

MELROSE PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SOCIAL STUDIES/HISTORY
PROGRAM REVIEW
October 2013-June 2015

Executive Summary

The findings of the Social Studies/History Program Review self-study are and ensuing action planning are outlined in this document, along with the ensuing action planning. To complete the self-study and action planning, a team of teachers spanning grades K-12 met once a month for two years from October 2013 to June 2015. The Social Studies/History Program Review team developed and utilized the following guiding essential questions throughout the self-study phase of the program review:

- To what extent does social studies/history prepare students for college and career readiness? Which 21st century skills are apparent?
- What is the curriculum in social studies/history? How is it aligned vertically and horizontally?
- What are the best instructional and assessment practices being used in social studies/history? How are they being implemented?
- What are the resources in social studies/history available and what is needed?

Common themes emerged from the review of the social studies curriculum at the elementary level. Common curriculum and assessments have not been clearly outlined at the elementary grades, although there have been some recent efforts during the 2014-2015 school year. In general, elementary teachers have collected and developed curriculums, assessments, and materials independently. Though some staff members utilize social studies-related materials to teach literacy, potential exists to further link instruction and materials with English Language Arts (ELA) to support social studies instruction. Social studies materials vary greatly from building to building. The materials that are available are dated and do not reflect the skills and rigor outlined in the ELA Curriculum Frameworks.

At the middle school level, significant progress has been made in curriculum mapping and the development of common assessments and social studies teachers have access to more curriculum materials at the middle school than the elementary grades. Supplemental teacher resources are also available in most areas, including sixth grade, where staff have new curriculum materials. Common assessments are prevalent in the middle school with all grades using common midyear and final exams, open responses, and document based questions. Research skills are taught at all three grade-levels and emphasize the use of digital and print resources, writing to inform and persuade, and taking notes from a variety of sources. Teachers are updating curriculum maps using principles of Understanding by Design, and essential questions are being revisited and rewritten.

At the high school level, all full-year courses have textbooks, though some are dated. Common assessment sequences exist and include common midyear and final exams, document-based questions, and research tasks. Unit tests and other assignments are only common in some areas and opportunities to improve and align curriculum, horizontally, vertically, and with the Massachusetts ELA Curriculum Frameworks, exist at the high school. Some high school social studies courses require students to read at least one historical non-fiction text, a practice that could be implemented across all courses. The content of courses is often structured around the organization of the textbook. There is an opportunity to take cues from the revised Advanced Placement courses and exams and move from current chronological approach to a more thematic approach.

An action plan is included to address the areas of need identified through the program review process. At the elementary level, the creation of an aligned social studies curriculum map is the priority in addition to identifying materials to deliver the content. At the secondary level, alignment of the current research sequence and the continued refinement of curriculum maps are priorities for the upcoming school year. Also, an examination of results of recent pilots in Advanced Placement (AP) European History and AP U.S. History, and a new pilot in 8th grade Civics, will be a focus at the middle and high school in the coming year. Furthering the use of technology to support social studies instruction at all levels is also an important component of instruction, curriculum, and assessment and will be a priority next year.

The program review found no policy implications but did find budget implications. Materials are dated at the elementary school, as well as in some places at the high school. Teachers' time for planning needs to be allocated to support needed curriculum and assessment development. Integration of technology will require investment in infrastructure and equipment, and teachers will need additional professional development to support the integration of technology. Additionally, there are opportunities to build upon current pilots of project-based learning and build more opportunities for cross-curricular connections.

Improving our social studies curriculum will support goals of citizenship and the development of 21st century learners. Through social studies instruction, students can develop stronger awareness of a global perspective. Alignment of the social studies curriculum can strengthen the teaching of research and informational and writing standards in the Massachusetts ELA Curriculum Frameworks. Students will continually develop the skills needed to read a variety of texts of varying complexity, including speeches, political cartoons, and the founding documents of our nation. The critical thinking skills of drawing conclusions, perspective taking, point of view, making inferences, comparing/contrasting, chronological reasoning, contextualization, synthesizing, and developing arguments from historical evidence are developed in social studies courses through close analysis of multiple texts including primary and secondary sources.

Program Review Process

Members of the Social Studies/History Program Review Team

Elementary

- Jessica Patti, Kindergarten Teacher, Lincoln School
- Carolyn McElligott, Second Grade Teacher, Lincoln School
- Michael Oginski, Second Grade Teacher, Lincoln School
- Stephanie Dembro, Third Grade Teacher, Roosevelt School
- Laurel LaVita, Fourth Grade Teacher, Horace Mann School
- Lindsay Shanahan, Fifth Grade Teacher, Lincoln School
- Krista Murthy, Fifth Grade Teacher, Roosevelt School

Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School

- Morgan Crooks, Seventh Grade History Teacher, MVMMS
- Maureen Connell, Eighth Grade History Teacher, MVMMS

Melrose High School

- Scott Santos, History/Social Science Teacher, MHS
- Lisa Lord, History/Social Science Teacher, MHS
- Timothy Daly, History/Social Science Teacher, MHS

Administrators

- Margaret Adams, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning
- Bryan Corrigan, Director of Social Studies, Grades 6-12
- Jason Merrill, Assistant Principal for Teaching and Learning, MHS

Protocol

The Social Studies/History Program Review Process (PRP) engaged in systematic evaluation consisting of the following three components:

- *Self-Study*

The key work in this phase consists of three stages: 1.) developing essential questions to focus the self-study; 2.) documenting the district's curriculum and instructional resources in preparation for evaluation; 3.) conducting the self-study.

- *Action Planning*

This phase is the district's response to the Program Review Team's report and recommendations. The action plan sets the agenda for program development and curriculum updates/changes, identifies professional development needs, and is used in the budgeting process to allocate resources.

- *Program and Professional Development and Implementation*

This phase is the implementation of updates and/or changes based on the report's recommendations. During this phase professional development is provided and recommended resources are reviewed, piloted, and purchased. The effectiveness of any updates and/or changes are monitored through teacher observation, student achievement, and staff self-reflection and collaboration.

The findings of the Social Studies/History Program Review for self-study and action planning are outlined in this document. To complete the self-study and action planning, a team of teachers spanning grades K-12 met during the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 school year.

Self-Study

This phase of the process involved an in-depth review of the existing program and began actual program evaluation. During this period, the Program Review Team, under the direction of the Assistant Superintendent and the Director for Social Studies/History Grades 6-12, reviewed and documented the course of study at each grade level. In addition, the review process involved the interpretation of assessment data from MCAS and other standardized tests, district determined measures, and draft essential questions to be answered by the review. The team also surveyed students, parents, and staff regarding their experience with the social studies and history curriculum and instruction.

The Program Review Team developed guiding essential questions to serve as a guide for program evaluation. The questions were framed with consideration of alignment to state standards, validation of written curriculum, range of student work, current instructional practices, student performance, and program rigor. The Social Studies/History Program Review team developed the following guiding essential questions used through the self-study phase:

- To what extent does social studies/history prepare students for college and career readiness? For 21st century skills?
- What is the curriculum in social studies/history? How is it aligned vertically and horizontally?
- What are the best instructional and assessment practices being used in social studies/history? How are they being implemented?
- What are the resources in social studies/history available and what is needed?

Components of Program Review

Components of this program review document include discussion of the major findings compiled in the review of student work, curriculum documents, materials, and assessment materials. The Program Review Team reviewed and evaluated curriculum documents and validated them as being representative of what in fact, they do teach. The review team also reviewed assessment data, staffing information, and scope of past professional development efforts. The review process also included surveys or interviews of students, parents, and teachers. This document is an assessment of whether or not each level is meeting each of the specific standards prescribed by the Massachusetts State Framework for the particular curriculum area.

Action Planning

The Program Review Team will draft an action plan based upon its finding. The action plan will be disseminated to stakeholders for review and feedback. This plan establishes short and long-range goals for professional development and outlines proposed changes in the program. Projected budgetary needs are outlined in this plan as well. The Administration and Program Review Team will continue to monitor and document changes in the curriculum with assistance from staff. Every three years the documented curriculum will be reviewed and revised as necessary.

Action Planning Implementation

At this stage, the district will pilot and evaluate program changes and new materials (as necessary). Curriculum documents will also be reviewed and updated to reflect any necessary changes. Proposed new resources will be included in budget development, following review by the Curriculum Materials Working Group. As with all curricula, the administration and staff will continue to articulate K-12 horizontal and vertical alignment. The Administration and the Program Review Team will monitor the implementation and success of the Action Plan.

Summary of Meetings
Year 1

Dates	Topics Reviewed/Tasks Completed
October 21 st	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss program review process. • Identify objectives and essential questions. • Adopt timeline for review.
December 2 nd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed overview of US History II grade 11 curriculum as a model for other courses/curriculum presentations. • Revise questions, essential questions, and review format. • Generate questions for teacher questionnaire/survey. • Generate questions for student survey.
January 6 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elementary teachers present grades K-5 curriculum. • Outline of major themes found at the elementary level.
March 3 rd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Middle school teachers present grades 6-8 curriculum. • High school teachers present grades 9-12 curriculum, focusing only on major courses of World History grade 9 and US History I grade 10. • Review of results of student elementary focus groups. • Outline of major themes found at the middle and high school level.
May 19 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop parent questionnaire and administer before the end of the school year. • Review data from middle school and high school student survey. • Review data from elementary, middle school and high school teacher survey.

Summary of Meetings
Year 2

Dates	Topics Reviewed/Tasks Completed
September 15 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss goals for the coming year. • Review parent survey data.
October 27 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of grade 9-12 parent survey. • Develop site visit protocol.
November 17 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare for site visit and review schedule for site visit. • Develop questions for site visit for focus groups of teachers and students. • Review of draft of findings for elementary, middle and high school.
December 1 st	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Debrief with site visit team.
February 2 nd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin action plan.
March 16 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review final action plan.
May 18 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write executive summary. • Plan school committee presentation. • Review final report in its entirety.

Timeline of Social Studies/History Program Review

Develop guiding essential questions.	October-November 2013
Gather curriculum documents and assessment.	October-November 2013
Gather assessment data. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mid-year and finals grades 6-12 • ELA MCAS data 	October-November 2013
Gather budget and staffing information.	October-November 2013
Ongoing collection of student work.	December-June 2014
Review of information collected by level. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grades 9-12 • Grades 6-8 • Elementary 	December-June 2014
Survey teacher and students.	February 2014
Conduct focus groups of students.	March 2014
Develop and administer parent survey.	April-May 2014
Review electives at grades 6-12. Analyze parent survey results.	September 2014
Develop themes from the data collected regarding curriculum, assessment, and instruction.	October 2014
Recruit and orient visiting team. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site visit of visiting team 	November-December 2014
Document findings of visiting team.	January 2015
Complete K-12 program review document.	February-March 2015
Develop of action plan.	April-June 2015

Elementary School Social Studies Findings

The elementary curriculum is aligned to the Massachusetts History and Social Science Curriculum Frameworks. Time for social studies instruction varies from grade-to-grade and increases as students reach fourth and fifth grade. Access to high quality current materials varies by grade and school. Teachers make connections to the English Language Arts when possible, though this alignment varies by teacher, grade level, and school. Represented below are the findings by the program review, organized by grade level.

Kindergarten

There are three general themes in the kindergarten social studies curriculum:

- History/Geography
- Economics
- Civics/Government

Kindergarten teachers use English Language Arts materials when appropriate. Some *Storytown* units, the current ELA core text, relate to social studies concepts. For example, students read and learn about structures of neighborhoods in the ELA text. Teachers make use of guided reading libraries when possible to support the social studies curriculum. Literacy skills taught through the ELA curriculum support the use of non-fiction skills, i.e. recognizing cause and effect, fact versus opinion, and sequencing.

Assessments make use of project-based activities. Students use writing and reading within these projects to communicate content knowledge. Students must know the following by the end of the year:

- their phone number
- address
- Pledge of Allegiance

A textbook, with a copyright of 2000, is available. Three big books, activities, and a teacher's edition are included in the program. Mostly, other materials are teacher created. Some schools implement Junior Achievement, while the copyright and content of the program may be dated.

Essential questions are not clearly developed for the social studies curriculum, and expected vocabulary is not clearly outlined. There is a scope and sequence of topics, but there is not one for skills development. Some of the leveled readers in the schools' literacy closets have potential to support the social studies curriculum. Additionally, the leveled readers that accompany the ELA core anthology, *Storytown*, could also support the social studies topics for the grade.

First Grade

The general themes in first grade social studies curriculum are as follows:

- History: U.S. National Symbols
- Time Period Skills
- Map Skills and Timelines
- Economics: Goods and Services
- American Folktales

Some *Storytown* units, from the ELA core anthology, relate to social studies concepts. Use of guided reading texts, from the elementary schools' literacy closets, along with those that accompany the ELA curriculum, have potential to support the social studies curriculum. Literacy skills covered in the ELA curriculum support use of non-fiction skills, i.e. cause and effect, determining main idea, fact versus opinion, and sequencing.

Many types of projects are used as assessments. Many teachers aim for one project per theme. For example, students create a project for the topic of national symbols. There are no established district-wide rubrics.

There is a student textbook with a copyright of 2000, and there is one student textbook and one teacher's edition per class. Teachers make use of sets of six non-fiction guided readers from the literacy closets and those that accompany the ELA curriculum.

Essential questions are not clearly identified in the first grade social studies curriculum. Key vocabulary is not well outlined for units of study. While there is a scope and sequence of topics, there is no sequence of specific literacy skills students develop through social studies instruction. There are no district-wide assessments and no common rubrics are available.

Second Grade

The topics covered in the second grade revolve around the study of the seven continents and world geography. Teachers make use of additional children's literature to support the theme. These literature selections are materials that teachers have chosen on their own. The general themes addressed are as follows:

- Landforms
- Map skills
- History/Geography
- Economics/Civics

Some schools make use of student magazines, such as *Time for Kids*, *Scholastic News*, and *Social Studies Weekly*. Some research tools to which students are introduced include Google

Earth, books, short articles, and Brain Pop Jr. Some kid-safe websites are also used. In general, the materials used vary by school and teacher.

Assessments are all teacher-created and vary by school and often include writing. For example, students might summarize their learning of the continents in writing. Some of the schools integrate social studies content into the research units during their writer's workshop.

Some schools have access to a student textbook, copyright 2000, published by Harcourt, while others no longer have these texts. There is an accompanying teacher's edition. There are maps in some of the classrooms, but many are not up-to-date. All other materials are teacher created.

Essential questions are not clearly identified for the social studies curriculum and common content vocabulary is not well developed. There is a scope and sequence of general topics but not for the development of literacy skills.

Teachers employ leveled readers from the schools' literacy libraries, which both accompany and support the ELA and social studies curriculums. There is an additional need for nonfiction texts that cover more topics in the second grade curriculum.

Third Grade

The social studies curriculum for third grade includes:

- First People of Massachusetts, including the Wampanoag, Puritans, and Pilgrims
- Massachusetts Geography
- Map Literacy Skills
- History of Melrose
- American Revolution

Because of the state's focus on local and state history and geography, *Storytown*, the ELA core text, does not align well to the social studies curriculum. However, the use of guided reading libraries has the potential to support the social studies curriculum. Literacy skills taught in the ELA block support the use of non-fiction skills, i.e. cause and effect, fact versus opinion, and sequencing. etc. The core text, *Massachusetts Our Home*, copyright 2004, is available. When these sets were purchased, every school received two sets. *Social Studies Weekly*, a weekly student magazine focused on social studies topics, has recently been added to the curriculum and provides additional reading material for students.

Research materials used include use of word processing for writing of reports, student friendly web sites, and books. For example, students complete researched biographies about famous Americans of the Revolution.

Teachers have created their own assessments. Some use of the literacy skills, including the identification of main idea and details, and the development of summaries, are used as assessments of content knowledge and literacy.

Essential questions are not clearly developed for the social studies curriculum, and content vocabulary is not well developed. While there is a clear scope and sequence of topics, there is not clear sequence of skills development.

Fourth Grade

The major topics of the grade include the regions of the United States, Canada, and Mexico. For each region, the students investigate the following geographical concepts:

- Climate
- Physical Geography
- Map Literacy Skills
- Economics: Products and Natural Resources
- Culture
- U.S. Landmarks/Monuments
- Immigration

The year begins with the topic of immigration, which includes a discussion of civics, governments, and rights of the individual. For each region, some teachers have created anticipation guides. Multimedia resources such as videos are used at various times.

Writing in social studies may include comparing and contrasting the regions of the United States. Other writing topics are included throughout the year. For example, students may research and write about a particular state or region.

Tests are individually developed by teachers. Some of the assessments include multiple-choice questions. Social studies topics are also used to support ELA curriculum goals such as reading comprehension and writing.

Social Studies Weekly, a weekly student magazine, has been recently added as a resource material. The current textbooks are not widely used. There are not a sufficient number of textbooks for each student to have their own copy and there are insufficient resources for the teaching of Canada and Mexico. Teachers use their own created materials. Teachers spend an average of one and a half hours per week teaching the social studies curriculum.

Essential questions are not clearly developed for the social studies curriculum. Key vocabulary for units is not outlined for each unit of study. While there is a clear scope and sequence of topics, there is not clear sequence of skills development.

Fifth Grade

The fifth grade curriculum includes the following topics:

- First Peoples
- Explorers of the Americas
- Colonial Times
- American Revolution
- Westward Expansion

Teachers make use of non-fiction texts that relate to the social studies content during the English Language Arts literacy block. The texts are used for partner reading. Non-fiction skills taught during ELA block that support the social studies curriculum include teaching main idea and details, facts and opinion, summarizing, and sequencing, etc. A student social studies text, *We the People*, is available and utilized (Harcourt 2000). Students generally receive two to three hours per week of social studies instruction. There is a teacher's edition and some additional resources, including assessments that accompany the textbook.

Writing is integrated during social studies instruction. Teachers make use of compare/contrast, persuasive, and informational writing that uses social studies content. Projects are usually assigned on each topic. Assessments and rubrics are teacher-created and vary widely.

Some leveled readers have been added to the literacy closet. These have potential to be integrated within ELA and social studies to support the curriculum.

Essential questions are not clearly developed for the social studies curriculum, and expected vocabulary is not outlined for units of study. While there is a clear scope and sequence of topics, there is not a clear sequence of skill development.

There are no district-wide assessments and no district-wide rubrics. Teachers create their own assessments.

Survey Data for Elementary Level

Teachers and parents were surveyed to inform the review of the current curriculum using survey instruments developed by the program review team (See Appendix A to view the surveys).

Survey of Teachers: Elementary

Survey results from the elementary classroom teachers reaffirm the findings of the committee. Elementary time ranges from 90 to 120 minutes of instruction in the course of a week. The materials teachers use include a varied and creative collection of what they are able to collect from non-fiction readers, Weekly Readers, and *Storytown*. Teachers report that they make use of the district-wide curriculum documents that outline the scope and sequence of topics. When available, they make use of the social studies textbook. The ELA core anthology, *Storytown*, and the Massachusetts Social Studies Curriculum Frameworks were also listed as resources. Teachers are using self-made assessments. Some materials are aligned when they are available from the social studies text. In some isolated cases, students are pulled out from social studies to receive services for special education. Students are also being pulled from social studies for instrumental music classes.

Survey of Parents: Elementary and Middle School

One hundred seventy-five parents responded to a district survey for grades K-8 that was distributed via email to all parents.

Overall, seventy-seven percent of respondents agree or strongly agree that their children like social studies. On the other hand, many of the statements indicated that parents do not know and are not aware of the goals of the curriculum. Parents reported the following:

- 37% of the parents report that they do not know about the materials.
- 39% of parents do not know about the pace of the curriculum.
- 21% do not know about the evaluation of students.
- 48% of parents do not know how technology is used.
- 50% of parents do not know if teachers are well prepared to teach their social studies courses.
- Approximately 70% feel welcomed to contact their child's social studies teacher.

While staff and administration may be communicating with parents about their individual children's progress, they are not communicating effectively about the social studies curriculum goals or the topics covered at the elementary levels. At all levels, parents learn about the curriculum through the projects that their children complete. Parents felt that these projects were valuable. The lack of clear and consistent use of materials at the elementary level may be the reason parents do not know as much about the curriculum at this level. In contrast, at the middle school level, parents learn about the curriculum through the textbooks and students' projects.

Parents suggested bringing in resources from outside of the classroom. They believe that there was not enough time at the elementary level available for social studies instruction. Parents indicated that some textbooks are out of the date. There is a desire for more civics topics covered and inclusion of more current events. Parents are not aware of the use of technology within social studies at the elementary or middle school levels.

Survey of Students: Elementary

Fifth grade students were interviewed at the Lincoln and Roosevelt Schools in small focus groups. Members of the program review team led the focus groups with students. The students indicated that they loved projects and remember working on maps. Students could describe projects in detail that they had worked on throughout the elementary grades. Students do not feel they have enough time for social studies instruction. The group remembered learning about the American Revolution and the explorers in fifth grade. These appear to be memorable topics that many students mentioned. Many students linked their experiences in social studies with positive memories of their teachers.

Themes of Elementary Curriculum Review

As presented in the overview of each grade level, common themes emerged from the committee's review of the social studies curriculum. Curriculum and assessments have not been clearly outlined across the elementary grades, though teachers currently have a list of topics that should be covered. Essential questions for the social studies elementary curriculum are not clear, and expected content vocabulary is not well developed for units of study. The elementary curriculum has no clear scope and sequence of objectives. Particular literacy skills and concepts aligned with social studies content for each grade needs to be developed. There is no enacted curriculum. Time devoted to social studies instruction in the schedule also can vary by building.

There are no clear and consistent common assessments for any grades. No common rubrics are available and most of the assessments being used are all teacher created. Teachers have collected and created curricula, assessments, and materials on their own. While there are rubrics in ELA for writing informational and persuasive text, the rubrics have not been applied to the social studies content specifically.

There is potential for instruction and use of some materials in English Language Arts to support social studies instruction. The current Harcourt books used in many grades are 15 years old. The third grade text is eleven years old. *Storytown* and leveled readers are sometimes used to support social studies and the teaching of nonfiction reading and writing skills. Guided readers that align to the social studies topics are sometimes used during the literacy block. However, there is an insufficient amount of leveled readers and non-fiction to support all units. Research, writing, and associated skills could be used to support social studies and content knowledge.

The pilot of the new ELA program, *Reading Street*, found that content and texts within the program will support alignment to the social studies content. The alignment is strongest at grades K-1. At the other grade levels, there are multiple texts that will support content standards. The close reading, writing in response to texts, writing across texts, and other literacy skill development in the program can be aligned with the social studies curriculum.

Materials vary to greatly from building to building. The materials that are available have an average copyright of 2000. In most cases, sufficient materials were not purchased, and therefore, every classroom and every student cannot access the materials. The materials are dated and do not accurately represent the literacy skills outlined in the 2011 Massachusetts ELA Curriculum Frameworks.

The elementary curriculum has undergone significant changes recently. For the past three years, teachers have integrated social studies concepts into several aspects of their English Language Arts curriculum. For example, authentic social studies literature is being used during reciprocal teaching reading groups. Students discuss historical concepts and then are asked to write prose

constructed responses (PCRs) based on those concepts. Students have multiple opportunities to respond to historical texts, primary sources, and informational texts. Students research topics associated with the social studies curriculum and write to inform and persuade. The connection between social studies and ELA has been strengthened as additional resources and instructional practices are added to the ELA curriculum.

During the 2014-2015 school year, as the program review continued, there have been efforts to create aligned curriculum documents at the elementary levels. The principles of Understanding by Design were used in outlining the units for grades K-5, including stage one, intended outcomes, and stage two, assessments. A pacing guide has been created for each grade. Approximately 80% of the units have been outlined and some grades have all stages of the curriculum maps completed. Curriculum maps are being built on a wikispace to support the collection of resources digitally (see <http://melrosesocialstudiesprek-5.wikispaces.com/>). A common research sequence of topics was developed and implemented in the 2014-2015 school year.

In addition, during the school year, document based questions (DBQs) and the use of primary sources was introduced through professional development in the elementary grades. Some DBQs were developed to support current units of study. Professional development offerings for the summer include opportunities for teachers to continue working on curriculum documents and to expand their use of primary sources within units. For example, the Fine Arts Department will spend two days this summer reviewing primary source texts and developing lessons for their integration into the curriculum. The development of further cross-curricular connections, as well as the continued focus on project-based learning will need to continue as the elementary curriculum is finalized.

Middle School Social Studies Findings

The middle school social studies curriculum is aligned to the Massachusetts History and Social Science Curriculum Frameworks (2003) and the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks for English Language Arts and Literacy. Each student at the middle school has 55 minutes of social studies six out of every seven days. Students also take one exploratory or challenge course every trimester, some of which are social studies courses. These courses meet five out of every seven days.

All social studies courses at the middle school have common syllabi (See Appendix B for an example). All core courses are currently working on curriculum mapping using the principles of Understanding by Design (See Appendix B for an example). All courses have at least two common assessment sequences. One sequence is focused on both content and skills and includes a common pretest, midyear, and final exam. The other sequence involves writing-to-text, in the form of visual-based tools, document-based questions, and open response questions. All three grade-levels are working on a common research sequence. The eighth-grade sequence is the most well developed.

Core Courses

6th Grade, Geography

The sixth grade geography curriculum focuses on both physical geography, such as location and major landforms, and human geography, including topics such as colonization, culture, language, and religion of the regions. The course covers all non-North American regions of the world unit-by-unit. It opens with a unit on the basic concepts and vocabulary of geography and a unit on the basics of government and economics. Staff is currently developing curriculum maps using the principles of Understanding by Design and is consolidating the content of units and updating their essential questions. There is a focus on skills, including analyzing visuals, note-taking, writing to inform and persuade, and research. These skills are assessed on both projects and writing assignments.

Assessments include a commonly administered sequence of writing-to-text Visual Based Tools (VBT) (See Appendix C). Students complete six of these assignments during the course of the year. Interim practice for the VBTs includes the use of non-fiction readings and MCAS-style text-to-writing prompts. For example, one MCAS-style assignment states, “Based on the reading, ‘Tensions in Southwest Asia,’ explain why the Israeli-Palestinian conflict does not have an easy solution.” Support your answer with important and specific details from the reading and visual” (see Appendix D for an example). Staff administers a common pretest, midyear, and final. Approximately 80% of most unit tests are common across teachers. Staff is working to update the multiple choice portion of exams to make them more rigorous and aligned to new curriculum materials and the expectations on the next generation of ELA assessments such as

PARCC. For example, the midyear and final exam were recently revised by the sixth grade team. Other additions and revisions include use of text sets, prose constructed responses, and an emphasis on analysis of maps, visuals, and longer passages of text.

Students complete a multitude of research projects including the Religions Projects, the ABCs of Culture, and a summative research assignment that involves a model United Nations simulation where students create their own nation. Students learn about and offer resolutions to three issues, one geopolitical, one economic, and one environmental, from the perspective of their nation. The event begins and ends with a ceremony and procession of nations.

The geography program purchased new textbooks and materials for the 2013-14 school year. The title of the textbook is *World Cultures and Geography* and the accompanying resources include an online textbook, common assessments, visuals, and videos. Teacher editions of the textbook are aligned to the ELA Curriculum Frameworks and offer instructional strategies and teaching activities such as determining main idea and details from text, using text structure and features of nonfiction to gather information, synthesis of information, and writing to inform and persuade.

Staff utilizes a variety of instructional practices to teach geography. Students collaborate in every class and are seated in groups. Staff consistently uses turn-and-talk, quick writes, and visual analysis strategies such as “I see, It means.”

7th Grade, Ancient Civilizations

The seventh grade Ancient Civilizations course spans the dawn of human life through the Roman Empire. Topics include archaeology, the origins of human species, the Neolithic Age, Mesopotamia, Egypt, Hebrews Phoenicians, and the classical civilizations, Greece and Rome. The course is structured around major essential questions, for example, the following:

- What stays the same from one civilization to another and what changes?
- What is a civilization?
- What makes a civilization strong?

Students focus on a variety of research and writing skills, which are assessed through the writing of open responses and document-based questions (DBQs). These assignments require students to read and analyze multiple documents, including excerpts, images, maps, and charts. Students then formulate a written response, using multiple sources, and through research projects (See Appendix E for an example). Staff is currently refining trimester curriculum maps that reflect updates to the common assessments.

Common assessments include a common pretest, midyear, and final that consists of multiple-choice questions that support critical thinking and two performance tasks. The team has developed a series of open response questions and DBQs. The DBQs are rigorous and strong

examples of assessments that are aligned to the 21st Century Skills outlined in the ELA Curriculum Frameworks. The rubrics for these assignments assess students writing, use of sources, content knowledge, and annotation. Research projects on Rome and Greece include scaffolding to develop a research project, generate questions, use of digital resources, writing, and note taking. The course is increasingly being revised to incorporate more project-based learning. Though the content and skills taught is common, the format and requirements of the projects still vary by teacher and team.

There are 120 classroom copies of *History Alive! The Ancient World*. Not every student has a textbook that they can take home. The text does include an interactive notebook, which is intended to help students create their own text to support their understanding of the topic. The interactive notebook includes documents, diagrams, and maps. The textbook covers the basic content. Students have access to an online textbook at home as needed, though there is a limit to the access. Some supplemental textbooks are also used, along with many online resources including Brain Pop and Discovery Education.

8th Grade, World History I

The eighth grade course continues where the seventh grade courses leaves off. Topics include Rome, Byzantine Empire, Islam, Medieval times, the Renaissance and Reformation, the Age of Exploration, the Scientific Revolution, the Americas, Africa, and Asia. Eighth grade staff focus on the development of note-taking skills, writing, the research process, thesis writing, the use of digital/print resources, and presentation skills. Teachers are currently working on trimester unit maps that include updated essential questions and objectives.

The eighth grade team has developed a clearly defined research sequence that includes three summative assignments, including one where students complete an original three to five page thesis paper. There is a project-based learning component to the course built into each trimester. The team has also developed a common open response sequence that utilizes the same rubric to assess student writing and use of evidence. There is some collaboration with ELA in regard to scaffolding and the writing of thesis statements. Common pretest, midyear, and final exams include multiple choice, document analysis, and open response questions.

The textbook for the course is *World History: The Human Experience* (2001). The students keep the book at home. Class sets of the textbook are occasionally used in the classroom. Staff uses the teacher resource guide for *Teaching Alive!* Curriculum, along with Brain Pop and United Streaming provide additional supplemental materials. There is no online version of the text.

Exploratory and Challenge Courses

There are seven exploratory courses offered in the social studies at MVMMS, along with one challenge course in each grade-level during the 2014-2015 school year.

2014-15 School Year		
Grade-Level	Exploratory Options	Challenge Courses
6 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Geography of North America• The American Revolution• The 1950s and 1960s	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Media Studies
7 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• History's Mysteries• Civics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Classical Thought
8 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Service Learning• Current Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Challenge Literature

Topics in these courses vary from United States studies, world studies, current events, and service learning. Topics are teacher driven and project-based learning is used primarily in these courses. There are no textbooks for the courses, but all use primary source documents and other outside readings. Two of the sixth grade courses are built the curriculum of their courses around trade books, *Fire from the Rock* and *My Brother Sam is Dead*, and one of the courses supplies each student with a Nook e-reader with three texts loaded onto it. The seventh grade civics course participates in the Generation Citizen program and completes an action research project. The current events course has a subscription to *Upfront Magazine* as a resource for recent news.

Two social studies teachers have historically taught a challenge course each year to a class of students who were previously labeled as accelerated. Debate, presentation, and Socratic discussions are the primary modes of instruction in these classes. The challenge courses also require major research and writing components.

The middle school has begun to set common expectations for exploratories, including the expectation that teachers administer two performance-based tasks, one coming at the midpoint and one at the end of the year. Overall, the exploratories will require additional curriculum work to provide aligned rigor and expectations. In an effort to enact some of these changes, all exploratory courses will be revised to become challenge courses, and all challenge courses will be available to all students for the 2015-16 school year. Students identified as accelerated will continue to be grouped together and will rotate through challenge courses as a cohort (as noted by the *).

2015-16 School Year	
Grade-Level	Challenge Courses
6 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Geography of North America • The American Revolution* • The 1950s and 1960s
7 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History's Mysteries • American Government* • Classical Thought*
8 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8th Grade Civics

Themes of Middle School Curriculum Review

Social Studies teachers have access to more curriculum materials at the middle school than the elementary grades. Supplemental teacher resources are also available in most areas, including sixth grade where staff have new materials. Use of online materials in sixth grade is prevalent. Seventh and Eighth grade lack online textbooks for all students, but teachers make use of digital databases and other visual media sources to support the curriculum.

Common assessments are prevalent in the middle school with all three grade-levels using exams, open responses, research projects, and DBQs to assess all students. Research skills are taught at all three grade-levels and emphasize the use of digital and print resources, writing to inform, and taking notes. Student writing and research skills are improving as students progress through grade-levels, as evidenced by the removal of scaffolding in eighth grade.

Teachers are updating curriculum maps in the UbD format with an emphasis on improving essential questions and identifying key knowledge and skills. Teachers are working to develop common assessments, curriculum, and instruction and are using common planning time to complete these tasks. Teachers use data analysis to critically review assessments to inform curriculum and instruction. There is some collaboration with English Language Arts specifically around the writing of thesis statements and argumentative writing, but many opportunities for further collaboration still exist.

A clear sequence of research skills at the middle school is almost completed as teachers have developed a list of research and writing skills they currently teach and are working on a clear, defined sequence. Staff has worked to revamp research projects to align with the expectations of next generation assessment like PARCC. Major updates occurred to projects in all three grade-levels occurred during the 2014-15 school year. Eighth grade teachers have started using Google Apps for Education with their students, along with Noodle Tools, software that allows students to take notes on digital notecards and organize them into a product.

The middle school program of studies has been updated to include the eighth grade civics course that will be piloted in the 2015-16 school year. The update also reflects the change of all exploratory courses to challenge courses for the upcoming year.

High School Social Studies Findings

The high school social studies curriculum is aligned to the Massachusetts History and Social Science Curriculum Frameworks (2003) and the Massachusetts ELA Frameworks (2011). Students at the high school are required to take social studies in 9th, 10th, and 11th grade. Each course runs six out of the seven-day-cycle and normally meets for 57 minutes. Most students select to take a fourth year of social studies.

All core courses have common syllabi, and all are currently working on curriculum mapping using the principles of Understanding by Design (see Appendix F for an example). All courses, similar to the middle school, have at least two common assessment sequences. One set is more focused on content and includes a common pretest, midyear, and final exam. The other involves writing-to-text, in the form of visual-based tools, document-based questions, and open response questions. Students in grades 9-11 are required to complete a common summative research paper. Students in elective social studies classes also complete research assignments that take various forms, but emphasize similar skills- evaluating sources, identifying main idea, formulating a thesis, and using evidence to support a claim.

Core Courses

9th Grade, World History II

The required ninth grade World History II course is offered at the College Prep (CP) and Honors level. The curriculum is a continuation of the eighth grade World History I course. The curriculum covers the 1500s to modern day and includes units on Absolutism, the Rise of Nation State, Industrialism, Imperialism, Colonialism, the World Wars, and the Cold War. The course focuses on the skills outlined in the ELA strands of the Curriculum Frameworks, along with 21st century skills, including a focus on persuasive writing, thesis writing, close reading and annotation, document analysis, and the teaching of tier-two vocabulary. Curriculum maps were developed in the past, but new maps are being developed using the UbD format. Ninth grade staff uses unit sheets, or documents for each unit that detail the enacted curriculum, core content, essential questions, and vocabulary (See Appendix G for an example). Staff shares these documents with students to help them frame their reading and studying.

Common assessments in the ninth grade World History II course include a sequence of document-based questions (DBQs) that require students to read and analyze multiple documents (excerpts, images, maps, charts, etc.) and then formulate a written response using multiple sources. Staff also administers a common pretest, midyear, and final, and a summative research paper. The formal research paper requires 3-5 pages for CP and 4-6 pages Honors. The persuasive paper requires the use of a minimum of four sources, at least one primary source, at least one print resource, MLA citations, and use of in-text citations. The common midyear and final exams assess content, document analysis, writing, and annotation.

Staff and students utilize the textbook, *Modern World History, Patterns of Interaction* (2007), along with primary sources and digital sources.

In 2014-15, Melrose High School is piloting an Advanced Placement option for freshman. Eleven students are enrolled in an Advanced Placement (AP) European History that replaces their World History II requirement. Successful completion of this course will qualify students for the Accelerated AP track in social studies and allow them to move into AP U.S. History, a course typically taken by juniors, as sophomores.

10th Grade, United States History I

The required tenth grade U.S. History I course is offered at the College Prep and Honors level. The curriculum includes pre-revolutionary U.S. History from mid-1700s through Reconstruction. The tenth grade staff also utilizes unit sheets and is also working to take old curriculum documents and develop updated maps using the principles of understanding by design. Students focus on the skills of primary source analysis, research, and writing.

Common assessments in the tenth grade include a pre-test, mid-year, and final exam. These are currently being revised to include more critical thinking questions. Document analysis, writing, and annotation are assessed on the midyear and final using a common rubric. The tenth grade also has a sequence of common open response questions that require document analysis and the team working to refine them so that they match the expectations of DBQs in other grades. The common summative research paper in the tenth grade is longer, 4-6 pages for CP and 5-7 for honors, and requires the use of a greater number of sources (See Appendix H for example). Common planning time is used by the staff for data analysis and collaborative grading.

The tenth grade uses a textbook titled *The Americans* (McDougal Little 2003, 2006, 2009), which has a companion e-book on classzone.com. Staff also utilizes materials from *History Alive!* and primary sources documents such as the *US Constitution* and *the Federalist Papers*.

During the 2014-15 school year, MHS is piloting an AP option for sophomores. Seventeen sophomores have moved from ninth grade World History II into AP U.S. History. These students will take another AP social studies course their junior year (See Appendix I for the accelerated course sequence).

Eleventh Grade, United States History II

The required eleventh grade U.S. History II course is offered at the College Prep and Honors level. Juniors also have the option of enrolling in AP U.S. History to meet their junior-year requirements. The U.S. History II course starts at the end of Reconstruction and continues through modern day. Topics include urbanization, segregation, imperialism into World War, and the Civil Rights movement.

The U.S. History II teachers are working to establish a common DBQ sequence this year to accompany their common pretest, midyear, and final. These assessments test both content and skills, including document analysis, main idea, writing, and annotation. The summative research paper increases in length by two pages, requires the largest number of sources, and is required to be a persuasive paper.

The eleventh grade also the textbook titled *The Americans* (McDougal Little 2003, 2006, 2009), which has a companion e-book on classzone.com. Staff utilizes resources from the Stanford History Education Group, the DBQ project, and many other online sources.

Advanced Placement United States History

Students enrolled in AP U.S. History follow a core curriculum that is prescribed and approved by the College Board. The curriculum has been revised for the 2014-2015 school year and provides a focus on historical thinking skills, themes, and periods. The course utilizes a variety of instructional methods, including the Harkness model, a format for student-driven, whole-class discussion, and primary source analysis. Students prepare for a culminating exam in May. The revised exam has been redesigned to better align to the ELA Curriculum Frameworks and PARCC and shifted the curriculum from primarily content to both content and skills. Students use a textbook titled *Out of Many* (2005). Students are also required to read five non-fiction historical texts, complete a book analysis, and a summative research paper.

Though the course is typically reserved for juniors, 17 sophomore students took AP U.S. History during the 2014-15 school year as a pilot so that students who had not completed freshman AP European History could move onto the accelerated track. The success of these students, based on local data, led to a second year of a pilot, where 20 students will move from World History II to AP U.S. History as sophomores.

Elective Courses

The majority of seniors take at least one social studies elective, with many students taking more than one elective course. Many underclassmen also choose to take elective social studies courses. Enrollment in social studies AP courses has increased over the last year, with AP

Economics and AP European History added as new courses (See Appendix J for enrollment data).

School Year	Total Seniors at MHS	Senior Enrollment in Social Studies Electives*	Non-senior Enrollment in Social Studies Electives
2012-2013	223	337	90
2013-2014	217	296	75
2014-2015	229	282	147

Though there has been a drop in enrollment in Sports and Society and History through Film in the past four years, overall elective enrollment has increased and students have more choices for social studies electives. Most electives target juniors and seniors. Anthropology/sociology, economics, and psychology are full year courses, which have textbooks and curriculum that tends to follow an introductory college course.

Half year courses are Civics and Legal Issues, History through Film, Global Leadership, Sports and Society, and World Religions. The offerings vary from year to year based on student interest. All elective courses administer midyear and final year exams.

Full-year social studies electives have textbooks and all electives use supplementary materials that are most current and relevant. Materials for half-year courses are teacher driven and comprise of both primary and secondary resources and readings. Some half-year courses have curriculum maps that were developed using Atlas Mapping. Work to reformat and refine these maps is a priority moving forward.

Themes of High School Curriculum Review

In general, all full-year courses have textbooks, though some are dated. At least two common assessment sequences exist in all courses, including a pretest, midyear, final and a series of document-based questions. Common assessments are the same for the CP and Honors level courses. Unit tests and other assignments are only common in some areas. Common planning time is used effectively by teams and has created more commonality among lessons and assessments. There is a general focus on skills, use of primary source, document analysis, and research skills. Students complete a summative research paper in all three required history courses.

The curriculum, instruction, and assessment at the high school is consistently evolving as the department members reflect on student data and school initiatives, as evidenced by the many iterations of the curriculum documents. Many opportunities for improving and aligning, horizontally, vertically, and with the Massachusetts Frameworks' literacy skills, exist at the high school. Some courses require students to read at least one historical non-fiction text, a practice that could be used across the board. Most courses, including documents like unit sheets that identify key content, are structured around the textbook and there is an opportunity to take cues from the revised Advanced Placement exams and move from current chronological approach to a more thematic approach. Curriculum maps will be revisited next year with an eye on developing stage 2 and stage 3 further.

During the 2014-15 school year, some grade-level teams assigned a mini research paper at midyear, a practice that can be spread to all grade levels next year. As it has at the middle school, work has begun to establish a clear sequence of research skills at the high school. Staff is working to revamp assignments and projects to reflect the raised expectation of the next generation of assessments, including PARCC, the new AP history exams, and the new SAT. Teachers have begun utilizing Google Apps for Education with their students, with a focus on Google Docs.

Course offerings for the 2015-16 school year have increased, with a new Current Events elective being offered along with a section of AP European History for students in grades 10-12. Approximately, thirty sophomores will pursue the accelerated track and take AP U.S. History next year.

Survey Data for Secondary Level

We elected to survey a variety of stakeholders in reference to their experience in social studies in the Melrose Public Schools. We sent two surveys to parents, one to the parents of students K-8 and one to the parents of students 9-12. For simplicity, we surveyed eighth graders about their experience in high school social studies and twelfth graders about their experience in high school social studies (See Appendix A for the text of the surveys).

Survey of Teachers: Secondary

According to the secondary school teacher survey that surveyed all 18 social studies teachers in Melrose, grade 6-12, teachers stated they had textbooks and make use the curriculum guides and standards. The primary curriculum materials are textbooks and primary source documents, along with some online and digital resources. Common assessments include mid-year, final, research papers, and open responses. Assessments that are not common include some research projects, quizzes, and tests. Many teachers state that they use projects as a form of assessment and a way to teach skills and content. Staff states that the cross-curricular skills they explicitly teach note-taking, research, writing, presentation, and annotation. Two teachers identified a need to include diversity in the curriculum, including less of Eurocentric focus in the World History courses.

Survey of Students: Middle School

The survey was administered in school and 234 eighth grade students responded to it. When prompted, “What did you like best about social studies at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School? What did you enjoy the most? Why?” students stated that they liked interactive projects, research, and activities with which they then connected to helping them learn the content. They noted fun and engaging teachers who made the material come alive. When asked, “what they liked least,” students noted that they did not like completing worksheets and handouts and reliance on that type of instruction. They did not enjoy completing the research paper for eighth grade and many found the DBQs challenging.

Students’ favorite “topic/units to study” included Rome, Greece, and Egypt. Topics on which they wanted to spend more time on included American History.

Ninety six percent of students stated that they learned either a significant amount or at least some concepts of geography with 57.2% saying the same for civics and 75% for economics. This may be due to the fact that teachers are not explicitly using the terms “civics” when discussing government within the existing curriculum.

Survey of Students: High School

The survey of high school students was administered online. Eighty-two out of 217 twelfth graders responded, with 47 of them rating their “love of history/social studies” as a 7 out of 10 or higher.

Students responded generally positive to the prompt, “What did you like best about social studies at Melrose High School? What did you enjoy the most? Why?” They stated that they liked teachers’ personalities, along with some of their instructional practices. Students tended to prefer depth over breadth to covering content, noting that they enjoyed digging deeper into a content or subject area. Students also enjoyed discussion and group work.

“Favorite unit/topics to study” included the World Wars, topics related to the real world within the realm of history, economics, psychology, and sociology.

Students stated that they liked the notes and busy work the least. Some disliked lack of interactions or interactive lessons. Some students referenced not getting work back in timely manner or getting feedback. Many, 38.5%, noted they got little to no civics, but this may have been due to confusion about the question.

Approximately, 78.8% of the students felt that the “curriculum prepared them for college and the workplace.” The majority of students specifically felt that research and projects had prepared them for the 21st Century, but only 48.8% agree that the writing in social studies had done the same. According to the comments, some would like to see more complexity and the study of real-life problems. Some students would like more opportunities to return to previously taught content.

Survey of Parents: High School

Fifty-four parents responded to a request for a survey. Forty-eight percent of the parents responding were at the ninth grade level. Some key conclusions from the data include:

- Approximately 65% either strongly agree or agree that “the social studies program provides an appropriate academic challenge for my child.”
- Eighty-three percent of parents report that their children like social studies.
- Approximately 55% either strongly agree or agree that “the pace of the curriculum is appropriate.”
- Seventy-five percent of parents strongly agree or agree that “their child is asked to communicate their understanding of social studies through writing.”
- Eighty-five percent of parents feel that they are “welcomed to contact their child’s teacher.”

In some cases, parents report that they don’t know enough to evaluate on the survey:

- the use of technology (42%)
- whether their students' teachers are well-prepared (33%)
- how work is celebrated (33%)
- whether course materials are relevant and appropriate (35%).

Parents were asked to report on the strengths of the social studies curriculum. The following comments were reported by multiple parents:

- Parents comment about specific teachers with whom their students had great experiences.
- Parents report teachers who show passion for their content.
- Improvements in Advanced Placement offerings and programming have been evident in the past few years.

Parents were asked to report on areas they would like to see improved in the social studies curriculum. The following comments were reported by multiple parents:

- Civics and the inclusion of current events are not apparent in the curriculum.
- Parents suggested more field trips and community engagement as a way to engage students
- The curriculum materials appear to be outdated to some parents.
- Some parents feel that World History is emphasized more than US History. They would like to see US History offered earlier in the course sequence.

Site Visit Findings

On Monday, December 1, 2014, the Melrose Public Schools hosted 24 educators from surrounding districts to participate in the site visit as part of the Social Studies Program Review. The group was divided into six teams of four. Each team visited classrooms and interviewed groups of students and teachers.

The team used the following essential question set forth by the committee to guide both their observations and discussions with teachers and students:

To what extent, does social studies prepare students for college and career readiness? For 21st century skills?

At the conclusion of the day, the site visit team met to debrief with the members of the Social Studies/History Program Review.

The following observations were made by the visiting team:

The site team observed many instances where students were collaborating with each other as part of lessons.

- Students at the high school were in seating arrangements that allowed for collaboration. There were lessons observed that used a combination of whole group to small group instruction.
- At the middle school, some teachers made use of grouping configurations so that the collaboration also included an opportunity for movement.
- In some cases, students worked collaboratively as part of the “Do Now.” For example, students had to observe an image and complete a “thinking routine.”
- Students were observed using each other as a resource within the classroom.
- Group work was observed in the majority of classrooms at the middle and high school.

The use of technology in social studies instruction varied.

- In one middle school classroom, students were creating a PowerPoint.
- The team questioned whether, in the high school, Chromebooks were being used as a tool to enhance learning or if technology was being used just for the sake of it.
- In the elementary schools, all computers were turned off. Smartboards were used more as a whiteboard. Fifth grade students in the focus group commented that they had never used the Smartboard, but said, “it looked like fun.” An elementary student said they never used technology.
- Students at the high school stated that there was inconsistent use of technology. They also said that there was not a coherent, cohesive technology implementation plan. They indicated that not all of their teachers had websites up.

Some implementation and teaching of research skills was observed.

- One eighth grade class was on the third or fourth day of a project
- In a high school anthropology class, students were using laptops to do research online.
- In the high school, students made reference to past research projects they had completed.
- Fifth grader students mentioned they remembered researching the regions in fourth grade
- Second graders were researching the continents.
- High school teachers mentioned that they felt responsibility for developing students' research skills.

Student use of reading and writing literacy skills was observed.

- In a fifth grade classroom, paired reading was observed.
- In a kindergarten classroom, students were writing about “why we celebrate Thanksgiving.”
- In a high school classroom, students were using the tool APPARTS to analyze primary sources.
- In a high school classroom, one student asked to generate questions from their primary sources. Students used text in different ways.
- In a middle school classroom, students wrote a paragraph as an exit ticket.
- In some elementary and middle school classroom, students were asked to define and paraphrase, but were not asked to question, synthesize, and summarize.
-

The following were overall summary statements generated by the group:

- There was a systematic culture of collaboration for students at all grade levels.
- There is inconsistency in the district's social studies program in the use of technology.
- MHS uses technology more appropriately but needs a robust WiFi and hardware.
- A definite commitment to teaching research skills in the social studies program exists.
- Evidence of the effectiveness of literacy instruction was present, but room for improvement exists. The emphasis on literacy integration within social studies varied.

Overall Summary of Findings

The team concluded by using evidence from the program review to benchmark the social studies curriculum using the curriculum rubric that the district has adopted (See Appendix K).

Alignment to Standards and 21st Century Skills

Curriculum units at the elementary and secondary levels show some evidence of alignment to Common Core, WIDA, and Massachusetts ELA Curriculum Frameworks. Unit design shows some evidence of purposeful scaffolding of instruction towards the goals of closing the achievement gap and promoting college and career readiness. While the elementary curriculum is aligned to the 2003 History Curriculum Frameworks, the links to the ELA Curriculum Frameworks are not yet clear. Recent efforts at curriculum mapping support moving grades K-5 closer to this goal. Efforts to strengthen non-fiction writing and reading have also supported teachers in making connections between ELA and social studies.

At the secondary level, curriculum is mostly aligned to both the 2003 History Curriculum Frameworks and the 2011 Massachusetts ELA Frameworks, though a clearer sequence of literacy skills will support links to ELA. Evidence of the use of strategies for including ELLs exists in many classrooms, inclusion of WIDA English Language Development Standards is not evident in any documents. After curriculum maps are completed, inclusion of strategies that support both our English Language Learners and special education students will be important.

Understanding by Design Alignment

Units at all levels show some of the elements of UbD principles and consist partially of the three stages, i.e. desired results, assessment evidence, and learning plans. Recent efforts this year at the elementary level have resulted in completed units that outlined desired results and assessment evidence. Stage 3, learning plans, are outlined for some units but not all. While assessments have been outlined, there do not exist common rubrics. Likewise, at the secondary level, curriculum units for core courses have been completed for stages 1 and 2. Learning plans have not been completed in all areas. Curriculum maps for all electives courses have not yet been updated.

Literacy Integration

At both the elementary and secondary level, there is evidence that some purposeful decisions were made regarding both emphasis on key standards and how to integrate literacy into the content area. Elementary teachers have begun to integrate literacy skills within the social studies curriculum. However, this varies and is not reflected in curriculum maps. Recent efforts in curriculum mapping will move the K-5 grades towards proficiency in this area. Outlining specifically the curriculum links to ELA and assessments that incorporate opportunities for reading, writing, listening, and speaking are needed.

At the secondary level, DBQs, research projects, and summative assessments show evidence of an inclusion of literacy standards. Interim assessments are common in all areas and some emphasize literacy skills. These skills are aligned to the ELA Curriculum Frameworks though there still exists some variation by grade level. A specific skill sequence for reading, writing, listening and speaking would move the curriculum towards proficiency.

Assessments

At the elementary level, few common assessments were evidenced. Recent efforts combined with the implementation of the action plan will support the district in developing further in this area. At the secondary level, high-quality assessments are evidenced and some are utilized to drive instruction. Implementation of district determined measures have supported the linking of assessments to instruction. As outlined elsewhere, a skill sequence aligned to assessments is needed.

Differentiation

At the elementary level, there is some evidence of differentiated instruction and practices, which would lead to a culturally proficient learning community. Practices vary by teacher and classroom. Incorporating such practices within units of instruction will be important as curriculum maps continue to be further developed.

In contrast, at the secondary level, for the most part there is evidence of differentiated instruction and practices, leads to a more culturally proficient learning community. Teacher reflection and implementation of best practices and social studies pedagogy, combined with a strong emphasis on the District Curriculum Accommodation Plan over the past year, has led to the widespread use of instructional strategies that engage all learners.

Inclusion of Diverse Perspectives

The social studies curriculum at all levels presents an enormous opportunity to provide for the inclusion of diverse perspectives. The elementary curriculum presents opportunities to expand students' perspectives. These efforts are not currently documented in existing curriculum maps. At the secondary level, curriculum maps present opportunities to allow students to view history and social studies through various perspectives. Professional Development in this area has begun and will continue to be a point of emphasis.

Evidence of Instructional Shifts and Higher Order Thinking

In the elementary grades, there is inconsistent evidence of the instructional shifts required by the English Language Arts Curriculum Frameworks. Academic tasks sometimes emphasize rigorous habits or higher-order thinking skills. Elementary teachers have integrated much of the professional development in ELA on writing, research, informational texts, and close reading

within the social studies curriculum. These efforts vary teacher to teacher. Implementing curriculum maps with consistent assessments will move the curriculum to proficiency.

At the secondary level, evidence of the instructional shifts required by the ELA Curriculum Frameworks are mostly apparent. Academic tasks often emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order thinking. An increasing rigorous set of common assessments at all levels, combined with research and writing requirements in all grades, holds students accountable for their learning. As noted above, a clear, common sequence of skills needed to meet the standards set forth in these assessments are in development.

Action Plan
Elementary Goals and Action Plan

Curriculum: Develop common scope and sequence for grades K-5 for social studies curriculum.

Actions	Who is Responsible	Timeline	Benchmarks	Resources Needed
Complete pacing of curriculum units for grades K-5.	Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning, Instructional Coaches, Grades K-5 Teachers	Spring 2015	Pacing Guide Complete	Grade Level Meeting Wikispace
Complete draft curriculum maps for grades K-5 units.	Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning, Instructional Coaches, Grades K-5 Teachers	Summer 2015	Curriculum Maps Completed	Summer Professional Development Wikispace
Implement and revise curriculum maps for grades K-5.	Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning, Instructional Coaches, Grades K-5 Teachers	September 2015- June 2016	Revised Maps Completed	Grade Level Meetings Wikispace
Align K-5 curriculum maps with ELA curriculum materials	Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning, Instructional Coaches, Grades K-5 Teachers, Elementary Library Media Specialists	September 2015- June 2016	Revised Maps Completed	Grade Level Meetings ELA Curriculum Materials Wikispace
Connect social studies curriculum further with other content areas such as music and arts	Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning, Instructional Coaches, Grades K-5 Teachers, Fine Arts Director	January 2016- January 2017	Integration of content	Grade Level Meetings Wikispace
Develop and collect resources for implementation.	Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning, Instructional Coaches, Grades K-5 Teachers, Elementary Library Media Specialists	September 2016- June 2017	Resources Collection per Grade Collected	Grades K-5 Teachers Google Drive Wikispace

Identify additional materials needed for implementation for grades K-5.	Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning, Instructional Coaches, Grades K-5 Teachers	June 2016- August 2016	Materials Identified for Purchase	Materials Funding
Pilot materials needed for implementation for grades K-5.	Selected Teachers Grades K-5	September 2016- February 2017	Materials Identified for Purchase	Pilot Materials Selected Teachers to Implement Funding
Purchase materials for implementation for grades K-5.	Superintendent of Teaching and Learning	July 2017	Funding Identified for Purchase of Materials	Funding
Provide professional development for grades K-5	Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning, Instructional Coaches	July 2017	Materials Identified	Instructional Coaches
Implement Materials	Grades K-5 Teachers	September 2017- June 2018	Materials Identified	Materials

Instruction: Develop core instructional practices for social studies Grades K-5.

Actions	Who is Responsible	Timeline	Benchmarks	Resources Needed
Continue training on use of primary source documents in grades K-5.	Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning, Instructional Coaches, Grades K-5 Teachers	Summer 2015 October-December 2015	Completed Lesson Plans	Funding for Professional Development
Create list of core instructional practices.	Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning, Instructional Coaches, Elementary Principals	Summer 2015	Draft of Core Instructional Practices	Instructional Coaches
Revise and edit list of core instructional practices.	Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning, Instructional Coaches, Elementary Principals, Grades K-5 Teachers	September 2015- January 2016	List of Core Instructional Practices	Grade Level Meetings Common Planning Time Early Release Days
Train teachers on inclusion of technology into the elementary grades.	Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning, Instructional Coaches, Academic Facilitator, Grades K-5 Teachers, Elementary Library Media Specialists	Spring - Summer 2016	Completed Professional Development	Technology Instructional Coaches Academic Facilitator
Create lesson plans and assessments that integrate technology.	Instructional Coaches, Academic Facilitator, Grades K-5 Teaches, Elementary Library Media Specialists	September 2016-June 2017	Completed Lesson Plan and Assessments	Common Planning Time Early Release Days

Secondary Goals and Action Plan

Curriculum: Continue to refine and align curriculum in grades 6-12, with a focus on research skills, essentials questions, civics education and cultural inclusivity.

Actions	Who is Responsible	Timeline	Benchmarks	Resources Needed
Refine and, in some cases, develop common research assignments.	CPT Teams; Vertical 6-12 team; almost all teams have common research assignments currently	2015-2016 school year	Common Research Projects and Assignments Updated Research Sequence Document	Support from library media specialists and department chair; common planning time; models/exemplars
Establish or refine essential questions for each grade level.	CPT Teams	Spring 2015 - Fall 2015	UbD Maps & assessments that are aligned to essential questions	Common Planning Time
Increase cultural inclusivity in existing curriculum content: through content-area professional development.	CPT Teams; Vertical 6-12 team; Director of Social Studies	Summer 2015 2015-2016 school year	UbD Maps Include Diverse Cultural Perspectives	Professional Development in content-area and cultural inclusivity; materials may be necessary
Plan with Fine Arts Department to plan interdisciplinary learning	Director of Social Studies; Director of Fine Arts; Grade 6-12 teachers	January 2016-2017	Completed Fine Arts and Social Studies Cross Disciplinary Projects	Professional development in content-area
Develop and pilot two-year Advanced Placement United States History course.	Director of Social Studies; MHS Social Studies	2015-2016 2016-17	Updated Course Sequence and Curriculum	Textbooks and resources that reflect updated exam; AP training for two staff members

	Department	school year (pilot)		
Develop and pilot Civics elective for all 8th grade students.	Director of Social Studies; 8th Grade CPT team	Summer 2015 (development) 2015-16 school year (pilot)	UbD Map Course Assessments Student Work	Materials that are aligned to the C3 Civics standards
Examine and refine expectations for all exploratory courses to align with expectations for challenge courses.	Director of Social Studies; MVMMS Social Studies Staff	Summer 2015 2015-16 school year	Curriculum and Assessments Outlined	

Instruction: Continue to refine and align instruction around research, literacy, and 21st century skills.

Actions	Who is Responsible	Timeline	Benchmarks	Resources Needed
Common lessons for essential skills in research and writing using lesson studies protocols.	Common Planning Time at grade level	Spring 2015- Fall 2016	Completion of Lesson Studies	Common Planning Time
Examine opportunities to decrease class sizes at both MHS for the 2015-2016.	Content Directors; MHS Principal; Director of Guidance	Spring/Summer 2015	Schedule with Decreased Class Size	Common Planning Time; Department Meetings
Professional development in content-area literacy instruction.	Outside Professional Development presenters; Director of Social Studies	July-August 2015 On-going 2015-16 school year	Evidence of Walk Throughs of Professional Development Lesson Plans Created	Professional Development Funding
Continue with implementation of RETELL strategies in the social studies classroom	Staff that have been previously trained; staff that will be trained next year	2015-16 school year	RETELL Strategies Evident in Walk-Throughs	
Utilize devices such as Google Chrome books to leverage Google Apps for Education to enhance student learning.	Staff; See Technology Action Plan	2015-2016 school year	Lesson Plans and Assignments that Incorporate Technology meetings	Wifi, devices; Google accounts for all students
Employ Noodle Tools, a technology based research platform, in grades 6-12.	Library Media Specialist, Grades 6-12	2015-2016 school year	Summative projects in 6-12 social studies	Library Media Specialist; funding for software; PD

Assessment: Align assessments with essentials questions and 21st century skills.

Actions	Who is Responsible	Timeline	Benchmarks	Resources Needed
Ensure that Understanding by Design essential questions guide development of common assessments.	Common Planning Time Teams	September 2015	Common Assessments	Common Planning Time
Implement and assess research skills within common assessments.	Common Planning Time Teams	September 2015	Common Assessments in Research	Common Planning Time
Revise and implement common rubrics, with focus on vertical alignment.	Common Planning Time Teams	2015-2016 school year	Common Rubrics	Common Planning Time