



## Committee Report

Committee Name: Instruction & Program

Location	Date	Time
Virtual	12/12/2023	5:00 PM
<b>Board Members</b>		
A'Dorian Murray-Thomas	Crystal Williams	
Vereliz Santana	Dawn Haynes	
<b>District Liaison &amp; Superintendent Representative</b>		
Roger León	Dr. Maria Ortiz	
<b>Other District Staff</b>		
Havier Nazario	Anzella Nelms	
Carynne Conover	Paula Perrone	
Jennifer Killeen	Michelina Thornton	
Sadia White		
<b>Guests</b>		
<b>Meeting Summary</b>		
<p>Comments:</p> <p>Chair Murray-Thomas called the meeting to order at 5:02 PM.</p> <p>Director Thornton began her presentation on the ARP submission of the Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Service at 5:03 PM.</p> <p>She explained how the Safe Return Plan must be updated every six months. The plan is needed in order to continue receiving ESSER funding and can be found on the District's website.</p> <p>Chair Murray-Thomas asked for more clarification on what is in the remote learning plan, and in what instances this plan will be enacted.</p> <p>The Superintendent explained that the Governor created criteria which will determine when a District will go remote. If a state of emergency is declared, or if the Health Department deems that it is not safe to be in school, then the plan can be put into effect. The Superintendent does not have the power to enact the remote learning plan.</p> <p>Director Thornton concluded her presentation at 5:10 PM.</p> <p>Director Conover then began her presentation on The Changing Landscape: Progress in Cultivating an Inquiry Based Social Studies Learning Environment.</p> <p>Director Conover presented her agenda, which comprised of the below topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● An overview of how the District's Office of Social Studies is crafting an inquiry learning environment</li> <li>● Progress on creating and supporting inclusive, inquiry learning</li> </ul>		

She then reviewed the Social Studies requirements for the State of New Jersey and some of the resources used to design these requirements, including *The College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework*, and the *National History Standards* from UCLA.

The *College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework* for Social Studies State Standards is the product of a three-year, multi-state (including New Jersey), multi-organizational collaborative effort to provide states guidance on enhancing the rigor of K-12 social studies education to prepare students for college, career, and civic life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The new 6<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grades social studies curriculum is a deeper, broader application of social studies engagement than required in the *NJSLS-SS*. Our work:

- Rests heavily on the *C3 Framework*;
- Has in-unit summative assessments explicitly aligned to the *National History Standards* (the *National History Standards* are core to College Board's Advanced Placement (AP) programming design);
- Integrates more standards of the discrete social studies;
  - National Council for Geography Education Standards,
  - National Standards for Civics and Government, and the
  - Economics Framework for the 2012 National Assessment of Educational Progress
- Seamlessly situates the mandates of inclusion in the core historical learning of every history course, which are the Mandates of Inclusion: Correction of Exclusion and Marginalization;
  - Amistad,
  - Holocaust/Genocide,
  - Queer Identity and Representation,
  - Ability Different/Disable,
  - Asian American and Pacific Islanders, and
  - Indigenous People of the Americas (not formally defined as a mandate, but included in our work.)

The *C3 Framework* has **Four Dimensions** that create an inquiry arc of learning.

1. Developing Questions & Planning Inquiries
2. Applying Disciplinary Concepts and Tools
3. Evaluating and Using Evidence
4. Communicating Conclusions

Embedded in the four dimensions are 21<sup>st</sup> century skills as defined by the Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills; successful citizens of the century will need a "blend of content, knowledge, specific skills, expertise, and literacies." 21<sup>st</sup> century preparation is interdisciplinary thinking, learning, and action.

Inquiry social studies values the path and preparation necessary for the creation of knowledge and the ability to take informed action. Making life choices informed by historical understanding and active participation in civic life are products of quality social studies environments.

In an inquiry learning environment, students are supported in the skills of evidence evaluation to form historical understanding. The analysis of diverse evidence supports students in understanding historical agency, the power of individuals, groups, and institutions to resist, blunt, or alter historical conditions. From our Founding Fathers to our Dreamers, students learn that the need to determine one's destiny is an enduring theme of history.

Director Conover then gave an overview on the history of the Mandate of Amistad. She then elaborated on the work done with teachers in the past three years, including having 40 teachers and 18 administrators from across the District write new curriculum for the core Social Studies Courses in Grades 6-11. These teachers and administrators also provide professional development and lead

collaborative learning groups on the curriculum they authored. Director Conover also highlighted some examples of topics the new curriculum covers in each course.

Director Conover then discussed the AP African American History and the AP Seminar with African Diaspora Content courses. Both courses provide students with an opportunity to prepare for the respective AP exam, which high scores can lead to college credit with advanced standing upon entering.

AP African American History course is currently offered at seven of the District's High Schools:

1. Arts
2. American History
3. Central
4. Newark Vocational
5. Technology
6. Science Park
7. Weequahic

AP Seminar with African Diaspora Content is currently offered at University, and will be offered at Barringer in the 2024-2025 school year.

Director Conover also discussed how the District is currently meeting the other mandates. The Holocaust/Genocide mandate predates Amistad by eight years. Sharing similar language, the mandate requires instruction on the causes of genocide. Examples of meeting the mandate include:

- Genocide of Native Americans is discussed in the United States History courses.
- The German genocide of Africans in present day Namibia is examined in Modern World History and the new elective, *Crimes Against Humanity* (written by two teachers and department chair).
- In all courses that engage the Holocaust, it is contextualized as part of a longer history of annihilation of peoples.

Queer Identity and Representation, Ability Different/Disable, and Asian American and Pacific Islanders are engaged across the curriculum.

The forced assimilation, displacement, and genocide of Indigenous Peoples is discussed in-depth in the United States Histories. In the curriculum work, teachers and administrators were deliberate in bringing Indigenous Peoples' experiences into the grand narrative of the American Experiment.

Director Conover then mentioned that there will be more electives offered in the coming years, including two sociology electives being created for the 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 SYs, another African American elective for the 2024-2025 SY, and expanding the Crimes Against Humanity course to another semester to include climate destruction and resulting displacement.

Director Conover then proceeded to explain her plans for a Summer Learning Institute for teachers to attend learning modules with academics who are actively engaged with current thought and best practices for their discipline.

Beginning on December 19th, there will be a monthly "Social Studies Hacks Series" where teachers or administrators will facilitate a learning session on a discrete topic that supports teachers and/or administrators in moving student achievement.

She also hosts monthly working dinners with Department Chairs to provide time to collaborate on strategies that can improve teacher capacity and student achievement.

Director Conover concluded her presentation at 5:36 PM, and welcomed comments and questions:

- Chair Murray-Thomas commended Director Conover on her attention to detail in the presentation and asked for further details on PD and how it is scheduled. She requested to see the PD calendar for the rest of the school year including Social Studies and other PD sessions. She also asked if there is some type of yearly celebration for students of the work they are doing as it can be something for students to look forward to. Director Conover shared that a yearly celebration is a great idea, and sees it as part of the future work of the department.
- Board Members remarked on the involvement with the community on this work. The Superintendent mentioned that local Historian Junius Williams worked on the Amistad integrated units in grades K-5.
- Board Member Santana inquired about anecdotal feedback from students on how they are receiving the curriculum, remarking she would have appreciated the opportunity to have learned this as a student.
- Board Member Haynes inquired about the schools offering African American studies, and Director Conover shared that 7 schools are offering an elective this semester, and 6 schools will offer it next semester. Superintendent added that AP African Studies is offered at 7 schools, and 1 school has an AP seminar with African diaspora content.
- Board Members Haynes also asked about the work in elementary schools, and Superintendent and Director Conover discussed the District's history with the Office of Social Studies, and building the pipeline for quality Social Studies education.
- Board Member Williams asked about work starting in Grades 6-8 instead of starting in the lower grades and working up. Director Conover discussed how Grades 6-11 were the priority as those students were closer to leaving the District than those in lower grades. Grade 6 is also when more work in content needs to be done. K-5 currently has the Amistad Integrated units in ELA and Social Studies content embedded.
- Board Member Williams also asked about the AP African American History course being offered in 7 schools, and Director Conover shared that we are in the process of building capacity. She explained that some of the teachers currently teaching this course have not taught an AP course in the past. Director Conover discussed how she plans to expand this course to other schools in the future. Board Member Williams asked if this course is able to be offered virtually for students who are interested but their home school does not offer it. Director Conover explained how decisions were made at schools based on student interest and teacher capacity.

Director Conover and Board Members agreed on the importance of continued Professional Development in order to support and build capacity among teachers and administrators.

At 6:15 PM Executive Mentor Sadia White began her presentation on Middle States.

She explained that five out of six comprehensive high schools went through the Middle States Accreditation process this year, and all have been recommended for accreditation. The sixth comprehensive high school - East Side - is already accredited. There are five standards schools have to meet to be recommended for accreditation:

- **Foundation**
  - History
  - Mission, Vision
  - Core Values, Portrait of a Graduate
- **Governance and Organization**
  - Succession Plan
  - Organizational Chart
  - Policies and Procedures
- **Resources**

- Budget
- Facilities
- Technology
- **Student Well-Being**
  - School Safety Plans
  - Student Health and Wellness
  - Student Activities
- **Teaching and Learning**
  - Curriculum and Assessments
  - Professional Development
  - Professional Learning Communities

East Side will go through the accreditation process again next year, as accreditation is good for seven years.

Executive Mentor White concluded her presentation at 6:15 PM, and welcomed comments and questions:

- All Board Members commended Executive Mentor White, Dr. Ortiz, the Principals, and the schools on this important work.

At 6:20 PM Jennifer Killen began to review the resolutions for this month:

[Approval of Saturday School curriculum units by the Newark Board of Education.](#)

[Approval of Cornell University Syllabi for Dual Enrollment Courses](#)

[Approval of the ELA Writing Revolution addendum to existing ELA Curriculum Units by the Newark Board of Education.](#)

Authorization of SY 23-24 Senior Class Trip

Authorization of District Field Trips

At 6:41 PM, Chair Murray-Thomas motioned to move resolutions to the full Board. This was supported by the Board Members.

Chair Murray-Thomas adjourned the meeting at 6:46 PM.