



Lexington Public Schools
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RE: Summary of the work of the Social Studies Review Committee (Year 1)

Date: May 22, 2012

On behalf of the Lexington Public Schools Social Studies Curriculum Review Committee, it is a privilege to report on the accomplishments in Year 1 of the review cycle. This expert group comprised of kindergarten through grade twelve classroom teachers, reading specialists, librarians, and administrators worked diligently to accomplish the first year objectives. These educators are listed, along with their positions, in Appendix A. The 32 committee members collaborated as a vertical K-12 group to understand the expectations for teaching and learning as described in the *Massachusetts History and Social Science Curriculum Framework* and in the national standards. The educators also conducted extensive research that is summarized in this report. The committee convened for six full days on August 16, 17, September 20, and December 21, 2011, March 14, and May 9, 2012. The work was challenging and invigorating, and led to a strong foundation for the thoughtful revision of the K-12 Social Studies curriculum in the next two years of the review cycle.

In this document and in the information that will be presented to you on Tuesday, May 22, 2012, the committee summarizes and highlights the accomplishments and findings of the curriculum review committee for Year 1. The ensuing summaries describe the current research, the implications of the research, and the level to which the committee accomplished its Year 1 goals. The summary will also indicate the recommendations and suggestions of the committee as they pertain to Year 2 goals.

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Mission Statement

The primary purpose of the Lexington Public Schools' Social Studies Department is to foster curiosity and help to create life-long learners who make informed decisions as they actively engage as citizens in their local, national, and global communities.

The Social Studies encompass history, as well as civics, economics, geography, sociology, and psychology. Over the course of their journey through the Lexington Public Schools, students will engage in learning experiences that will help them understand the major events and trends in these domains that have shaped the modern world. Through these experiences, students will be able to connect the past with the present and gain insights. The K-12 curriculum is designed to help students discover the relevance of social studies to their own lives. This interdisciplinary approach allows students to use multiple lenses to develop a sophisticated and culturally literate understanding of the world.

Students' engagement with the social studies curriculum will provide them with the tools needed to navigate a competitive and complex global society. Students will develop 21st Century Skills that include using a wide variety of technologies and emphasize the importance of gathering, analyzing and evaluating evidence and information. With these skills, students will discover their own authentic voice, learn to think independently, work collaboratively, and communicate their ideas effectively.

The skills and understanding students will acquire from kindergarten through high school have wide applicability both in the classroom and throughout their lives. The social studies curriculum helps young people become socially responsible citizens of a culturally diverse democratic society in an increasingly interdependent world.

Goals for Year 1

- 1. Assemble K-12 content-specific curriculum task forces and study groups** √
Created six vertical K-12 subcommittees: Civics, History, Geography and Economics, Global Education, 21st Century Skills, and Assessment, to build the group's collective understanding of the Social Studies. The first four areas are recognized by national organizations as the key strands that create the academic area known as the Social Studies.
- 2. Study content-related literature** √ *Began to identify strengths and needs in our K-12 curriculum.*
- 3. Review Massachusetts and national curriculum standards, and compare with the existing Lexington Social Studies curriculum** √ *Examined and discussed what will students know and be able to do at the end of each school year.*
- 4. Review current resources and materials to determine alignment of curriculum and resources currently being used** √ *Identified what is and is not working in the existing curriculum.*
- 5. Review accomplishments or areas of progress in supporting district goals** √ *Data collected from surveys, K-8 and NEASC self study report at the high school level.*
- 6. Analyze MCAS and other student performance data to assess strengths and weaknesses of the current curriculum.** *No data to analyze, as the Social Studies MCAS has not been given for many years. It is under consideration by the DESE for the 2014 school year.*
- 7. Summarize data analysis.** *In the absence of this data, in years two and three of the review the committee will examine locally produced formative and summative assessments.*
- 8. Make recommendations for updated curriculum (further development in Year 2)** √
Observations and some changes have been made at various grade levels and descriptions are embedded in this report.
- 9. Develop standards-based benchmark outcomes/assessments consistent with revised curriculum.** *Unable to complete as the revised curriculum is still in the process of being developed. This work will be addressed in Year Two.*
- 10. Study research-based recommended practices** √
The entire committee read and discussed the research and standards.

Unique Aspects of the Lexington Social Studies Program

- Lexington currently has K-5 Social Studies benchmarks and a comprehensive list of social studies courses and course descriptions at the middle and high school levels, but no existing K-12 Social Studies document that represents a vertical and horizontal articulation of the curriculum.
- Social Studies as a content area lacks a national common core type document, although it does have a national council that has developed broad theme-based standards. Instead, each strand of the Social Studies - history, economics, geography, and civics - has its own national standards document created by separate groups of content experts. The most recent version of the *Massachusetts History and Social Science Framework* was published in 2003 and incorporates the four strands listed above with a great deal of emphasis being placed on the history strand. In fifth grade alone there are 32 history standards. Additionally, the committee needs to take into consideration the *Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for English Language Arts and Literacy* as this document incorporates skill standards for social studies (from this point on referred to as the MA Framework and is typically referred to as the “Common Core”). The challenge lies in creating a K-12 Social Studies program that thoughtfully addresses the standards and engages students in a meaningful manner.
- This large, diverse committee brings a wide range of experiences and expertise in curriculum and teaching. The committee spent many hours developing common understandings about best practices in curriculum and instruction in the Social Studies by reading and discussing selected articles and texts. Research committees were formed to focus on specific topics. The reports from these groups are included in the body of this report to highlight the complexity of social studies and to distill the key elements of each area. From this research, the committee has prepared itself to create a K-12 curriculum map that will include enduring understandings that reach across all grade levels.

Research and Literature Review Groups

History Research Group

What is History? Why is it Important to Social Studies?

History, the study of people, events and ideas of the past, is essential for the development of an educated and responsible democratic society. Thomas Jefferson declared that the study of history was necessary for a successful republic. Understanding history allows students to recognize and evaluate the forces that have shaped the community, country and wider world. “Without history, a society shares no common memory of where it has been, what its core values are, or what decisions of the past account for present circumstances. Without history, we cannot undertake any sensible inquiry into the political, social, or moral issues in society” (National Center for History in Schools 41). By examining the choices and decisions of the past, students develop a deeper awareness of the alternatives available to solve contemporary problems and improve their ability to evaluate the likely consequences of their decisions.

History also offers students rich opportunities to develop critical thinking skills. Through the use of both primary and secondary sources, students at all grade levels can evaluate evidence, examine events and ideas from multiple perspectives, trace patterns of change over time, and communicate their observations and conclusions effectively (Massachusetts History and Social Science Curriculum Framework 2).

Current Research in History

The research supports developing clear themes across grade levels and using engaging instructional strategies as a means, not only to make history comprehensible to students, but also to help students develop the critical thinking skills that will make them responsible citizens. Research makes it clear that the challenge of teaching history is deciding what to prioritize, as there are numerous history standards for each grade level.

True historical understanding must go beyond lists of names, dates, places, and events. To meet the demands of engaged citizenship, students must demonstrate five characteristics of historical thinking: chronological thinking, historical comprehension, historical analysis and interpretation, historical research capabilities, historical issues-analysis and decision-making (National Center for History in Schools 41). Both the state and national standards provide guidelines in which history is placed at the center of the Social Studies curriculum (Appendix B). Overarching themes link the standards in the belief that “genuine historical knowledge will develop from a deepening understanding of the relationship between the basic facts of history and these larger themes and concepts” (Massachusetts History and Social Science Curriculum Framework 2).

These habits of mind allow students to understand individuals, groups, and communities, their own identity within groups, and the actions and events that occur within societies. In addition, historical thinking provides students with a way to understand the process of change and the ways the past affects the present, as well as what stays the same even when societal change does occur (Stearns 2008). Students learn history best when they begin their studies in the distant past and move forward, connecting patterns of cause and effect over time by studying issues and

problems that are recurrent. This mix of a thematic and chronological approach engages students and provides them with enduring understandings of how humans interact with their environment, ideas and each other (World History for Us All).

Although the MA Framework focuses on reading and writing skills, it also recognizes the critical role of history. Instead of presenting the study of history merely as a tool to promote literacy, this document describes history as a unifying force, noting that teachers can “provide students with common ground through discussion of significant works in American cultural history to help prepare them to become self-governing citizens of the United States of America” (Massachusetts History and Social Science Curriculum Framework 5). The guiding principles of this document acknowledge the role of history in helping students build academic vocabulary and strong content knowledge through research.

The MA Framework also emphasizes that in order to be college and career ready students must be able to write arguments, produce explanatory or informative texts, create narratives, and express complex ideas orally. In the K-5 standards, the study of history is embedded in the reading and writing standards. At the secondary level, the MA Framework delineates the elements of high-quality literacy and writing in history. It outlines for teachers the specific skills students need to think critically, access different media and formats, conduct independent research, integrate information from primary/secondary sources and to understand other cultures and perspectives.

Research shows that history is a complex field. History teachers must use priority standards in order to make content meaningful for students. Developing students’ higher order thinking requires time to delve deeply, so that students can compare leaders, achievements and events, search for and evaluate evidence, develop their own analysis, understand the relationships between cause and effect, and walk in the shoes of another. A thematic approach to history, rather than a chronological approach, provides a means to make the difficult decisions about which content to emphasize within a course (Weiland 7-9).

Many research studies also discussed several strategies to make the teaching of history more effective and engaging. Oral history is an effective strategy to engage students in the study of history and has many cross-curricula advantages in terms of integrating literacy into social studies. As students make connections from their own lives to the big picture of history, they develop higher-order thinking skills. These skills include how to pose questions, draw conclusions, examine point of view, as well as the ability to compare and contrast. In addition, these strategies foster positive self-image through personal empowerment and promote equity and diversity (Jenks). Another effective strategy to engage upper elementary students in primary and secondary sources is teaching history as “mystery.” This instructional model is intended to motivate students and arouse their curiosity. Instruction is initiated through an essential question, which students answer using critical thinking skills as they form and present a hypothesis, analyze primary and secondary sources, and evaluate the results (Kirchner et al.).

Examples from Lexington Public Schools

The National Standards for History and the Massachusetts History and Social Science Curriculum Framework make it clear that history is the heart and soul of social studies. Given

this emphasis on history, the K-5 Curriculum Benchmarks and the Programs of Studies at the middle and high school-levels provide a sequence of study that attempts to balance history and the other social sciences. Lexington Public Schools Social Studies Curriculum in grades 3, 5, 8, and 11 focus on American History, while Ancient /World History is studied in grades 6, 9, and 10.

Civics Research Group

What is Civics? Why is it important to Social Studies?

As a central component of the Lexington Public Schools' Social Studies Curriculum, the study of civics is essential to fostering an informed, participatory, and empowered public in a democratic society. While broad in scope, civics may be defined as a social science dealing with the rights and duties of citizens, as well as with the core structures and institutions established to uphold our collective ideals.

A thorough examination of current research for civics education reveals several prominent findings. The comprehensive 2011 report, *Guardian of Democracy: The Civic Mission of Schools* asserts, "America as a new nation was not created out of devotion to a motherland, a royal family, or a national religion. Americans are instead defined by our fidelity to certain ideals, expressed in the Declaration of Independence, Constitution, Bill of Rights and subsequent amendments" (Gauld). This research maintains, therefore, that an informed and engaged public is crucial to improving civic discourse, increasing the accountability of elected officials, fulfilling the ideal of civic equality, and modeling responsible citizens and character development for future generations.

Knowledge of our ideals, history, and systems (be they social, legal, governmental, etc.) is not innate, however, it is acquired through education. Former Associate Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, founder of the web-based education project iCivics.org, stated "knowledge about our government is not handed down through the gene pool. Every generation has to learn it."

According to the *Guardians of Democracy: Civic Mission of Schools*, "effective civic learning increases the civic health of our nation by empowering young people to exercise their democratic rights and responsibilities" (Gauld). Further, understanding civics is a precondition of action as high-quality civic learning has been proven to increase the civic knowledge, skills, dispositions, and participation of citizens (Delli Carpini).

On a smaller scale, research shows that "civic learning builds a positive school climate, which in turn has a positive impact on a wide range of outputs for students, ranging from academic achievement to personal character" (Cohen). Civic education also fosters knowledge of economic and political processes, skill in understanding presentations in a range of media, and the ability to work cooperatively with others.

Current Research on Civics

There is ample evidence suggesting that civic education is an essential ingredient in creating a democratic society. First and foremost, civic knowledge encourages civic action. "Young people who know more about government are more likely to vote, discuss politics, contact the

government, and take part in other civic activities than their less knowledgeable counterparts” (Deli Carpini). It appears a correlation exists between effective public civic education and a greater participatory and empowered society. Additional research from a recent study entitled, *From Classroom to Voting Booth: The Effect of High School Civic Education on Turnout* found that “students who complete a year of American government or civics are 3–6 percentage points more likely to vote than peers without such a course” (Bachner).

Research also shows that curriculum emphasizing civic education has positive interdisciplinary academic effects. For example, “Students receiving high-quality civic learning score higher on a broad range of twenty-first century competencies than those without” (Comber). Competent and responsible citizens share four common traits, as outlined by the *Guardians of Democracy: Civic Mission of Schools* report, “they are informed and thoughtful; they participate in their communities; they act politically; they possess moral and civic virtues that keeps them socially responsible and they are confident in their capacity to make a difference” (Gauld) According to the National Research Council, there is a high degree of overlap between these twenty-first century competencies and the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that are necessary for democratic citizenship.

Research indicates that civic education yields higher rates in student achievement. For example, “civic learning beginning in elementary and middle school, with a focus on civic responsibility, is directly tied to lowering a student’s propensity to drop out of high school” (Starks).

Examples from Lexington Public Schools

Through the study of civics, Lexington’s students, a population forged from increasingly diverse cultural, religious, and racial backgrounds, can fully join the American community by learning to share a commitment to its common values and collective ideals. Ensuring this outcome is both an urgent necessity and the social responsibility of LPS educators. All Lexington Public schools have mission statements and core values that highlight respect and responsibility to oneself, the school, and the larger community.

At the elementary level, civics is taught through a variety of instructional strategies and activities. The use of social competency curricula such as *Open Circle* and *Responsive Classroom* provide students with engaging lessons centered on how they can be responsible school citizens that will ultimately translate into broader civic engagement. Students practice civics values by participating in all school meetings as well as through daily classroom experiences. Many schools also conduct food drives for local agencies, winter coat donations, and the Bowman school donates funds each year to their Kenyan sister school.

All middle school students participated in Rachel’s Challenge, a student centered assembly to promote social change, in 2010-2011. Rachel’s Challenge mission is to “inspire, equip and empower every person to create a permanent positive culture change in their school, business and community by starting a chain reaction of kindness and compassion.” (Rachel’s Challenge 2012) Building upon the prominent themes of Rachel’s Challenge, guidance councilors at William Diamond Middle School implemented pro-social centered lessons making the connection concrete for students. Jonas Clarke Middle School guidance counselor’s implemented the Chain Links club, which meets during the weekly intervention and enrichment block. The

Chain Links club strengthens a school culture that is safe and welcoming for all students. Additionally, both middle schools provide opportunities for student government such as the Jonas Advisory Board (JAB) and the Diamond Student Council. The middle school social studies teachers have facilitated in-school mock presidential elections for students.

Civic values are emphasized in the Lexington High School's mission statement and social and civic expectations for student learning. Civic values are embedded in the core curriculum, especially in the required Issues in America History course for juniors. In addition, issues of citizenship and civics are addressed in electives such as Government and Politics, Law, Race and Gender, Debate, Modern Conflict; community service requirements for graduation; and a large number of student activities and clubs (Appendix C).

Geography and Economics Research Group

What is Geography? Why is it Important to Social Studies?

Geography allows students to learn about the world and better understand differences in languages, race, religion and politics. Geography is more than just identifying locations on a map and understanding cultural diversity. The geographic themes of human and environmental interaction, region, movement, place, and location largely determine patterns of economic and global interdependence that are crucial in our world today. The application of these geographic themes is critical in order for students to become highly successful citizens in a complex global community.

In the context of social studies, geography uniquely encourages skills concerning spatial reasoning and the patterns of human and environmental interaction. Geography includes the study of diverse cultures, which offers sensitive pathways to cooperation in response to global challenges. In order to make critical decisions in a rapidly changing world, the ability to navigate new and different spatial relationships is increasingly important. According to the Grosvenor Institute, "Americans may not know much about key elements of our world that contribute to our interdependence." It emphasizes geographic knowledge as a key basis for informed decision-making. While base knowledge has its place, the skills associated with the study of geography may be even more important. Mastery of geography related skills enable students to accurately evaluate the impact of location on important decisions (Why Geography is Important).

Current Research in Geography

The study of geography should be much more than rote memorization of facts. It is the application of meaningful skills, which are essential in developing critical thinking and geographic understandings. Current research of geography shows that knowledge and skills are essential for students to understand patterns and how humans impact their world. Students can improve critical thinking skills through analysis of both real and artificially constructed examples (Gould 243). Some of the best tools for instruction are greatly simplified real world examples that do not necessarily include political geography or traditional mapping. Spatial understanding enables students to create functional maps and pattern relationships independently (Why Geography is Important).

Examples from Lexington Public Schools

Geography is a core piece of numerous social studies units in the Lexington Public Schools. At the elementary level, students begin their study of geography by exploring and mapping the classroom, school and neighborhoods. Building on these personal applications, third grade students learn about Lexington's farming history when analyzing old maps. Fourth grade students study North American geography as they compare and contrast regional climates and physical features. Fifth grade students use a variety of historic maps to better understand the routes of early European exploration, colonial expansion, and the events of the American Revolution.

Geography is a required course in seventh grade social studies that incorporates a regional thematic approach, as students understand the physical and cultural characteristics of our world. For example, after examining the physical geography of Southwestern Asia and Northern Africa students investigate the development of monotheistic religions and the impact of non-renewable resources upon the modern countries in the region. Middle school students have participated in the National Geography Bee, "the contest is designed to encourage teachers to include geography in their classrooms, spark student interest in the subject, and increase public awareness about geography" (Why Geography is Important).

Geography is embedded in the high school history classes and is used to interpret and understand the past. Maps, graphs and charts are used to understand the rise and fall of empires, the development of trading networks, or the expansion of the United States across the continent. Geography assists students in analyzing the causes of the Industrial Revolution or the migrations of people around the world. In addition to the AP Geography elective offered in the 12th grade, many other electives, such as Modern Conflict or International Relations, also incorporate geographic reasoning into the social studies curriculum.

However, variations exist between teachers and schools, which lead to inconsistent student experiences. At the elementary schools there is great variation in content from one school to another and one grade to another. Geography content and skills are addressed, but not in a way that is uniform, sequential, or builds skills from one year to the next. The seventh grade geography course brings a degree of common content, but not common skills expectations. The other grades do not have systematic commonality with geography content or skills. High School history courses provide common content, but not common skills expectations. However, there are many opportunities to explicitly include geographic concepts in the existing curriculum.

What is Economics? Why is it Important to Social Studies?

Economics is a social science that analyzes the consumption, production and distribution of goods and services. The study of economics helps students to "comprehend the modern world and make decisions that shape the future" (Meszaros and Suiter). This study enables students to make better-informed decisions and understand the consequences of their choices. The Voluntary National Council Standards on Economic Education further suggests that workers without adequate economic knowledge and skills will be disadvantaged as they enter the workforce. Students will be making economic choices all their lives as consumers, producers, citizens and voters. Our global interdependence is increasingly built through our economic connections with others. Improved study in economics enables students to function more effectively in society. In

order to make critical decisions in a rapidly changing world, the ability to navigate new and different economic relationships is increasingly important for our students.

Current Research in Economics

According to recent research in economics education, economic concepts and skills can be embedded in the teaching of a wide variety of core curricular concepts and can be integrated within subjects already taught. In order to be more effective, additional training for teachers in core economic concepts is necessary (Voluntary National Council Standards).

Opportunities to include economic concepts in instruction arise most obviously whenever money or commerce is included, but economics goes well beyond that. Whenever human interactions deal with issues connected with scarcity including time, resources, and decision-making, economic concepts can and should also be included. Explicit and intentional efforts to instruct students in economics should span from elementary through secondary education with increasing complexity that builds on previous understandings.

Examples from Lexington Public Schools

It is important that the curricular expectations are adjusted in a way that makes it clear how each year builds on the previous year's economic skills and content. There is some variation in economic instruction in the way that skills and content are taught vertically, K-12. At the elementary level there is currently no explicit scope and sequence for economics. However, there are many instances where economic ideas are taught in conjunction with history standards. Such as, the fifth grade study of the 13 American colonies and their economic interdependence.

Currently in the middle school level economics is offered as an exploratory elective course to 8th grade students. The Lexington Middle School Program of Studies 2011-2012 outlines the concepts of the economics course focus upon "the basic topics of scarcity of resources, specialization, production and flow of goods and services, wages, credit and banking are part of everyday life." As economics is an elective middle school course it is important to note the enrollment data, as it demonstrates the current level of student involvement. As such, in 2011-12 school year 29% of 8th grade students at Diamond Middle School and 20% of 8th grade students at Jonas Clarke Middle School enrolled in the economics elective.

At the high school level economics is integrated in the curriculum, especially in the economics and business electives. The department offers specific courses in economics, both at the college prep and AP levels, marketing, business, management, and personal finance. In addition, economic issues are addressed in the core curriculum through such themes as trade, economic systems, and the development of the American economy.

21st Century Skills Research Group

What are 21st Century Skills? Why Are They Important to Social Studies?

The concepts that comprise 21st Century Skills are essential to Social Studies education. One of the primary purposes of a social studies education is to create learners who make informed decisions and actively engage as citizens in their local, national, and global communities. 21st century skills are integral to this process. These skills focus on critical thinking, problem solving,

collaboration, written and oral communication, creativity, self-direction, leadership and global awareness. While these skills have always been important, they are taking on new meaning as high school graduates transition into increasingly complex and competitive world.

A comprehensive list of the skills incorporated in the idea of 21st Century Skills would be lengthy. The overarching themes are Learning and Innovation Skills (Creativity and Innovation, Critical Thinking and Problem Solving, Communication, Collaboration); Information, Media and Technology Skills (Information Literacy, Media Literacy, Information and Communications Technology Literacy); Life and Career Skills (Flexibility and Adaptability, Initiative and Self Direction, Social and Cross-cultural Skills, Productivity and Accountability, Leadership and Responsibility).

Current Research on 21st Century Skills

There is a general consensus that the ability to master 21st Century Skills is critical to a student's transition to higher education and global society as a whole. Research shows that "a majority of U.S. students leave high school without the core competencies that employers and post-secondary educators cite as the most critical for real-world performance and advanced learning. Critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, and the other 21st Century Skills are the tools people need to move up the economic ladder" (Bellance and Brandt). The availability of a plethora of online resources makes the learning of social studies more exciting. Students need to be taught 21st Century Skills in order to use these resources, particularly primary and secondary sources effectively (Goldberg).

There is debate around the question of what a 21st Century Skills education should look like in a K-12 curriculum. Much progress in incorporating the skills has been made, especially with the adoption of the MA Framework. According to this document, "students must gain literacy skills specific to a variety of disciplines ... and teaching and assessing those skills is the responsibility of a variety of subject-area teachers" (Kendall). The challenge is how to encourage teachers to focus on 21st Century Skills in a high stakes testing environment (Walser).

Examples from Lexington Public Schools

Lexington Public Schools has dedicated considerable resources for the hardware, software, infrastructure, staff and professional development to bring meaningful technology integration into the classroom. The technology integration specialists work collaboratively with teachers to provide support in development of lessons using a variety of technology skills and resources.

Many 21st Century Skills are introduced at the elementary level through critical thinking and problem solving skills, collaboration, and technology literacy. These skills are reinforced and expanded upon throughout the elementary grade levels. Research projects related to social studies content are introduced in second grade. These research projects involve collaboration between classroom teachers, librarians and instructional technology specialists. They build in scope and complexity throughout the grades, gradually including higher-level skills. The challenge for the Social Studies Curriculum Review Committee along with all curriculum departments in Lexington Public Schools is to clearly articulate the 21st Century Skills across all grade levels.

Each grade level at the middle schools fosters progression of the essential skills of collaboration, creativity, communication, innovation and pro-social behavior. Utilizing the PLCs as a vehicle, the department relies on both the MA History and Social Science Framework and the MA Framework as a basis for promoting proficiency and better preparing the students for college, career, and citizenship. This includes direct instruction of content vocabulary, analysis and evaluation of a variety of both print and electronic sources, as well as the cultivation of problem solving and creative thinking through student projects. The middle school social studies teachers plan to use the results of the MA Framework literacy survey to better inform instruction. Finally, Clarke and Diamond utilize technology and library-media specialists to assist teachers with implementation of technology in curriculum, instruction and assessment. Examples of this include student response clickers, Open Classroom, Glogster, and Noodlebib.

Most yearlong history classes at the high school require students to complete inquiry-based projects that require the use of technology to acquire and organize information. Students are then expected to analyze and evaluate evidence to support and communicate an original argument. All of these inquiry-based projects challenge students to confront obstacles and adapt to frustrations, teaching resilience.

Global Education Research Group

What is Global Education? Why is it Important to Social Studies?

Global Education is not solely the study of other cultures or global appreciation, it is a call for students to see the world through multiple perspectives of diverse peoples and engage in authentic experiences with diverse populations. In Lexington we are fortunate that our student population represents a global community. Statistics show that LPS students speak 54 languages and we currently have a population of 380 ELL students. In addition to language diversity, LPS students practice a rich variety of religious and cultural traditions. This diversity enables Lexington students to learn from their peers and experience multiple perspectives.

The purpose of Global Education is to “prepare young people to understand and interact within a culturally diverse and globally interconnected world” (Merryfield). This approach to teaching and learning is interdisciplinary; it challenges students to integrate understanding from multiple content areas in order to think and act as compassionate citizens as they create solutions to the complex issues of today’s increasingly interconnected world. Through access to knowledge, experiences and perspectives of diverse peoples, student can develop the critical thinking skills necessary to work collaboratively in diverse groups and understand the realities of daily life in the 21st century. The Global Education approach focuses on the concept of connectedness, encouraging and supporting students to make connections between global, local, and personal choices and the impact of these choices.

The goal of Global Education is to develop global competencies. Global competency requires cognitive, emotional and social engagement; developing the “attitudinal and ethical dispositions that make it possible to interact peacefully, respectfully and productively with fellow human beings from diverse geographies” (Reimers). Due to global technological, economic, and political changes our students are currently engaging in an increasingly globalized world. These

patterns of globalization change relationships and our students must be prepared to engage meaningfully and empathetically in our interconnected world.

Current Research on Global Education

Global Education is a philosophy of education aimed at preparing students to engage purposefully and ethically in today's interconnected world. Global Education includes teaching and learning that incorporates the strands of history, economics, geography, civics, and 21st Century Skills. Like many of the other research areas, Global Education emphasizes application of skills such as historical empathy, evaluating multiple perspectives, and integrating knowledge from multiple disciplines to provide solutions to our world's complex problems.

The skills and dispositions promoted through Global Education are mirrored in the reading, writing, listening and speaking strands of the MA Framework. The reading strand includes analyzing point of view, integrating knowledge, and reading informational texts such as non-fiction, historical, scientific and technical texts. The MA Framework speaking and listening strand emphasizes participating effectively in collaborative discussions and taking into account audience when presenting information. The writing strand includes conducting research, gathering evidence from multiple sources, crafting argumentative and informational writing.

The *Massachusetts History and Social Science Framework* primarily focuses on content as well as skills and concepts that include several overarching themes pertinent to Global Education. At the elementary level, the Framework centers upon developing the building blocks for global understanding and making connections through its civics and geography standards. Students investigate and learn key concepts moving from local to national topics (family, community, state, and country), scaffolding into global issues, and eventually present day issues and their historical contexts. An important theme of the Framework is the importance of developing a student's sense of individual responsibility and respect for human dignity. This includes how the world is shaped by diverse economic, political, religious, and cultural phenomena that span time and space and how these global patterns can impact national, local, and individual economies and lifestyles (*Massachusetts History and Social Science Framework* 6-11).

Looking beyond Massachusetts for guidance in this area, the *National Council for the Social Studies* created theme-based standards. Theme Nine, *Global Connections* states, "the realities of global interdependence require a deeper understanding of the increasingly important and diverse global connections among world societies" (National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies).

Examples from the Lexington Public Schools

In elementary schools, students experience different types of global connections and the effects upon daily life, past and present. There are a variety of units that address Global Education including a study of cultures and celebrations in grade two, immigration in fourth grade and the examination of the Triangle Trade by fifth grade students.

Middle school students continue to build on the understanding that while some global issues have existed over time, the pace of global connections is increasing. In the middle schools, students explore the themes of global trade and cultural diffusion in 6th grade Ancient Civilizations. Themes from Global Education are examined through international relations and

demographic development in 7th grade World Geography. Students analyze events of the Revolutionary and Civil War eras from multiple perspectives in 8th grade US History.

Students in Lexington High School examine the causes, conflicts, effects and impact of global issues and connections. Students evaluate individual action versus national or international approaches to problem solving. These goals drive the curriculum in World History I, World History II, and many of the elective courses at the high school level. It is the goal that students will understand that individuals at all levels, from local and national leadership to international organizations, are capable of creating positive change and that they will become globally connected citizens. Examples might include World History II students evaluating the impact of donations to Goodwill in the United States on the textile industry in Zambia or participation in Human Rights Day activities.

In Lexington Public Schools teachers are creating opportunities for students to engage with global issues. Although LPS teachers are addressing the key tenets of Global Education in their curriculum and pedagogy, teachers must be purposeful and mindful when integrating these skills and concepts into their lessons. Furthermore, teachers must make these goals explicit for their students so that students can make meaningful connections.

Assessment Research Group

The Social Studies MCAS has not been given for many years. Due to this lack of data, the committee concluded that a research group dedicated to assessment in social studies was necessary. The committee understands that assessment is an essential component in a cycle that also includes curriculum and instruction.

What is Assessment? Why is it Important to Social Studies?

Assessment in education is the process of documenting, in measurable terms, knowledge, skills, attitudes and beliefs. Assessment can focus on the individual learner, the class, the school, or the educational system as a whole. Assessment is important in education to monitor learning, provide on-going feedback, inform instruction, evaluate learning based upon a set of standards, and measuring student progress over time. Ultimately, the assessing of students' work allows educators to judge the progress of students with a set of criteria based on the national, state and local standards for achievement.

Current Research on Social Studies Assessment

The current research shows that a spectrum of assessments should be explicitly linked to state and national standards. Formal assessments must be a mix of both formative and summative tools. Formative assessments help guide future instruction based upon the results, informing teachers of what students know and do not know, so that instruction can be tailored to address the weaker areas. Summative assessments generally occur at the end of curriculum units and measure student understanding to determine if the educational objectives have been achieved (Valencia).

Recent years have seen a simultaneous push for more regular formal assessments across grades in elementary and middle school. At the same time, there has been a national emphasis on greater

informal formative assessments being used in the classroom at the high school level to inform instruction (Black and William). Carnegie Mellon University examined a wide array of formative assessment techniques such as minute paper, problem recognition tasks, documented problem solutions, directed paraphrasing, application cards and classroom opinion polls. Using this formative array of Classroom Assessment Techniques, CATs, provides a set of specific activities that instructors can use to gauge student understanding. Monitoring the learning progress of groups of students is the primary purpose. “CATs are meant to provide immediate feedback about the entire class’s level of understanding, not individual students. The instructor can use this feedback to inform instruction, such as speeding up or slowing the pace of a lecture or explicitly addressing areas of confusion” (Angelo and Cross).

Social Studies teachers in the classroom, on a weekly or even daily basis, repeatedly implement formative assessments. These assessments inform understanding and they should provide an opportunity for students to demonstrate what they have learned. The formative assessments provide a chance for students to apply higher order thinking skills including synthesis.

Research shows that common assessments should be implemented to increase teacher collaboration and focus professional conversations around interpreting student achievement data. Research shows that dedicated time for collaboration, such as Professional Learning Communities (PLC), which is embedded into an educator’s schedule, provides support for common data analysis. Richard DuFour states the purpose is, “to create a professional learning community, focus on learning rather than teaching, work collaboratively, and hold yourself accountable for results.” Such common assessments allow greater use of data to inform teachers’ practices to determine evidence of effectiveness.

Examples from Lexington Public Schools

At the elementary level, there is little formal assessment in social studies. Formal formative assessments are rare and are not coordinated across schools or across the district.

At the middle schools, formative and summative assessments are implemented across the district, within the school-based PLCs, and by individual teachers. Non-fiction literacy common assessments are currently being implemented across the district. Rubrics based upon MA Framework standards are used to assess student progress. School-based PLCs implement common assessments based upon topics such as map skills. These assessments are formative and help guide teachers through the remainder of the unit based upon the results. Other common assessments also include long-term research projects and the use of primary and secondary sources to determine skills such as sequence of events and point-of-view.

The high school emphasizes common summative assessments by having PLCs move from a loosely enforced 80% common final to a 100% common final. Having met that objective, high school teams are starting to consider how to use student academic data gathered through smaller common formative assessments in order to inform and improve instruction. The result will be a shift from focusing on the cumulative knowledge gained in a course to the day-to-day understanding of concepts so that instruction can be tailored for best results.

Summary Reports

Elementary School

The Social Studies Curriculum Review, Year 1, reveals a K-5 program that is not aligned with current standards and is in need of consistency and clarity district wide. The K-5 committee members knew, prior to starting the review, about many of the issues. In order to gain a deeper understanding of the Social Studies situation, the committee also conducted a staff survey in September 2011. The survey illuminated the complexity and depth of the issues around the curriculum.

- Lack of a K-5 district-wide leadership in Social Studies from 2007 - 2010
- Changing standards in social studies and literacy
- Absence of a detailed curriculum map tied to district-wide formative and summative assessments
- Need for consistency when selecting and purchasing grade appropriate materials
- Need for professional development

District wide Leadership

Since the 2007-2008 school year Lexington Public Schools has been without a K-5 Social Studies Curriculum Coordinator. During this time classroom teachers worked to include the Social Studies in a meaningful manner without clear and consistent leadership or a program focus. In the absence of this leadership, teachers are to be commended for their efforts. In 2010 a new coordinator was hired to work with all staff and co-facilitate the review committee in creating a program that provides thoughtful standards based instruction for all students.

The K-5 Social Studies Curriculum Coordinator provides instructional support for classroom teachers through co-planning, teaching model lessons, acquiring materials and helping grade level teams establish clearer instructional goals. The curriculum coordinator also researches and purchases materials district-wide in an effort to provide equitable resources for all students. One project that has met with considerable success is the use of two National Geographic giant maps, Africa and Asia, with each classroom. Not only did these maps provide students with increased geographic knowledge, families who attended a map night were able to engage in rich geographic conversations with their children.

Curriculum

At each grade level there are teacher created units and some materials. However, due to staffing and standard changes these units are taught to varying degrees and depth across the district creating horizontal gaps in the curriculum. Fourth grade in particular is a level that has struggled with the changes in the standards. In 1997 the Massachusetts Department of Education published its first version of the *History and Social Science Curriculum Framework*. This document called for the teaching of ancient river valley civilizations at fourth grade. Communities across the Commonwealth, including Lexington, designed units and purchased materials to address the new content. In 2003 the DESE revised the standards by eliminating the ancient civilization standards and inserted new standards centered on North American geography, history, culture, and economics. These changes were extremely problematic for the fourth grade curriculum and created inconsistencies between all of the elementary schools.

Assessment in the Social Studies is also an area that needs attention. In order to develop a better understanding of current research and practice, the review committee's assessment research group (comprised of K-12 teachers and the K-5 coordinator) attended a multi-day MASCD (Massachusetts Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development) workshop that highlighted the need for meaningful common assessments that truly measure student learning as related to the new Common Core documents. This research group was able to engage in thoughtful discussions, examine their own practices, and begin to develop assessments on which they will continue working during Year Two of the curriculum review.

Collaboration

In order to increase horizontal alignment in the fourth grade curriculum, the classroom teachers have worked with the K-5 coordinator to plan professional development and they have also begun to map their standards. This curriculum mapping will continue into the summer of 2012 and into Year Two of the review. Additionally, in March all fourth grade teachers attended a one-day North American geography workshop with Professor Vernon Domingo from Bridgewater State University that provided needed content information and solid instructional strategies. To begin to address the needs at the primary level, the Bridge Elementary School K-2 teachers participated in a Social Studies/literacy workshop during two principal afternoons. This workshop was co-designed by the K-5 Social Studies coordinator, the Bridge literacy specialists and the Bridge principal. Due to the success of this workshop, this same planning team is coordinating additional offerings for the 2012-13 school year.

The creation of the new elementary report card has allowed for clearer expectations in social studies that are aligned with current standards. Committee members consulted with the K-5 coordinator in order to select priority benchmarks that foster students' creativity, civic engagement and increase their understanding of history.

Materials

The recently published MA Framework also created new challenges as well as opportunities for Social Studies. These standards call for direct instruction of informational text that dovetails with many research based projects and lessons. The challenge is locating quality resources at a wide variety of text levels to meet the needs of all learners. Fourth grade teachers at the Estabrook School participated in a curriculum pilot using a well-regarded program, *Geography Alive!* published by Teachers Curriculum Institute. Recommendations for the adoption of this program are on going. The review committee has worked to identify additional resources at other grade levels. Professional development for the use of these resources will be part of the Year Two goals.

Middle School

Year 1 of the Lexington Public School Social Studies curriculum review revealed a middle school program of instructed content that is closely aligned with the current Massachusetts Curriculum Framework, yet is in need of greater alignment to the *MA Framework Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies* regarding instructed skills. The new district-wide leadership model of a social studies department head in grades 6-8 strengthens cohesion between teachers

from Jonas Clarke Middle School and William Diamond Middle School and promotes the vertical and horizontal alignment of instructed curriculum and skills.

District-wide leadership

Previous district-wide curriculum reviews have shown that some significant curriculum differences have developed between schools and that one supervisor per department for both schools is needed. Since the 2003-2004 school year, Lexington Public Schools has been without a middle school department head for both Jonas Clarke Middle School and William Diamond Middle School. Prior to the 2003-2004 school year, Lexington Public Schools had a 6-12 Social Studies Department Head model of leadership. This 6-12 model was replaced when both Jonas Clarke Middle School and William Diamond Middle School moved to separate 6-8 department chairs for social studies. As a result, opportunities for district-wide professional collaboration were limited.

The recent change to a district-wide middle school department head leadership structure has increased continuity and clarity of curriculum and expectations between schools and strengthened cohesion between schools. This reorganization increased the amount of administrative time during the school year and has allowed the department head to supervise and evaluate the teachers in the department. Furthermore, the role of the middle school Social Studies department head is to align and coordinate curriculum and promote professional collaboration and growth through the supervision and evaluation for faculty members in the department.

The Middle School Social Studies Departments' goals are aligned to the goals of the Social Studies Curriculum Review Committee, as follows:

- Build professional collaboration between Social Studies teachers at Clarke and Diamond
- Increase vertical and horizontal alignment of instructed curriculum of content and skills
- Improve non-fiction literacy skills for students in grades 6, 7 and 8

Collaboration

To accomplish the stated goals, the middle school Social Studies department utilized professional collaborative time. All middle school Social Studies teachers collaborated in content specific weekly Professional Learning Community (PLC) meetings embedded into their schedules. In support of this dedicated collaboration, norms and professional expectations were created and communicated for these weekly PLC meetings as well as for all after school department meetings. These district-wide department meetings alternated between Jonas Clarke Middle School and William Diamond Middle School and included the entire middle school Social Studies department.

In an effort to strengthen collaboration and improve informational text-based literacy skills for middle school students, multiple district-wide common assessments were created, implemented, and assessed throughout the 2011-2012 school year by Social Studies teachers. These assessments targeted non-fiction paragraph writing skill development using common grade-level rubrics. These common rubrics were designed during departmental meeting times and are based upon the MA Framework Standards. During PLC meeting times teachers then evaluated samples of student work collaboratively to increase the calibration of scoring using the common rubrics. After increasing inter-rater reliability, individual teachers generated student achievement data

based upon the common rubrics and then inputted into a grade level specific Google document account. Proficiency standards were established using formulas in the Google doc to analyze student achievement trends. Next, district-wide department meeting time was used to share teaching strategies to improve student acquisition of literacy-based skills. In support of professional collaboration, peer observations were provided for teachers to increase sharing of professional practice.

Curriculum

The current sequence of Social Studies courses provided at the middle school level in Lexington Public Schools is as follows:

- Ancient Civilizations, grade 6
- World Geography, grade 7
- US History, grade 8

The instructed curriculum of middle school social studies content is currently horizontally aligned towards the Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for Social Sciences. It is important to note an inversion currently exists in the vertical alignment for grades 6 and 7 between Lexington Public Schools and the Massachusetts Framework. With the exception of this one noted vertical inversion, alignment across the district is horizontally consistent for instructed content of units in social studies.

Due to the chronological nature of the content in the Ancient Civilizations and US History middle school courses, the horizontal curriculum units of instruction were closely aligned between both Jonas Clarke and William Diamond Middle School. Some immediate needs were identified regarding district-wide horizontal curriculum in World Geography. As a result, a revised sequence for the instructed units was implemented for the World Geography course (Appendix F). The sequential district-wide realignment of the World Geography curriculum was necessary as to better facilitate the timely sharing of instructional practices and to enable district-wide collaborative work.

In an effort to further increase horizontal and vertical curriculum alignment, curriculum review committee meeting time was used to begin mapping instructed curriculum for selected content units by grade level. A backwards design model based upon the Atlas Rubicon unit template was utilized for mapping units and included referenced curriculum standards, Big Ideas, Essential Questions, content, common assessments and instructional materials.

Additionally, a revised process to instruct the grade 6 Ancient Civilizations common research paper was implemented at Jonas Clarke Middle School, which further highlighted the departmental need to explore how discrete skills are instructed at both middle schools.

Literacy Survey

It was anticipated that a gap exists in the instruction of skills in the Social Studies department due to the adoption by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts of the MA Framework Standards. As a result, a literacy survey was created and provided to all middle school department members for the purpose assessing alignment towards the MA Framework Standards. The purpose of the

survey was to gather data of the instructed skills-based curriculum of the middle school teachers in the Social Studies department in Lexington Public Schools.

The survey was divided into reading and writing sections based upon the *MA Framework Anchor Standards for Literacy* in grades 6-8 Social Studies. Literacy based strands from the MA Framework Standards divide both the reading and writing sections of the survey. The survey included both bimodal quantitative and qualitative statements that were designed to assess the current literacy-based instructional practices in relation to the MA Framework Standards in middle schools. The quantitative data is reported through bar graphs expressed as percentages while the qualitative data is summarized by emergent themes from teacher reported examples (Appendix G).

Examining the MA Framework reading survey data of middle school Social Studies teachers some patterns emerge pointing to areas of future literacy centered improvement. In the reading anchor strand of craft and structure standard, only 57% of teachers report using instructional time in the past 12 months to teach how a text presents information. This skill includes sequential, comparative and causally structure in texts. The distribution of responses for this particular standard is equal across grade levels and middle schools indicating an area to departmental focus. The implication is for middle school teachers to explicitly provide students with direct reading instruction describing how different texts comparatively present information.

The distribution of reported reading instruction is not always consistent across grade levels. For example, 71% of teachers indicate instructional alignment towards the MA Framework Reading Standard # 6. This reading skill is for students to identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose. Disaggregating the teacher response data by grade level for this standard yields 100% reported alignment in both middle schools by 8th grade US History teachers. This vertical finding points to the potential need to delineate which grade levels should target specific and appropriate MA Framework standards for reading skills.

Similar patterns emerge when analyzing additional MA Framework reading standards. For example, reading standard #9 specifically requires students to analyze the relationship between primary and secondary source on the same topic. While the entire middle school Social Studies survey indicated 71% of teachers utilizing instructional time on analyzing the relationship between primary and secondary sources, significantly more teachers in the 8th grade instructed this particular skill. Perhaps the content of 8th grade US history is most appropriate to instruct and focus upon this reading skill. These findings indicate the need to vertically align the MA Framework reading skills in grades 6th, 7th and 8th to ensure student understanding in reading skills in the content area of social studies by the end of middle school.

Next Steps

The next step is for the middle schools to continue with horizontal and vertical mapping of the curriculum for both content and skills using a backwards-design model. Professional development will be provided for the Social Studies curriculum review committee in August to build teacher capacity for this work. Based upon the results of the literacy survey, vertical mapping of instructed skills needs to continue with emphasis upon the research project in grade 6. Based upon feedback from teachers, the horizontal content units in grade 7 may be adjusted.

Additionally, the Lexington Education Foundation grant proposal seeks to strengthen school-community relationships and enhance the civics curriculum in grade 8.

High School

Year 1 of the Lexington Public School Social Studies curriculum review revealed a high school program of instructed content that is closely aligned with the current Massachusetts Curriculum Framework, yet is in need of greater alignment to the *MA Framework Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies* regarding instructed skills.

NEASC

In preparation for the 2008 reaccreditation, the Social Studies Department took primary responsibility for the teaching of Lexington High School academic expectations for learning standards 1 (writing), 2 (reading), 5 (research/gather data) and 8 (context of knowledge). School-wide rubrics were created to assist in the development of common expectations for learning outcomes. Department members also assembled a 9-12 curriculum guide that included course descriptions, links to the academic expectations, Essential Questions, and course outlines. These outlines include instructional activities and assessment instruments. This was the first step in curriculum writing since the 2001 Framework alignment. Although there have been various targeted curriculum workshops for staff members, the written curriculum had not been updated since 1990. The NEASC preparations allowed the inclusion of all the departmental electives for the first time in the written curriculum.

Use of common rubrics has become widespread for such major assignments as the 9th and 11th grade research papers and the 10th grade History Day Project. The LHS school-wide rubric for writing is frequently used and has been widely adapted to meet the needs of individual teachers and students. Another result of the NEASC reaccreditation process was the recommendation from the visiting team to reduce tracking in the department. As a result, honors sections of World History II and Issues in American History were eliminated in an effort to raise the level of expectation and performance for all students in the college preparatory classes.

Collaboration

In the 2008 school year the department began to experiment with the Professional Learning Communities or PLCs. Currently, there are four Social Studies PLCs, each organized around a common subject areas: 9th grade World History I; 10th grade World History II, CP1; 11th grade Issues in American History, CP1; and “singletons.” All of the PLCs have a common planning time for at least three blocks and one common meeting time each week. In addition, the 9th grade PLC also works collaboratively with the 9th grade English PLC. This joint 9th Grade Team meets bi-weekly to address transitional needs of the freshman class and also has worked on common teaching strategies and expectations for writing. The 9th – 11th grade PLCs have developed numerous common writing assignments, expectations and rubrics. There has also been much effort in the development of common research projects, unit assessments, and final exams.

For the 2011 – 2012 school year the major focus of all of the PLCs has been “backwards design” or the mapping out of the curricular units before implementation and the refinement of Big Ideas and Essential Questions. Atlas Rubicon has been a new on-line tool used to facilitate discussion

and store unit plans in a consistent manner. Alison Zmuda has been supporting these efforts during the professional development release afternoons. The next step is to align individual lessons and objectives with the course/unit Big Ideas and Essential Questions.

The Singleton PLC does not have a common curriculum to focus on, so has instead been researching and discussing best practices. PLC members have conducted peer observations as a means to provide feedback on the effectiveness of selected strategies. Along with the rest of the department, Singleton PLC members have been inputting curriculum materials into the Atlas Rubicon system and reflecting on Big Ideas and Essential Questions for their courses.

Professional Development

A number of nationally known leaders in education have come to LHS to support the on-going staff development program. In 2005 Doug Reeves spoke to the staff about the challenges at LHS, including insufficient time for collaboration; complex and differentiated needs of students; a history of professional isolation; and increased expectations. He offered, as a possible solution, the PLC model that would allow for continuous professional development through the sharing with colleagues. Rick and Becky DuFour followed in 2007 and introduced the concept of PLC as a means to promote high achievement for all students through a culture of collaboration. Bob Marzano (2008) presented an overview of instructional strategies from his *The Art and Science of Teaching*. He noted that effective teaching is both an art and a science and that there are research based practices that will improve student achievement. Teachers (as artists) can use their creativity to best match their style with the personality of the class. Larry Ainsworth (2009) discussed powerful curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices that are intentionally aligned as part of a whole system of instructional changes as a result of common formative assessments. This past year Alison Zmuda has supported the staff in “backwards” design of curriculum and the development of Big Ideas and Essential Questions as guiding elements. This work in backwards design is being stored on-line in the Atlas Rubicon system.

The professional development program has matched and supported the PLC Goals:

- 2007-08: Administer one common assessment for one unit.
- 2008-09: Complete one common unit with a common assessment; institute common planning time.
- 2009-10: Identify Big Ideas for course and develop common final assessment.
- 2010-11: Input consensus curriculum units into Atlas Rubicon; implement Backwards Planning.
- 2011-12: Develop Big Ideas and Essential Questions as part of the backwards design of curricular units into Atlas Rubicon.

Curriculum

The current sequence of Social Studies courses provided at Lexington High School is aligned with the current Massachusetts Curriculum Framework:

- World History I
- World History II
- American History
- Electives

The implementation of PLCs has allowed teachers of common courses to come together and to identify key skills and content so that students will have common understandings and experiences across a grade level. However, staff need to look more closely between grades and at the transition from 8th to 9th grades for gaps in the curriculum and areas where content and skill work are repetitious.

Lexington High Schools' Social Studies Department elective program offers a rich array of elective offerings in psychology, business/economics, civics, human rights, debate and history. The challenge is to make sure the elective program is reinforcing and expanding the student skills and enduring understandings from the core curriculum. The department needs to articulate the ways in which the elective program of studies aligns with the core curriculum.

Lexington High School offers numerous opportunities for student engagement as contributing members of the Lexington community and to develop a sense of citizenship in the state, nation and the world. Students may experience many aspects of the importance of citizenship through community service, course work, mock elections, student senate, voter registration drives, Government Day, class council and student clubs such as Mock Trial, Amnesty International, or Global Warming Action Club (Appendix C). However, the department needs to continue to look for new ways to engage the student population in the community and to enhance student civic understanding and the importance of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

Lexington's 300th Anniversary Celebration

Research indicates that community support is an important component of a vibrant social studies curriculum. Fortuitously, the social studies curriculum review coincides with the 300th anniversary of Lexington's incorporation. All LPS students will celebrate this important event by their participation in a rich array of experiences. Due to generous funding from the Lexington Education Foundation, teachers at all grade levels have collaborated to engage students around the 300th anniversary of the town's incorporation.

A representative group of K-5 educators have participated in professional development workshops to increase their own background knowledge of Lexington. The LEF funds also provided the opportunity for this same group to create lessons plans that all K-5 teachers will use to teach students the history of their schools, neighborhoods, and town during the 2012-13 school year.

In eighth grade, all LPS students are required to complete *U.S. History and Civics* that focuses upon the formation and framework of American democracy. Analyzing the depth of the instructed grade 8 US History curriculum horizontally, it had been determined that the civics unit of study at both middle schools lacked emphasis upon the role and function of local government. Serendipitously, a grant proposal was presented to the Lexington Education Foundation titled, "All Politics is Local: Celebrating Lexington's 300th Anniversary by Enhancing Civics and Local Government Education for All Middle School Students." This LEF program grant proposal will enhance the existing 8th grade US History and Civics curriculum for all middle school students in Lexington Public Schools through the collaborative development of lessons centering on local town government in conjunction with the celebration of Lexington's 300th anniversary as a town. The grant proposal will fund collaboration between local civic organizations such as the Lexington League of Women Voters, Lexington Town Meeting Members Association and middle school US History teachers. The goal is to enhance existing curriculum involving the function and processes of local town government in Lexington through the creation of student-run mock town meetings.

The LEF funded a project at the high school for US History students to create research projects that address historical artifacts from Lexington's rich history. Students will create documentaries on these artifacts to be played in the fall as part of the 300th celebrations. In addition, the Debate teams will research controversial issues from Lexington's History to debate as part of the festivities as well.

Year 2 Goals

The extensive reading, thoughtful discussions, and reflective writing of the research groups yielded numerous recommendations. Based on these recommendations, the committee has established their goals for Year Two of the review process that are reflective of the LPS curriculum review framework.

- Promote and ensure vertical and horizontal alignment of district curriculum.
 - Create curriculum maps, skills and content, using the *Backwards Design* model with expert instruction from Alison Zmuda.
 - Utilize ATLAS curriculum mapping software when appropriate.
 - Make recommendations for updated materials.

- Keep the curriculum current with the local, state, and national standards while maintaining a distinct identity.
 - Develop themes and/or enduring understanding K-12 that reflect all strands of social studies.
 - Locate and examine K-12 models of global education and the integration of 21st Century Skills.
 - Project budgetary implications of implementation of new curriculum.

- Identify a professional development program reflective of the Lexington Public Schools curriculum.
 - Provide professional development for all teachers to gain a deeper understanding of social studies beginning with a district-wide report during the 2012-2013 school year.
 - Identify meaningful instructional strategies that incorporate literacy with social studies.
 - Equitable and consistent technology access and professional development is key for successful social studies instruction.

- Analyze data to gauge the efficacy of the curriculum, assessment practices, and professional development initiatives.
 - Creation of common formative and summative assessments that include rubrics will be the first step toward this goal.

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Appendix A: Social Studies Curriculum Review Committee - 2011-2012

<u>Nbr</u>	<u>Representative</u>	<u>School</u>	<u>Grade</u>
1	Jane Hundley	K-5 Social Studies Coordinator	K-5
2	Carol Pilarski	Assist Supt. Curriculum, Instruction, Prof Dev	CO
3	Rob Collins	LHS	LHS Dept Chair Middle School Dept Chair
4	Matt Mehler	Diamond/Clarke	Kindergarten
5	Jonathan McMullen	Bowman Elementary	
6	Melinda Webster Loof: Library	Bowman Elementary	Specialists
7	Lynnette Allen: Library	Bridge Elementary	Specialists
8	Jill O'Reilly	Bridge Elementary	Grade 1
9	Katie Bourret	Estabrook Elementary	Grade 4
10	Andrea Taddeo	Estabrook Elementary	Grade 4
11	Cary St. Onge	Estabrook Elementary	Grade 5
12	Maria Azerado: Reading	Fiske Elementary	Specialists
13	Kim Michael	Fiske Elementary	Grade 4
14	Sahr Moussa	Harrington Elementary	Grade 5
15	Heather Daly	Hastings Elementary	Grade 2
16	Maureen McKenna	Hastings Elementary	Grade 3
17	Jennifer Sheerin	Hastings Elementary	Kindergarten
18	Stacey Gaetano	Clarke Middle School	7th World Geography 6th Ancient Civilization
19	Nancy Picardi	Clarke Middle School	8th US History
20	David Vincent	Clarke Middle School	Librarian
21	Carolyn Kelly	Clarke Middle School	Grade 6
22	Mary Barry	Diamond Middle School	Grade 7
23	Ron Godfrey	Diamond Middle School	Grade 8
24	Troy Lemay	Diamond Middle School	Grade 10
25	Bill Cole	LHS	Electives/12
26	Tammy Darling	LHS	Grade 9
27	Brooke Forelli	LHS	Grade 11
28	Matt Gardner	LHS	Electives/12
29	Julie Kuo	LHS	Grade 10
30	Katherine Murphy	LHS	Grade 9
31	Ellen Shea	LHS	Grade 11
32	Emily Tremaine	LHS	

Appendix B: National Standards for History

Standards in History for Grades K-4

Topic 1: Living and Working Together in Families and Communities, Now and Long Ago

Topic 2: The History of Students' Own State or Region

Topic 3: The History of the United States: Democratic Principles and Values and the Peoples from Many Cultures Who Contributed to Its Cultural, Economic and Political Heritage

Topic 4: The History of Peoples of Many Cultures Around the World

United States History Standards for Grades 5-12

Era 1: Three Worlds Meet (Beginnings to 1620)

Era 2: Colonization and Settlement (1585-1763)

Era 3: Revolution and the New Nation (1754-1820s)

Era 4: Expansion and Reform (1801-1861)

Era 5: Civil War and Reconstruction (1850-1877)

Era 6: The development of the Industrial United States (1870-1900)

Era 7: The Emergence of Modern America (1890-1930)

Era 8: The Great Depression and World War II (1929-1945)

Era 9: Postwar United States (1945-1970s)

Era 10: Contemporary United States (1968-present)

World History Standards for Grades 5-12

Era 1: The Beginnings of Human Society

Era 2: Early Civilizations and the Emergence of Pastoral Peoples, 4000-1000 BCE

Era 3: Classical Traditions, Major Religions, and Giant Empires, 1000 BCE-300 CE

Era 4: Expanding Zones of Exchange and Encounter, 300-1000 CE

Era 5: Intensified Hemispheric Interactions, 1000-1500 CE

Era 6: The Emergence of the First Global Age, 1450-1770

Era 7: An Age of Revolutions, 1750-1914

Era 8: A Half-Century of Crisis and Achievement, 1900-1945

Era 9: The 20th Century Since 1945: Promises and Paradoxes

Appendix C: List of Clubs and Activities at LHS

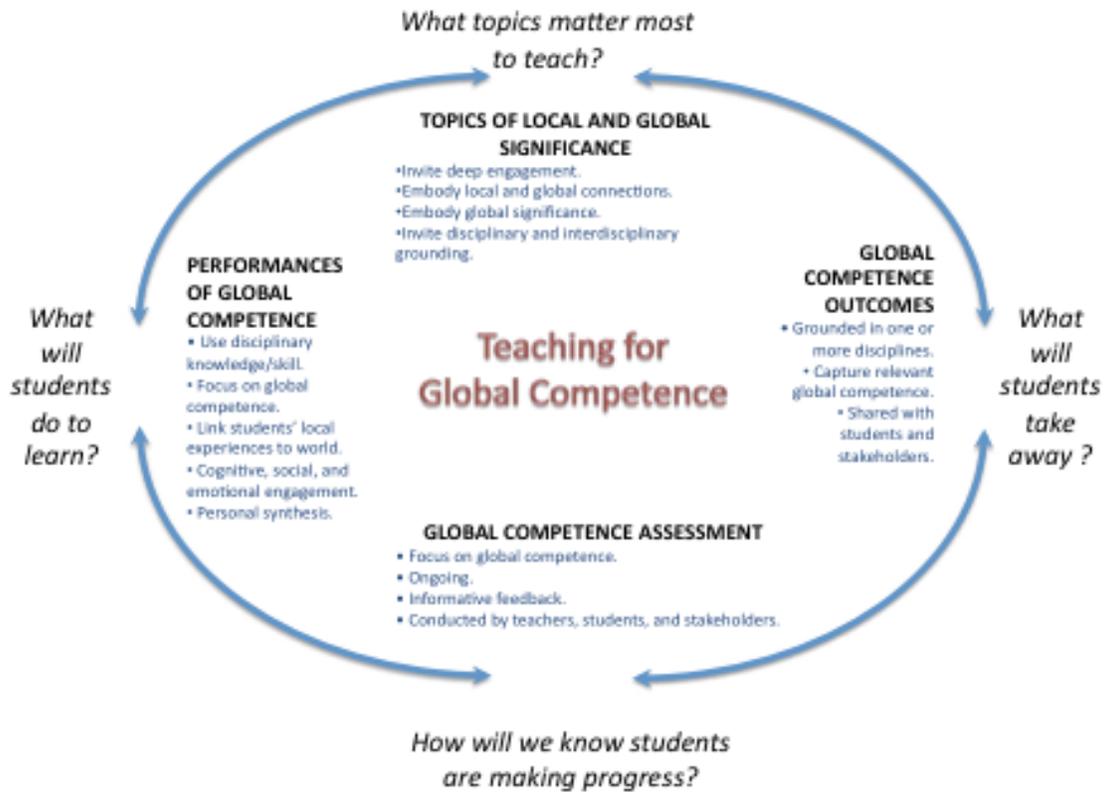
Name	Description of Club
Adopt a Soldier Club	Collects and sends cards and gifts to the troops overseas
American Computer Science League	To compete in ACSL sanctioned events.
Amnesty International Club	Promote social justice by bringing attention to human rights violations
Art Club	Create visual projects that will contribute to the school environment and community.
Asian Culture Club	To explore and experience different Asian experiences.
Best Buddies	Provides the opportunity for students with "disabilities" to make friends with students who are "non disabled"
Bibliobuilders Club	Fundraise to buy books for poor areas of the country.
Body Image Awareness Club	To create a safe environment for LHS students to discuss having a good body image.
Book Club	We get together to talk about our favorite books
Book Design Club: "Coptic Posse"	This art club designs and creates books
Book Exchange Club	Collect and redistribute used study materials and books
Certamen Latin Club	This club meets and studies Latin
Charity: Water	We raise awareness and money for people to build wells in poor areas where there is no safe water to drink.
Chess Club	To play and promote the game of chess.
Class Council (2012)	class activities
Class Council (2013)	class activities
Class Council (2014)	class activities
Class Council (2015)	class activities
Clothes 4 Kids Club	To organize and run clothing and food drives for children in America.
Conducting Club	Provide instruction and a learning opportunity to aspiring conductors with help of a professional conductor
Connect	Assist senior residents of Countryside Village w. housework, run errands, keep them company, organize fun events
Cooking Club	To explore, learn and develop an understanding & proficiency in culinary & pastry arts.
Cricket Club	Play cricket after school
Dance Club	Provide a fun and friendly forum for dancers to meet and share ideas and dance.
Dept. Energy Science Bowl	Science department team. Competes at state and national levels.
Drama Club	Students learn and practice dramatic techniques in a welcoming, playful environment.
Economics Challenge Club	To train for regional economics competitions and enjoy the study of micro and macro economics
Envirothon Team	Science department team. Competes at state and national levels
Figure Skating Club	To bring together different types of figure skaters throughout LHS.
First Robotics Club	Inspire young people to be science & technology leaders
Folio Magazine	Publishes Folio Magazine, a literary and arts magazine made up of student work.
French Club	Explore French culture and language

Name	Description of Club
Gay/Straight Alliance	Educational, support, advocacy, and discussion group for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender students and their allies.
German Club	To expose students to German culture and language
Global Warming Action Coalition	Promote energy conservation and environmental awareness
Health and Fitness Club	To improve health & fitness through practicing and developing better and healthier habits
H.O.P.E. (helping out people everywhere)	Community service
Hip Hop Club	To get together and dance and perform dances for community service and use talents to support & entert. Comm.
Hip Hop Interaction	To work out dance steps and create performances
Horror Film Club	Watch and discuss horror movies
Illustration Club	To have drawing skills and to give honest and constructive art critiques
Improve Troupe	Students learn, practice and perform improvisation techniques.
Initiating Change/Alleviating Need:I CAN	Harness the energy of Lexington's youth and channel it into community service projects and activities.
Instrumental Video	To play music, film and edit it to create art.
International Club	Discuss different cultures of the world.
Investment Club	Learn more about the stock market and how to invest money.
Italian Club	Explore the Italian culture and language
Italian Movie Club	Meet to watch and discuss Italian movies
Jewish Student Union	Study, and discuss the Jewish culture.
Juggling Club	To teach people how to juggle and do Diablo.
Knowledge Master Open	Bring together students for nationally and international. Contested academic quiz bowl competition.
Korean Culture Club	Learn how to speak and write Korean, eat different types of Korean food and learn history and culture of Korea
Lexington Star Craft Team	To bring the players of Star Craft together to discuss strategy and to have tournaments.
Lexington Youth Outreach	To reach out to the Lexington community through community service.
LHS Bhangra Club	To introduce a new type of Indian Folk Dance, make performances.
LHS Entrepreneur Club	To learn the process of bringing ideas, concepts and inventions to commercialization.
LHS Multimedia Club	We teach people how to work with cameras, and film local community events all over Lexington town
Linguistics Olympiad	Study and explore Latin
Math Team	Math Department team. Competes at state and national levels
Middle Eastern Club	To inform our peers about the unique cultures and national identities and history of countries in middle east.
Mind the Gap Club	To bring students together, watch and discuss British comedy.
Minuteman ARC Club	Visit and entertain disabled adults in rest homes
Mixed Race Club	A place to share the experience of being multi-racial.
Mock Trial Club	Engage students in a simulated ("mock") trial competition.
Model UN	Focuses on both human/humanitarian and political aspects of international relations

Name	Description of Club
Musical Outreach Collaboration	To provide a musical experience though performance.
Muslim Student Union	To meet and discuss Muslim culture
National History Bowl	To compete in the new nationwide competition in world history.
National Honor Society	LHS chapter of the national organization. Service club.
National Ocean Science Bowl	Science department team. Competes at state and national levels
Nexus	To provide a place for students new to Lexington to hang-out.
Operation Smile	Raise money for surgery and gifts for children with cleft palates.
Origami Club	Study the Japanese art of paper folding.
P.A.N.D.A	To do several campaigns and donate to a good cause the money that is raised.
Peer Leaders	Students volunteer for projects around school.
Percy Jackson Fan	Students who like Percy Jackson get together
Photography Club	Students share their photos and work together to improve their art.
Ping Pong Club	Play ping pong.
Poseur Magazine	To bring a fashion/literary magazine where students can express themselves to LHS.
Pokemon Video Game Club	Students meet to play Pokemon video games
Puzzle Club	Meet to solve puzzles
Quidditch Club of Lexington	To play Quidditch and hang with kids who like Harry Potter.
Reading Buddies	High school students read to Bridge Elementary students.
S.P.C.A. Animal Protection Club	Protect animals
SADD	Students Against Destructive decisions. Substance abuse prevention
Science Olympiad	Science department team. Competes at state and national levels
See of Hope for East Timor	To bring awareness to LHS students about Indonesia & Australia that declared its independence and raise money.
Seinfeld Appreciation Club	To watch, appreciate and commemorate Seinfeld.
Shakespeare Club	To study and perform Shakespeare
Skateboarding	A chance to bring the METCO skaters to Lexington more, also to have all METCO skaters have fun
Spanish Club	Student learn about and celebrate Spanish culture and language
Sponsor a Child Club	To participate in sponsor a child program to raise awareness of children in need to raise money to sponsor 2 child.
SPORK	To meet and discuss and share knowledge of outdoor gear.
Step Forward Club	We work to provide footwear for underprivileged people.
Student Faculty Senate	Student government
Students Making a Difference	Social; public service
Supreme tech	Discuss and debate technology.
Tea Club	To appreciate the cultural value of tea. This is a social group.
Teen Advisory Board	?
The Musket	School newspaper
The Winter Running Club	Role playing games are played during club meetings
Toastmasters Club	To develop the skills of public speaking.

Name	Description of Club
TV Club "Tunnel Vision"	To learn more about Film. Film community/school events.
Ultimate Frisbee Club	Compete with other schools playing Ultimate Frisbee
United Voices	Public service club
West African Drum Club	Name says it all... Play African drums
Writer's Block	Workshop where students who enjoy writing can get together and share their work, write and learn.
Yearbook	Publish the yearbook in the spring

Appendix D: Teaching for Global Competence



Elementary Review Committee Members

Jane Hundley
Social Studies Curriculum Coordinator
781-861-2580 ext. 261

Bowman

- Melinda Webster Loof: Librarian
- Jonathan McMullen: Kindergarten

Bridge

- Lynnette Allen: Librarian
- Jill O'Reilly: First Grade

Estabrook

- Katie Bourret: Fourth Grade
- Andrea Taddeo: Fourth Grade
- Cary St. Onge: Fifth Grade

Fiske

- Maria Azerado: Reading Specialist
- Kim Michael: Fourth Grade

Harrington

- Sahr Moussa: Fifth Grade

Hastings

- Jennifer Sheerin: Kindergarten
- Heather Daly: Second Grade
- Maureen McKenna: Third Grade

Lexington Public Schools Social Studies Curriculum Review Committee
September 2011

Appendix F: 7th Grade World Geography Realignment of Units

Revised Unit Sequence (11-12)	Diamond Unit Sequence (10-11)	Clarke Unit Sequence (10-11)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Intro/Cartography 2. Europe 3. Asia: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • East Asia • Southeast Asia • South Asia • Central Asia 4. Australia & Pacific 5. Southwest Asia & Northern Africa (Monotheistic Religions) 6. Sub-Saharan Africa 7. South America 8. Central America* 9. Caribbean* 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Intro/Cartography 2. Australia & Pacific 3. Asia (including all sub regions) 4. Northern Africa & Southwestern Asia 5. Sub-Saharan Africa 6. Europe 7. Latin America 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Intro/Cartography/Country Profile 2. Latin America: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central America* • Caribbean* • South America 3. Europe 4. Asia (including all sub regions) 5. Australia & Pacific 6. Northern Africa & Southwestern Asia (Monotheistic Religions) 7. Sub-Saharan Africa 8. End-of-Year Country Challenge (100/192)

*Units/regions not addressed by Massachusetts History and Social Science Curriculum Frameworks, August 2003, Grade 6

Appendix G: MA Framework Middle School Survey Results

Literacy Survey Results

LPS Middle School Social Studies 6-8

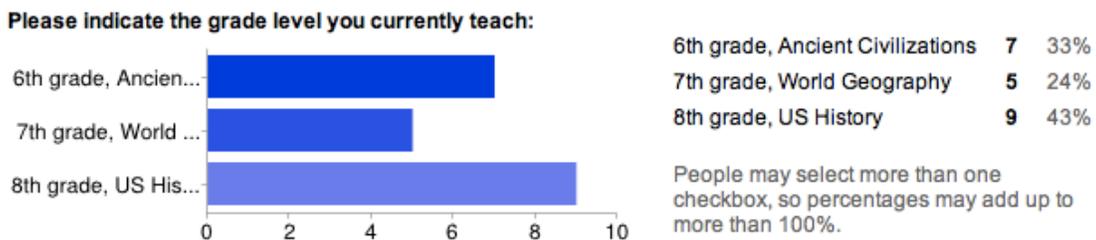
Common Core Standard for Literacy in History/Social Studies

I. Introduction:

The purpose of this survey was to gather data of the instructed skills-based curriculum from middle school teachers in the social studies department in Lexington Public Schools. The results of this survey helped inform the work of the Social Studies Curriculum Review Committee.

The survey is divided into two main sections based upon the Common Core Anchor Standards for Literacy in grades 6-8 social studies: reading and writing. Strands of the Common Core Standards further divide both the reading and writing sections of the survey. Survey included both bimodal quantitative and qualitative statements that were designed to assess the current literacy-based instructional practices in relation to the Common Core Standards in middle school. The quantitative data is reported in bar graphs as percentages and the qualitative data is then summarized by emergent themes from teacher provided examples. Following the results of this standards-based survey, implications for Lexington Public Schools are explored.

The survey was provided to every 6th grade Ancient Civilization, 7th grade World Geography and 8th grade US History teacher in March of 2012. The feedback represents 95% of all middle school social studies teachers in Lexington Public Schools with 21 out of 22 teachers responded. The survey question answers were based upon instruction over the past 12 months for teachers in the same grade level at both Jonas Clarke and William Diamond Middle Schools.



II. Common Core Reading Standards:

Reading is critical to building knowledge in history/social studies as well as in science and technical subjects. College and career ready reading in these fields requires an appreciation of the norms and conventions of each discipline, such as the kinds of evidence used in history and science; an understanding of domain-specific words and phrases; an attention to precise details; and the capacity to evaluate intricate arguments, synthesize complex information, and follow detailed descriptions of events and concepts.

In history/social studies, for example, students need to be able to analyze, evaluate, and differentiate primary and secondary sources. When reading scientific and technical texts, students need to be able to gain knowledge from challenging texts that often make extensive use of elaborate diagrams and data to convey information and illustrate concepts. Students must be able to read complex informational texts in these fields with independence and confidence because the vast majority of reading in college and workforce training programs will be sophisticated nonfiction. It is important to note that these Reading standards are meant to complement the specific content demands of the disciplines, not replace them.¹

III. Reading Anchor Standards Survey Results:

Based upon the Common Core Standards for student reading in grades 6-8 in social studies the below statements were posed to teachers in the survey. The statements are derived from the Common Core reading anchor standards.² The Common Core reading anchor standards for Social Studies are classified into four strands: key ideas and details, craft and structure, integration of knowledge and ideas, range of reading and level of text complexity. The specific common core standards for reading are numbered below and correspond the survey statements.

A. Reading for Key Ideas and Details:

The below data is based upon the Common Core Standards for reading as stated below. 82% of middle school Social Studies teachers reported using instructional time to teach reading for key ideas and details in the past year. Approximately 18 % of teachers reported not-using class time to instruct students towards the below standards. Each individual standard can be further examined for specific percentages self-reported by teachers. Please note that the common core standard below was subdivided for the survey. (Y69, N15)

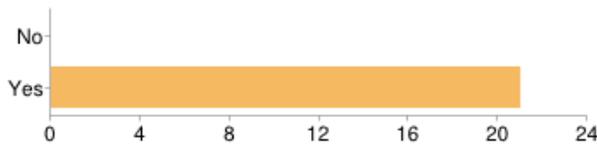
Common Core Reading Standards for Key Ideas and Details:

1. Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.
2. Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.
3. Identify key steps in a text's description of a process related to history/social studies (e.g., how a bill becomes law, how interest rates are raised or lowered).

¹ Common Core State Standards for Literacy in Social Studies, Grades 6-8, Pg. 60

² Reading Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies 6-12, Pg. 61

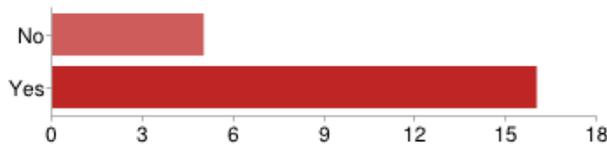
#1. I used class time to teach students to read for key ideas and cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.



No	0	0%
Yes	21	100%

People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.

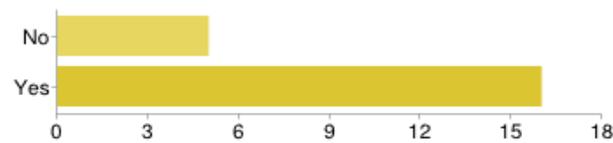
#2A. I used class time to teach students to determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source based upon multiple readings.



No	5	24%
Yes	16	76%

People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.

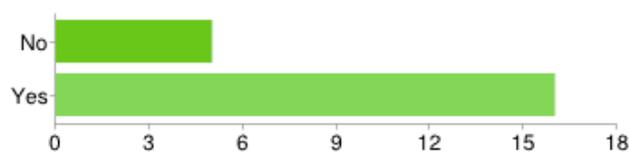
#2B - I taught my students to provide an accurate summary of a reading passage?



No	5	24%
Yes	16	76%

People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.

#3. I used class time to teach students to identify key steps in a text's description of a process related to history/social studies.



No	5	24%
Yes	16	76%

People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.

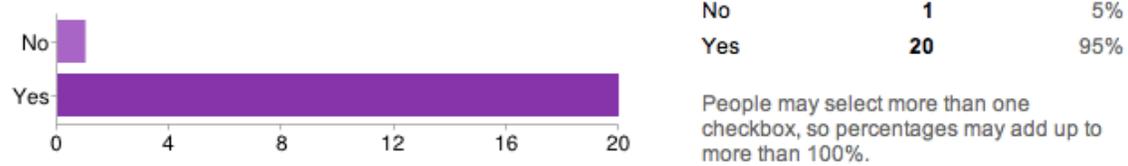
B. Reading for Craft and Structure:

The below data is based upon the three Common Core Standards for reading as stated below. 73% of middle school Social Studies teachers reported using instructional time to teach reading for craft and structure in the past year. Approximately 26 % of teachers reported not-using class time to instruct students towards the below standards. Each individual standard can be further examined for specific percentages as self-reported by teachers. (Y47, N17)

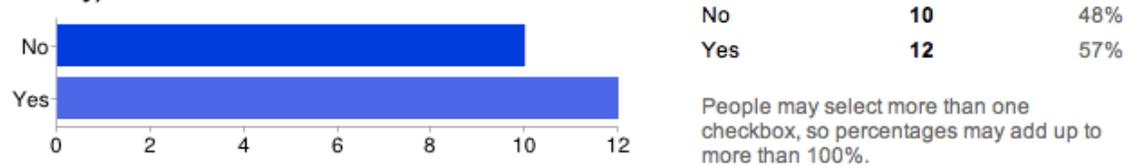
Common Core Standards of the Craft and Structure for Reading:

4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.
5. Describe how a text presents information (e.g., sequentially, comparatively, causally).
6. Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts).

#4. I taught my students to determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.



#5. I taught my students to describe how a text presents information (e.g., sequentially, comparatively, causally).



#6. I taught my students to identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts).



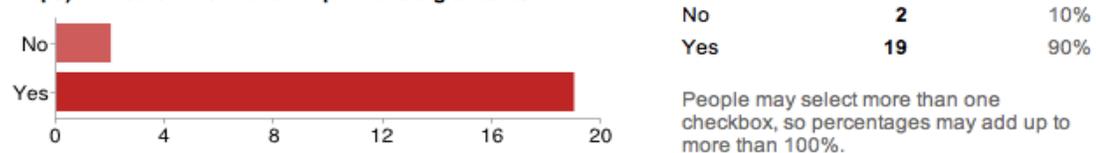
C. Reading for the Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:

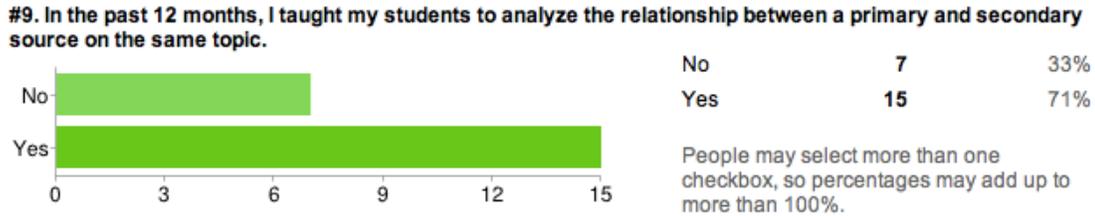
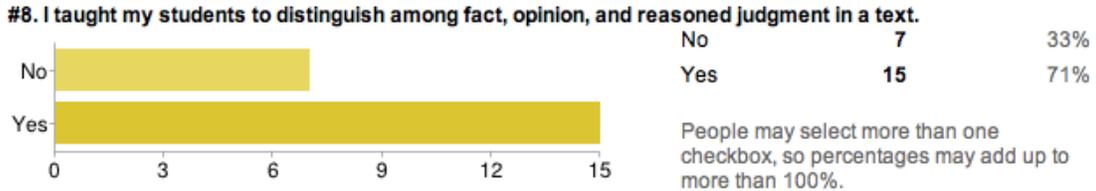
The below data is based upon the three Common Core Standards for reading as stated below. 75% of middle school Social Studies teachers reported using instructional time to teach reading for the integration of knowledge and ideas in the past year. Approximately 25 % of teachers reported not-using class time to instruct students towards the below standards. Each individual standard can be further examined for specific percentages as self-reported by teachers. (Y49, N16)

Common Core Standards for the Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:

7. Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.
8. Distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment in a text.
9. Analyze the relationship between a primary and secondary source on the same topic

#7. I taught my students to understand visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.



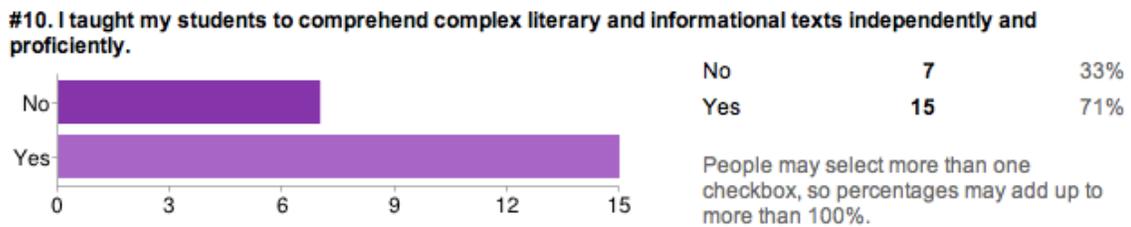


D. Range of Reading Level and Text Complexity:

The below data is based upon the one common core standard for reading as stated below. 71% of middle school Social Studies teachers reported using instructional time to teach independent reading comprehension in the past year. Approximately 33 % of teachers reported not-using class time to instruct students towards the below standards. Each individual standard can be further examined for specific percentages as self-reported by teachers. Please note the small sample size of this particular finding as it is solely based upon standard ten. (Y15, N7)

Common Core Standard for Range of Reading Level and Text Complexity:

- 10. By the end of grade 8, read and comprehend history/social studies texts in the grades 6–8 text complexity band independently and proficiently.



IV. Common Core Writing Standards:

For students, writing is a key means of asserting and defending claims, showing what they know about a subject, and conveying what they have experienced, imagined, thought, and felt. To be college and career ready writers, students must take task, purpose, and audience into careful consideration, choosing words, information, structures, and formats deliberately. They need to be able to use technology strategically when creating, refining, and collaborating on writing. They have to become adept at gathering information, evaluating sources, and citing material accurately, reporting findings from their research and analysis of sources in a clear and cogent manner. They must have the flexibility, concentration, and fluency to produce high-quality first draft

text under a tight deadline and the capacity to revisit and make improvements to a piece of writing over multiple drafts when circumstances encourage or require it. To meet these goals, students must devote significant time and effort to writing, producing numerous pieces over short and long time frames throughout the year.³

V. Writing Anchor Standards Survey Results:

Based upon the Common Core Standards for student writing in grades 6-8 in social studies the below statements were posed to teachers in the survey. The statements are derived from the Common Core Anchor Standards for Writing. The Common Core anchor writing standards in Social Studies are classified into four strands:

- a. Texts Types and Purposes
- b. Production and Distribution of Writing
- c. Research to Build and Present Knowledge
- d. Range of Writing

The strand of Text Types and Purposes is further divided by two distinct writing styles: persuasive and expository writing. The specific common core standards for writing are numbered below and correspond the survey statements posed. Please note that standard three is not applicable as a separate requirement per the Common Core Standards and as such was not included in this survey.

A. Text Types and Purposes

1. Text Types and Purposes for Argument Based-Writing:

The below data is based upon the text types and purpose common core standard for persuasive writing as stated below. 84% of middle school Social Studies teachers reported using instructional time to teach argument focused writing skills in the past year. Approximately 15 % of teachers reported not-using class time to instruct students towards the below standard. Each individual standard can be further examined for specific percentages as self-reported by teachers. Please note that the argument-based writing standards is subdivided into six separate survey statements as stated below. (Y108, N18)

Common Core Standards for the Text Types and Purposes of Persuasive Writing:

1. Write arguments focused on *discipline-specific content*.
 - a. Introduce claim(s) about a topic or issue, acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.
 - b. Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant, accurate data and evidence that demonstrate an understanding of the topic or text, using credible sources.
 - c. Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s),

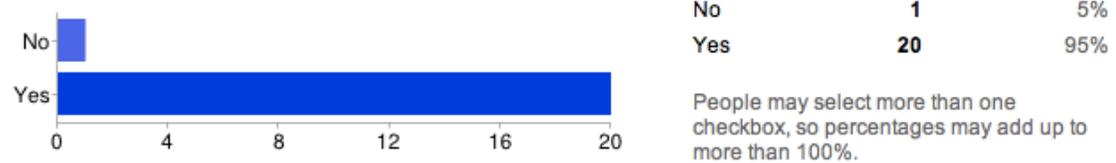
³ Common Core State Standards for Literacy in Social Studies, Grades 6-8, Pg. 63

counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.

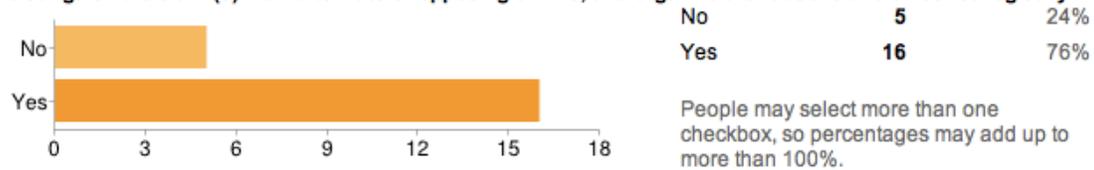
d. Establish and maintain a formal style.

e. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented

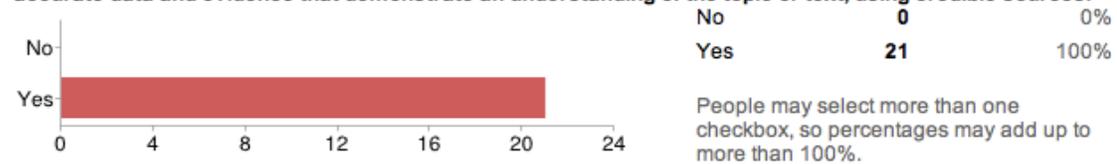
#1. I taught my students to write persuasive arguments focused on social studies content in Ancient Civilizations, World Geography or US History classes.



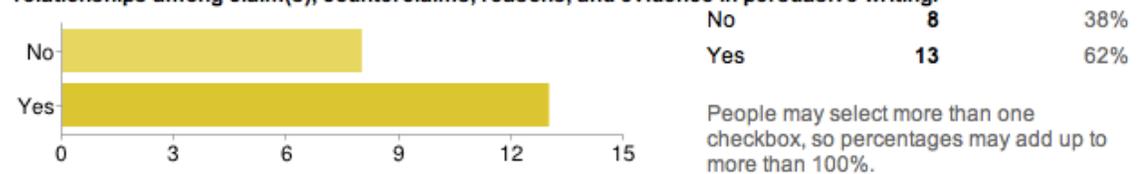
#1A. I taught my students to introduce claim(s) about a topic or issue in persuasive writing, acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.



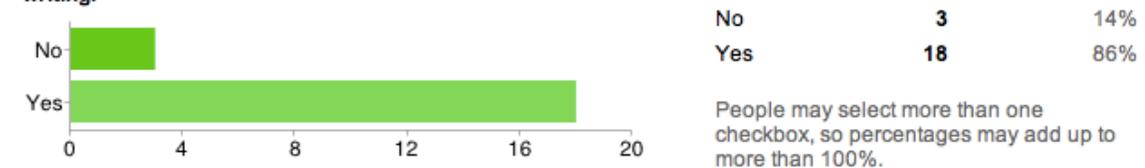
#1B. I taught my students to support claim(s) in persuasive writing with logical reasoning and relevant, accurate data and evidence that demonstrate an understanding of the topic or text, using credible sources.



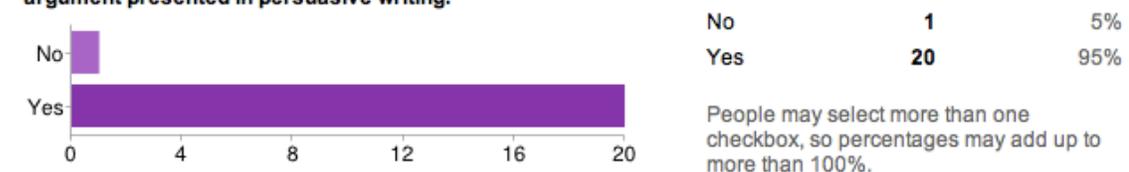
#1C. I taught my students to use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion in writing and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence in persuasive writing.



#1D. In the past 12 months, I taught my students to establish and maintain a formal style in persuasive writing.



#1E. I taught my students to provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented in persuasive writing.



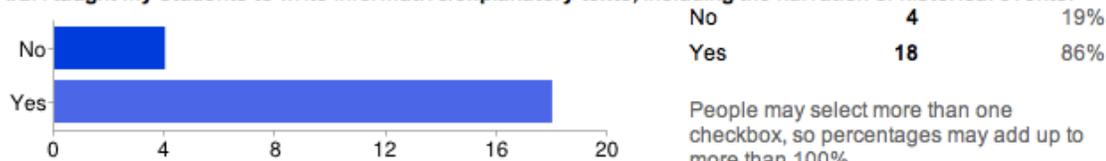
2. Text Types and Purposes for Expository-Based Writing:

The below data is based upon the text types and purpose common core standard for expository writing as stated below. 88% of middle school Social Studies teachers reported using instructional time to teach informative focused writing standards in the past year. Approximately 12 % of teachers reported not-using class time to instruct students towards the below standard. Each individual standard can be further examined for specific percentages as self-reported by teachers. Please note the sample size of this particular finding as it is solely based upon standard one, yet subdivided into six separate survey statements. (Y121, N17)

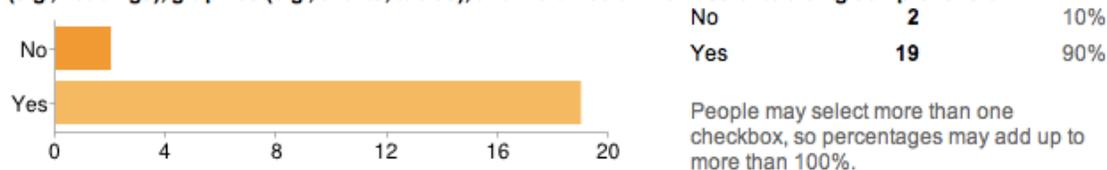
Common Core Standards for Text Types and Purposes for Expository Writing:

2. Write informative/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/ experiments, or technical processes.
 - a. Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; organize ideas, concepts, and information into broader categories as appropriate to achieving purpose; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., charts, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.
 - b. Develop the topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.
 - c. Use appropriate and varied transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.
 - d. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.
 - e. Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone.
 - f. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented.

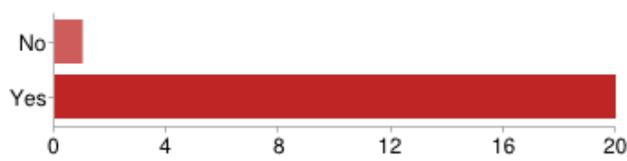
#2. I taught my students to write informative/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events.



#2A. I taught my students to write and introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; organize ideas, concepts, and information into broader categories as appropriate to achieving purpose; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., charts, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension



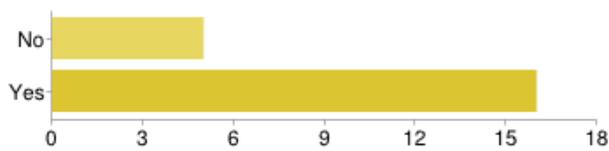
#2B. In the past 12 months, I have taught my students to develop a topic in explanatory writing with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.



No 1 5%
Yes 20 95%

People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.

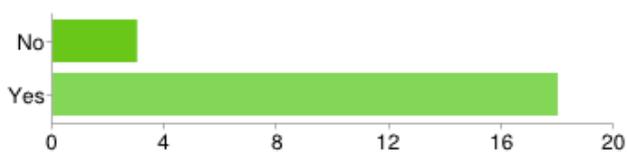
#2C. In the past 12 months, I have taught my students to use appropriate and varied transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.



No 5 24%
Yes 16 76%

People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.

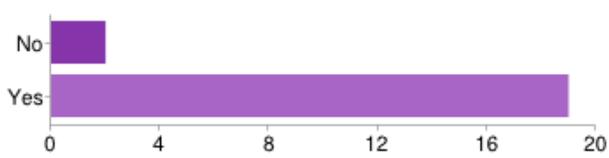
#2D. I have taught my students to use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.



No 3 14%
Yes 18 86%

People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.

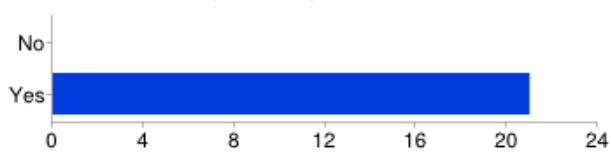
#2E. In the past 12 months, I have taught my students to establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone in writing.



No 2 10%
Yes 19 90%

People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.

#2F. I have taught my students to provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented.



No 0 0%
Yes 21 100%

People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.

B. Production and Distribution of Writing

The below data is based upon the production and distribution of writing as stated in the Common Core Standards #4-6 as stated below. 88% of middle school Social Studies teachers reported using instructional time to teach the writing process standards in the past year. Approximately 11 % of teachers reported not-using class time to instruct students towards the below standards. Each individual standard can be further examined for specific percentages as self-reported by teachers. (Y56, N7)

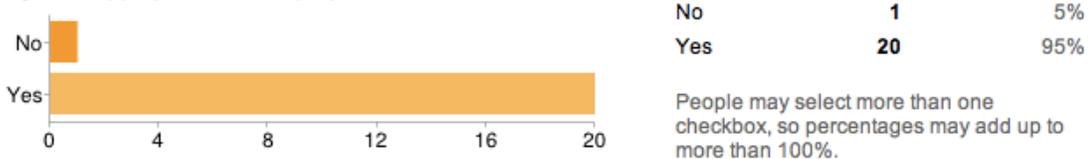
Common Core Standards for Production and Distribution of Writing:

4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

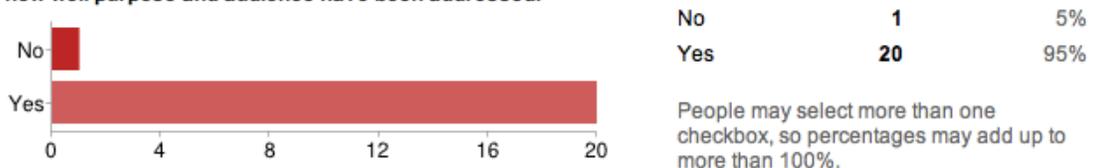
5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

6. Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.

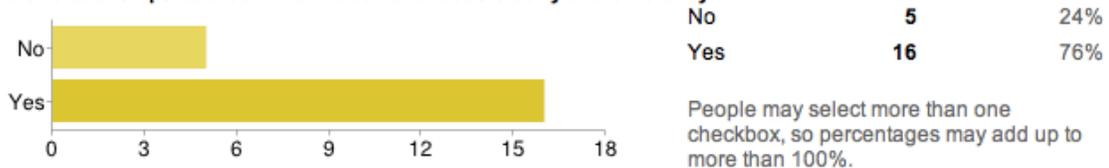
#4. I taught my students to produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.



#5. I taught my students to write with some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.



#6. I taught my students to use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and present the relationships between information and ideas clearly and efficiently.



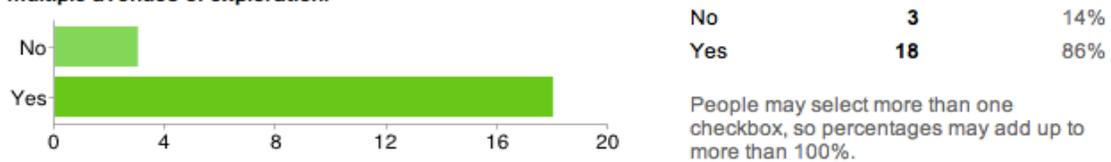
C. Research to Build and Present Knowledge:

The below data is based upon the research to build and present knowledge as stated in the Common Core Standards for writing in Social Studies. 87% of middle school Social Studies teachers reported using instructional time to teach content research skills in the past year. Approximately 13 % of teachers reported not-using class time to instruct students towards the below standards. Each individual standard can be further examined for specific percentages as self-reported by teachers. (Y55, N8)

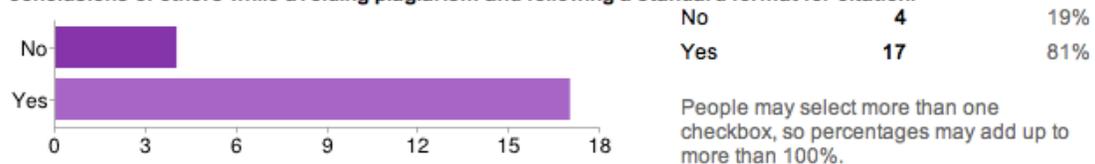
Common Core Standards for Research to Build and Present Knowledge in Writing:

7. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
8. Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.
9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

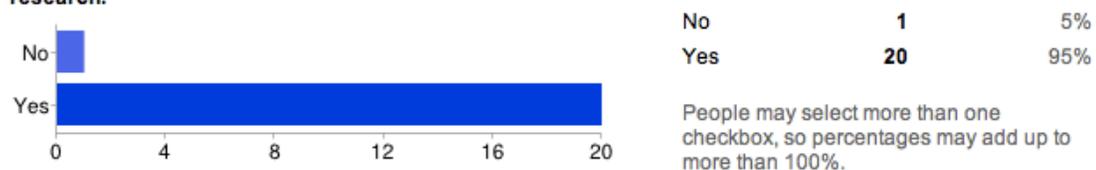
#7. I taught my students to conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.



#8. I taught my students to gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.



#9. I taught my students to draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis reflection, and research.



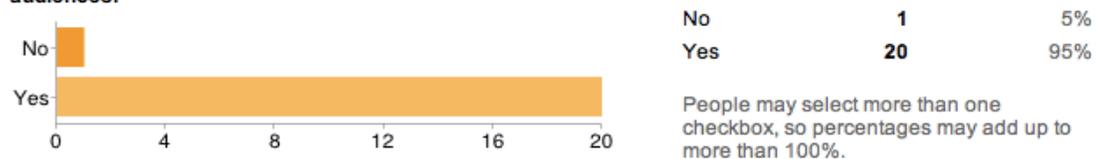
D. Range of Writing:

The below data is based upon the range of writing as stated in the Common Core Standards for writing in Social Studies. 95% of middle school Social Studies teachers reported using instructional time to teach content range of writing in the past year. Approximately 5 % of teachers reported not-using class time to instruct students towards the below standard. Please note the small sample size of this particular finding as it is solely based only the one standard below. (Y20, N1)

Common Core Standard for Range of Writing:

10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for reflection and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

#10. I taught my students to write routinely over extended time frames (time for reflection and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.



VI. Literacy Survey Findings

A. Reading Anchor Standards Findings:

Examining the Common Core reading survey data of middle school social studies teachers some patterns emerge pointing to areas of future literacy centered improvement. In aggregate of the Common Core reading anchor standards, 76% of middle school social studies teachers reported utilizing instructional time for these skills. However, in the reading anchor strand of craft and structure standard #5, only 57% of teachers report using instructional time in the past 12 months to teach how a text presents information. This skill includes sequential, comparative and causally structure in texts. The distribution of responses for this particular standard is equal across grade levels and Lexington middle schools indicating an area for departmental focus. The implication is for middle school teachers to explicitly provide students with direct reading instruction describing how different texts comparatively present information.

The distribution of reported instruction is not always consistent across grade levels. For example, 71% of teachers indicate instructional alignment towards the Common Core Reading Standard # 6. This reading skill is for students to identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose. Disaggregating the teacher response data by grade level for this standard yields 100% reported alignment in both middle schools by 8th grade US History teachers. This finding points to the potential need to delineate which grade levels should target specific and appropriate common core standards for

reading.

Similar patterns emerge when analyzing additional common core reading standards. For example, reading standard #9 specifically requires students to analyze the relationship between primary and secondary source on the same topic. While entire middle school social studies survey indicated 71% of teachers utilizing instructional time on analyzing the relationship between primary and secondary sources, significantly more teachers in the 8th grade instructed this particular skill. Perhaps the content of 8th grade US history is most appropriate to instruct and focus upon this reading skill. These findings indicate the need to vertically align the common core reading skills in grades 6th, 7th and 8th to ensure student understanding in reading skills in the content area of social studies by the end of middle school.

B. Writing Anchor Standards Findings:

In comparison to the aggregate common core reading standards, teachers reported utilizing significantly more instructional time aligned towards the writing anchor standards. However similar patterns emerge when disaggregating the data by individual writing standard or strand. 62% of teachers indicated instructional alignment towards the Common Core Writing Anchor Standard #1C. This writing skill requires students to use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion in writing and clarify the relationships among claims, counterclaims, reasons and evidence in persuasive writing.

The text type and purposes writing strand for argument-based writing is analogous to expository-based writing in teacher reported alignment across the department. 84% of teachers reported using instructional time teaching the skill of argument-based writing to middle school students in comparison to 88% for expository based writing. Examining the qualitative reported data for persuasive writing assignments teachers provided the following examples: formal business letter, persuasive essay, writing persuasive speeches, written arguments, document based written opinions, five-paragraph persuasive essays, and short opinion-centered paragraph writing. These findings indicate the need to vertically align the common core writing skills in grades 6th, 7th and 8th to ensure student understanding in expository and persuasive writing skills in the content area of social studies by the end of middle school. Interdepartmental collaboration between Social Studies and English Language Arts teachers is an area of future professional growth and development of consistent literacy practices.