

In accordance with the policy of the Archdiocese of Denver Catholic Schools, a Social Studies Curriculum Guide revision is being published in Spring 2011. Classroom teachers from several schools served on the review committee. The work of this committee was based on the Archdiocese of Denver Catholic Schools Social Studies Curriculum Guidelines (April, 2005), and used as additional resources the Standards of the National Geographic Society (1994), the National Council for Social Studies (Expectations of Excellence, 1994), the National Standards for Civics and Government (www.civiced.org), the National Council of Economics Education (www.ncee.net), the National Center for History in Schools (www.sscnet.ucla.edu), and the Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) Social Studies Standards (www.mcrel.org). The committee sought input from their colleagues in other Catholic schools by interviewing a number of teachers, and asking for written comments from others.

Based on the review of national resources and the comments from Archdiocese of Denver Catholic School classroom teachers, there were very few substantive changes in this revision. The committee spent a good deal of time creating the Social Studies Summative Projects which will be piloted during the 2011-12 school year. They will be published as revised in Spring 2012 as an appendix to the Social Studies Curriculum Guidelines. During the Summative Project creation process teachers were given the opportunity to work with the committee via on-line conferencing. We heard some very positive things about this process. Many teachers participated and projects are richer because of their input.

The committee also spent some time evaluating textbook series based on the support they provide for our curriculum objectives. Textbook publishers are more responsive to the public school model than to this curriculum guide. However, one of the strengths of using a curriculum guideline and not being dependent on a specific publisher is that schools are free to select texts that support the curriculum and not adopt a series that might support the curriculum at one level and not at another. In evaluating textbooks, the committee tried to indicate which texts best support these guidelines at various levels. Teachers are also encouraged to take advantage of the wealth of available resources that are not textbook specific. Series advertise their connection with National Geographic and the History Channel. Both of these sources provide video, suggestions for lesson plans, student activities, and links to other resources. Teachers with access to interactive white boards and similar technologies are encouraged to take advantage of these resources. Peer teachers in this area are also a rich resource. The members of the committee are very willing to assist their colleagues with ideas and suggestions.

High school courses consist of required courses and electives. The level of the course is indicated in the introduction to each section. Elective offerings usually depend on availability of qualified staff and student interest. Their inclusion in this document does not guarantee that they will be offered every year.

Many thanks to the committee for their professional and diligent service in completing the following document, and to their schools for generously allowing them the time to accomplish this task.

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The Social Studies Curriculum Guideline should serve as the basis upon which all instructional resources and teaching depend. It is designed to comprise a spiral of learning that includes all the paradigms of the social studies. These paradigms assist students to view their world with an ever-broadening vision, so that they can understand their place, and their influence on the activities and events in the world. The strands included in this Guide include geography, economics, civics, history, and social, cultural, religious, and world perspectives. Social justice issues and current events are integral learning components in every grade. The social studies should be integrated with literature, the arts, and religion.

The social studies curriculum enables students to:

- explore and apply the growth and influence of Catholic traditions, principles, and values to all aspects of political, personal, and spiritual life;
- use the process of historical inquiry to understand the past, develop a sense of the present, and build perspectives on the future. These studies will contribute to the development of the student's historical self.
- develop and use geographic knowledge and concepts to understand the relationships between human and physical geography;
- examine the ideals, purposes, and characteristics of political systems to identify how people have organized and governed themselves throughout history. Students will analyze the history of American democracy in order to develop a sense of civic responsibility.
- examine economic choices, principles, and systems, in order to make informed economic decisions for themselves and their society;
- study the cultural elements of historical and current societies of the world in order to interpret the present and plan for the future;
- analyze historical, political, economic, and social connections among world societies in order to interpret the present, and plan for the future.

Students should develop an inclusive welcoming of all peoples and cultures and the variety they represent, seeing them all as children of God. Understanding the past will contribute to a fuller understanding of the present as a foundation for building the world's future. Probing all the social studies will enable students to see the web of interconnectedness of all peoples. The ultimate goal of social studies in education is to prepare students to make a significant contribution to society and make the world a better, more Christ-like place for the human family.