

# 2018-2019 - Unity School District Social Studies Department Board Report



*Submitted by Louis Colletti, Social Studies Department Chair  
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## **New Faces and Standards**

The Social Studies Department has some new, but familiar faces in teaching assignments this year. Cola Denucci has taken over 4th grade social studies, with an emphasis on Wisconsin History. Rory Paulsen returned to 6th grade teaching Ancient History. A truly new face is Laura Ritten and she has been a great addition to the 3rd grade. The department has met multiple times thus far and it has led to some insightful discussions. At the most recent meeting during the January inservice, teachers were able to have some meaningful conversation, especially while looking at state test scores on the Forward exams for 4th, 8th, and 10th grades. Teachers believe, with the new mindset of the standards, they will be able to raise those scores in the years to come.

Social Studies standards in Wisconsin have recently been revised. The state of Wisconsin shared a suggested roll out plan of the new standards. This is year one of the rollout. This year's focus is understanding the foundations and investigations of the new standards. DPI suggests that teachers understand how the standards fit into current coursework, while also understanding the shift required between the old and the new standards. The new standards have increased rigor and content. Teachers are excited to incorporate the new standards into district curriculum.

As a department, six teachers attended a CESA 11 workshop on November 8, 2018. While there, they learned that the standards have had five main shifts.

1. Inquiry as an instructional framework means that students should do more than just complete a research project. Inquiry should be integrated into lessons, units, and courses across the social studies continuum.
2. Integration across all strands means that all social studies courses should expect to incorporate standards from multiple strands of the standards when developing lessons, units, and scope and sequence materials.

3. Dynamic balance of skills and content shows that in this technological era with extremely tech-savvy students, teachers need to have students problem solve using the content in order to reflect the usage of skills.
4. With the new standards, it is clear that K-12 is a progression and curriculum should be planned by each grade level to show clear expectations to students.
5. The standards show a shift to college, career, and community ready students. With the new standards, students will be provided opportunities for civic engagement and authentic audiences in the safe environment of school. The teachers worked on district plan.

### **Unity Social Studies - Examples of Students Learning Great Things!**



- Kindergarten is continuing to utilize Google Maps to show students different parts of the world and *Scholastic News* for early reading and analysis exposure.
- As a final project for the 3rd grade Mapping Unit, each student was asked to create a map to demonstrate their understanding of key map tools such as a compass rose, map key, symbols, and scale. They will also researched and wrote about a historical person, place, or event and learned an overview of the federal government and how it worked.
- 4th grade students learned all about Wisconsin and completed pioneer journals and a mini version of National History Day.
- 5th grade continues to do daily geography icebreakers and work through early exploration to the Civil War.
- Sam Rivers is enjoying teaching 7th grade World History classes and is excited to be teaching the new 8th grade U.S. History class.
- Students and teachers have enjoyed the new trimester schedule and have been able to go deeper with their discussions in class at the middle and high school levels.

- High School teachers are developing more inquiry based lessons and projects. The Civics students continue to pass the citizenship test with flying colors. In U.S. History, students completed a “*Fight for Rights*” project in which they examined the cause and effect of a group of people that were discriminated against and contextualized why. The majority of students have become experts on their subject choice.

For the remainder of the year, all social studies teachers will continue to analyze the new standards and plan for the future. The focus for teachers will shift to the development of curriculum and resources that meet the new standards. Some teachers are planning to go to the WI Social Studies Conference in Madison in March. Others will plan to go to CESA 11 again in April for their *Knowing the Additional Requirements for Instruction and How to Embed Them* conference for the new standards. DPI will also be providing a K-5 Unit Draft resource for teachers in the coming months. The department cannot thank the district enough for all of their support of the department!