

**BERNARDS TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
BASKING RIDGE, NEW JERSEY 07920**

**Social Studies Program Evaluation  
Secondary Level (6-8)**

Submitted by:  
Sean Siet  
Supervisor of Social Studies

August 2005

Bernards Township Public Schools  
Basking Ridge, New Jersey

**Board of Education**

Louis Carlucci, President  
Ann Marie Woolford, Vice President  
Michael J. Byrne  
William Koch  
Susan McGowan  
Patty Seitz  
Janet Smith  
Leslie Stevens  
Lisa Winter

**Administration**

Valerie A. Goger  
Superintendent of Schools

Regina Rudolph  
Assistant Superintendent

Cheryl Dyer  
Director of Curriculum and Instruction

**Affirmative Action Officer**

Regina Rudolph, Assistant Superintendent

**504 Coordinator**

Gregory Youngman, Director of Pupil Personnel Services

*This document has been aligned with the  
New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards*

*It is the policy of the Bernards Township Board of Education to provide equal  
education opportunities regardless of color, creed, religion, gender or handicap.*

## Table of Contents

Committee Members	4
Philosophy	5
Program Overview	7
Curricular Alignments	10
Comparison to Benchmarked Districts	22
Perception of the Program	23
6 <sup>th</sup> Grade Review and Recommendations	24
7 <sup>th</sup> Grade Review and Recommendations	31
8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Review and Recommendations	38
Data Collection	40

**Committee Members****Sixth Grade**

Lisa Filippini  
Mary Mortensen  
Susan Wargo

**Seventh Grade**

Karen Applebaum  
Christine Corigliano  
Ken LeCour

**Eighth Grade**

Kelly Baum  
Paul Ciempola  
Janet Marino

## Philosophy

*Social studies is the integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence... The primary purpose of social studies is to help young people develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world. (National Council for Social Studies)*

WE BELIEVE....

*that the Social Studies program, K-12 should...*

- prepare students to be socially responsible citizens who participate in a democratic republic
- foster in students an appreciation for cultural/ethnic diversity and for the values and attitudes of others
- encourage students to respect their own culture as well as other cultures
- equip students to seek and evaluate divergent points of view, think independently, and express themselves intelligently
- empower students to exercise control over present and future experience
- enhance the meaning of students' experience by exploring the connections between their lives and the world around them

*that to achieve these aims, the Social Studies program, K-12 should...*

- guide students toward adulthood through purposeful experiences with subject knowledge, fundamental skills, and ideals of American society
- enable students to use knowledge and methods of history, geography, and the social sciences to understand the ideals and realities of past and present societies

*In order to implement this philosophy the Social Studies program will:*

1. Integrate subject knowledge and concepts, fundamental skills, and ideals of American society.
2. Integrate Social Studies curriculum and instruction with other subject areas as appropriate.
3. Enable students to access, process, and assimilate relevant information from a variety of sources.

4. Develop in students the ability and desire to employ critical thinking, decision making, and problem solving strategies.
5. Enable students to apply the social scientific method toward understanding social- political participation skills.
6. Encourage students to participate actively in their society by exercising appropriate social-political participation skills.
7. Enable students to apply knowledge and concepts from history, geography, and the social sciences toward understanding the dynamics of personal-social experience.
8. Instill in students a commitment to basic ideals of American society.
9. Develop in students an understanding of the uniqueness, similarities, and interdependence of regions, nations, and peoples in a global age.
10. Encourage students to respect the dignity of the individual regardless of ethnicity, race, gender, handicap or other attribute.
11. Enable students to identify, cultivate, and build upon unique abilities in themselves and others for the benefit of all.
12. Preserve students' desire for continued learning.

## Program Overview

The middle school social studies teachers deliver content daily to students in grades sixth through eight. The lessons are integrated with science, language arts, math, arts, and character education. The infusion of these other subject areas takes place throughout the year depending on the subject matter. The district has established time allocations for social studies instruction at the middle school level.

Sixth Grade:	200 minutes per week
Seventh Grade	200 minutes per week
Eighth Grade	200 minutes per week

The sixth grade curriculum is a world history survey course, which is organized around civilizations studied throughout history. The course begins with a brief discussion of geography skills and an introduction to the importance of culture. It moves into discussion of ancient civilization and into medieval Europe and Ancient Africa. Lessons are designed with a heavy emphasis on skill development and intended to build off of the foundation laid in fifth grade. The seventh grade curriculum is a world geography course, which introduces critical map skills and an application of those skills by looking at case studies around the world. The eighth grade curriculum is an American History course, which begins with explorers and culminates with a discussion of early twentieth century life. There is a great deal of emphasis on reading critically and writing skills.

**Each grade level includes the following interwoven learning objectives:**

❖ Social Scientific Problem Solving

- Students are taught to recognize a problem, make relevant hypothesis, select pertinent data, test their hypothesis, and reach conclusions and apply their conclusions to new situations.

❖ Decision Making

- Students are taught to define goals, identify alternatives, analyze alternatives and choose the best alternative.

❖ Social Political Participation Skills

- Students participate in persuading, compromising and debating as they identify situations in which social action is required and then work to influence those in positions of social power.

❖ Critical Thinking

- Students are taught to distinguish between fact and opinion, distinguish relevant from irrelevant information, determine the credibility of a source, detect bias, determine the strength of an argument or claim, move from specific to general, and make inferences from available information.

❖ Cooperative Skills

- Students learn to contribute to the support climate of a group, participate in making rules for a group, and be an active participant in a group.

❖ Personal Skills

- Students learn to communicate their convictions, feelings, or beliefs, adjust their behavior to fit the dynamics of the situation, appreciate alternative perspective, and respect individual differences and similarities.

## **Curricular Alignment**

The desired outcomes for social studies instruction are based on New Jersey's Core Curriculum Content Standards. For social studies, there are six standards that must be addressed by the curricula. Under each standard is a set of Cumulative Progress Indicators (CPI) that should be met by the conclusion of eighth grade. They are:

### 6.1 ALL STUDENTS WILL UTILIZE HISTORICAL THINKING, PROBLEM SOLVING, AND RESEARCH SKILLS TO MAXIMIZE THEIR UNDERSTANDING OF CIVICS, HISTORY, GEOGRAPHY, AND ECONOMICS.

-Building upon the knowledge and skills gained in the previous grades, by the end of Grade 8 students will:

#### A. Social Studies Skills

1. Analyze how events are related over time.
2. Use critical thinking skills to interpret events, recognize bias, point of view, and context.
3. Assess the credibility of primary and secondary sources.
4. Analyze data in order to see persons and events in context.
5. Examine current issues, events, or themes and relate them to past events.
6. Formulate questions based on information needs.
7. Use effective strategies for locating information.
8. Compare and contrast competing interpretations of current and historical events.
9. Interpret events considering continuity and change, the role of chance, oversight and error, and changing interpretations by historians.
10. Distinguish fact from fiction by comparing sources about figures and events with fictionalized characters and events.
11. Summarize information in written, graphic, and oral formats.

### 6.2 (CIVICS) ALL STUDENTS WILL KNOW, UNDERSTAND AND APPRECIATE THE VALUES AND PRINCIPLES OF AMERICAN DEMOCRACY AND THE RIGHTS, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND ROLES OF A CITIZEN IN THE NATION AND THE WORLD.

Building upon knowledge and skills gained in preceding grades, by the end of Grade 8, students will:

#### A. Civic Life, Politics, and Government

1. Discuss the sources, purposes, and functions of law and the importance of the rule of law for the preservation of individual rights and the common good.

2. Describe the underlying values and principles of democracy and distinguish these from authoritarian forms of government.
3. Discuss the major characteristics of democratic governments.
4. Describe the processes of local government.
5. Discuss examples of domestic policies and agencies that impact American lives, including the Environmental Protection Agency (e.g., clean air and water), the Department of Labor (e.g., minimum wage) and the Internal Revenue Service (e.g., Social Security, income tax).\*
6. Explain how non-governmental organizations influence legislation and policies at the federal, state, and local levels.\*

#### B. American Values and Principles

1. Analyze how certain values including individual rights, the common good, self-government, justice, equality and free inquiry are fundamental to American public life.
2. Describe representative government and explain how it works to protect the majority and the minority.
3. Describe the continuing struggle to bring all groups of Americans into the mainstream of society with the liberties and equality to which all are entitled, as exemplified by individuals such as Susan B. Anthony, Frederick Douglass, Nat Turner, Paul Robeson, and Cesar Chavez.

#### C. The Constitution and American Democracy

1. Discuss the major principles of the Constitution, including shared powers, checks and balances, separation of church and state, and federalism.
2. Compare and contrast the purposes, organization, functions, and interactions of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of national, state, and local governments and independent regulatory agencies.
3. Discuss the role of political parties in the American democratic system including candidates, campaigns, financing, primary elections, and voting systems.
4. Discuss major historical and contemporary conflicts over United States constitutional principles, including judicial review in *Marbury v. Madison*, slavery in the *Dred Scott Decision*, separate but equal in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, and the rights of minorities in the *Indian Removal Act*.
5. Discuss major historical and contemporary conflicts over New Jersey constitutional principles.
6. Research contemporary issues involving the constitutional rights of American citizens and other individuals residing in the United States, including voting rights, habeas corpus, rights of the accused, and the Patriot Act.

#### D. Citizenship

1. Discuss the rights and responsibilities of American citizens, including obeying laws, paying taxes, serving on juries, and voting in local, state, and national elections.

2. Discuss how the rights of American citizens may be in conflict with each other (e.g., right to privacy vs. free press).
3. Describe major conflicts that have arisen from diversity (e.g., land and suffrage for Native Americans, civil rights, women's rights) and discuss how the conflicts have been addressed.
4. Explain the benefits, costs, and conflicts of a diverse nation.
5. Discuss basic contemporary issues involving the personal, political, and economic rights of American citizens (e.g., dress codes, sexual harassment, fair trial, free press, minimum wage).

#### E. International Education: Global Challenges, Cultures, and Connections

1. Analyze ways in which nation-states interact with one another through trade, diplomacy, cultural exchanges, treaties or agreements, humanitarian aid, economic incentives and sanctions, and the use or threat of military force.
2. Discuss factors that lead to a breakdown of order among nation-states (e.g., conflicts about national interests, ethnicity, and religion; competition for territory or resources; absence of effective means to enforce international law) and describe the consequences of the breakdown of order.
3. Compare and contrast the powers the Constitution gives to Congress, the President, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and the federal judiciary regarding foreign affairs.
4. Evaluate current United States foreign policy issues and strategies and their impact on the nation and the rest of the world.
5. Discuss the purposes and functions of major international organizations (e.g., United Nations, World Health Organization, International Red Cross, Amnesty International) and the role of the United States within each.
6. Describe how one's heritage includes personal history and experiences, culture, customs, and family background.
7. Analyze how the life, culture, economics, politics, and the media of the United States impact the rest of the world.
8. Discuss how global challenges are interrelated, complex, and changing and that even local issues may have a global dimension (e.g., environmental issues, transportation).
9. Discuss how cultures may change and that individuals may identify with more than one culture.
10. Engage in activities that foster understanding of various cultures (e.g., clubs, dance groups, sports, travel, community celebrations).
11. Discuss the impact of the Internet and technology on global communication.
12. Discuss the impact of stereotyping on relationships, achievement, and life goals.
13. Analyze how prejudice and discrimination may lead to genocide as well as other acts of hatred and violence for the purposes of subjugation and exploitation.

6.3 (WORLD HISTORY) ALL STUDENTS WILL DEMONSTRATE KNOWLEDGE OF WORLD HISTORY IN ORDER TO UNDERSTAND LIFE AND EVENTS IN THE PAST AND HOW THEY RELATE TO THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE.

Building upon knowledge and skills gained in the preceding grades, by the end of Grade 8, students will:

A. The Birth of Civilization to 1000 BCE

1. Describe the physical and cultural changes that shaped the earliest human communities as revealed through scientific methods, including:
  - Early hominid development, including the development of language and writing
  - Migration and adaptation to new environments
  - Differences between wild and domestic plants and animals
  - Locations of agricultural settlements
  - Differences between hunter/gatherer, fishing, and agrarian communities
2. Describe how environmental conditions impacted the development of different human communities (e.g., population centers, impact of the last Ice Age).
3. Compare and contrast the economic, political, and environmental factors (e.g., climate, trade, geography) that led to the development of major ancient civilizations including Mesopotamia (e.g., Hammurabi's Code), Egypt, the Indus Valley, the Yellow River, and Kush (Nubia).

B. Early Human Societies to 500CE

1. Explain the historical context, origins, beliefs, and moral teachings of the major world religions and philosophies, including:
  - The origins of Judaism and Christianity and the emergence of the Judeo-Christian tradition
  - The influence of Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism on the formation of Chinese civilization
  - Hinduism, the Aryan migrations, and the caste system in India
  - The influence of Buddhism in India
2. Describe the political framework of Athenian society and its influence on modern society, including:
  - The influence of Athenian political ideals on public life
  - The importance of participatory government
  - The role of women in Athenian society, their rights under law, and possible reasons why democracy was limited to males
  - Athenian ideas and practices related to political freedom, national security, and justice
3. Describe the social and political characteristics of the Greek city-states, including:
  - Similarities and differences between Athenian democracy and Spartan military aristocracy
  - Location and political structure of the city-states
  - Hierarchical relationships in Greek societies

- Civic, economic, and social tasks performed by men and women of different classes
4. Describe the significant contributions of ancient Greece to Western Civilization, including:
    - Characteristics of Classic Greek art and architecture and how they are reflected in modern art and architecture
    - Socrates' values and ideas
    - Philosophy, including Plato and Aristotle
    - Greek Drama, including Sophocles and Euripides
    - History, including Herodotus, Xenophon, and Thucydides
    - Greek mythology
  5. Discuss the cultural influences of Greece, Egypt, Persia, and India on Mediterranean cultures through assimilation, conquest, migration, and trade.
  6. Discuss the origins and social framework of Roman society, including:
    - The geographic location of various ethnic groups on the Italian peninsula and their influence on early Roman society
    - The legends of the founding of Rome and how they reflect the beliefs and values of its citizens
    - Daily life in Rome and Pompeii
  7. Describe the political and social framework of Roman society, including:
    - Political and social institutions of the Roman Republic and reasons for its transformation from Republic to Empire
    - The influence of key Roman leaders
  8. Analyze how shifts in the political framework of Roman society impacted the expansion of the empire and how this expansion transformed Roman society, economy, and culture.
  9. Discuss the political events that may have contributed to the decline of the Roman Empire, including internal divisions, significant battles, invasions, and political changes.
  10. Describe the development of the Mayan civilization from agricultural community to an urban civilization, including the influence of the environment on agricultural methods, water utilization, and herding methods.
  11. Describe the significant features of Mayan civilization, including the locations of Mayan city-states, road systems, and sea routes, the role and status of elite men and women in Mayan society and their portrayal in Mayan architecture, the role of religion and ceremonial games in Mayan culture, and the structure and purpose of the Mayan pyramids.
- C. Expanding Zones of Exchange and Interaction to 1400 CE
1. Discuss how Western civilization arose from a synthesis of Christianity and classical Greco-Roman civilization with the cultures of northern European peoples.
  2. Discuss the spread of Islam in Southwest Asia, the Mediterranean region, and Northern Africa and the influence of Islamic ideas and practices on other cultures and social behavior, including:
    - The origin and development of Islamic law

- The significance of the Quran and the Five Pillars of Islam
  - The diverse religious, cultural, and geographic factors that influenced the ability of the Muslim government to rule
  - The split into Sunni and Shi'ite factions
  - The importance of Muslim civilization in mediating long-distance commercial, cultural, intellectual, and food crop exchange across Eurasia and parts of Africa
3. Discuss the significance of the developing cultures of Asia, including the Golden Age in China and spread of Chinese civilization to Japan, Korea, and Southeast Asia and the rise of the Mongol Empire and its impact on the Kievan Rus.
  4. Analyze the rise of the West African Empires of Ghana, Mali, and Songhay and compare with changes in Asia, Europe, and the Americas.
  5. Analyze the relationships between Mesoamerican and Andean societies, including:
    - The growth of urban societies and urban planning
    - Religions and rituals
    - Governing structure and economy
    - The construction of the Mesoamerican calendar
    - Similarities in agriculture, societal structures, and artisan craft
  6. Explain the medieval origins of constitutional government in England (e.g., Edward I, Magna Carta, Model Parliament of 1295, Common Law).
  7. Discuss the evolution of significant political, economic, social and cultural institutions and events that shaped European medieval society, including Catholic and Byzantine churches, feudalism and manorialism, the Crusades, the rise of cities, and changing technology.

#### D. The Age of Global Encounters (1400-1750)

1. Discuss factors that contributed to oceanic travel and exploration in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, including technological innovations in ship building navigation, naval warfare, navigational inventions such as the compass, and the impact of wind currents on the major trade routes.
2. Describe the significant contributions of the Renaissance and Reformation to European society, including major achievements in literature, music, painting, sculpture, and architecture.
3. Compare the social and political elements of Incan and Aztec societies, including the major aspects of government, the role of religion, daily life, economy, and social organization.

**6.4 (UNITED STATES AND NEW JERSEY HISTORY) ALL STUDENTS WILL DEMONSTRATE KNOWLEDGE OF UNITED STATES AND NEW JERSEY HISTORY IN ORDER TO UNDERSTAND LIFE AND EVENTS IN THE PAST AND HOW THEY RELATE TO THE PRESENT AND FUTURE.**

Building upon knowledge and skills gained in preceding grades, by the end of Grade 8, students will:

**A. Family and Community Life**

Reinforce indicators from previous grade levels.

**B. State and Nation**

Reinforce indicators from previous grade levels.

**C. Many Worlds Meet (to 1620)**

1. Discuss factors that stimulated European overseas explorations between the 15<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries and the impact of that exploration on the modern world.
2. Trace the major land and water routes of the explorers.
3. Compare the political, social, economic, and religious systems of Africans, Europeans, and Native Americans who converged in the western hemisphere after 1492 (e.g., civic values, population levels, family structure, communication, use of natural resources).
4. Discuss the characteristics of the Spanish and Portuguese exploration and conquest of the Americas, including Spanish interaction with the Incan and Aztec empires, expeditions in the American Southwest, and the social composition of early settlers and their motives for exploration and conquest.
5. Describe the migration of the ancestors of the Lenape Indians and their culture at the time of first contact with Europeans.
6. Compare and contrast historic Native American groups of the West, Southwest, Northwest, Arctic and sub-Arctic, Great Plains, and Eastern Woodland regions at the beginning of European exploration.
7. Analyze the cultures and interactions of peoples in the Americas, Western Europe, and Africa after 1450 including the transatlantic slave trade.
8. Discuss how millions of Africans, brought against their will from Central Africa to the Americas, including Brazil, Caribbean nations, North America and other destinations, retained their humanity, their families, and their cultures during enslavement.

**D. Colonization and Settlement (1585-1763)**

1. Analyze the political, social, and cultural characteristics of the English colonies.
2. Describe the political, religious, social, and economic institutions that emerged in Colonial America, including New Netherland and colonial New Jersey.
3. Explain the differences in colonization of the Americas by England, the Netherlands, France, and Spain, including governance, relation to the mother countries, and interactions with other colonies and Native Americans.
4. Examine the interactions between Native Americans and European settlers, such as agriculture, trade, cultural exchanges, and military alliances and conflicts.

5. Describe Native American resistance to colonization, including the Cherokee War against the English, the French and Indian War, and King George's War.
  6. Identify factors that account for the establishment of African slavery in the Americas.
  7. Discuss Spanish exploration, settlement, and missions in the American Southwest.
- E. Revolution and the New Nation (1754-1820)
1. Discuss the background and major issues of the American Revolution, including the political and economic causes and consequences of the revolution.
  2. Discuss the major events (e.g. Boston Tea Party, Battle of Trenton) and personalities (e.g., George Washington, John Adams, John Witherspoon, William Franklin, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson) of the American Revolution.
  3. Identify major British and American leaders and describe their roles in key events, such as the First and Second Continental Congresses, drafting and approving the Declaration of Independence (1776), the publication of "Common Sense," and major battles of the Revolutionary War.
  4. Explain New Jersey's critical role in the American Revolution, including major battles, the involvement of women and African Americans, and the origins of the movement to abolish slavery.
  5. Discuss the political and philosophical origins of the United States Constitution and its implementation in the 1790s.
  6. Describe and map American territorial expansions and the settlement of the frontier during this period.
  7. Analyze the causes and consequences of continuing conflict between Native American tribes and colonists (e.g., Tecumseh's rebellion).
  8. Discuss the background and major issues of the War of 1812 (e.g., sectional issues, role of Native Americans).
- F. Expansion and Reform (1801-1861)
1. Describe the political, economic, and social changes in New Jersey and American society preceding the Civil War, including the early stages of industrialization, the growth of cities, and the political, legal, and social controversies surrounding the expansion of slavery.
  2. Discuss American cultural, religious, and social reform movements in the antebellum period (e.g., abolitionists, the Second Great Awakening, the origins of the labor and women's movements).
  3. Explain the concept of the Manifest Destiny and its relationship to the westward movement of settlers and territorial expansion, including the purchase of Florida (1819), the annexation of Texas (1845), the acquisition of the Oregon Territory (1846), and territorial acquisition resulting from the Mexican War (1846-1848).
  4. Explain the characteristics of political and social reform movements in the antebellum period in New Jersey, including the 1844 State Constitution, the temperance movement, the abolition movement, and the women's rights movement.
  5. Explain the importance of internal improvements on the transformation of New Jersey's economy through New Jersey's two canals and the Camden and Amboy Railroad.

6. Discuss the economic history of New Jersey, including growth of major industries and businesses, the lives of factory workers, and occupations of working people.
  7. Compare political interests and views regarding the War of 1812 (e.g., US responses to shipping harassment, interests of Native Americans and white settlers in the Northwest Territory).
  8. Discuss sectional compromises associated with westward expansion of slavery, such as the Missouri Compromise (1820) and the continued resistance to slavery by African Americans (e.g., Amistad Revolt).
  9. Describe and map the continuing territorial expansion and settlement of the frontier, including the acquisition of new territories and conflicts with Native Americans, the Louisiana Purchase, the Lewis and Clark expedition, and the California gold rush.
  10. Explain how state and federal policies influenced various Native American tribes (e.g., homeland vs. resettlement, Black Hawk War, Trail of Tears).
  11. Understand the institution of slavery in the United States, resistance to it, and New Jersey's role in the Underground Railroad.
- G. Civil War and Reconstruction (1850-1877)
1. Explain the major events, issues, and personalities of the American Civil War including:
    - The causes of the Civil War (e.g., slavery, states' rights)
    - The course and conduct of the war (e.g., Antietam, Vicksburg, Gettysburg)
    - Sectionalism
    - The Dred Scott and other Supreme Court decisions
    - The role of women
    - The role of African Americans
    - The Gettysburg Address
    - The Emancipation Proclamation
    - Juneteenth Independence Day
  2. Analyze different points of view in regard to New Jersey's role in the Civil War, including abolitionist sentiment in New Jersey and New Jersey's vote in the elections of 1860 and 1864.
  3. Explain Reconstruction as a government action, how it worked, and its effects after the war.
  4. Discuss the impact of retaliatory state laws and general Southern resistance to Reconstruction.
  5. Discuss the Dawes Act of 1887, how it attempted to assimilate Native Americans by converting tribal lands to individual ownership, and its impact on Native Americans

## 6.5 (ECONOMICS) ALL STUDENTS WILL ACQUIRE AN UNDERSTANDING OF KEY ECONOMIC PRINCIPLES.

Building upon knowledge and skills gained in preceding grades, by the end of Grade 8, students will:

### A. Economic Literacy

1. Discuss how needs and wants change as one ages and the impact of planning, spending and saving.
2. Explain the law of supply and demand.
3. Compare ways to save money, including checking and savings accounts, stocks and bonds, and the relationship between risk and return in investments.
4. Describe the role credit plays in the economy and explain the difference in cost between cash and credit purchases.
5. Discuss the economic growth of a nation in terms of increasing productivity, investment in physical capital, and investment in human capital.
6. Describe how private industry acquires material and energy resources, provides jobs, raises financial capital, manages production processes, and markets goods and services that create wealth in order to meet consumer and industrial requirements.
7. Discuss how innovation, entrepreneurship, competition, customer satisfaction, and continuous improvement in productivity are responsible for the rise in the standard of living in the United States and other countries with market economies
8. Compare and contrast the characteristics of the three basic economic systems: traditional or barter and trade, market capitalism, and command (e.g., communism).
9. Explain what taxes are, how they are collected, and how tax dollars are used by local, state, and national governments to provide goods and services.

### B. Economics and Society

1. Discuss how meeting the needs and wants of a growing world population impacts the environment and economic growth.
2. Describe the many ways federal, state, and local governments raise funds to meet the need for public facilities and government services.
3. Discuss how societies have been affected by industrialization and by different political and economic philosophies.
4. Describe how inventions and innovations have improved standards of living over the course of history.
5. Compare and contrast various careers, examining educational requirements and costs, salary and benefits, longevity, impact on society and the economy, and
6. Analyze and give examples of how business and industry influence the buying decisions of consumers through advertising.
7. Discuss the need for ethical behavior in economic decisions and financial transactions.

6.6 (GEOGRAPHY) ALL STUDENTS WILL APPLY KNOWLEDGE OF SPATIAL RELATIONSHIPS AND OTHER GEOGRAPHIC SKILLS TO UNDERSTAND HUMAN BEHAVIOR IN RELATION TO THE PHYSICAL AND CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT.

Building upon knowledge and skills gained in preceding grades, by the end of Grade 8, students will:

A. The World in Spatial Terms

1. Distinguish among the distinct characteristics of maps, globes, graphs, charts, diagrams, and other geographical representations, and the utility of each in solving problems.
2. Translate maps into appropriate spatial graphics to display geographical information.
3. Explain the spatial concepts of relative and absolute location and distance.
4. Estimate distances between two places on a map using a scale of miles, and use cardinal and intermediate directions when referring to a relative location.
5. Use geographic tools and technologies to pose and answer questions about spatial distributions and patterns on Earth.
6. Distinguish among the major map types, including physical, political, topographic, and demographic.
7. Explain the distribution of major human and physical features at country and global scales.
8. Use thematic maps to describe places (e.g., patterns of population, diseases, rainfall).
9. Describe and distinguish among the various map projections, including size, shape, distance, and direction.
10. Describe location technologies, such as Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Global Positioning Systems (GPS).
11. Describe the significance of the major cities of New Jersey, the United States, and the world.

B. Places and Regions

1. Compare and contrast the physical and human characteristics of places in regions in New Jersey, the United States, and the world.
2. Describe how regions change over time.
3. Compare the natural characteristics used to define a region.
4. Explain how regional systems are interconnected (e.g., watersheds, trade, transportation systems).
5. Discuss how the geography of New Jersey impacts transportation, industry, and community development (not specifically).
6. Discuss the similarities and differences among rural, suburban, and urban communities.
7. Describe the types of regions and the influence and effects of region labels including:
  - Formal regions: school districts, states

- Functional regions: marketing area of a newspaper, fan base of a sport team
- Perceptual regions: the Bible Belt, the Riviera in southern France

#### C. Physical Systems

1. Describe the characteristics and spatial distribution of major Earth ecosystems.
2. Discuss how ecosystems function locally and globally.
3. Predict effects of physical processes and changes on the Earth.
4. Discuss how the community and its environment function as an ecosystem.
5. Describe how the physical environment affects life in different regions (e.g., population density, architecture, transportation systems, industry, building materials, land use, recreation).

#### D. Human Systems

1. Discuss how technology affects the ways in which people perceive and use places and regions.
2. Analyze demographic characteristics to explain reasons for variations between populations.
3. Compare and contrast the primary geographic causes for world trade.
4. Analyze the patterns of settlement in different urban regions of the world.
5. Discuss how and why people cooperate, but also engage in conflict, to control the Earth's surface.
6. Compare the patterns and processes of past and present human migration.
7. Explain and identify examples of global interdependence.
8. Describe how physical and human characteristics of regions change over time.

#### E. Environment and Society

1. Discuss the environmental impacts or intended and unintended consequences of major technological changes (e.g., autos and fossil fuels, nuclear power and nuclear waste).
2. Analyze the impact of various human activities and social policies on the natural environment and describe how humans have attempted to solve environmental problems through adaptation and modification.
3. Compare and contrast conservation practices and alternatives for energy resources.
4. Compare and contrast various ecosystems and describe their interrelationship and interdependence.
5. Describe world, national, and local patterns of resource distribution and utilization, and discuss the political and social impact.
6. Analyze the importance of natural and manufactured resources in New Jersey.
7. Delineate and evaluate the issues involved with sprawl, open space, and smart growth in New Jersey.

### Comparison to Benchmarked Districts

William Annin Middle School was compared to seven other middle schools with similar socioeconomic status. The committee focused their attention on the number and type of courses offered. The seven comparison schools were:

#### Required Courses

<b>School</b>	<b>Sixth Grade</b>	<b>Seventh Grade</b>	<b>Eighth Grade</b>
<i>William Annin Middle School</i>	World History Survey	World Geography	American History
<i>Chatham</i>	World Cultures	American History-1865-present	Civics/World History
<i>Hillsborough</i>	American History	World History	Global Studies
<i>Holmdel</i>	Early American History	American History-1865-present	World History Survey
<i>Livingston</i>	World Geography	American History	World Cultures/History
<i>Millburn</i>	World History Survey	Culture of Eastern Hemisphere	American History
<i>Montgomery</i>	Culture of Western Hemisphere (North America, South America)	Culture of Eastern Hemisphere (Far East, Russia, Middle East)	Government and Civics
<i>Princeton</i>	World History	World Geography	Civics

### Perception of the Program

In 2003, parent opinion inventories, student opinion inventories, and teacher opinion inventories were administered district-wide through the National Study of School Evaluation. Some selected responses related to social studies at the Middle School are indicated below.

Response choices were: Strongly Agree (SA)/Agree (A), Neutral (N), Disagree (D)/Strongly Disagree (SD), or Not Applicable (N/A).

Statement	SA/A	N	SD/D	N/A
Parent Opinion Inventories				
<b><i>Our school is doing a good job in Social Studies.</i></b>	89.4%	3.5%	6.2%	0.9%
<b><i>Our school is preparing students to deal with issues and problems they will face in the future.</i></b>	67.9%	18.3%	12.1%	1.7%
<b><i>Our school is doing a good job of helping students understand their moral and ethical responsibilities.</i></b>	67.6%	19.3%	11.4%	1.8%
<b><i>Our school's programs help students to understand and get along with other people.</i></b>	65.5%	20.4%	12.4%	1.8%
<b><i>Students see a relationship between what they are studying and their everyday lives.</i></b>	55.6%	23.5%	16.5%	4.3%
Student Opinion Inventories				
<b><i>Our school is preparing students to deal with issues and problems they will face in the future.</i></b>	62.7%	22.1%	14.0%	1.1%
<b><i>Technology is incorporated into instruction in many classes.</i></b>	56.6%	25.9%	14.8%	2.8%
<b><i>Students see a relationship between what they are studying and their everyday lives.</i></b>	34.6%	35.6%	26.9%	2.9%
<b><i>Teachers provide instructional activities that involve students in their learning.</i></b>	69.1%	20.9%	8.9%	1.1%
<b><i>Homework that I am expected to complete helps me improve my learning.</i></b>	41.5%	26.6%	31.4%	0.6%
Teacher Opinion Inventories				
<b><i>Our school is doing a good job in Social Studies.</i></b>	90.8%	4.6%	0%	4.6%
<b><i>Our school is preparing students to deal with issues and problems they will face in the future.</i></b>	78.5%	15.4%	6.2%	0%
<b><i>Technology is available to sufficiently support instruction.</i></b>	78.5%	10.8%	10.7%	0%

## Sixth Grade

### Current Status

#### • Curriculum Focus

The current sixth grade social studies course is a world history survey course, which covers thirteen different time periods and regions. Each unit incorporates a geography focus as well as critical skill development at each unit progression. The thirteen units consist of:

- ◆ Geography Skills
- ◆ Culture
- ◆ Mesopotamia
- ◆ Ancient Egypt
- ◆ Ancient Greece
- ◆ Ancient Rome
- ◆ The Middle Ages
- ◆ Geography of Africa
- ◆ African Civilizations
- ◆ Ancient India
- ◆ Ancient China
- ◆ Japan, and
- ◆ Korea.

Several language arts themes are woven throughout the sixth grade curriculum. For example, Greek Mythology is studied in reading, English, and social studies simultaneously.

#### • Staffing

There are currently four sixth grade teachers, two of whom are tenured and two are non-tenured.

#### • Text

The textbook used is called Discover our Heritage with a 2003 copyright date.

### **Changes Since Last Evaluation**

The sixth grade curriculum was last reviewed in 1996 as part of a K-8 Social Studies program evaluation. Although the curriculum has not been reviewed since then, there were curriculum revisions in 2000. The revisions in 2000 had addressed the major recommendations during the 1996 report. More emphasis was placed on critical skill development at all grade levels and articulation between each year.

### **Areas of Strength**

The sixth grade curriculum has many notable strengths that were echoed by all teachers at that grade level. The sixth grade staff noted their reliance on supplemental materials purchased by the William Annin Media Center. These materials were vital to engaging students in meaningful activities, which supported the text. Since a variety of instructional materials are used, teachers are better able to effectively match the content with the developmental level of their students. The media center has a vast selection of videos, computer programs, and supplemental books for use by classroom teachers. For example, the Jackdaws series of primary source pictures of ancient civilizations as well as the lesson plan activities that accompany them. The department has also purchased supplemental resources. A few examples of these are the following:

1. World History Unfolding Transparencies  
The objectives of this series are to interpret and use primary sources, master the art of answering document based questions, and effectively answer historical based questions.
2. History Alive Series  
The objectives and uses for this set of lessons include graphic organizers, color transparencies, an audio CD to accompany the lessons, geography and timeline challenges, and Internet projects/resources.

### 3. Nystrom Map Activities

The Nystrom materials used are vital for students to make connections between location and place and the people living in those locations. This includes wall maps, desk maps and atlases.

The textbook also supported student success through the use of web-based activities, which reinforce material covered during school. Throughout the school year, other activities are designed to make the experience of learning history hands-on. One example of these activities is the creation of a board game incorporating a map of and facts from the ancient history of India and China. Students acquire skills such as formulating appropriate questions, identifying subtopics and keywords, identify the main idea and search for relevant information, identify roles of different members of a group, and formulate appropriate questions. Other examples are the following:

- Creation of cuneiform tablets, cartouches and Arabic writings
- Cave drawings
- Family coat of arms
- Stained glass windows
- Geography/culture collages
- Map of individual neighborhoods where students must incorporate geography skills.
- Clay topography map of Africa
- Reading and writing is also emphasized with particular focus placed on editing and revising. A cross-curricular unit has been designed for the Middle Ages during which sixth grade teacher's work together to develop content specific activities. For example, large-scale projections are drawn using medieval pictures in math, medieval castles are constructed in social studies, and research about the daily life during the time period takes place in language arts. Through this cross-curricular project, students acquire skills such as the following:
  - Evaluate the credibility and reliability of various sources
  - Organize information from a variety of sources into a structured presentation using more than one form of representation

Ultimately, sixth grade staff is better able to create authentic assignments, which challenge students and actively engage them in a variety of activities.

### **Areas Needing Improvement**

The sixth grade teachers felt that there needed to be a greater focus on the writing process and these ideas should be incorporated into more activities, which highlight outlining, sequencing, and chronological order development. For example, students need to further develop skills such as the use of graphic organizers to organize thoughts. Students also need to transfer information learned from one unit into the next, allowing them to make comparisons and connections throughout the school year. Students acquire this skill throughout the year in various ways. For example, in every unit students need to use their basic knowledge of geography to interpret the various locations of civilizations. Another example of students using their previous knowledge to transfer information is comparing some of the earliest forms of government such as Hammurabi's code to the development of democracy in Ancient Greece. Activities such as these will allow them to develop critical thinking skills and apply knowledge to their daily life. Furthermore, students need to be able to transfer knowledge obtained through the text and other sources into their own words to show greater depth of understanding. It is noted that students have a hard time condensing large amounts of information into more manageable pieces for studying purposes. This is further evidenced by the fact that students have a hard time selecting the main idea in a given amount of material. The supervisor and teachers felt that there needed to be greater articulation between language arts teachers and social studies teachers in terms of curricular expectations to avoid overlap of instruction.

Teachers also felt that students needed a stronger geography skill base upon entering sixth grade, as they have to spend significant amounts of time at the beginning of

the course in remedial activities. Basic geography skills such as cardinal and intermediate directions, longitude and latitude, map skills, and awareness of geographical features of the earth, are lacking and need to be refined and reviewed before entering the middle school. This will allow for more in depth instruction in the sixth grade and more efficient use of time in terms of addressing curriculum standards.

A greater emphasis on the effective use of technology at the sixth grade level was noted. Teachers stressed that the use of LCD projectors and laptops could greatly enhance the curriculum implementation process. The use of Webquests and research depend on the use of at least five computers or laptops per class and also help facilitate several cooperative activities.

### **Recommendations**

- 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.
- 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).
- 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.

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

- 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.
- 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.

Examples include:

- Research local community resources and create a map using geographical skills learned. Students could have the option of creating a contour map, physical map, political map, vegetation map, topographical map, etc.
- Research different cultures and compare and contrast the various aspects of the cultures including daily life, rituals and government.
- Compare the causes and effects of how the land of Mesopotamia affected the development of the early civilization and how the area has progressed.
- Students practice the skill of highlighting and finding the main idea with the use of supplemental readings. Students will then use the knowledge learned to paraphrase information. Because of the extensive writings on ancient Egypt, this would work well in this unit.
- Compose logical questions and answers from all levels of Bloom's Taxonomy to create a board game about ancient China and ancient India. The students will use these questions to assess their learning on the content matter.
- Analyze photographs of ancient architecture and art in ancient Greece and Rome and compare and contrast the similarities and differences.
- Students use technology to create a visual presentation of how the geography, climate, and regions of Africa have affected its development. This will help them to understand the historical significance of the themes of geography in the area.
- Compare the different lifestyles of the people of Japan and Korea and why they developed so differently from the other civilizations studied.

## Seventh Grade

### Current Status

#### • Curriculum Focus

The current seventh grade curriculum focuses on world geography. The course begins with an overview of the five themes of geography along with basic map and data interpretation skills interwoven. The next introductory units focus on resources, physical geography, and global economics. The course then shifts to an application of these themes to every continent of the world. The course studies the following regions:

- ◆ United States
- ◆ Canada
- ◆ Latin America
- ◆ Western and Northern Europe
- ◆ Southern and Eastern Europe
- ◆ Russia and it's Near Abroad (former USSR region)
- ◆ Southwest Asia and North Africa
- ◆ Middle East
- ◆ Southeast Asia
- ◆ East Asia
- ◆ South Asia
- ◆ Australia
- ◆ Pacific Islands
- ◆ Antarctica, and
- ◆ Sub-Saharan Africa

#### • Staffing

There are currently four seventh grade teachers, two of whom are tenured and two are non-tenured.

#### • Text

The textbook used is called World Geography Today with a 2000 copyright date.

### **Changes Since Last Evaluation**

The seventh grade curriculum was last reviewed in 1996 as part of a K-8 Social Studies program evaluation. Although the curriculum has not been reviewed since then there were curriculum revisions in 2000. There is no longer a separate unit on world climate. Instead the physical geography unit now incorporates climate concepts. The unit on the geography of the United States was added and previously used units on France, Ireland, Monaco, Eastern Europe, and Germany were deleted. Two units of study on the United States have been added, along with units on Latin America and Canada. The individual study of European countries was replaced by regional studies of Europe. These units incorporated a look at Northern and West Central Europe as well as a look at Southern and Eastern Europe. Finally, a unit on the Holocaust was added to augment a seventh grade team wide interdisciplinary study on the subject of the Holocaust.

### **Areas of Strength**

The seventh grade curriculum is effectively able to weave the conceptual study of geography, particularly the five major themes of geography, with more data driven areas such as demographic and economics studies. Examples would include: using multiple map sources to make generalizations about regions and relationships between regions; using data charts to classify countries/regions economically, politically, culturally, and ascertain population patterns; using climate statistics to formulate climate region concepts; using GMT statistics, time zone maps, longitude and latitude statistics to utilize concepts of time to solve real time problems. There is also a great emphasis placed on skill development, which can be utilized in many different areas of study. An ongoing

effort is made to integrate interdisciplinary activities into social studies instruction. For instance, math skills are utilized for effective data interpretation, solving time problems, analyzing climate charts and graphs, interpreting population rates of natural increase. Another instance of such interdisciplinary activity involves World War II scenario journals developed by English classes as a concurrent activity with a social studies unit on the Nazi Era and German History through the World War II Era. These two activities are part of an even larger interdisciplinary activity involving communication arts, English, science, math, and social studies in various Holocaust activities culminating in a two-day Holocaust Remembrance Activity. Science focused on the genetic relationship to the Holocaust, math used a map exercise to visually dramatize the extent of the Holocaust, and communication arts used poetry to express the Holocaust, while the physical education and world languages classes conducted a simulation activity.

There is also a breadth of supplemental materials used which support greater understanding of abstract topics mentioned throughout the course. For example, Material World (a supplemental text) is used to portray the cultural/economic diversity that is evident when shifting from the study of one geographic region to another. Students were also able to make connections between their own lives and the material discussed in class. This is due in large part to the fact that students are exposed to an issue based study of each region which focuses on the consequences of human impact on land, conflict over limited resources, and finally conflict resolution.

### **Areas Needing Improvement**

Teachers noted that this type of course lends itself to effective technology usage. For example, students would benefit greatly from using some type of Global Positioning Software (GPS) to help facilitate an understanding of distance and differences by region. The use of a laptop cart would not only allow students to work with the GPS software In addition by using an LCD Projector teachers would be able to display maps on the screen and manipulate them using computer generated graphics. Through the use of LCD projected maps teachers would be able to display the most up to date maps and manipulate them in a uniform fashion during every class. This also highlighted the lack of up to date photographs, which visually depict the differences between land areas. There is also a need to review and secure useful visual materials such as updated DVDs/videotapes to augment regional studies.

### **Recommendations**

- Purchase GPS/GIS software for use by students at the conclusion of certain regions of study.
- Staff college courses and grade level meetings used to increase content knowledge in other social studies disciplines.
- 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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.
- 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 culture grams (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. 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](http://lonelyplanet.com), [countrywatch.com](http://countrywatch.com), [SIRSdiscoverer.com](http://SIRSdiscoverer.com), [Infotrac](http://Infotrac), and [CIAfactbook.com](http://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 following are suggested as culminating activities for such a Sub-Saharan African unit:
  - a. Venn diagram comparison of North and Sub-Saharan Africa
  - b. Statistical studies of the region to create mystery activities, which challenge students to determine why some countries in the region seem to stand out as exceptions to the overall economic status of the region.
  - c. Sensory place images of both the North African and Sub-Saharan portions of Africa. This enables students to develop their own images of both regions.
  - d. Create flow diagrams that would permit students to create spatial interactions between Sub-Saharan Africa and other regions, especially the US. This would

enable students to understand many of the world's most pressing issues since most such issues are predominantly focused in this region.

- Purchase up-to-date Nystrom wall maps for use in all seventh grade social studies classrooms along with classroom sets of historical atlases.
- Study the benefits of a block period whereby students would have more time to critically study themes of the course.
- Purchase of effective visual materials (software, videos, DVDs, books) to augment the important visual image understandings portion of world geography. Utilize staff college offerings to enable search for suitable visual materials, followed-up by the creation of effective activities.

## **Eighth Grade**

### **Current Status**

- **Curriculum Focus**

The current eighth grade social studies course focuses on American History. The course begins with a study of Native Americans and ends in the early twentieth century. Before beginning the course, students are exposed to the ideas of exploration, discovery, and colonization in previous grade levels. The course is composed of ten units that incorporate the following themes:

- ◆ Colonization
- ◆ American Revolution
- ◆ Constitution
- ◆ Westward Expansion
- ◆ Slavery/Civil War/Reconstruction
- ◆ Industrialization
- ◆ America as a World Power
- ◆ World War I
- ◆ Depression
- ◆ World War II
- ◆ Cold War
- ◆ Space Race
- ◆ Counterculture
- ◆ Energy Crisis
- ◆ Reagan Era, and
- ◆ Persian Gulf War.

- **Staffing**

There are currently three eighth grade teachers, two of whom are tenured and one is non-tenured.

- **Text**

The textbook used is called Call to Freedom with a 2003 copyright date.

**Changes Since Last Evaluation**

The eighth grade curriculum was last reviewed in 1996 as part of a K-8 Social Studies program evaluation. Although the curriculum has not been reviewed since then, there were curricular revisions in 2000. The curriculum was aligned with the New Jersey Core Content Curriculum Standards (NJCCCS) with corresponding essential questions before each unit. There was also an attempt to incorporate technology on a limited basis through the use of guided research on Webquests. Students interact with local civic leaders during the Veterans Day project. There is a great deal of emphasis on the value of multiculturalism and how this idea is a guiding principle throughout the curriculum.

**Strengths**

The eighth grade curriculum provides an opportunity for students to integrate skills from their language arts class and other subject areas. For example, there is a historical fiction unit, which asks students to select an appropriate novel and critique the validity of the novel with an opinion essay. In addition, the textbook provides a great deal of supplemental resources such as sample tests, digital online resources, and links to valuable web resources.

**Areas Needing Improvement**

Teachers felt the curriculum was quite difficult to cover because of the vast time period through which they were expected to move. Teachers noted they were having a difficult time looking at issues, which took place in a given time period in any depth.

**Recommendations**

- 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.
- 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.

**Data Collection**

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development

National Council for the Social Studies

New Jersey Council for the Social Studies

New Jersey Department of Education

New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards