

BACKGROUND OF PROGRAMMING IN BHM SCHOOLS

Social Studies instruction is required for all students in elementary grade levels. Required Minnesota Academic Standards in Social Studies guide the curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices.

The last time a CAP was presented for K-5 Social Studies was in May 2013. At that time, there was a split in requested resources to meet the needs of all students. K-3 requested Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, whereas Grades 4-5 continued with the previously used TCI (Teachers' Curriculum Institute). In addition to the core resources, a supplemental resource was purchased from Pearson called My World Social Studies. The resource consisted of small group readers that were biographies. The total cost was \$172,082. K-3 had no consumable resources, and grades 4/5 did. The 1st edition of TCI for grades 4-5 had student textbooks, interactive notebooks, and online components.

The current status of social studies resources at the elementary level can be described as leftovers. The Houghton Mifflin Harcourt series that K-3 used was discontinued years ago. Teachers were no longer able to use the online resources. The books are old and falling apart. The flipbooks are still in working condition, but with outdated pictures and content. For grades 4 and 5, the 1st edition version of TCI was sunsetted a few years ago. Some teachers use the online teacher accounts, but must use the 2nd edition, so it doesn't match the students' books. The interactive notebooks were left to be purchased at the site level, so some teachers used them, and some didn't. During COVID, some classrooms' supplies of textbooks were diminished as books weren't always returned. Teaching & Learning was able to assist in the moving of extra books from one building to another.

PROGRAM STANDARDS

The Minnesota 2021 Social Studies standards were finalized in 2024. The new standards are required to be implemented in the 2026-2027 school year. The academic standards and their supporting benchmarks are organized into five strands: (1) Citizenship and Government, (2) Economics, (3) Geography, (4) U.S. and World History, and (5) Ethnic Studies. The contributions of Minnesota's American Indian tribes and communities are integrated into each strand and all standards. Some shifts in the standards include a focus on student inquiry and disciplinary literacy skills.

Examples of standards

- Kindergarten
 - K.2.7.1 (Use cost-benefit analysis as a group to solve a problem.)

- K.4.18.1 (Ask historical questions about a past event in an individual’s family, school or local community.)
 - K.5.25.1 (Describe the importance of first peoples’/Indigenous peoples’ relationships to land, water, and the non-human world.)
- Fourth Grade
 - 4.3.14.2 (Describe physical and human characteristics needed for different types of agricultural and energy production regions.)
 - 4.4.20.1 (Compare and contrast two historical sources to investigate a contemporary issue and its historical roots.)
 - 4.1.6.1 (Locate areas inhabited by Indigenous people united by language and similar ways of life in North America and understand the impact of permanent tribal homelands on Indigenous people of Minnesota.)
- The recommendation of the selected program aids in the alignment with standards
 - The recommended program focuses on the active doing of social studies versus just learning about the topic. Students grasp the concepts through active learning and real-world connections. The interactive aspect of the journal lends itself to using AVID strategies. WICOR can be found throughout the teacher guides to support student learning.
 - The variety of media found in the recommended program engages students in a multitude of ways. The structured lessons allow for teacher and student flow. The routine allows for cognitive load to be on the learning of benchmarks and not on the lesson structure.
 - The recommended program provides a suggested alignment to the MN State standards. The provided assessments assist the teachers and students in determining how well they are learning the individual benchmarks.
 - The recommended program has MN specific lessons online for the grades that meet MN standards that are not currently in the printed resources.

PROGRAM VISION STATEMENT

The K-5 social studies program empowers learners to become inquisitive, informed, and engaged members of society who use critical thinking, inquiry, and literacy to prepare for civic life, college, and careers.

SUMMARY OF PROCESS FOR REVIEW OF INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES

The district’s Continuous Improvement Process (CIP) requires a comprehensive review of needs, educational research, and potential materials before making a recommendation in the Curriculum Adoption Proposal. During the CIP phases of RESEARCH and PILOT over the past two years, the K-5 Social Studies CIP Team engaged in the following activities:

- Reviewing the MN Social Studies standards along with a variety of documents that were used during the creation of the standards. The readings included sections of the *College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards: Guidance for Enhancing the Rigor of K-12 Civics, Economics, Geography, and History* resource. <https://www.socialstudies.org/standards/c3>
- Selection of Materials
 - The team used the core curriculum selection checklist that was developed by Teaching and Learning staff. Next, they reviewed the important components of

a social studies program. A small group of teachers reviewed various social studies programs.

- The initial screening of programs included:
 - Social Studies Weekly (Studies Weekly)
 - Inquiry Journey (InquirEd) - online
 - SAVVAS MyWorld
 - IMPACT (HMH)
 - Encompass (Nystrom)
 - TCI
- A small group of teachers representing each grade and each building made the decision to pilot Social Studies Weekly and TCI. A group of 12 teachers volunteered to pilot both programs for the 25-26 school year. There were 2 teachers at each grade level representing the 6 elementary schools.
- The pilot began in August 2025 with teachers attending virtual training with the salesperson and professional development providers of each company. They then had some time to plan and prepare for their first lesson. The first round lasted until the beginning of November. Teachers then came in for another half day of training before piloting the second program. The second round of piloting lasted until mid-January. Finally, the team was brought together to thoroughly review each pilot program before making a recommendation. Teachers who were unable to attend the final day provided feedback before the meeting day. They had opportunities to share the pros and cons of each program, along with recommending what they thought the next steps should be.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Based on the pilot of both programs, the decision was reached to recommend TCI for K-5 curriculum adoption for social studies.
- The reason for the recommendation of TCI includes:
 - Alignment to the 2022 MN State Social Studies Standards
 - Updated resources and images
 - Allows for implementation of AVID's WICOR strategies into TCI lessons.
 - Engaging, hands-on content and activities (students were excited for this program)
 - Wide range of activities to keep students motivated
 - The assessments were of a higher quality than the other program.
 - The online experience for teachers was positive, and navigation was easy.
 - 4th and 5th-grade teachers already use an older edition of the program, so the transition will be seamless for them.
 - The student journals are consumable, and updates to the resources are included as part of the initial cost.
 - Curriculum has differentiation options written into the lessons.
 - Primary sources are embedded in the student materials.

- Potential Challenges
 - Not all of the MN standards will be thoroughly covered, so a team will need to closely review materials to ensure all standards are taught.
 - The management of the student materials may be a concern at some grade levels. The student journal is bulky at the upper grade levels.
 - Adjusting to a new online platform may be challenging for some teachers.
 - Making adjustments to the required materials. For example, one lesson requires balloons, so a substitution will need to be made. Currently, there isn't a required materials list from the company.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

<u>Program</u>	<u>Budget Request</u>
K-5	\$ 198,508

[K-5 Spreadsheet for requests](#)

The proposed financial request is for a 5-year contract with the TCI. The overall social studies program would need to be purchased for 10 years. While working with the sales vendor, he noted that a 5-6 year agreement is usually where the best costing is seen, so purchasing for an 8-year agreement (maximum allowed by the company) and another 2-year agreement would cost considerably more than doing two 5-year agreements. Another reason for a 5-year contract is that a new English Language Arts (ELA) program is anticipated to be implemented in 2027-2028. The newer ELA programs are content-rich. The K-2 teachers would like an opportunity to look at alignment with ELA and Social Studies standards after a new program is purchased to see if TCI will overlap with ELA.

EVALUATION

Evaluation of the curriculum adoption will be monitored in several ways. Some of the anticipated desired outcomes include:

- More student engagement compared to the recent social studies curriculum
- Increased hands-on exploration of social studies-based activities
- A more common/consistent experience for students across elementary classrooms.

Data that will be collected:

- A teacher survey at the end of the year to gather feedback about the units and lessons, along with how students responded to the program.
- Scores on summative assessments in the second year of implementation.

NEXT STEPS

- Purchase Timeline
 - After July 1, 2026, a purchase agreement will be established for a 5-year contract for K-5. A 5-year contract provides the best cost structure. The total years will be 10, and another 5-year contract will be established in July 2031.
 - Additional supplies will be ordered in July.
 - Printshop will have pages loaded so teachers can begin ordering in August.
- Professional Development Plan

- Alignment documents will need to be created to ensure that all MN standards/benchmarks are met at each grade level.
- A short introduction video on March 27, 2026.
- A brief overview for BTS will include a review of new social studies standards and shifts.
- A full PD session (half days) for K-1, 2-3, and any grades 4-5 teachers who would like a more in-depth training.
- For grades 4-5, teachers who have been using the program will have a 1-hour overview of changes from the 2nd to 3rd edition with a Q/A time.