



The Vision for Ambitious Social Studies Teaching

To best prepare our students for success, Eastpointe Community Schools is committed to a vision of social studies that places *students* at the center of classroom environments based on empathy, respect, and in control of learning experiences based on the passionate pursuit of what it means to be a human, and what it means to be humane. A focused classroom incorporates the cultural, social and intellectual funds of its students to prepare them for success in college and career, as well as informed, engaged participation in civic life.

Inquiry

Inquiry is at the heart of social studies teaching and learning. The C3 framework organizes the teaching and learning of social studies into an “arc of inquiry” while recognizing the four major disciplines of social studies: civics, economics, geography, and history. By focusing on inquiry, the framework emphasizes the disciplinary concepts and practices that support students as they develop the capacity to know, analyze, explain, and argue about interdisciplinary challenges in our social world.

Active Learning

Inquiry instruction is based on both teachers and students asking compelling questions. Student investigation of subject matter is the most critical component of inquiry and teachers must carefully guide students through the inquiry process, keeping in mind that true inquiry allows students to construct inquiry on their own. To successfully engage in inquiry, students and teachers must emphasize both skills and content as working together and not as separate entities. Inquiry should not be the only method of instruction that a teacher uses in a social studies classroom, but it should be used on a consistent and regular basis.

Learning Experiences Based on the C3 Framework

Our vision of passionate teaching and learning in social studies is based on the *College, Career and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards (NCSS, 2013)* created by social studies specialists from all over the country. There are four dimensions of inquiry in the C3 framework:

Develops Questions and Plans Inquiries:

Questioning is key to student learning. Teachers will provide guidance and support in crafting compelling and supporting questions. Students will develop questions as they investigate controversial issues, societal and economic trends, geopolitical conflicts, and historical events.

- ◆ Interdisciplinary inquiry includes the teaching of and inquiry into sophisticated concepts, ideas, and in-depth investigation of fewer rather than more topics, with deep processing and detailed study of each topic.
- ◆ Social studies teachers will guide students to consider the human experience of topics and address controversial issues, providing an arena for reflective development of concern for the common good.
- ◆ Social studies teachers will focus on sustained examination of a few important topics rather than superficial coverage of many. The focus should be on teaching these ideas for deep understanding and application to real life.
- ◆ Social Studies students will prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and experiences and expressing their own ideas clearly and persuasively through a variety of mediums.

Applies Interdisciplinary Concepts and Tools:

Rich social studies teaching offers students opportunities to investigate questions thoroughly through disciplinary and multi-disciplinary means, so that they can begin constructing answers to their questions.

- ◆ Social studies subject matter will be integrated and taught across other disciplines to assist student form culturally relevant, content related connections.
- ◆ Social studies instruction will interconnect knowledge, skills, beliefs, values, and attitudes to sustain effective social/political action among students.
- ◆ Social studies teachers will emphasize student learning of important institutions in our society and the principles that these institutions are intended to reflect in an effort to guide students to master a body of knowledge about law, politics, and government to come to an understanding of the diverse arguments about such institutions.
- ◆ Social studies teachers will model how to develop an understanding and evaluation of change over time to make appropriate use of historical evidence in answering questions and developing arguments about the past.
- ◆ Social studies teachers will model effective reading strategies for informational text to support students, to help them make sense of complex language, of discipline specific text structures, to analyze primary sources and to be a skilled censor of modern media.

Evaluates Sources and Uses Evidence:

Helping students develop a capacity for gathering and evaluating sources and then using evidence in disciplinary ways to work toward conclusions about the issues, trends, and events by collecting evidence and evaluating its usefulness in developing causal explanations.

- ◆ Social studies teachers will assist students in developing sophisticated claims and counterclaims that draw on evidence from multiple sources.
- ◆ Social studies students will demonstrate prudent use of 21st Century media and technology skills to find information and to express their responses to compelling and supporting questions through well-reasoned explanations and evidence-based arguments to facilitate understanding for the need to give reasons for their ideas.

Communicates Conclusions and Takes Informed Action:

Active and responsible citizens identify and analyze public problems; communicate their ideas; deliberate with other people about how to define and address issues; take constructive, collaborative action; reflect on their actions; create and sustain groups; and influence institutions both large and small.

- ◆ Social studies teachers will move from providing considerable guidance by modeling, explaining, or supplying information that builds student knowledge, to a less directive role that encourages students to become more independent and self-regulated learners. Teachers will emphasize authentic activities that call for real-life applications using the skills and content of the field.
- ◆ Social studies students will use disciplinary knowledge, skills, and perspectives to solve problems involved in public issues; deliberate with other people about how to define and address issues; take constructive, independent and collaborative action; reflect on their actions; and create and sustain groups while engaging in purposeful, informed and reflective experiences.
- ◆ Social studies students will develop well-reasoned positions consistent with basic democratic social and political views.
- ◆ Social studies students will use a variety of writing activities to demonstrate understanding of content knowledge and to support and or defend arguments using evidence.

Teacher Actions:

- ◆ Teacher provides skillful, instructional scaffolding to ensure students are able to become independent and self-regulated learners.
- ◆ Teacher ensures that students become aware of the values, complexities, and dilemmas involved in an issue.

- ◆ Teacher ensures that instruction focuses on sustained examination of a few important topics rather than superficial coverage of many.
- ◆ Teacher promotes subject specific "talk" that facilitates the construction of meaning and develops important social understanding.
- ◆ Teacher models and asks students to engage in reflective thinking and decision-making as events unfold during instruction.
- ◆ Teacher guides students to consider the ethical dimensions of topics and address controversial issues, providing an arena for reflective development of concern for the common good and application of social values.
- ◆ Teacher encourages recognition of opposing points of view, respect for well-supported positions, sensitivity to cultural similarities and differences, and a commitment to social responsibility.
- ◆ Teacher models seriousness of purpose and a thoughtful approach to inquiry, and uses instructional strategies designed to elicit and support similar qualities from students.
- ◆ Teacher expects students to provide well-reasoned arguments rather than opinions voiced without adequate thought or commitment.

Student Actions:

- ◆ Students analyze, comment on, compare, and share their thinking about social studies through learning-focused "talk" that facilitates the construction of meaning and develop important social understanding.
- ◆ Students think critically and make value-based decisions about social issues.
- ◆ Students show awareness and respect for opposing points of view and respect others positions.
- ◆ Students provide well-reasoned arguments orally and in writing.
- ◆ Students engage in reflective thinking and decision-making.
- ◆ Students develop new understanding through a process of active construction of knowledge.
- ◆ Students engage in meaningful learning activities that focus on the most important ideas embedded in what they are learning.
- ◆ Students monitor their own learning through self-reflection and teacher feedback.