



## ELEMENTARY GRADES K-5 SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM ADOPTION PROPOSAL (CAP) REPORT

### **History of Social Studies Programming at the Elementary Level**

In 2003, the BHM School District adopted the instructional resources by *Teachers' Curriculum Institute (TCI)* for Social Studies instruction at both the primary and intermediate grade levels and has been using those resources for the past ten years. Due to changes at the state level with the revision of new Social Studies Standards in 2011, it became necessary to search for resources that best meet these new standards.

At the primary level, teachers have been concerned with the lack of rigor in the *TCI* curriculum and found it necessary through the years to supplement to meet the previous 2003 state standards, let alone the 2011 social studies standards. In addition, with building and staffing changes, materials have become scarce. With the *TCI* curriculum implementation in 2003, *TCI* provided training to the staff, but over time many new staff people joined the district and have not been trained in the unique features of the *TCI* curriculum and therefore the integrity of the program has been compromised.

In the intermediate grades, the teachers and students appreciated the *TCI* active learning opportunities and the rigor was grade level appropriate. Like at the primary level, the materials have become scarce and staff training by *TCI* was needed for the many new teachers in order for the curriculum to be effective.

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

There were several changes in the standards revision that impact the elementary grades. At the primary level, there is an emphasis on more of a global perspective. The academic rigor has also increased. At grade 3, there are now standards for ancient civilizations, which used to be sixth grade standards. In grade 4, there is a stronger focus on economy (buyers and sellers in a market) and on tribal government to develop a better understanding of the multiple players involved in the US government. In grade 5, the revised standards do not include westward expansion or the Civil War. These standards have now been moved to 7th grade.

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

Our current social studies instructional resources, the 2003 adoption of *TCI*, do not meet the revised state standards. There is also a lack of materials and training within each building. Based on the goals written by the Elementary Social Studies Team, we have the need to update our current instructional materials to meet the 2011 standards, required for implementation in 2013.

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 elementary social studies program goal is listed below.

***Elementary Social Studies Improvement Process Goal:***

***As a district striving to meet the intent of the state standards, the goals that the BHM elementary social studies task force agreed upon are:***

- ***to provide a variety of quality materials, resources, and technologies that connect to multiple disciplines and allow students to learn through a global lens;***
- ***to create authentic learning opportunities through research, collaboration, and response activities;***
- ***to develop assessments that allow for student ownership and show personal learning.***

In order to accomplish these goals, a decision was made to not design our own resources. We felt that as a team, we did not have the ample time or expertise to create a viable and reliable curriculum. Instead we considered four instructional resources from the following companies: *Pearson, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, TCI, and McGraw-Hill*. After initial considerations, we decided to pilot the first three. We decided not to pilot *McGraw-Hill* due to the lack of technology, outdated resources and inability to meet all of the state standards.

In K-3, *Houghton Mifflin Harcourt* and *Pearson* were piloted by various teachers within the district. A recommendation was made to adopt *Houghton Mifflin Harcourt* at the K-3 level. The piloting teachers found that these instructional materials met the revised standards, provided a much-needed technology component, and allowed students to learn through a global lens.

In grades 4 and 5, *Pearson* and *TCI* were piloted by a variety of teachers. Both of these companies provided instructional materials that met the revised standards, however, a recommendation was made to adopt *TCI*. This decision was made due to the alignment of the standards, the strong technology component, and a variety of learning opportunities.

**Financial Implications**

The vendor-purchased resources will provide a foundational base from which teachers will be able to develop their instruction to meet the revised 2011 standards. Resources at the primary level from *Harcourt* include the use of Big Book flip charts with students, along with both print and technology resources for teachers to use with students. Student texts are included beginning at Grade 3. At Grades 4-5, the *TCI* proposal will include teacher and student technology bundles, student texts, and student workbooks. The total cost for this K-5 curriculum adoption proposal is approximately \$172,000 for the six elementary sites.

### **Evaluation**

Throughout the district continuous improvement process activities, the elementary social studies team will be required to keep the program goal stated previously in the forefront to utilize during implementation, monitoring, and on into the evaluation phase.

A team of teachers will be meeting over the summer to align the *Harcourt* and *TCI* curriculum to the Minnesota Social Studies Standards, so teachers will have the core expectations available.

We know we will be meeting the district Social Studies goals, by inviting all elementary teachers to complete a survey based on the program goal included above. That teacher feedback will provide us the needed information to know which areas are successfully being met by these new curriculum resources and what areas may need further adjustments or improvements.

### **Next Steps**

Training will be provided by *TCI* and *Houghton Mifflin Harcourt* trainers to grade 4-5 and K-3 teachers during workshop week with a possible follow-up optional session available again during an October workshop day. The implementation costs associated with curriculum planning and development, as well as additional training needs, are all budgeted within the Teaching & Learning Department's professional development dollars separately from the curriculum adoption proposal.