



## **BUFFALO COMMUNITY MIDDLE SCHOOL SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM ADOPTION PROPOSAL (CAP) REPORT**

### **History of Social Studies Programming at BCMS**

The social studies content taught at BCMS has been determined and changed by the different standards revisions. Due to the changes in other content area standards and testing, as well as district budget reductions, social studies instructional resources have not been updated when originally scheduled within the continuous improvement process. This has caused us to use outdated curriculum.

#### **6th grade**

For the last twelve years, sixth grade social studies content has focused on Ancient Civilizations (Egypt, Greece, Rome), as well as Minnesota History. We have been using *History Alive* materials to teach Ancient Civilizations. Minnesota content was split between 4th grade and 6th grade curriculums with 6th grade teaching Minnesota government. Prior to the History Alive adoption 12 years ago, 6th grade used the first edition of Northern Lights to teach Minnesota history.

In it's infancy, Quest students have been using modified curriculum from the History Alive Ancient Civilizations resources as well as teacher created activities to enrich and differentiate the content and activities. The Quest students also have participated in the History Day program through the Minnesota Historical Society.

#### **7th grade**

For the past eleven years, seventh grade social studies content has included United States History from the Reconstruction to the present. We have used the *History of Us* textbooks as the core instructional material to support our curriculum. Teachers discovered that the supporting materials with that text were insufficient, so most of the activities have come from individual teachers' creations.

Quest has not had a complete resource set for seventh grade. We have been using instructional materials pulled together, and two *William and Mary Gifted Curriculum* units throughout the year. The curriculum we have been using has been piecemealed together to meet the student's needs and state standards. The Quest students also have participated in the History Day program through the Minnesota Historical Society.

#### **8th grade**

For the past ten years, eighth grade has been using the textbook *People Places Change* as the main core curriculum. This text does not align to the new standards. The eighth grade classroom curriculum has been enhanced with online programs such as the *Global Imaging System* software and *Google Earth*.

Quest Geography has not been taught prior to this year and currently does not have a curriculum.

### **State Standards Revision 2011 and Impact**

The new standards have shifted the grade levels that different content is taught as well as how much information is to be included at each grade level.

#### **6th**

The latest standards revisions have shifted Minnesota History instruction back to sixth grade. This shift will make the current instructional resources, *History Alive Ancient Civilizations*, obsolete.

#### **7th**

The latest state standards have added 100 years of history for seventh grade to teach. The current *History of Us* resources start with Reconstruction after the Civil War. Currently the seventh grade curriculum does not have resources for the prior 100 years.

#### **8th**

The latest state standards have changed the focus of eighth grade from geography to a thematic global studies approach. Some of the civilization standards have been added and our current curriculum does not fit these standards or the thematic approach.

### **Process for Review of Instructional Resources and Recommendation**

Within the district continuous improvement process, a program goal is developed by teachers. The purpose of this goal is to guide decisions and action plans within the improvement process. Each step of the process, the goal is used to determine if the next step is aligned with the intent of the desired goal. The secondary social studies program goal is listed below.

#### ***Secondary Social Studies Improvement Process Goal:***

***Provide students with access to authentic learning experiences beyond the four walls, both virtually and physically.***

Our current curriculum is outdated, and does not align to the revised standards. In addition to that, the continuity between teachers is limited because curriculum has been piecemealed together to get enough resources in each classroom. When looking into the options for new

materials, the decision was made by the group of teachers not to design our own resources. Some of the concerns with creating our own was the time commitment and expertise that we would need as teachers to create a curriculum. We were also concerned about the lack of technology resources available and reliability solely on technology for our students, which would be crucial if we went completely to a digital self-developed curriculum.

## **6th**

With the changes in standards statewide, Natalie Polaschek worked with a collaborative group of teachers from thirteen school districts to create an online curriculum that would align to the new standards. After reviewing the completed curriculum there were many gaps in standards, facts, and activities included. It was determined through this review that it would not be a feasible foundational resource to meet the standards. Following that discovery the sixth grade team looked at the newest edition of Northern Lights through the Minnesota Historical Society. Teachers attended the Minnesota Historical Society workshop on the curriculum to see how it is implemented in the classroom as well as what the newest version will look like when the new book becomes available in 2013, as well as the proposed technology additions. It was determined that the new Northern Lights curriculum will fit the standards as well as be a good fit for the Quest program (with additional resources to incorporate more primary analysis through the Minnesota Archives.)

## **7th**

With the new standards in mind, seventh grade teachers piloted three different sets of social studies materials from *Teachers' Curriculum Institute (TCI)*, *Pearson*, and *McGraw Hill*. Time was spent aligning the new standards to the new materials. We compared the reading levels, online resources, and activities. We evaluated how these resources are set up to meet the needs of students with different reading levels and learning needs. We explored options for technology, including Chromebooks, netbooks, and other online resources. We found *Pearson* to be the best choice to meet our current and future needs. They created a book specifically aligned to the Minnesota social studies standards.

Quest will also be using this resource as well for a base and will be supplementing this with additional primary sources and activities to increase the depth of analysis.

## **8th**

We have piloted three different resources in the eighth grade as well from *TCI*, *Pearson* and *McGraw Hill*. While piloting we looked at online resources, readability levels and student activities to enhance the curriculum. TCI's *Geography Alive!* meets the needs of the new social studies standards, with its regional and thematic approach to the content.

Quest will require a high school text. *Human Geography: People, Place, and Culture* is a proven quality resource that meets the high standards this course requires. This resource will provide a base and will be supplemented with additional primary sources and activities to increase the depth of analysis, providing a challenging curriculum.

### **Financial Implications**

The curriculum and technology needs for BCMS social studies adoption include a set of 35 Chromebooks for each grade level to share. These will be used to better integrate online resources that can enhance student learning. In addition, the vendor-purchased resources that will provide a foundational base will include 45 new textbooks per teacher for classroom use, plus additional texts available for student checkout. In addition, online access for each student and some additional resources such as workbooks, DVD's, activity kits, and novels are included in the proposal. The total cost for this curriculum adoption proposal is approximately \$105,000 for BCMS.

### **Evaluation**

For the first time in ten years, having a consistent curriculum will allow us within our Personal Learning Communities (PLC's) at BCMS to develop common assessments based on the standards. These assessments will allow us to determine whether or not the students are mastering the standards being taught. In addition to the assessments our PLC's will reflect upon the activities that our students are getting in our classes to increase the number of authentic learning experiences we are able to create for students, both virtually and physically.

### **Next Steps**

Teachers will have some days to work together as a grade level team over the summer to become familiar with the curriculum and resources and plan additional lessons and assessments to ensure that the state standards are being met. One additional day per quarter during the first year of implementation will be used to evaluate and enhance the curriculum as needed. Teachers will also participate in training to best utilize the curriculum and online resources that are available. The implementation costs associated with curriculum planning and development, as well as training costs, are all budgeted within the Teaching & Learning Department's professional development dollars separately from the curriculum adoption proposal.