

WEST JEFFERSON HILLS SCHOOL DISTRICT SOCIAL STUDIES PHILOSOPHY

GRADE 8

West Jefferson Hills School District's eighth grade social studies curriculum is designed to help students reach four important goals. The first goal is to provide students with knowledge about the development of the United States. The second is to better understand the interrelationship between the United States and the world. The third is to provide beneficial instruction and practice in developing basic map skills, critical thinking skills, writing skills, and other general social studies skills. The fourth goal is for every student in eighth grade social studies to follow a planned course of study of the history, geography, economics, and government of the United States.

The core components of this philosophy are:

1. We as social studies teachers know that classroom life is complicated and ever changing. We also know there is no single right way to teach and the state standards were developed with both of these precepts in mind. Through curriculum assessments we can make informed judgments about what needs to be changed and how change can be effectively implemented.
2. We as social studies teachers recognize that we are decision makers. It is in that role that we will use the standards to strengthen what we already teach about social studies.
3. We as social studies teachers will learn to use and apply the state standards to grow professionally. This professional enhancement will enable us to organize our curriculum, prepare assessments, present content, and suggest learning opportunities for students.
4. We as social studies teachers want students to be able to apply what they have learned. That means asking appropriate historical questions; finding, organizing, and recording historic information; presenting that information in meaningful ways; generalizing about issues in history; and solving problems from an historical perspective.
5. We as social studies teachers understand that history is not an unconnected mass of names, dates, and places. We want students to recognize that facts of history are tied together by the common thread issues of the multicultural nation, the spirit of democracy, the changing economy, the environment, and global interdependence.
6. We as social studies teachers recognize that ever changing technology and teaching strategies will further enhance student learning. To this extent, we are committed to the implementation and utilization of technology in our classrooms.
7. We as social studies teachers recognize the importance of interdisciplinary teaching methods and the key role of social studies in the development of interdisciplinary teaching units.