

K-12 Social Studies Committee
Meeting Notes
November 7, 2008

Present: Mark Jackson – Chair (High School), Cindy Corey (New - Pelham), Sarah Bing-Owens (New - Wildwood), Chris Gould (High School), Kristen Schreiber (Crocker Farm), Karen Lowe (New - Wildwood), Simon Leutz (High school) joined for the afternoon, Mike Hayes (Central Office)

Unable to attend: Liz Elder (Fort River)

New to Committee, but unable to attend: Jose Cantillo (Fort River), Jen Pablico (Mark's Meadow)

I. Revisit Framework

Mike shared the general curriculum cycle of development, implementation, data collection, review, and action plan.

Mark reframed our work:

- We have gone down a path of trying to generate outcomes quickly. After reviewing our work and the program review progress laid out by Brookline and Newton, it became clear that we needed to slow down our process. To do this, we need to broaden the representation within the committee, opportunities for input both within the district and the broader community, and the data used to create an action plan. Through doing this, we expect to have a product that is not only stronger, but widely accepted.

Several ideas were shared:

- We need to consider the short term issues (outdated K-6 curriculum, 10th grade MCAS)
- Teachers need to be aware of where the work is going (timeline, significant changes may happen for many grade levels)
- Members need to understand that the committee may have differing views at the table and there will be a need to be compromise.
- Timeline – based on this new direction, major revisions will not be made in the classroom until Fall 2011.

Reviewed documents from Newton and Brookline who have gone through a SS review process

Brookline:

- Have clarity about how and when to get involved
- Process is transparent from beginning to end
- Transparency where each subject is
- Job description for committee members

Phase 1: Study – Big picture, gather data (strengths, areas for inquiry, eye towards planning) – outside consultant, survey, interviews/focus groups

Phase 2: Plan – “Set of recommendations” Some immediate, some long term, plan timeline, budget assessments

Phase 3: Implementation – Offer professional development. Do steps to get where we want to be

Phase 4: Review of the process (not the program)

After a lengthy discussion, the committee agreed to take this new process oriented path.

II. Program Review

The committee came up with the following Program Review Process based on Brookline’s model, Newton’s model, and knowledge of our district.

Rationale -

- This is a review of the program with a goal of continuous improvement.
- Increasing student outcomes is the ultimate goal.
- The K-12 Social Studies program has been in Implementation for at least 5 years in each grade cluster.
- We need to respond to evolving academic landscape (Standards, MCAS, differentiation, every child, every day,)

Committee representation

- At least 1 teacher per school
- Range of grade levels
- At least 1 elementary and 1 secondary administrators
- Parent Reps from Elementary, MS, HS
- At least one academic expert in social sciences and/or education
- Attempt to represent cultural/racial diversity of community
- At least 2 HS students (with different Social Studies experiences)
- Leverett/Shutesbury staff (one each)
- Representative from Social Justice or BAMSS Committee
- SSO representative

People interested in becoming committee members will be asked to fill out a short application.

The Work:

The committee will meet five days between January and June and three days over the summer. Additional days next year will be determined based on the work.

Throughout the three steps, there will be communication with internal and wider communities. There will be many opportunities for feedback.

Step 1: STUDY (Committee) By September 2009

- Where we want to be
 - o National/State Standards

- Current research regarding curriculum and instruction
- Looking at other schools
- What is our vision/mission?
- Where are We?
 - Curriculum maps/curricula
 - Focus groups
 - Assessment data
 - Surveys/on-line
 - MCAS
 - Program of studies (HS/MS)
 - Personnel
 - Grad. Requirements
 - Course excellent
 - Professional Development
 - Budget
 - Variation by schools
- Create recommendations to bridge the gap between where we are and where we want to be.
 - Broad areas of Inquiry
 - Road map for further work
 - Concrete changes

Step 2: ACTION PLAN (Committee) By June 2010

- Take the broad recommendations from Step 1 and identify specific steps to carry them out.
 - Example: There is a recommendation for greater horizontal and vertical alignment. Specific tasks could be:
 - Develop Mission statement
 - Develop learning objectives
 - Develop K-6 Curriculum
 - Provide Professional Development
 - Considerations: who, when, money, etc.
- School Committee Approval
- Committee's work ends

Step 3: EXECUTE ACTION PLAN (District Staff) Dates TBD by action plan –

Major changes to classes would not be implemented until Fall 2011

- District Staff would be responsible for carrying out the action plan.

III. Short Term issues

Issue: The K-6 Social Studies curriculum was last revised in 1995. Additionally, there are incomplete supplies.

- There is not a simple short term solution to this. We expect that revision of the K-6 Social Studies curriculum will be addressed in the action plan. Elementary schools will need to continue to teach the units they are currently teach.

Issue: Approximately half of the material covered on the 7th grade MCAS is not taught in grades 6/7.

- Similar to the first issue, there is not a short term fix. Additionally, the 7th grade social studies MCAS does not “count” towards anything for individual students or for the school (i.e. AYP status). This issue will be addressed in the action plan generated by the review.

Issue: The current 9th graders need to pass the 10th grade Social Studies MCAS (US History test) to graduate.

- i. The high school has a short term plan for this group. They are creating a Primary Source Document that covers material from US History I (taught in 8th grade) and are considering additional possibilities to support students passing the test.

IV. Start Review

Tasks for Mike/Mark:

- Inform superintendents and school committee
 - Request funding for outside consultant
- Find 5 days to meet January - June
- Form committee (internal and external recruitment)
- Start to gather documents for next meeting