.	Students are given vocabulary lists at the beginning of every unit, they define those words and use them in the context of the content of the unit.

Craft and Structure: CCSS.ELA – Literacy.RH.6-8.5 Describe how a text presents information (e.g., sequentially, comparatively, causally).			
Is this standard addressed?	**6th Grade __yes___**	**7th Grade _____**	**8th Grade __yes___**
Examples	Timelines intended to help students see how events are related over time and analysis of cause and effect. Students analyze documents and organize by perspective in order to draw conclusions about events. Students categorize propaganda posters by theme and content.	Case studies are comparative between nations and there are cause and effect relationships throughout the curriculum.	Students complete timelines at the start of each unit, they can then compare the presentation of the text to the unfolding of the history.

Craft and Structure: CCSS.ELA – Literacy.RH.6-8.6 Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts).			
Is this standard addressed?	**6th Grade __yes___**	**7th Grade __yes___**	**8th Grade __yes___**
Examples	Analysis of primary sources prior to answering a DBQ. Sourcing heuristic worksheets designed to detect author bias. Comparing of American vs. North Korean text excerpts regarding 1950 Korean War.	Students identify ideas about ethnocentrism and how that can lead to specific bias.	Using current events, websites, and primary and secondary sources students are asked to identify bias.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: CCSS.ELA – Literacy.RH.6-8.7 Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.			
Is this standard addressed?	**6th Grade _____**	**7th Grade _____**	**8th Grade _____**
Examples	Creation and analysis of charts, graphs, and maps related to Imperialism, WWI, WWII and Vietnam War throughout various activities and project. Illustrated description and overview of Bill of Rights. Analyze photographs of tenement life and the Great Depression to determine the daily lives of these Americans.	Students are constantly analyzing data and maps to make meaningful analysis about a country's economic, social, and cultural status.	Students use maps of the River Valley Civilization to determine why people settled in certain areas of the world.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: CCSS.ELA – Literacy.RH.6-8.8

Distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment in a text.			
Is this standard addressed?	**6th Grade _____**	**7th Grade _____**	**8th Grade _____**
Examples	Analysis of primary source documents. Examination of instances of bias and discrimination within various primary sources.	Looking at world issues, students must constantly think about what the bias	Using DBQ to determine the fairness of laws, and the failures of civilizations.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: CCSS.ELA – Literacy.RH.6-8.9 Analyze the relationship between a primary and secondary source on the same topic.			
Is this standard addressed?	**6th Grade _____**	**7th Grade _____**	**8th Grade _____**
Examples	Students alternate between using the textbook and primary sources as a means of studying an event or topic. DBQ's and perspective lessons incorporate secondary sources.	Focus of the new curriculum is centered around Millennium Goals, which is a primary document. Students will use secondary sources to determine if nations have met them.	Discussions about the differences between primary and secondary sources, and which could contain bias more so. DBQs contain both primary and secondary sources about one topic.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity: CCSS.ELA – Literacy.RH.6-8.10 By the end of grade 8, read and comprehend history / social studies texts in the grades 6-8 text complexity band independently and proficiently.			
Is this standard addressed?	**6th Grade _____**	**7th Grade _____**	**8th Grade _____**
Examples	Teacher-guided reading and comprehension of textbook is used to develop students' ability to do this independently over time. Guided analysis of primary source documents with the intention of over time developing students' ability to do this independently.	Student complete questions and guided readings of the textbook along with other source.	Student complete questions and guided readings of the textbook along with other sources.

2014 New Jersey Standards for Student Learning - Social Studies

Content Area	Social Studies			
Standard	**6.1 U.S. History: America in the World:** All students will acquire the knowledge and skills to think analytically about how past and present interactions of people, cultures, and the environment 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, national, and global communities.			
Era	**Three Worlds Meet (Beginnings to 1620)**			
Grade Level	By the end of grade 8			
Content Statement	**Strand**	**Indicator #**	**Indicator**	
1. Three Worlds Meet Indigenous societies in the Western Hemisphere migrated and changed in response to the physical environment and due to their interactions with Europeans. European exploration expanded global economic and cultural exchange into the Western Hemisphere.	**A. Civics, Government, and Human Rights**	6.1.8.A.1.a	Compare and contrast forms of governance, belief systems, and family structures among African, European, and Native American groups.	x
	B. Geography, People, and the Environment	6.1.8.B.1.a	Describe migration and settlement patterns of Native American groups, and explain how these patterns affected interactions in different regions of the Western Hemisphere.	n/a
		6.1.8.B.1.b	Analyze the world in spatial terms (e.g., longitude, latitude) using historical maps to determine what led to the exploration of new water and land routes.	n/a
	C. Economics, Innovation, and Technology	6.1.8.C.1.a	Evaluate the impact of science, religion, and technology innovations on European exploration.	x
		6.1.8.C.1.b	Explain why individuals and societies trade, how trade functions, and the role of trade during this period.	n/a
	D. History, Culture, and Perspectives	6.1.8.D.1.a	Compare and contrast gender roles, religion, values, cultural practices, and political systems of Native American groups.	n/a
		6.1.8.D.1.b	Explain how interactions among African, European, and Native American groups began a cultural transformation.	n/a
		6.1.8.D.1.c	Evaluate the impact of the Colombian Exchange on ecology, agriculture, and culture from different perspectives.	n/a

Content Area	Social Studies			
Standard	**6.1 U.S. History: America in the World:** All students will acquire the knowledge and skills to think analytically about how past and present interactions of people, cultures, and the environment 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, national, and global communities.			
Era	**Colonization and Settlement (1585-1763)**			
Grade Level	By the end of grade 8			
Content Statement	**Strand**	**Indicator #**	**Indicator**	
2. Colonization and Settlement The colonists adapted ideas from their European heritage and from Native American groups to develop new political and religious institutions and economic systems.	**A. Civics, Government, and Human Rights**	6.1.8.A.2.a	Determine the roles of religious freedom and participatory government in various North American colonies.	n/a
		6.1.8.A.2.b	Explain how and why early government structures developed, and determine the impact of these early structures on the evolution of American politics and institutions.	x
		6.1.8.A.2.c	Explain how demographics (i.e., race, gender, and economic status) affected social, economic, and political opportunities during the Colonial era.	n/a

The slave labor system and the loss of Native American lives had a lasting impact on the development of the United States and American culture.	**B. Geography, People, and the Environment**	6.1.8.B.2.a	Determine factors that impacted emigration, settlement patterns, and regional identities of the colonies.	n/a
		6.1.8.B.2.b	Compare and contrast how the search for natural resources resulted in conflict and cooperation among European colonists and Native American groups in the New World.	n/a
	C. Economics, Innovation, and Technology	6.1.8.C.2.a	Compare the practice of slavery and indentured servitude in colonial labor systems.	n/a
		6.1.8.C.2.b	Explain the system of mercantilism and its impact on the economies of the colonies and European countries.	n/a
		6.1.8.C.2.c	Analyze the impact of triangular trade on multiple nations and groups.	n/a
	D. History, Culture, and Perspectives	6.1.8.D.2.a	Analyze the power struggle among European countries, and determine its impact on people living in Europe and the Americas.	n/a
		6.1.8.D.2.b	Compare and contrast the voluntary and involuntary migratory experiences of different groups of people, and explain why their experiences differed.	n/a

Content Area	**Social Studies**			
Standard	**6.1 U.S. History: America in the World:** All students will acquire the knowledge and skills to think analytically about how past and present interactions of people, cultures, and the environment 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, national, and global communities.			
Era	**Revolution and the New Nation (1754-1820s)**			
Grade Level	By the end of grade 8			
Content Statement	**Strand**	**Indicator #**	**Indicator**	
3. Revolution and the New Nation Disputes over political authority and economic issues contributed to a movement for independence in the colonies. The fundamental principles of the United States Constitution serve as the foundation of the United States government today	**A. Civics, Government, and Human Rights**	6.1.8.A.3.a	Examine the ideals found in the Declaration of Independence, and assess the extent to which they were fulfilled for women, African Americans, and Native Americans during this time period.	n/a
		6.1.8.A.3.b	Evaluate the effectiveness of the fundamental principles of the Constitution (i.e., consent of the governed, rule of law, federalism, limited government, separation of powers, checks and balances, and individual rights) in establishing a federal government that allows for growth and change over time.	x
		6.1.8.A.3.c	Determine the role that compromise played in the creation and adoption of the Constitution and Bill of Rights.	n/a
		6.1.8.A.3.d	Compare and contrast the Articles of Confederation and the United States Constitution in terms of the decision-making powers of national government.	n/a
		6.1.8.A.3.e	Explain how and why constitutional civil liberties were impacted by acts of government (i.e., Alien and Sedition Acts) during the Early Republic.	n/a
		6.1.8.A.3.f	Explain how political parties were formed and continue to be shaped by differing perspectives regarding the role and power of federal government.	n/a
		6.1.8.A.3.g	Evaluate the impact of the Constitution and Bill of Rights on current day issues.	x
	B. Geography, People, and the Environment	6.1.8.B.3.a	Assess how conflicts and alliances among European countries and Native American groups impacted the expansion of the American colonies.	n/a
		6.1.8.B.3.b	Determine the extent to which the geography of the United States influenced the debate on representation in Congress and federalism by examining the New Jersey and Virginia plans.	n/a
		6.1.8.B.3.c	Use maps and other geographic tools to evaluate the impact of geography on the execution and outcome of the American Revolutionary War.	n/a

		6.1.8.B.3.d	Explain why New Jersey's location played an integral role in the American Revolution.	n/a
	C. Economics, Innovation, and Technology	6.1.8.C.3.a	Explain how taxes and government regulation can affect economic opportunities, and assess the impact of these on relations between Britain and its North American colonies.	n/a
		6.1.8.C.3.b	Summarize the effect of inflation and debt on the American people and the response of state and national governments during this time.	n/a
		6.1.8.C.3.c	Evaluate the impact of the cotton gin and other innovations on the institution of slavery and on the economic and political development of the country.	n/a
	D. History, Culture, and Perspectives	6.1.8.D.3.a	Explain how the consequences of the Seven Years War, changes in British policies toward American colonies, and responses by various groups and individuals in the North American colonies led to the American Revolution.	n/a
		6.1.8.D.3.b	Explain why the Declaration of Independence was written and how its key principles evolved to become unifying ideas of American democracy.	n/a
		6.1.8.D.3.c	Analyze the impact of George Washington as general of the American revolutionary forces and as the first president of the United States.	n/a
		6.1.8.D.3.d	Analyze how prominent individuals and other nations contributed to the causes, execution, and outcomes of the American Revolution.	n/a
		6.1.8.D.3.e	Examine the roles and perspectives of various socioeconomic groups (e.g., rural farmers, urban craftsmen, northern merchants, and southern planters), African Americans, Native Americans, and women during the American Revolution, and determine how these groups were impacted by the war.	n/a
		6.1.8.D.3.f	Analyze from multiple perspectives how the terms of the Treaty of Paris affected United States relations with Native Americans and with European powers that had territories in North America.	n/a
		6.1.8.D.3.g	Evaluate the extent to which the leadership and decisions of early administrations of the national government met the goals established in the Preamble of the Constitution.	n/a

Content Area	**Social Studies**			
Standard	**6.1 U.S. History: America in the World:** All students will acquire the knowledge and skills to think analytically about how past and present interactions of people, cultures, and the environment 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, national, and global communities.			
Era	**Expansion and Reform (1801-1861)**			
Grade Level	By the end of grade 8			
Content Statement	**Strand**	**Indicator #**	**Indicator**	
4. Expansion and Reform Westward movement, industrial growth, increased immigration, the expansion of slavery, and the development of transportation systems increased regional tensions.	**A. Civics, Government, and Human Rights**	6.1.8.A.4.a	Explain the changes in America's relationships with other nations by analyzing policies, treaties, tariffs, and agreements.	n/a
		6.1.8.A.4.b	Analyze how the concept of Manifest Destiny influenced the acquisition of land through annexation, diplomacy, and war.	n/a
		6.1.8.A.4.c	Assess the extent to which voting rights were expanded during the Jacksonian period.	n/a
	B. Geography, People, and the Environment	6.1.8.B.4.a	Assess the impact of the Louisiana Purchase and western exploration on the expansion and economic development of the United States.	n/a
		6.1.8.B.4.b	Map territorial expansion and settlement, as well as the locations of conflicts with and resettlement of Native Americans.	n/a

	C. Economics, Innovation, and Technology	6.1.8.C.4.a	Analyze the debates involving the National Bank, uniform currency, and tariffs, and determine the extent to which each of these economic tools met the economic challenges facing the new nation.	n/a
		6.1.8.C.4.b	Explain how major technological developments revolutionized land and water transportation, as well as the economy, in New Jersey and the nation.	n/a
		6.1.8.C.4.c	Analyze how technological innovations affected the status and social class of different groups of people, and explain the outcomes that resulted.	x
	D. History, Culture, and Perspectives	6.1.8.D.4.a	Analyze the push-pull factors that led to increases in immigration, and explain why ethnic and cultural conflicts resulted.	x
		6.1.8.D.4.b	Describe efforts to reform education, women's rights, slavery, and other issues during the Antebellum period.	n/a
		6.1.8.D.4.c	Explain the growing resistance to slavery and New Jersey's role in the Underground Railroad.	n/a

Content Area	**Social Studies**			
Standard	**6.1 U.S. History: America in the World:** All students will acquire the knowledge and skills to think analytically about how past and present interactions of people, cultures, and the environment 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, national, and global communities.			
Era	**Civil War and Reconstruction (1850-1877)**			
Grade Level	By the end of grade 8			
Content Statement	**Strand**	**Indicator #**	**Indicator**	
5. Civil War and Reconstruction The Civil War resulted from complex regional differences involving political, economic, and social issues, as well as different views on slavery. The Civil War and Reconstruction had a lasting impact on the development of the United States.	**A. Civics, Government, and Human Rights**	6.1.8.A.5.a	Explain how and why the Emancipation Proclamation and the Gettysburg Address continue to impact American life.	n/a
		6.1.8.A.5.b	Compare and contrast the approaches of Congress and Presidents Lincoln and Johnson toward the reconstruction of the South.	n/a
	B. Geography, People, and the Environment	6.1.8.B.5.a	Assess the role of various factors (i.e., geography, natural resources, demographics, transportation, leadership, and technology) that affected the course and outcome of the Civil War.	n/a
	C. Economics, Innovation, and Technology	6.1.8.C.5.a	Assess the human and material costs of the Civil War in the North and South.	n/a
		6.1.8.C.5.b	Analyze the economic impact of Reconstruction on the South from different perspectives.	n/a
	D. History, Culture, and Perspectives	6.1.8.D.5.a	Prioritize the causes and events that led to the Civil War from different perspectives.	n/a
		6.1.8.D.5.b	Analyze critical events and battles of the Civil War and determine how they contributed to the final outcome of the war.	
		6.1.8.D.5.c	Examine the roles of women, African Americans, and Native Americans in the Civil War.	
		6.1.8.D.5.d	Analyze the effectiveness of the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments to the United States Constitution from multiple perspectives.	

Content Area	**Social Studies**
Standard	**6.2 World History/Global Studies:** All students will acquire the knowledge and skills to think analytically and systematically about how past interactions of people, cultures, and the environment affect issues across time and cultures. Such knowledge and skills enable students to make informed decisions as socially and ethically responsible world citizens in the 21st century.
Era	**The Beginnings of Human Society**
Grade Level	By the end of grade 8

Content Statement	Strand	Indicator #	Indicator	
1. The Beginnings of Human Society: Paleolithic and Neolithic Ages Hunter/gatherers adapted to their physical environments using resources, the natural world, and technological advancements. The agricultural revolution led to an increase in population, specialization of labor, new forms of social organization, and the beginning of societies. Archaeology provides historical and scientific explanations for how ancient people lived.	**A. Civics, Government, and Human Rights**	6.2.8.A.1.a	Compare and contrast the social organization, natural resources, and land use of early hunters/gatherers and those who lived in early agrarian societies.	x
	B. Geography, People, and the Environment	6.2.8.B.1.a	Explain the various migratory patterns of hunters/gatherers **that** moved from Africa to Eurasia, Australia, and the Americas, and describe the impact of migration on their lives and on the shaping of societies.	x
	C. Economics, Innovation, and Technology	6.2.8.C.1.a	Describe the influence of the agricultural revolution (e.g., the impact of food surplus from farming) on population growth and the subsequent development of civilizations.	x
		6.2.8.C.1.b	Determine the impact of technological advancements on hunter/gatherer and agrarian societies.	x
	D. History, Culture, and Perspectives	6.2.8.D.1.a	Demonstrate an understanding of pre-agricultural and post-agricultural periods in terms of relative length of time.	x
		6.2.8.D.1.b	Describe how the development of both written and unwritten languages impacted human understanding, development of culture, and social structure.	x
		6.2.8.D.1.c	Explain how archaeological discoveries are used to develop and enhance understanding of life prior to written records.	x

Content Area	**Social Studies**
Standard	**6.2 World History/Global Studies:** All students will acquire the knowledge and skills to think analytically and systematically about how past interactions of people, cultures, and the environment affect issues across time and cultures. Such knowledge and skills enable students to make informed decisions as socially and ethically responsible world citizens in the 21st century.
Era	**Early Civilizations and the Emergence of Pastoral Peoples (4000-1000 BCE)**
Grade Level	By the end of grade 8

Content Statement	Strand	Indicator #	Indicator	
2. Early Civilizations and the Emergence of Pastoral Peoples: Early River Valley Civilizations Early river valley civilizations (e.g., Mesopotamia, Egypt, Indus River [modern Pakistan and northwestern India], and, later, Yellow River Valley in China) developed due to favorable geographic conditions. They created centralized systems of government and advanced societies.	**A. Civics, Government, and Human Rights**	6.2.8.A.2.a	Explain how/why different early river valley civilizations developed similar forms of government and legal structures.	x
		6.2.8.A.2.b	Determine the role of slavery in the economic and social structures of early river valley civilizations.	x
	B. Geography, People, and the Environment	6.2.8.B.2.a	Determine the extent to which geography influenced settlement, the development of trade networks, technological innovations, and the sustainability of **early** river valley civilizations.	x
		6.2.8.B.2.b	Compare and contrast physical and political maps of **early** river valley civilizations and their modern counterparts (i.e., Mesopotamia and Iraq; Ancient Egypt and Modern Egypt; Indus River Valley and Modern Pakistan/India; Ancient China and Modern China), and determine the geopolitical impact of these civilizations, then and now.	x
	C. Economics, Innovation, and Technology	6.2.8.C.2.a	Explain how technological advancements led to greater economic specialization, improved weaponry, trade, and the development of a class system in **early** river valley civilizations.	x

	D. History, Culture, and Perspectives	6.2.8.D.2.a	Analyze the impact of religion on daily life, government, and culture in various early river valley civilizations.	x
		6.2.8.D.2.b	Explain how the development of written language transformed all aspects of life in early river valley civilizations.	x
		6.2.8.D.2.c	Analyze the factors that led to the rise and fall of various early river valley civilizations and determine whether there was a common pattern of growth and decline.	x
		6.2.8.D.2.d	Evaluate the importance and enduring legacy of the major achievements of the early river valley civilizations over time.	x

Content Area	**Social Studies**			
Standard	**6.2 World History/Global Studies:** All students will acquire the knowledge and skills to think analytically and systematically about how past interactions of people, cultures, and the environment affect issues across time and cultures. Such knowledge and skills enable students to make informed decisions as socially and ethically responsible world citizens in the 21st century.			
Era	**The Classical Civilizations of the Mediterranean World, India, and China (1000 BCE-600 CE)**			
Grade Level	By the end of grade 8			
Content Statement	**Strand**	**Indicator #**	**Indicator**	
3. The Classical Civilizations of the Mediterranean World, India, and China Classical civilizations (i.e., Greece, Rome, India and China) developed and expanded into empires of unprecedented size and diversity by creating centralized governments and promoting commerce, a common culture, and social values. Cultural exchange and diffusion dramatically increased, and enduring world religions emerged, during the era of classical civilizations. Classical civilizations declined as a result of internal weaknesses and external invasions, but they left lasting legacies for future civilizations.	**A. Civics, Government, and Human Rights**	6.2.8.A.3.a	Compare and contrast the methods (i.e., autocratic rule, philosophies, and bureaucratic structures) used by the rulers of Rome, China, and India to control and unify their expanding empires.	x
		6.2.8.A.3.b	Compare and contrast the rights and responsibilities of free men, women, slaves, and foreigners in the political, economic, and social structures of classical civilizations.	x
		6.2.8.A.3.c	Determine the foundational concepts and principles of Athenian democracy and the Roman Republic that later influenced the development of the United States Constitution.	x
		6.2.8.A.3.d	Compare the status (i.e., political, economic, and social) of groups in the Ancient World to those of people today and evaluate how individuals perceived the principles of liberty and equality then and now.	x
		6.2.8.A.3.e	Compare and contrast the American legal system with the legal systems of classical civilizations, and determine the extent to which these early systems influenced our current legal system.	x
	B. Geography, People, and the Environment	6.2.8.B.3.a	Determine how geography and the availability of natural resources influenced the development of the political, economic, and cultural systems of each of the classical civilizations and provided motivation for expansion.	x
		6.2.8.B.3.b	Explain how geography and the availability of natural resources led to both the development of Greek city-states and to their decline.	x
	C. Economics, Innovation, and Technology	6.2.8.C.3.a	Analyze the impact of expanding land and sea trade routes as well as a uniform system of exchange in the Mediterranean World and Asia.	x
		6.2.8.C.3.b	Explain how classical civilizations used technology and innovation to enhance agricultural/ manufacturing output and commerce, to expand military capabilities, to improve life in urban areas, and to allow for greater division of labor.	x
	D. History, Culture, and Perspectives	6.2.8.D.3.a	Compare and contrast social hierarchies in classical civilizations as they relate to power, wealth, and equality.	x
		6.2.8.D.3.b	Determine common factors that contributed to the decline and fall of the Roman Empire, Gupta India, and Han China.	x
		6.2.8.D.3.c	Evaluate the importance and enduring legacy of the major achievements of Greece, Rome, India, and China over time.	x

		6.2.8.D.3.d	Compare and contrast the tenets of various world religions that developed in or around this time period (i.e., Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, Islam, Judaism, Sikhism, and Taoism), their patterns of expansion, and their responses to the current challenges of globalization.	x
		6.2.8.D.3.e	Determine the extent to which religion, economic issues, and conflict shaped the values and decisions of the classical civilizations.	x

Content Area	**Social Studies**			
Standard	**6.2 World History/Global Studies:** All students will acquire the knowledge and skills to think analytically and systematically about how past interactions of people, cultures, and the environment affect issues across time and cultures. Such knowledge and skills enable students to make informed decisions as socially and ethically responsible world citizens in the 21st century.			
Era	**Expanding Exchanges and Encounters (500 CE-1450 CE)**			
Grade Level	By the end of grade 8			
Content Statement	**Strand**	**Indicator #**	**Indicator**	
4. Expanding Exchanges and Encounters The emergence of empires (i.e., Asia, Africa, Europe and the Americas) resulted from the promotion of interregional trade, cultural exchanges, new technologies, urbanization, and centralized political organization. The rise and spread of new belief systems unified societies, but they also became a major source of tension and conflict. While commercial and agricultural improvements created new wealth and opportunities for the empires, most people's daily lives remained unchanged.	**A. Civics, Government, and Human Rights**	6.2.8.A.4.a	Analyze the role of religion and other means rulers used to unify and centrally govern expanding territories with diverse populations.	x
		6.2.8.A.4.b	Compare and contrast the Japanese and European systems of feudalism and the effectiveness of each in promoting social, economic, and political order.	
		6.2.8.A.4.c	Determine the influence of medieval English legal and constitutional practices (i.e., the Magna Carta, parliament, the development of habeas corpus, and an independent judiciary) on modern democratic thought and institutions.	x
	B. Geography, People, and the Environment	6.2.8.B.4.a	Explain how geography influenced the development of the political, economic, and cultural centers of each empire as well as the empires' relationships with other parts of the world.	x
		6.2.8.B.4.b	Assess how maritime and overland trade routes (i.e., the African caravan and Silk Road) impacted urbanization, transportation, communication, and the development of international trade centers.	x
		6.2.8.B.4.c	Determine how Africa's physical geography and natural resources presented challenges and opportunities for trade, development, and the spread of religion.	x
		6.2.8.B.4.d	Explain why the Arabian Peninsula's physical features and location made it the epicenter of Afro-Eurasian trade and fostered the spread of Islam into Africa, Europe, and Asia.	x
		6.2.8.B.4.e	Analyze the motivations for civilizations to modify the environment, determine the positive and negative consequences of environmental changes made during this time period, and relate these changes to current environmental challenges.	x
		6.2.8.B.4.f	Explain how the geographies and climates of Asia, Africa, Europe, and the Americas influenced their economic development and interaction or isolation with other societies.	x
	C. Economics, Innovation, and Technology	6.2.8.C.4.a	Explain how and why the interrelationships among improved agricultural production, population growth, urbanization, and commercialization led to the rise of powerful states and kingdoms (i.e., Europe, Asia, Americas).	x
		6.2.8.C.4.b	Determine the extent to which interaction between the Islamic world and medieval Europe increased trade, enhanced technology innovation, and impacted scientific thought and the arts.	x

	D. History, Culture, and Perspectives	6.2.8.D.4.a	Analyze the role of religion and economics in shaping each empire's social hierarchy, and evaluate the impact these hierarchical structures had on the lives of various groups of people.	x
		6.2.8.D.4.b	Analyze the causes and outcomes of the Crusades from different perspectives, including the perspectives of European political and religious leaders, the crusaders, Jews, Muslims, and traders.	x
		6.2.8.D.4.c	Assess the demographic, economic, and religious impact of the plague on Europe.	x
		6.2.8.D.4.d	Determine which events led to the rise and eventual decline of European feudalism.	x
		6.2.8.D.4.e	Analyze the immediate and long-term impact on China and Europe of the open exchange between Europe and the Yuan (Mongol) Dynasty.	x
		6.2.8.D.4.f	Determine the extent to which the Byzantine Empire influenced the Islamic world and western Europe.	x
		6.2.8.D.4.g	Evaluate the importance and enduring legacy of the major achievements of the people living Asia, Africa (Islam), Europe and the Americas over time.	x

Content Area	**Social Studies**			
Standard	**6.3 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 collaboratively to address the challenges that are inherent in living in an interconnected world.			
Grade Level	By the end of grade 8			
Content Statement	**Strand**	**Indicator #**	**Indicator**	
Active citizens in the 21st century: · Recognize the causes and effects of prejudice on individuals, groups, and society. · Recognize the value of cultural diversity, as well as the potential for misunderstanding. · Critically analyze media to assess different viewpoints and detect bias, opinion, and stereotypes. · Listen open-mindedly to views contrary to their own. · Collaboratively develop and practice strategies for managing and resolving conflict. · Demonstrate understanding of democratic values and processes. · Recognize that the actions or inactions of individuals, groups, and nations can have intended and unintended consequences.	**A. Civics, Government, and Human Rights**	6.3.8.A.1	Deliberate on a public issue affecting an upcoming election, consider opposing arguments, and develop a reasoned conclusion.	x
		6.3.8.A.2	Participate in a real or simulated hearing to develop a legislative proposal that addresses a public issue, and share it with an appropriate legislative body (e.g., school board, municipal or county government, state legislature).	n/a
		6.3.8.A.3	Collaborate with international students to deliberate about and address issues of gender equality, child mortality, or education.	
	B. Geography, People and the Environment	6.3.8.B.1	Evaluate alternative land use proposals and make recommendations to the appropriate governmental agency regarding the best course of action.	
	C. Economics, Innovation, and Technology	6.3.8.C.1	Examine the perspectives of multiple stakeholders involved in the local budget process (e.g., obtaining information, discussing priorities).	
	D. History, Culture, and Perspectives	6.3.8.D.1	Engage in simulated democratic processes (e.g., legislative hearings, judicial proceedings, elections) to understand how conflicting points of view are addressed in a democratic society.	x

· Challenge unfair viewpoints and behaviors by taking action. · Make informed and reasoned decisions. · Accept decisions that are made for the common good.				

Appendix B: Survey Questions

Survey #1: Outside District Survey

1	Cooperative learning is used often in my classroom instruction (Strongly Agree → Strongly Disagree)
2	I use document based questions consistently as part of my classroom instruction (Strongly Agree → Strongly Disagree)
3	I use inquiry based instruction consistently in my classroom instruction (Strongly Agree → Strongly Disagree)
4	If you indicated that you do use inquiry based instruction, how effective would you say it is? (Extremely effective → Ineffective)
5	What grade level do you teach?
6	What general subject area is taught in your classroom?
7	On average, how much homework would you say you give per night?
8	How do you typically group students for projects and activities?
9	When students work in groups they most often are….(doing so as an informal discussion, involved in a formal activity, required to produce a final product, combination)
10	How often are Document Based Questions used in the classroom?
11	What do students typically produce when creating a DBQ?
12	How do students take notes when they read their textbook?
13	Please check off the various types of assessments that you use in the classroom.

Survey #2: Parent Survey

1	What grade is your child currently in?
2	I am satisfied with the curriculum and instruction of the WAMS S.S. Department (Strongly Agree → Strongly Disagree)
3	My child's social studies classes are preparing students to deal with issues and problems they will face in the future. (Strongly Agree → Strongly Disagree)
4	Throughout middle school social studies my child sees a relationship between what they are studying and their everyday lives (Strongly Agree → Strongly Disagree)
5	The WAMS S.S. program has helped prepare my child to think critically. (Strongly Agree → Strongly Disagree)
6	The WAMS S.S. program helps students to understand and get along with other people. (Strongly Agree → Strongly Disagree)
7	The WAMS S.S. program helps students to understand their moral and ethical responsibilities. (Strongly Agree → Strongly Disagree)
8	The amount of S.S. homework is appropriate in order to adequately reinforce classroom instruction. (Strongly Agree → Strongly Disagree)

9	What are the strengths of the S.S. program?
10	What are the weaknesses of the S.S. program?

Survey #3: Ridge Social Studies Teachers

1	Students have the ability to analyze documents when they enter high school. (Strongly Agree → Strongly Disagree)
2	Students have the required study skills for assessments when they enter high school. (Strongly Agree → Strongly Disagree)
3	Students have the ability to efficiently take notes on a reading passage. (Strongly Agree → Strongly Disagree)
4	Please check all of the technology applications that apply and that you use in the classroom.
5	Students have the required research skills to complete papers and projects when they enter high school.
6	Students are retaining some information about American History when they enter 10th grade (Strongly Agree → Strongly Disagree)
7	Does the current middle school scope and sequence help students transition better to 9th grade social studies?
8	Students have the ability to read and understand the high school textbook. (Strongly Agree → Strongly Disagree)
9	Students have the ability to read and understand the high school textbook.
10	Students are consistently citing evidence in their essays / DBQs. (Strongly Agree → Strongly Disagree)
11	On average, how many minutes of homework do you assign each night? (0-10 → more than 40 minutes)
12	When doing a DBQ, I employ the bucketing strategy with the students. (Not applicable → Strongly Agree)
13	Check off the assessments that you use in the classroom.
14	What skills can the middle school teachers help develop in order to better prepare for high school?

Survey #4: Social Studies Teachers at WAMS

1	The S.S. program is preparing students to deal with issues and problems they will face in the future. (Strongly Agree → Strongly Disagree)
2	The S.S. program appropriately prepares students to become an active participant in their community. (Strongly Agree → Strongly Disagree)
3	The S.S. program program is helping students see a relationship between what they are seeing and their everyday lives. (Strongly Agree → Strongly Disagree)
4	The amount of homework is appropriate in order to adequately reinforce classroom instruction. (Strongly Agree → Strongly Disagree)

5	I have access to appropriate, meaningful, and challenging resources I need in order to effectively teach my students. (Strongly Agree → Strongly Disagree)
6	I have the support and guidance I need to be successful in the In Class Support Classroom. (Strongly Agree → Strongly Disagree)
7	How do you use technology in the classroom? (Select what you use)
8	What are the strengths and weaknesses of the social studies program?
9	Please list areas you would like to have professional opportunities through Staff College or department meetings.
10	Of the goals listed below, which would be the most interesting to learn about? (Inquiry Based Instruction, Common Core implementation, Document Analysis, Technology integration and best practices, grouping strategies, assessments, current event integration, note taking strategies, research strategies)

Survey #3: William Annin Students

1	What grade are you currently in? (6th, 7th, or 8th)
2	Social Studies class is an enjoyable class. (Strongly Agree → Strongly Disagree)
3	What activities were most helpful to understanding Social Studies? Check 3 that you feel strongest about. (DBQs (document based questions), Debates & Discussions, PowerPoint/Lecture, Reading Guides, Videos, Timelines, Maps, Webquests, Scored Discussions)
4	How helpful do you find the online version of your textbook? (Very helpful→ Not helpful, I never use it)
5	If you use the online version of your textbook, what features do you use the most or find the most helpful about it? (open long answer text box)
6	Do the WAMS Social Studies classes help you understand and feel more prepared for the future? (Strongly Agree → Strongly Disagree)
7	How do you feel about the reading level of your textbook? (It is too hard to read or understand → It is too easy and I don't feel challenged)
8	When there is Social Studies homework how much time do you spend on it? (5 min, 5-10 min, 10-15 min, 15-20 min, 20-30 min, over 30 min)
9	The teacher helps me feel prepared for assignments. (Strongly Agree → Strongly Disagree)
10	I feel confident analyzing and answering questions about primary source documents. (Strongly Agree → Strongly Disagree)
11	I feel confident writing strong thesis statements based on documents presented in class. (Strongly Agree → Strongly Disagree)
12	I learned about citing evidence from documents into my writing in my social studies class. (Yes, frequently and I feel like I am really strong on this skill → I really do not understand how to cite documents)

13	What type of note taking do you feel comfortable with and have learned about in social studies? (Check all that apply) (Reading guides/Guided Outlines, RTN (read and take notes), Graphic organizers, Outlines, SQ3R)
14	How confident do you feel in studying and preparing for assessments? (very confident, I have learned study strategies throughout middle school) → Not confident at all, I never know what to study)
15	Please check all of the study strategies that you use when preparing for assessments (I re-read the textbook, I complete the study guide given by the teacher (if available), I work with a partner/parent to quiz myself, I generate and create flashcards, I re-read my notes and handouts, other)
16	I see a connection between what I learn in class to my everyday life and the "real world" (Strongly Agree → Strongly Disagree)
17	I would like to discuss more current events in class. (Strongly Agree → Strongly Disagree)
18	I like using Google Classroom where I can upload assignments, comment online, and have a conversation with my classroom online. (Strongly Agree → Strongly Disagree)
19	How do you prefer to read your textbook? (Read a hard copy of the textbook, Read an online version of the textbook on my computer, Read an online version of the textbook on my tablet/phone, Listen to an audio version of the textbook)
20	Please add any feedback you would like us to consider about WAMS Social Studies classes. (long answer open response box)