

## **Social Studies Curriculum Philosophy K-12**

A balanced and effective Social Studies program prepares students to be active, informed, and responsible citizens. Social Studies increases students' awareness of their world, their nation, their state, their community, and themselves, giving them fundamental understandings of their society and others, both past and present. Students acquire and perfect skills of individual and group inquiry and examine a broad range of peoples and cultures. Students gain from Social Studies programs the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that enable them to be effective problem-solvers, good decision-makers, and wise planners. They are prepared, as a result of their Social Studies education, to deal with present, recurring, and unforeseen problems.

Social Studies provides a framework through which essential skills and other subjects may be integrated. Ultimately, Social Studies provides a context for students to use the skills introduced in other areas as they learn to understand and practice the art of living and working together in a productive and constructive manner.

Furthermore, it is the purpose of Social Studies to encourage the growth of independent, knowledgeable young adults who will conduct their lives in accordance with democratic and ethical principles. As a result, students in the Social Studies are presented with some very basic questions:

- Who am I?
- To what communities do I belong?
- What does citizenship in our nation require of me as an individual and as a member of the various groups to which I belong?
- What does being a member of the world community mean to me and to my nation?
- How have things changed, and how should they change in time to come?

The evolutionary process that has brought people to the society, as we know it – computers, space shuttles, wars and the struggles for human dignity – did not occur in a vacuum. People have used their imagination, as well as their capacity for reasoning, to create and develop the unimaginable. This is the human drama that is Social Studies.

### *Overall Goals:*

Students successfully completing a balanced and effective Social Studies program:

- Possess civic understanding and accept the responsibilities that come with freedom as citizens in a democratic society
- Are proficient in the skills of information acquisition, information use for problem-solving, decision-making, planning interpersonal relationships, social participation, and civic participation
- Possess the ability to apply concepts, generalizations, and theories to analyze and explain:

- the structure, function, and operations of the economic, social, and political institutions of the United States and other societies
- who holds power, how power is gained, used, and justified, and how authority is created, structured, maintained, and changed
- the economic, social, and political behavior of people
- societies
- persistent issues and problems
- basic geographic concepts
- Exhibit constructive attitudes toward change, conflict, diversity, and uncertainty
- Develop the ability to understand the spatial dimensions of human experiences, and thus be able to determine where things are, how they are arranged, why they are in particular locations, and how people, places, and the environment relate to each other
- Develop the ability to use language well and thoughtfully
  - developing speech that is sensitive to the weight and meaning of words
  - acquiring the habit of reading intelligently and critically
  - learning to write coherently
  - knowing and saying what one means
  - attending to the meaning of other people's words
- Develop the ability to reason and experiment with solutions, and learn how to:
  - observe
  - question
  - listen
  - experiment
- Develop the ability to use their imagination and participate in and appreciate different forms of personal and group expression; implying that serious attention be given to the arts from a historical perspective
- Develop the ability to understand and utilize technology to access and assess information in our world, and
- Develop the skills and confidence to be a life-long learner.