

Social Studies Program Evaluation

Secondary Level (9-12)

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2007- 2008

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The Program Evaluation began in the spring of 2007 and continued through the end of the 2007-2008 school years. This period of time was approximately fourteen months.

Changes Since 2003

The social studies program was last evaluated as part of the program evaluation conducted in 2003. At that time, the department at Ridge consisted of fifteen full-time teachers. The department had a curriculum supervisor who was responsible for both social studies and world languages. This individual served as a liaison between the department and the administration at the building and district level. In 2004 the position was split and a separate district level social studies supervisor was created to oversee the program. Among the high school department members, ten teachers have Master's degrees. No one had an earned Ph.D. Nine of the sixteen teachers are non-tenured.

The number of social studies teachers at Ridge High School has increased proportionally with the student population. Currently there are sixteen teachers assigned to the high school for all of their day.

In 2004, the district added a curriculum supervisor for the areas of social studies and world languages.

Current Status

Of the sixteen teachers in the social studies department at Ridge High School, 63% have Master's degrees and an additional third of the teachers are matriculated in degree programs at Rutgers University and Drew University.

There are eighty sections of social studies currently being taught at the high school with an average class size of 22 students. The department offers a number of required and elective courses in the social sciences. These include:

Course Title	Required/ Elective	Grade Level	Semester/ Full Year	Date Established
World History	Required	9	Year	Prior to 1996
American Studies	Required*	10	Year	Prior to 1996
History of U.S. Government and Economics	Required	11	Year	Prior to 1996
AP U.S. Politics and AP Macroeconomics	Elective**	11-12	Year	Prior to 1996
AP US History	Elective	12	Year	Prior to 1996
Honors Foreign and Domestic Policy Practicum	Elective	12	Semester	Prior to 1996
Psychology	Elective	10-12	Semester	Prior to 1996
Sociology	Elective	10-12	Semester	Prior to 1996
AP European History	Elective	10-12	Year	2001
Challenges of Democracy	Elective	12	Year	1999
Non-Western Cultures	Elective	12	Year	1999
Social and Cultural History of 20 th C America	Elective	11-12	Semester	2001
Social Studies Research	Elective	9-12	Year	2001
AP Psychology	Elective	10-12	Year	2003
American History	Required*	10	Year	2003
History of the Middle East	Elective	11-12	Semester	2005
Holocaust and Human Behavior	Elective	11-12	Semester	2005
Women in American History	Elective	11-12	Semester	2005

*Beginning in 2003, students were now required to take either American Studies, which is a team-taught integrated double-period English/History class or American History.

**Students who elect to take AP U.S. Politics and AP Macroeconomics do so in lieu of History of U.S. Government and Economics.

All required courses are offered at either the college preparation level or the honors level. Students must meet pre-determined criteria to be enrolled in honors or Advanced Placement courses. Electives are heavily enrolled at the high school. During the 2007-

2008 school years, fourteen sections of full year electives were taught and eighteen sections of semester electives.

There are five AP courses taught in the social studies department at Ridge High School. Enrollment and exam scoring data are highlighted below.

	Macroeconomics	U.S. Politics	US History	European History	Psychology
Enrolled 2005	118	122	35	35	106
% Scored 3-5	90%	76%	83%	97%	96%
Enrolled 2006	128	132	58	36	156
% Scored 3-5	88%	80%	88%	100%	96%
Enrolled 2007	117	120	42	47	155
% Scored 3-5	96%	82%	88%	100%	96%
3 Year average enrollment	121	124.6	45	39.3	139
3 Year average score	91.3%	79.3%	86.3%	99%	96%

Comparison to Other Similar Districts

Ridge High School was compared to seven other high schools with similar socioeconomic status. The committee focused their attention on the number and type of courses offered, the number of students participating in the Advanced Placement Program and the elective courses offered. The eight comparison schools were:

Required Courses

Required Courses

<i>School</i>	<i>Freshman</i>	<i>Sophomore</i>	<i>Junior</i>
Ridge	World History -Honors, CP	American Studies -Honors, CP or American History -Honors, CP	History of U.S. Government and Economics -Honors, CP
Chatham	World Studies Concepts in World Studies	US History I -General, Honors Concepts in US History I	US History II Concepts in US History II
Hillsborough	World History/Cultures -Standard, CP, Honors	US History I -Standard, CP, Honors	US History II -Standard, CP
Holmdel	World Civilizations	US History I	US History II
Livingston	Modern World History -General, CP, Honors	US History I -General, CP	US History II -General, CP
Millburn	World History -CP, Accelerated	US History I -CP, Accelerated	20 th Century American History -CP, Accelerated
Montgomery	World Studies	US History I	US History II
Princeton	US History I - Elements, Support Lab, CP	US History II - Elements, Support Lab, S.T.E.P. Academy, CP	World History/Cultures - Support Lab, S.T.E.P. Academy, CP

Elective Courses

Elective Courses

<i>School</i>	<i>AP Classes</i>	<i>Other Electives*</i>
Ridge	Psychology (10-12) European History (10-12) US History (12) Macroeconomics (11-12) US Politics (11-12)	Social Studies Research (9-12) Challenges of Democracy (12) Psychology (10-12) Sociology (10-12) History of the Middle East (11,12) Holocaust and Human Behavior (11,12) Women in American History (11,12) Social & Cultural History of 20 th Century America (11,12) Non-Western Cultures (12)
Chatham	US History (11,12) European History (11,12) US Government & Politics (11,12) Psychology (11,12)	International Relations (11,12) Law & Society (11,12) Psychology (11,12) Sociology (11,12) African-American Studies (11,12) Middle Eastern Studies (11,12) Holocaust & Genocide (11,12)
Hillsborough	US History (11,12) US Government & Politics (11,12) European History (11,12)	Economics (11,12) Gender Studies (11,12) Genocide & Holocaust (11,12) Psychology (11,12) Sociology (11,12) United States History Since 1980 (11,12)
Holmdel	US History I (10) US History II (11) Psychology (11,12) Economics (11,12) American Government (12)	Human Geography (10-12) International Relations (10-12) Psychology (10-12) Sociology (10-12) Anthropology (10-12)
Livingston	US History I (10) US History II (11) European History (12) Government and Politics: US and Comparative (11,12)	African-American Studies (10-12) Anthropology (10-12) Middle Eastern Studies, Honors (10-12) Women's Studies (10-12) Sociology (11,12) Psychology (11,12) Political Science (11,12) The Vietnam Era (11,12) Holocaust and Genocide (11,12) Full Year History Research Seminar, Honors (11,12) Full Year American Democracy (12) Full Year European History (12) Full Year
Millburn	Modern European History (10-12) US History (11) US Government & Politics (11,12) Art History (11,12) Economics (12) Psychology (12)	Russian History (9-12) Ages and Ideas (9-12) Film and Society (9-12) Middle East (9-12) American Government (10-12) Law and Society (11,12) Global Issues Seminar (11,12) American Law (11-12) Economics (11-12) American Social & Cultural History (10-12)

		Modern European History (10-12) Psychology I (12) Psychology Applications (12)
School	AP Classes	Other Electives*
Montgomery	US History I – Part I US History II – Part II Government and Politics (11,12) Art History (11,12) Economics (11,12)	Introduction to Psychology (10-12) Diversity in America (10-12) Social Psychology (10-12) Crime & Punishment (10-12) American Film & Culture (10-12) World Religions (11,12) US History: 1945-Present, Honors (12) Full Year
Princeton	US History (10-12) World History & Cultures (11) Government & Politics (11,12) European History (11,12)	Accelerated Sociology (11,12) Africa (11,12) Latin America (11,12) Middle East (11,12) Russia & The Former Soviet Union (11,12) The Other Wall: Understanding and Moving Beyond Racial & Ethnic Conflict (11,12) Human Behavior Elements (11,12) Full Year Human Behavior (11,12) Full Year US Government and Law (11,12) Full Year US Government and Law – S.T.E.P. Academy (11,12) Full Year

S=Semester Course

Curricular Alignment

The desired outcomes for social studies instruction are based on New Jersey's Core Curriculum Content Standards. For social studies, there are six standards that must be addressed by the curricula. They are:

- 6.1 (Social Studies Skills) All students will utilize historical thinking, problem solving, and research skills to maximize their understanding of civics, history, geography, and economics.
- 6.2 (Civics) All students will know, understand and appreciate the values and principles of American Democracy and the rights, responsibilities, and roles of a citizen in the nation and the world.
- 6.3 (World History) All students will demonstrate knowledge of world history in order to understand life and events in the past and how they relate to the present and the future.
- 6.4 (United States and New Jersey History) All students will demonstrate knowledge of United States and New Jersey history in order to understand life and events in the past and how they relate to the present and future.
- 6.5 (Economics) All students will acquire an understanding of key economic principles.
- 6.6 (Geography) All students will apply knowledge of spatial relationships and other geographic skills to understand human behavior in relation to the physical and cultural environment.

The curriculum in Bernards Township has been aligned to the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards through a program of curriculum revision, with Psychology being revised in 2008. Every student graduating from Ridge High School will meet or exceed all New Jersey Core Content standards as measured by the cumulative progress indicators.

Perception of the Program

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

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

Statement	SA/A	N	SD/D	N/A
<i>Parent Opinion Inventories</i>				
Our school is doing a good job in Social Studies.	77.3%	12.6%	9.5%	0.6%
Our school is preparing students to deal with issues and problems they will face in the future.	58.7%	23.4%	21.1%	0.5%
Our school is doing a good job of helping students understand their moral and ethical responsibilities.	57.9%	21.1%	14.8%	6.3%
Our school's programs help students to understand and get along with other people.	65.8%	20.5%	11.1%	2.6%
Students see a relationship between what they are studying and their everyday lives.	50%	25%	20.4%	2.6%
<i>Student Opinion Inventories</i>				
Our school is preparing students to deal with issues and problems they will face in the future.	46.9%	27.9%	23.7%	1.5%
Technology is incorporated into instruction in many classes.	52.1%	29.7%	16.6%	1.4%
Students see a relationship between what they are studying and their everyday lives.	31.5%	33.7%	34.2%	2.4%
Teachers provide instructional activities that involve students in their learning.	63.4%	26.2%	8.9%	1.3%
Homework that I am expected to complete helps me improve my learning.	40.4%	26.1%	23.3%	1.0%
The educational program offered to students at this school is of a high quality.	69.9%	21.5%	6.4%	2.3%
<i>Teacher Opinion Inventories</i>				
Our school is doing a good job in Social Studies.	71.9%	4.7%	3.2%	20.3%
Our school is preparing students to deal with issues and problems they will face in the future.	69.7%	16.7%	13.9%	0%
Students, teachers, and administrators at our school demonstrate sensitivity to issues of racial and ethnic fairness.	63.6%	19.7%	16.6%	0%

Criticisms

While both parents and teachers agree we are doing a good job in social studies at Ridge High School, neither parents nor students strongly believe we are preparing students for problems they will face in the future. Most students said they fail to see a relationship between what they are learning and their everyday lives.

Complements

A majority of parents and teachers agree that our school is doing a good job in social studies. A majority of students feel involved in their learning. Although most students did not see a relationship, their parents did see a relationship between what they are learning and their everyday lives.

Areas of Strength

The Bernards Township program of study in social studies has notable strengths. All teachers are certified in their content area with almost two-thirds of the department either holding or pursuing Master's degrees. Course offerings are developed to meet the needs of students of varying ability and interest.

Staff College has successfully been able to address the professional development concerns of teachers based on a survey of the department. Teachers noted that professional development focused on technology integration in the content area as well as incorporating the ideas of differentiated instruction into the curriculum.

Based upon a comparison sample, Ridge offers the same three years of required social studies in addition to a variety of electives. Ridge High School offers more or many Advanced Placement courses than any other school in the sample except Millburn, who offers the same number. Additionally, in those AP classes, more than 90% of students who take the AP exam for that course receive a score of 3 or better based upon 3-year averages.

Most of the recommendations from the 2003 program evaluation have been addressed as follows:

- The AP U.S. History curriculum was revised to account for a change in the College Board approved curriculum.
- Honors Foreign Domestic policy was made inactive due to a lack of student interest with most of the concepts covered in this course integrated into other elective courses.
- To meet the concerns of students who were taking American Studies, American History was added at both the college prep and Honors level. This option allows students to take an honors level course in either language arts or social studies without being forced to take both.
- An honors level of the History of U.S. Government and Economics was added as an option to meet the third year social studies requirement at Ridge High School.
- Staff College courses have been offered to address evaluation procedures and the design of rubrics. Also, department meeting time has been set aside to address these issues.
- According to student survey results, technology use is available in the classrooms and incorporated into instruction on a regular basis.
- The department chose not to implement the recommendation for further development of interdisciplinary courses due to scheduling and staffing constraints. However, many activities have been added to existing curriculum that is interdisciplinary in nature.

Areas Needing Improvement

Some courses in the social studies department have not been rewritten in compliance with the district timeline for revision. Specifically, Foreign and Domestic Policy was last revised in 1993.

The staff and supervisor noted a concern over the lack of interdisciplinary connections between required social studies courses in 9th, 10th and 11th grade and other subject areas, such as American History. During the 2006-2007 school years teachers did begin to meet in interdisciplinary groups to address these concerns but teachers felt more time was needed to truly map out the necessary connections. The American Studies model was the course used to discuss possible other interdisciplinary course offerings.

Teachers and students noted that some there should be honors level courses offered in some of the social studies electives. Sociology was given as an example of a course that

should also include an honors level. An examination of running college prep and honors level courses concurrently will take place during the 2008-2009 school years and this seems to offer the best solution. This would also allow the social studies department the option to offer any new electives in this format.

Recommendations

- Explore the possibility of offering courses which allow student to either receive college prep or honors credit concurrently.
- Align psychology to the National Standards for Psychology.
- An elective Human Geography or Art History course should be added in which students can opt to receive honors or AP credit.
- Provide staff development to ensure consistent standards in courses taught by multiple teachers. Suggestions include:
 - Reading and Writing in the content area
 - Evaluating class discussions
 - Using the Tablet PC to enhance instruction
 - Rubric design and implementation

Timeline for Implementation of Recommendations

Revisions for Psychology	Summer 2008
Develop Honors/AP Art History or Human Geography course	2008- 2009
Revise sociology to allow for college prep or honors credit	Summer 2009
Social Studies discussion of possible Interdisciplinary units.	2008- 2009
Staff Development for Consistency	Ongoing