

Social Studies Department

K - 12 Curriculum Review
2020 - 2025

Social studies Review Team



High School Department Chair: Alex Bobsein

Middle School Department Chairs: Dennis Gluck and Dave Hinkle

Elementary School Department Chairs: Chris Garr and Jaimi Yost

Director of Curriculum: Dr. Michael Donnelly

Input from all elementary teachers and secondary social studies teachers

Progress Review

A look at the previous 5 - year plan (2015-2020)

- Successful implementation of instructional technology such as the creation of Canvas courses, the use of current events materials (NewsELA, Study.com)
- Successful incorporation of additional political and physical geography within the curriculum of all three levels
- Continued expansion of our research and writing program, including collaboration with the English Department and Librarians
- Successful alignment of curriculum with PA Core reading and writing standards
- Standardized elementary benchmark assessments developed and implemented
- Successful implementation of ‘vertical alignment’ within the High School for AP preparation
- Increased use of historical fiction to help prepare students for PSSA’s and keystones

MISSION



Palisades Social Studies Department Mission Statement:

The mission of the social studies department is to develop active and informed citizens who embrace diversity, understand the context of historical and current events, and think independently when presented with conflicting sources of information.

Rationale: A democracy requires educated citizens who can make informed decisions. Social studies helps students understand and participate in the democratic process. As our society becomes more culturally diverse and we live in a more interdependent world, social studies provides students with the knowledge and understanding of the past necessary for coping with the present and planning for the future. Our mission is that students not only learn information but also how to learn so that they can continue to seek the knowledge that will allow them to reach their full potential and be productive members of our society.

Current Program

Highlights

Elementary-

- Informational Texts tie in to Social Studies topics from the Benchmark Literacy Program
- Working on including more Project-Based Learning in Social Studies
- Recent implementation of Google Classroom as a Learning Management System due to the current Covid Pandemic

Current Program

Highlights

PALMS-

- Implementation of historical fiction within grades 6-8
- Development and implementation of learning software such as NewsELA, Canvas, etc.
- Greater use of writing across all grade levels, including the implementation of a grade specific research paper
- Development of grade level geography materials and instruction

Current Program

Highlights

High School-

- Creation of Canvas courses (in traditional, hybrid, and full online setting)
- Consistently high AP European and American history scores
 - Fruit perhaps of our vertical alignment reforms of the last 5 year cycle
- Collaboration with English and other departments in the development and implementation of reading and writing strategies
- Continued use of a Graduation Project to help prepare all students for collegiate writing requirements

Bucket #1



Increase student achievement

Measurable Goal

By the end of the 5 year review plan, students will demonstrate growth in their writing and reading comprehension of informational texts through a variety of offered strategies as defined by the department.

Bucket #2



Professional Development

Measurable Goal

Increase opportunities for K-12 collaboration with colleagues through professional development; allowing opportunities to further investigate and share best practices in addition to exploring outside opportunities to further improve and broaden our knowledge and instructional strategies.

Bucket #3



Technology/Resources

Measurable Goal

By the end of the 5 year review plan, all levels will explore and implement online resources that will differentiate learning opportunities to increase student engagement and competencies.

Bucket #4



Curriculum Review

Measurable Goal

Review and adjust current curriculum guidelines and courses to reflect evolving state requirements and students' needs and interests.

Next Steps...

Program Updates

- Fall 2020 - Review curriculum programs that encompass K - 5 scope and sequence
- Develop a scope and sequence that encompasses state recommended standards for each grade level, including project-based learning opportunities

Reading comprehension

- At PALMS, the department will partner with ELA to further develop close reading strategies to develop additional skills for students' reading and writing in multiple subjects.

Course opportunities

- Develop and review a student interest survey to inform course offerings at the high school.

2020 - 2025 goals by level



Collaborative Goals Guiding Document