

Date: February 17, 2026
To: Dr. Robert Halverson, Superintendent of Schools
East Aurora School District 131 Board of Education
From: Dr. Ami Engel, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment
Subject: Social Studies Curricular Resource Adoption: Grades 6-8

The Proposal:

The Middle School Social Studies Pilot Committee recommends Teachers' Curriculum Institute (TCI) for approval by the Board of Education. The program provides a high-quality curriculum for grades 6-8 that balances knowledge-building with inquiry-led instruction and aligns with updated Illinois social studies standards and a broader inclusion of perspectives.

Justification:

The Middle School Social Studies Pilot Committee was tasked with vetting products that aligned with the social studies materials evaluation criteria, the updated Illinois social studies standards, and the Illinois instructional mandates. After narrowing the selection down to National Geographic's Cengage and Teachers' Curriculum Institute (TCI), the curricular resources were piloted in classrooms and evaluated in order to arrive at the recommended curricular resource that best fits the unique needs of East Aurora's student population.

Board Policy and Past Practices:

Past practice is for the Board of Education to approve curricular resources that are recommended once the teachers have completed the pilot process and provided feedback for their top choice. Curricular resource recommendations are based on a comprehensive rubric review and pilot implementation in the classroom with students.

Strategic Plan:

This proposal supports Strategic Goal #1 Educational Equity: East Aurora School District 131 will meet the diverse needs of all students by ensuring a safe and inclusive learning environment and Strategic Goal #4, Student Achievement: East Aurora School District 131 will ensure the academic success of all students by closing the opportunity gap.

Supporting Data:

Teachers' Curriculum Institute (TCI) was selected as the pilot committee's curricular resource recommendation, based on compiled survey data where TCI outperformed Cengage in all three categories: (1) Key Elements for Social Studies Instruction, (2) Inquiry Standards alignment, (3) Social Studies standards alignment.

Recommendation:

Materials will be available for review at the Administrative Center for the next month. It is recommended that the Board of Education approve the proposed literacy curricular resources from Teachers' Curriculum Institute (TCI) including student and teacher resources and professional development for a combined total cost estimated at \$278,471.60.

Timeline for Decision:

March 16, 2026