

Parents, Students and Community Members,

CCSD will introduce a new social studies curriculum during the 2021-22 school year, and we would like to invite you to share your feedback. What we teach our children about our shared history is important and there are many different opinions and beliefs about how this should be done within our community so we want to make sure we hear from our community. Drafts of units for grade 5 and grade 8 are being shared for your comments, and we will use the feedback to help develop the units for other grades. We would like to receive all feedback by August 27. The following is a description of the process to develop the standards and the process to implement them in CCSD schools.

New Social Studies Standards

The South Carolina Department of Education developed [new social studies standards](#) for this coming school year. All public school districts in South Carolina are required to teach to these state standards. Our understanding is that these changes were intended to ensure students are exposed to more primary and secondary sources from historic events; and that historical events were shown from multiple perspectives.

The South Carolina Department of Education reviews textbooks for adoption - and the Charleston County School District (CCSD) adopted the following state-approved textbooks: *National Geographic World Cultures and Geography* for 7th grade; *Modern World History* for high school; and *World History and Geography: Modern Times* for high school. These textbooks were also approved by the CCSD Board of Trustees. However, no textbook addresses all of the standards thoroughly so additional curricular resources are needed. This summer, over 30 of some of our best social studies teachers put together draft curriculum units for each grade level. Our Curriculum & Instruction Team provided a fifth grade unit template to guide teachers' work.

District Priorities

In creating new curricular materials to align to the state standards, the Charleston County School District is prioritizing the following:

- All units of study are fair and balanced in perspectives.
- Students should learn about their own history and culture as well as others' history and culture.
- We don't teach students what to think about a particular historical event, but rather to understand what happened in the event and to think for themselves about the complicated issues involved in what it meant and why it matters.
- We want to ensure complicated issues are raised when age appropriate and in a developmentally appropriate way.
- We will comply with related South Carolina legislation and policy. Specifically, Proviso 1.105 prohibits districts and schools from providing instruction in, teaching, instructing, or training any administrator, teacher, staff member, or employee to adopt or believe, or to approve for use, make use of, or carry out standards, curricula, lesson plans, textbooks, instructional materials or instructional practices that serve to inculcate any of the following concepts: (1) one race or sex is inherently superior to another race or sex; (2) an individual, by virtue of his race or sex, is inherently racist, sexist, or oppressive, whether consciously or unconsciously; (3) an individual should be discriminated against or receive adverse treatment solely or partly because of his race or sex; (4) an individual's moral standing or worth is necessarily determined by his race or sex; (5) an individual, by virtue of his race or sex, bears responsibility for actions committed in the past by other members of the same race or sex; (6) an individual should feel discomfort, guilt, anguish or any other form of psychological distress on account of his race or sex; (7) meritocracy or traits such as a hard work ethic are racist or sexist, or were created by members of a particular race to oppress members of another race; and (8) fault, blame or bias should be assigned to a race or sex, or to members of a race or sex, because of their race or sex. Districts are not prohibited from providing

professional development for teachers related to issues of addressing unconscious bias within the context of teaching certain literary or historical concepts or issues related to the impacts of historical or past discriminatory policies.

- These social studies standards do not include critical race theory.

Social Studies advisory group

We consulted with the SC State Department of Education, local historians, principals and teachers to get recommendations for a group of history experts, teachers, community leaders, parents and students who reflect our diverse community to advise us on improving the curriculum. Specifically, we are asking for their help in the following:

- 1) Give the district feedback on the extent to which these draft units are well-aligned to the state standards;
- 2) Provide suggestions on ways in which we can improve the curriculum particularly by suggesting additional resources, field trips locally, or organizations that might help enhance student learning; and
- 3) Advise us on how to incorporate public feedback on the new curriculum.

Process for incorporating feedback

- After the public comment period, we will ask each member of the advisory group to individually review the public comments and the units to share their feedback.
- We will then compile the feedback and convene the advisory group to discuss it and make changes to improve the material. In general, the district will aim to incorporate feedback supported by the majority of the advisory group.
- We also plan to solicit feedback from principals and teachers to revise the curriculum over this year.
- We plan to reconvene the advisory committee at least twice this year to review feedback from teachers, principals; review additional grade levels; offer additional public comment periods; and continue to improve the curriculum.

Thank you for taking the time to review these materials and offer feedback. We want to ensure we are teaching a rigorous, balanced social studies curriculum.