

## **SOCIAL STUDIES PROGRAMS OF EXCELLENCE AWARD CURRICULUM GUIDELINES**

### **1. The Social Studies Program Should Be Directly Related to the Age, Maturity, and Concerns of Students.**

**1.1** Students should be involved in the formulation of goals, the selection of activities and instructional strategies, and the assessment of curricular outcomes.

**1.2** The school and its teachers should make steady efforts, through regularized channels and practices, to identify areas of concern to students.

**1.3** Students should have some choices, some options, within programs fitted to their needs, their concerns, and their social world.

**1.4** Students should have a social studies experience at all grade levels, K-12.

**1.5** The program should take into account the aptitudes, developmental capabilities, and psychological needs of the students.

### **2. The Social Studies Program Should Deal with the Real Social World.**

**2.1** The program should focus on the social world as it is, its flaws, its strengths, its dangers, and its promise.

**2.2** The program should emphasize pervasive and enduring social issues.

**2.3** The program should demonstrate the relationships between the local and global aspects of social issues.

**2.4** The program should include analysis and attempts to formulate potential resolutions of present and controversial global problems such as racism, sexism, world resources, nuclear proliferation, and ecological imbalance.

**2.5** The program should provide intensive and recurring cross-cultural study of groups to which students themselves belong and those to which they do not.

**2.6** The program should offer opportunities for students to meet, discuss, study, and work with members of racial, ethnic, and national groups other than their own.

**2.7** The program should build upon realities of the immediate school community.

**2.8** Participation in the real social world, both in school and out, should be considered a part of the social studies program.

**2.9** The program should provide the opportunity for students to examine the potential future conditions and problems.

### **3. The Social Studies Program Should Draw from Currently Valid Knowledge Representative of Human Experience, Culture, and Beliefs.**

**3.1** The program should emphasize currently valid concepts, principles, and theories in history and the social sciences.

**3.2** The program should develop proficiency in methods of inquiry in history and the social sciences and in techniques for processing social data.

**3.3** The program should develop students' ability to distinguish among empirical, logical, definitional, and normative propositions and problems.

**3.4** The program should draw upon history and all of the social sciences, anthropology, economics, geography, political science, sociology, and psychology.

**3.5** The program should draw from other related fields such as law, the humanities, the natural and applied sciences, and religion.

**3.6** The program should represent some balance between the immediate social environment of students and the larger social world; between small group and public issues; among local, national, and global affairs; among past, present, and future directions; among Western and non-Western cultures; and among economically developed and developing nations.

**3.7** The program should include the study not only of human achievements but also of human failures.

## **SOCIAL STUDIES PROGRAMS OF EXCELLENCE AWARD CURRICULUM GUIDELINES**

### **4. Objectives Should Be Thoughtfully Selected and Clearly Stated in Such Form as to Furnish Direction to the Program.**

- 4.1 Objectives should be carefully selected and formulated in the light of what is known about the students, their community, the real social world, and the fields of knowledge.
- 4.2 Knowledge, abilities, valuing, and social participation should all be represented in the stated objectives of social studies programs.
- 4.3 General statements of basic and long-range goals should be translated into more specific objectives conceived in terms of behavior and content.
- 4.4 Classroom instruction should rely upon statements which identify clearly what students are to learn; learning activities and instructional materials should be appropriate for achieving the stated objectives.
- 4.5 Classroom instruction should enable students to see their goals clearly in what is to be learned, whether in brief instructional sequences or lengthy units of study.
- 4.6 Instructional objectives should develop all aspects of the affective, cognitive, and psychomotor domains.
- 4.7 Objectives should be reconsidered and revised periodically.

### **5. Learning Activities Should Engage the Student Directly and Actively in the Learning Process.**

- 5.1 Students should have a wide and rich range of learning activities appropriate to the objectives of their social studies program.
- 5.2 Activities should include formulating hypotheses and testing them by gathering and analyzing data
- 5.3 Activities should include using knowledge, examining values, communicating with others, and making decisions about social and civic affairs.
- 5.4 Students should be encouraged to become active participants in activities within their own communities.
- 5.5 Learning activities should be sufficiently varied and flexible to appeal to many kinds of students.
- 5.6 Activities should contribute to the students' perception of teachers as fellow inquirers.
- 5.7 Activities must be carried on in a climate which supports students' self-respect and opens opportunities to all.
- 5.8 Activities should stimulate students to investigate and to respond to the human condition in the contemporary world.
- 5.9 Activities which examine values, attitudes, and beliefs should be undertaken in an environment that respects each student's right to privacy.

### **6. Strategies of Instruction and Learning Activities Should Rely on a Broad Range of Learning Resources.**

- 6.1 A social studies program requires a great wealth of appropriate instructional resources; no one textbook can be sufficient.
- 6.2 Printed materials must accommodate a wide range of reading abilities and interests, meet the requirements of learning activities, and include many kinds of material from primary as well as secondary sources, from social science and history as well as the humanities and related fields, from other nations and cultures as well as our own, and from current as well as basic sources.
- 6.3 A variety of media should be available for learning through seeing, hearing, touching, and acting, and calling for thought and feeling.
- 6.4 Social studies classrooms should draw upon the potential contributions of many kinds of resource persons and organizations representing many points of view, a variety of abilities, and a mix of cultures and nationalities.
- 6.5 Classroom activities should use the school and community as a learning laboratory for gathering social data and for confronting knowledge and commitments in dealing with social problems.
- 6.6 The social studies program should have available many kinds of work space to facilitate variation in the size of groups, the use of several kinds of media, and a diversity of tasks.

## **SOCIAL STUDIES PROGRAMS OF EXCELLENCE AWARD CURRICULUM GUIDELINES**

### **7. The Social Studies Program Must Facilitate the Organization of Experience.**

- 7.1 Structure in the social studies program must help students organize their experiences to promote growth.
- 7.2 Learning experiences should be organized in such manner that students will learn how to continue to learn.
- 7.3 The program must enable students to relate their experiences in social studies to other areas of experience.
- 7.4 The formal pattern of the program should offer choice and flexibility.

### **8. Evaluation Should Be Useful, Systematic, Comprehensive, and Valid for the Objectives of the Program.**

- 8.1 Evaluation should be based primarily on the school's own statements of objectives as the criteria for effectiveness.
- 8.2 Included in the evaluation process should be assessment of progress not only in knowledge, but in skills and abilities, including thinking, valuing, and social participation.
- 8.3 Evaluation data should come from many sources, not merely from paper-and-pencil tests, including observations of what students do outside as well as inside the classroom.
- 8.4 Regular, comprehensive, and continuous procedures should be developed for gathering evidence of significant growth in learning over time.
- 8.5 Evaluation data should be used for planning curricular improvements.
- 8.6 Evaluation data should offer students, teachers, and parents help in the course of learning and not merely at the conclusion of some marking period.
- 8.7 Both students and teachers should be involved in the process of evaluation.
- 8.8 Thoughtful and regular re-examination of the basic goals of the social studies curriculum should be an integral part of the evaluation program.

### **9. Social Studies Education Should Receive Vigorous Support as a Vital and Responsible Part of the School Program**

- 9.1 Appropriate instructional materials, time, and facilities must be provided for social studies education.
- 9.2 Teachers should not only be responsible but should be encouraged to try out and adapt for their own students promising innovations such as simulation, newer curricular plans, discovery, and actual social participation.
- 9.3 Decisions about the basic purposes of social studies education in any school should be as clearly related to the needs of its immediate community as to those of society at large.
- 9.4 Teachers should participate in active social studies curriculum committees with decision-making as well as advisory responsibilities.
- 9.5 Teachers should participate regularly in activities which foster their professional competence in social studies education: in workshops, or in-service classes, or community affairs, or in reading, studying, and travel.
- 9.6 Teachers and others concerned with social studies education in the schools should have competent consultants available.
- 9.7 Teachers and schools should have and be able to rely upon a district-wide policy statement on academic freedom and professional responsibility.
- 9.8 Social studies education should expect to receive active support from administrators, teachers, boards of education, and the community.
- 9.9 A specific minimal block of time should be allocated for social studies instruction each week.