

FAQ's about HSS Implementation

What about materials and supplies?

The guide includes information about suggested materials and supplies. Any new materials need to be ordered through the school's budget. There are no grant funds or other centralized sources for curriculum materials.

Are there identified core material and supplies for classroom?

For grades pre-K through 4, children's literature is the central resource. Teachers are encouraged to supplement with websites and software and at the fourth grade level with atlases. Teachers of grades 5 through 8 are encouraged to use History Alive! as the core for instruction. National Geographic Xpedition websites is very useful for teaching outcomes related to the eighteen national geography standards. United video streaming is another valuable teaching resource that should be utilized as it connects with the grade level topics and outcomes across all grade levels. Primary and secondary source documents are to be used at every level as developmentally appropriate. At the secondary levels, 7-12, primary sources are to be considered the preeminent core material. Reminder: the student learning outcomes should drive instructional planning rather than a specific text, resource or material.

Are there identified core material and supplies for school libraries?

The Massachusetts Association of School Librarians have provided a core literature list that relates to the topics and outcomes of the History and Social Science curriculum frameworks, grades preK-5. Teachers are encouraged to review this list and recommend titles for inclusion in individual school and town libraries.

At what point, does the curricula ask students to conduct research?

Students at every level are encouraged to conduct research as developmentally appropriate. Also, at every level, students are encouraged to use their own words to express their thinking—plagiarism in any form or at any level is not acceptable. In early childhood (preK-2), students develop questions and discuss possible sources for finding the answers to their questions. As the teacher reads aloud from these sources (both print and media), students identify answers to their own questions.

In grades 2, 3, and 4 students should be encouraged to conduct research in small groups with multiple resources from print and media. Students should be taught the Big 6 strategy and apply these steps to their research. In grades 5 and beyond, students should be encouraged to conduct research on their own, applying the principles and strategies of the Big 6 so that by the time they enter grade 9 Big 6 terminology and steps are thoroughly mastered and can be applied to any content area or research question.

What role does technology and its availability have in the implementation of this curriculum?

By Jan. 1, 2006 the District will have a document summarizing the technology and library/media knowledge and skills that students should master at each grade level. Teachers should review the standards for their grade and contiguous grades and then plan instructional activities with these goals in mind. Technology is heavily linked to the study of history and geography; thus, technology applications are provided for each grade level. WebQuests are available for many topics contained in the curriculum and these are encouraged as are some of the interactive lessons found through MarcoPolo educational resource site. Teachers are encouraged to use websites to gain access to primary and secondary sources, virtual field trips to museums and historical sites to enrich learning. Students should be encouraged to use technology to demonstrate their understanding through research, writing, and presentations. As noted above, United Video streaming and Xpedition are other valuable resources for learning.

What about assessments?

Teachers at every grade are encouraged to use the suggested performance assessments that are included in the guide with their students. For the 2005-06, school year there will be tryouts for these assessments and pilots of others. Feedback from these tryouts and pilots will be useful in planning next steps. Teachers at the secondary level should continue to work on the development and refining of common grade level/course assessments.

During 2005-06 school year, will there be a Full or trial implementation of the new HSS curriculum?

During the 2005-06 school year, teachers of every grade are expected to implement the curriculum fully within available resources. The only exception to this will be at grade 11 in which only one semester of (US History II) will be offered.

Efforts to integrate HSS with Language Arts revised curricula are ongoing: *elementary teachers are encouraged to use guided reading with materials focused on their own grade level social studies themes and content for at least one quarter of the year. The new ELA standards put more emphasis on the acquisition of informational reading skills and social studies materials provide rich content for practice and reinforcement of these skills. Publishers are supplying more and more nonfiction materials geared to younger readers. As one becomes aware of new titles that are useful, please share this information with colleagues across Union 61.*

Professional Development

- Rubric with common language across developmental continuum
- Strategies for formative assessments
- Common performance assessments
- Interdisciplinary writing assignments integrating ELA and SS
- 4th grade study guide
- grade alike sharing of materials, strategies, common concerns and issues
- 5 themes of geography (gr.3-6)
- Research and its application to HSS
- Differentiated instructional strategies for HSS (7-8)
- Shared understanding from SPED and classroom teacher to address assessments
- Big 6 Research Method
- Small group orientation (building by building decision)