

# Political Institute

**August**

# 2015

**Developed Spring 2012**

---

The Political Institute curriculum is an elective course that was developed by the Fair Lawn Social Studies Department and is aligned to the Grades 11-12 Common Core State Standards Initiative and the NJ Core Curriculum Content Standards in Social Studies.

**Social Studies  
Elective**

# Fair Lawn

# Public Schools

**Fair Lawn, NJ**

# Fair Lawn School District

## **Table of Contents**

Committee Credits

Course Synopsis

Philosophy & Rationale

Scope & Sequence

Unit Descriptions

Course Materials

Assessments

Interdisciplinary Connections

21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills Connections

Alignment to Technology Standards

Appendix I

## **Committee Credits**

Curriculum Authors: Julianne Fuoco  
and Jeanine Hayek  
Suzanne Gons, Supervisor

## Political Institute

### I. Course Synopsis

Political Institute has been a part of the Social Studies curriculum at Fair Lawn High School since September, 1973. It was created to replace a traditional civics course by offering something more creative and modern.

The course is designed to teach students about U.S. government, politics, parties, and procedures by having them directly participate in the process. This hands-on approach has proven to be both popular and effective over time.

The course is divided into three major areas of study which, in turn, are segmented into smaller, related units. The first marking period deals with elections and political parties and includes the historical development of each as well as the present day function and make-up of each. The second and third marking periods deal with the organization and function of government on all four levels: national, state, country and local. Once again, historical antecedents are studied as well as how each level evolved into the present systems. The last marking period is devoted to the study of Constitutional rights, contrasting them with those awarded to minors, and the judicial process that constantly examines and interprets them.

The course is not chronological in an historical sense and has always been too topical to require a text. When needed, there is a set of texts for historical background that is kept on reserve in the classroom. Most of the work is accomplished by reading periodical articles, monographs, news reports, interviews, and the like.

During the year, the students are given charts to complete from their readings and with some outside research. These charts have been specifically designed for the course and, once completed, become the students' study guide for the year. They also provide the students with readily accessible summaries to refer to for class discussions, tests, and the final exam. In addition, the charts serve as practice for learning and perfecting researching, paraphrasing and documentation skill that the students need to know. As the course progresses, the charts become more difficult and require more outside research for supporting material. In effect, the students create their own text.

Since 1997, Political Institute has been a restructured course. This allows students the option to elect the course for honors or on-level credit. While the subject matter, tests, and basic assignments are the same for all students, those who opt for honors credit contract to do more complicated, in-depth projects. All these activities and assessments are described in the special projects section.

**Course Description:**

The Political Institute course is designed to afford students a hands-on experience in U.S. political affairs. The objective is to teach students about U.S. politics and government in both the past and present by means of direct participation and study.

The curriculum includes three major units, each designed to educate and illustrate the political systems, structures and practices of the United States government. Within each unit activities have been created to illustrate and reinforce the lessons and to allow students to participate in the various workings of the government. Projects include in-school voter registration drives; work on an election campaign; compiling information on candidates and issues for a special edition of the school newspaper with articles, graphics, and editing done by the students; writing a debating original pieces of legislation; among others.

This experience is enhanced allowing the students to take part in the annual Washington Work Experience during which time the students work with and interview federal legislators and government officials.

**Educational Objectives:**

- Students will learn the essentials of the processes of government on the federal, state, county and local levels.
- Students will become familiar with the electoral processes for all officials on all levels.
- Students will be able to appreciate the similarities and differences of government within the various states, between the states, and between the federal government and the various states.
- In the process of learning about their contemporary governments and institutions, they will gain insight into the historical precedents and causes that shaped them.
- Students will gain an appreciation of the concomitants of civil liberties and their historical development.
- Students will learn the importance of participating in government on all levels.
- Students will learn about the various career possibilities and options associated with government

**Proficiency Skills - CP Credit:**

- Students will develop an understanding of the political processes by direct participation in governmental and political activities. These activities will include but are not limited to conducting a voter registration drive, compiling information for and the publishing of the election information edition of the school newspaper regarding candidates and issues, analyzing election results, and writing and debating original pieces of legislation.
- Recognize and understand the processes involved in elections, the various electoral

- systems, voting and campaign laws and procedures, the workings and interaction of the four levels of government, the concepts and practices of checks and balances and separation of power, and constitutional rights and responsibilities.
- Understand the historical development of political parties and factions up to and including the present day.
- Develop the ability to create study guides regarding elections, parties, government and constitutional rights using a variety of research and documentation skills.

***Proficiency Skills - Honors Credit:***

NOTE: Basically, the proficiencies will be the same except for the following two additions:

- Item one must also include:
  - working on and analyzing a political campaign
  - tracing the progress of a bill through the federal legislative process
- Writing a research position paper analyzing a current controversial issue.

## **II. Philosophy & Rationale**

### **Fair Lawn District Mission**

Recognizing that the "Leaders of Tomorrow Attend Fair Lawn Schools Today," it is the mission of Fair Lawn High School to afford each student the opportunity to learn, to achieve success and to become a confident and productive member of a global and technological society prepared to face the challenges of the 21st century. We believe that a major purpose of an education is to cultivate in each student a sense of wonder in the life-long process of learning. We believe that our school provides a learning environment that is student-centered, and supports the interaction of students, parents, professional staff, and the community. We believe that teachers must be empowered to develop and deliver high quality instruction, nurture students' special talents and abilities, and respond to the needs of each individual. We believe that the optimal environment is one in which students feel free to challenge themselves and have opportunities to take initiative, to articulate clearly and imaginatively, to be creative, and to learn from their inquiry and experience.

We believe that an education which provides for the intellectual, aesthetic, physical, cultural, technological and social development of young people leads to their becoming productive and humane citizens who demonstrate self-discipline, responsibility and respect for others. We believe that education provides students with opportunities to access knowledge, ensuring competence and confidence in responding to the challenges of the future.

### **Department of Social Studies Statement of Philosophy**

Social Studies is the integrated study of history, geography, economics, government and civics. More importantly it is the study of humanity, of people and events that individually and collectively have

affected the world. A strong and effective Social Studies program helps students make sense of the world in which they live, it allows them to make connections between major ideas and their own lives, and it helps them see themselves as members of the world community. It offers students the knowledge and skills necessary to become active and informed participants on a local, national and global level. Social Studies must also help students understand, respect and appreciate the commonalities and differences that give people character and identity. The complexities of history can only be fully understood within an appreciation and analysis of diversity, multiple perspectives, interconnectedness, interdependence, context and enduring themes.

### **Ten Thematic Strands**

**I Culture** – A people’s way of life, language, customs, arts, belief systems, traditions, and how they evolve over time.

**II Time, Continuity, and Change** – The importance of understanding the past and key historical concepts, analytically and from various perspectives.

**III People, Places, and Environments** – The complex relationship between human beings and the environments within which they live and work.

**IV Individual Development and Identity** – The exploration of human behaviors as they relate to the development of personal identities and the various factors that impact identity formation.

**V Individuals, Groups, and Institutions** – The impact of educational, religious, social, and political groups and institutions and the integral roles they play in people’s lives.

**VI Power, Authority, and Governance** – The complex purposes and features of individuals and groups with respect to issues of power and government.

**VII Production, Distribution, and Consumption** – The role of resources, their production and use, technology, and trade on economic systems.

**VIII Science, Technology, and Society** – The significance of scientific discovery and technological change on people, the environment, and other systems.

**IX Global Connections** – The critical importance of knowledge and awareness of politics, economics, geography, and culture on a global scale.

**X Civic Ideals and Practices** – The understanding that civic ideals and participatory citizenship are central to democracy.

*For a complete explanation of the Ten Thematic Strands, go to [www.socialstudies.org/standards/strand](http://www.socialstudies.org/standards/strand)*

### **The Common Core Standards**

The Common Core Standards reflect a more recent adoption by the State of New Jersey in accordance with forty-six states across the country. These standards are an outgrowth of the many states that have been working for decades to produce strong and measurable standards to educate the students in a variety of areas. Focusing on English Language Arts and Mathematics as most applicable to all learners, these Standards were adopted by New Jersey State Board of Education in June of 2010.

The Standards set requirements not only for English language arts (ELA) but also for literacy in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects. Just as students must learn to read, write, speak, listen, and use language effectively in a variety of content areas, so too must the Standards specify the literacy skills and understandings required for college and career readiness in multiple disciplines. Literacy standards for grade 6 and above are predicated on teachers of ELA, history/social studies, science, and technical subjects using their content area expertise to help students meet the particular challenges of reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language in their respective fields. It is important to note that the literacy standards in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects are not meant to replace content standards in those areas but rather to supplement them. States may incorporate these standards into their standards for those subjects or adopt them as content area literacy standards.

The English language arts (ELA) standards integrated into history/social studies classes for grades 11 and 12 includes a strand of standards relating to Key Ideas and Details. It includes RH.11-12.1, RH.11-12.2 and RH.11-12.3. The strand of standards relating to Craft and Structure includes RH.11-12.4, RH.11-12.5 and RH.11-12.6. The strand of standards relating to Integration of Knowledge and Ideas includes RH.11-12.7, RH.11-12.8 and RH.11-12.9. The category Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity contains the standard RH.11-12.10.

Much more detailed information can be found on the web site of the ***Common Core State Standards Initiative – Preparing America’s Students for College and Career*** at <http://www.corestandards.org/in-the-states>.

### **Curricula Writing**

The administrators and teachers of the Fair Lawn Public Schools are committed to writing, researching, and producing curricula in all subject areas that are aligned with both the 2009 State of New Jersey Core Curriculum Standards and the Common Core State Standards. Curriculum is designed to be a ***living document*** – added to, edited, and enhanced at any time. Standing committees of teachers and administrators meet on a routine basis to monitor the effectiveness of our curriculum. The process used

by the educators of the Fair Lawn Schools is rigorous and reflective in examining all facets of the foundational documents, upon which our curricula is based, to ensure for this alignment.

In all curriculum writing, particular emphasis is given to employing the most current, research based instructional and assessment strategies available at the time. These strategies are continually updated and refined as new knowledge and pedagogy becomes widely accepted and proven successful in the field of education.

### **21st Century Competencies and Standards**

There is ample evidence all around us of the many changes the 21st century has brought to our lives. The Fair Lawn Public Schools believe that to prepare our students for the world of tomorrow, we must enhance today's learning environments. The outcomes we want for our students are not new to the 21st century. Instead, they express knowledge and skills that are essential for life in the 21st century. Reflecting time-honored skills, taught via proved learning methods, and supported by modern learning tools, processes, and environments, the Fair Lawns Public Schools embraces the teaching of 21st Century Skills and unite these elements into a coherent set of educational objectives to ensure that all students are prepared for success.

There are four 21st-Century Life and Careers standards. Standards 9.1, 9.2, and 9.3 describe life and career skills that are integrated throughout the K-12 curriculum, while Standard 9.4 describes specialized skills that are taught in grades 9-12 as part of career and technical education programs. An overview of the four standards follows. Click on the link for more information

<http://www.state.nj.us/education/cccs/standards/9>

### **New Jersey State Department of Education NJ Educational Mandates**

The core mission of the New Jersey Commission on Holocaust Education is to promote Holocaust education in the State of New Jersey. On a continual basis, the Commission shall survey the status of Holocaust Education; design, encourage and promote the implementation of Holocaust and genocide education and awareness; provide programs in New Jersey; and coordinate designated events that will provide appropriate memorialization of the Holocaust on a regular basis throughout the state.

[http://www.state.nj.us/njded/holocaust/about us/mandate.html](http://www.state.nj.us/njded/holocaust/about_us/mandate.html)

The Amistad Bill (A1301), calls on "New Jersey schools to incorporate African-American history into their Social Studies curriculum." Passed by the New Jersey legislature in 2002, "The Amistad Bill" created the Amistad Commission, a 22- member body charged with ensuring that the rich heritage and lessons of black America are fully represented and taught throughout the state's classrooms.

<http://www.theamistadcommission.com/>

### III. Scope & Sequence

- I. General Introduction of Political and Government Terms** **5 weeks**
  - A. Political Spectrum and all terms
  - B. Government and its organization and functions
  - C. Ideas of republicanism and federalism
  
- II. Origins and Operations of the U.S. Government** **15 weeks**
  - A. The Federal Government
  - B. State Government
  - C. County Government
  - D. Fair Lawn Municipal Government
  - E. Analysis of government at all four levels
  
- III. Elections and the Electoral Process** **15 weeks**
  - A. Types of Elections
  - B. Voter Registration
  - C. Candidates and Campaigns
  - E. Political Parties
  - F. Discussion of the General Election results

### IV. Unit Descriptions

#### Unit 1: General Introduction of Political and Government Terms

- A. Political Spectrum and all terms
  
- B. Government and its organization and functions
  
- C. Ideas of republicanism and federalism

**Benchmark Assessments & Suggested Activities:** See Roman Numeral VI.

#### **Standards:**

***NJCCCS in Social Studies:*** 6.3.12.A.1-2; 6.3.12.B.1; 6.3.12.C.1; 6.3.12.D.1; 6.1.12.A.2.a-f; 6.1.12.B.2.a; 6.1.12.D.2.b; 6.1.12.A.3.g; 6.1.12.A.4.b; 6.1.12.A.4.d; 6.1.12.A.5.a; 6.1.12.A.5.c; 6.1.12.A.13.a; 6.1.12.A.13.b; 6.1.12.A.14.a-h; 6.1.12.C.14.a-d; 6.1.12.D.14.a-f

***Common Core standards for Literacy in Social Studies:*** See *Philosophy and Rationale*

**Modifications: See Appendix I**

## **Unit II. Origins and Operations of the U.S. Government**

- A. The Federal Government
  - 1. Precedents and History
    - a. English and Colonial History
    - b. Articles of Confederation
    - c. Need for Federalism
    - d. The Constitutional Convention
  - 2. Article I - The Congress
    - a. Organization and structure
    - b. Powers, duties and functions
    - c. Representatives and leadership positions
    - d. Selection and membership
    - e. Special operating procedures
  - 3. Article II - The Executive
    - a. Organization and structure
    - b. Powers, duties and functions
    - c. Executive and Cabinet positions
    - d. Selection and membership
    - e. Special operating procedures
  - 4. Article III - The Judiciary
    - a. Organization and structure
    - b. Powers, duties, functions
    - c. Justices
    - d. Selection and membership
    - e. Special operating procedures
    - f. Treason
  - 5. Checks and Balances
    - a. Between branches
    - b. Internal checks
  - 6. Article IV - The states and their relationship and role within the federal system.
  - 7. Article V - Amendment procedures

8. Article VI - General principles
  9. Article VI – Ratification
- B. State Government
1. Overview of historical precedents and development of New Jersey state government.
  2. Legislative, Executive and Judicial branches - Each of these will be discussed in terms of similarities and differences with the federal government and why such exists
  3. Relationship to the county and local governments
- C. County Government
1. Overview of historical precedents and development of Bergen County government and restructuring
  2. Board of Freeholders
  3. County Executive
  4. County Court(s)
  5. Relationship to local government
- D. Fair Lawn Municipal Government
1. Types and precedents of and for local government
  2. Mayor and Council
    - a. Elections and qualifications
    - b. Powers, duties and responsibilities
  3. Borough Manager
    - a. Selection
    - b. Powers, duties and responsibilities
  4. Municipal Court
  5. School Board
    - a. Elections and qualifications
    - b. Powers, duties and responsibilities
- E. Analysis of government at all four levels

**Benchmark Assessments & Suggested Activities:** See Roman Numeral VI.

**Standards:**

***NJCCCS in Social Studies:*** 6.3.12.A.1-2; 6.3.12.B.1; 6.3.12.C.1; 6.3.12.D.1; 6.1.12.A.2.a-f; 6.1.12.B.2.a; 6.1.12.D.2.b; 6.1.12.A.3.g; 6.1.12.A.4.b; 6.1.12.A.4.d; 6.1.12.A.5.a; 6.1.12.A.5.c; 6.1.12.A.13.a; 6.1.12.A.13.b; 6.1.12.A.14.a-h; 6.1.12.C.14.a-d; 6.1.12.D.14.a-f

***Common Core standards for Literacy in Social Studies:*** See *Philosophy and Rationale*

**Modifications: See Appendix I**

**Unit III. Elections and the Electoral Process**

- A. Types of Elections
  - 1. Primary
  - 2. General
  - 3. Methods and reasons
    - a. direct
    - b. indirect
  
- B. Voter Registration
  - 1. Reasons
  - 2. Practice
  
- C. Candidates and Campaigns
  - 1. Campaigns for nomination
  - 2. Campaigns for election
  - 3. Specific election terminology
    - a. polling
    - b. front-runner
    - c. favorite son
    - d. dark horse
    - e. bandwagon
    - f. charisma
    - g. methodology
  - 4. Historical development of creation and practice of Electoral College
  - 5. Modern Presidential Election System
  - 6. Role of the media
  - 7. Election laws and enforcement

8. Special Activities
  - a. Voter Registration Drives
  - b. Campaign Work
  
- E. Political Parties
  1. Terms and definitions
  2. Functions
  3. History from 1789 - 1820.
  4. Overview from 1820 to present
  5. Present day political parties
    - a. Structure and organization
    - b. Roles and functions
    - c. Constituency and geography
  
- F. Discussion of the General Election results

**Benchmark Assessments & Suggested Activities:** See Roman Numeral VI.

**Standards:**

***NJCCCS in Social Studies:*** 6.3.12.A.1-2; 6.3.12.B.1; 6.3.12.C.1; 6.3.12.D.1; 6.1.12.A.2.a-f; 6.1.12.B.2.a; 6.1.12.D.2.b; 6.1.12.A.3.g; 6.1.12.A.4.b; 6.1.12.A.4.d; 6.1.12.A.5.a; 6.1.12.A.5.c; 6.1.12.A.13.a; 6.1.12.A.13.b; 6.1.12.A.14.a-h; 6.1.12.C.14.a-d; 6.1.12.D.14.a-f

***Common Core standards for Literacy in Social Studies:*** See *Philosophy and Rationale*

**Modifications: See Appendix I**

## **V. Course Materials**

Primary text - *American Political Behavior*, revised edition, Mehlinger, Patrick, Ginn and Company Publishers, Lexington, 1977.

Videotapes, monographs, news articles, electoral maps, etc. are reproduced and used as needed.

## **VI. Assessments**

An ongoing aspect of this program will be periodic discussions of current events and how the incidents described effect our understanding of the world.

Within each unit of instruction opportunities will be presented for the students to explore and discuss personal insights developed through empirical problem solving, inferential comprehension interpreting data, reading for detail, writing development, and causality.

Where appropriate and germane to the topic, the concepts of gender equity, appreciation of cultural diversity, and the socially/culturally debilitating effects of discrimination and prejudice will be explored.

In addition, the following methods will be employed in the delivery of this program:

- A. Lectures - teacher centered - presentation of foundations and basic safety
- B. Discussions - ideas exchanged - problem solving
- C. Small group discussions - "buzz" groups - group dynamics
- D. Debates - formal procedures on major topics
- E. Student short term research projects - selected unit topics and current issues
- F. Field trips and field work - resulting in formal reports of observations
- G. Resource speakers - specific areas requiring specific expertise
- H. Library Research Project - culminating in class presentations
- I. Multi-media presentations

### **Formative Assessments**

Do Nows

Class Discussions

Exit Slips

Oral Presentations

Summary/Responses

Reading comprehension questions- verbal and written

### **Summative Assessments**

Quizzes

Tests

Research

Presentations

## VII. Interdisciplinary Connections and Alignment to Technology standards

### Interdisciplinary Connections

Social studies encompasses a broad multidisciplinary field within its own academic area, including the teaching of anthropology, civics, economics, geography, history, political science, psychology and sociology. The NJCCCS are designed to integrate four core social studies disciplines: civics, economics, geography, and history. These interdisciplinary connections, as a result, are present within the current standards. Interdisciplinary connections in this document expand outside of the distinct field of social studies into: moral/social education; science, mathematics, and technology; and literacy/language arts.

**Moral/social education:** What are universal ideas and problems shared across humanity? What does it mean to be a citizen? What are the responsibilities and opportunities for active citizenship? What ideals and actions will enhance my personal development and the development of my various communities?

- Character education (Responsive Classroom, Teaching Tolerance, Facing History and Ourselves)
- Global citizenship education - Civics Kids, Teaching Civics, Character.org, Teaching Tomorrow's Citizens, Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools, World Savvy, and Facing History
- Social participation projects - 150 Service Learning Projects, Sci/SS Service Connections.

**Science, mathematics, and technology:** How are we all connected? How have science and technology changed how we live across time? How can study of data inform my understanding of social, political, and historical phenomena?

- Sustainability and environmental education (NGSS Science, Technology, and Society Appendix; Facing the Future; Project Wild; UNESCO)
- Health and medical education

- Analysis of graphic and statistical data (historical, social, political) - Making Connections through Mapping, and Statistics and Social Sciences

**Literacy (narrative, information, argument, and media):** How do certain texts inform our understanding of social studies and history? How can social studies be a venue to express and communicate our ideas?

- Reading and writing content units of study (ELA)
- Historical fiction - Elem. Thematic Reading Materials, Carter Woodson Book Award Winners, Notable Social Studies Texts,
- Media and information literacy - The DBQ Project, PBS Teaching Media Literacy, National Associations for Media Literacy Education,
- Research writing - Teachers College Reading and Writing Project Reading/Writing Units of Study,
- Argument - Teaching Argumentative Writing

### 21<sup>st</sup> Century Themes & Skills

The following content statements can be integrated into any of the adopted Social Studies strands (A. Civics, Government and Human Rights, B. Geography, People and the Environment, C. Economics, Invention, and Technology, D. History, Culture and Perspectives.)

- CRP1. Act as a responsible and contributing citizen and employee.
- CRP2. Apply appropriate academic and technical skills.
- CRP3. Attend to personal health and financial well-being.
- CRP4. Communicate clearly and effectively and with reason.
- CRP5. Consider the environmental, social and economic impacts of decisions.
- CRP6. Demonstrate creativity and innovation.
- CRP7. Employ valid and reliable research strategies.
- CRP8. Utilize critical thinking to make sense of problems and persevere in solving them
- CRP9. Model integrity, ethical leadership and effective management.
- CRP10. Plan education and career paths aligned to personal goals.

- CRP11. Use technology to enhance productivity.
- CRP12. Work productively in teams while using cultural global competence

### Social Studies and Technology K-12 Indicators

As teaching, learning and curriculum across New Jersey evolves to better meet student needs, teachers when addressing social studies topics are expected to integrate the adopted 8.1 Educational Technology, 8.2 Technology Education, Engineering, Design, and Computational Thinking - Programming, and 21st Century Skills into their classroom practice. To that end, teachers will be expected to apply the following anchor standards into their classroom practice.

#### 8.1 Educational Technology

- Understand and use technology systems.
- Select and use applications effectively and productively.
- Apply existing knowledge to generate new ideas, products, or processes
- Create original works as a means of personal or group expression.
- Interact, collaborate, and publish with peers, experts, or others by employing a variety of digital environments and media.
- Communicate information and ideas to multiple audiences using a variety of media and formats.
- Develop cultural understanding and global awareness by engaging with learners of other cultures.
- Contribute to project teams to produce original works or solve problems.
- Advocate and practice safe, legal, and responsible use of information and technology.
- Demonstrate personal responsibility for lifelong learning.
- Exhibit leadership for digital citizenship.
- Plan strategies to guide inquiry.

**Please see district chart for more detailed connections**

## Appendix I

**Curriculum Differentiation** is a process teachers use to increase achievement by improving the match between the learner's unique characteristics: prior knowledge, cognitive level, learning style, motivation, strength or interest and various curriculum components: Nature of the objective, teaching activities, learning activities, resources and products. This broad notion applies to learners from a diverse range of abilities, including: Gifted and Talented, English Language Learners, Students with Disabilities, and Students at Risk of School Failure.

The social studies is a field of education that provides educators with a wealth of opportunities for differentiation, but also real challenges of meeting the needs of diverse learners. This addendum reveals pathways for social studies differentiation specific to four distinct student populations.

Teachers can differentiate

- *Content: What we teach and how we give students access to the information and ideas that matter*
- *Process: How students come to understand and "own" the knowledge, understanding, and skills essential to a topic*
- *Product: How a student demonstrates what he or she has come to know, understand and be able to do as a result of a segment of study*

According to students'

- *Readiness-The current knowledge, understanding, and skill level a student has related to a particular sequence of learning*
- *Interest-What a student enjoys learning about, thinking about, and doing*
- *Learning Style-A student's preferred mode of learning. It is influenced by learning style, intelligence preference, gender and culture*

## Examples of Modifications and Differentiation

**Gifted and Talented (content, process, product and learning environment)**

N.J.A.C. 6A:8-3.1 Curriculum and instruction

District boards of education shall develop appropriate curricular and instructional modifications used for gifted and talented students indicating content, process, products, and learning environment.

*Sample Differentiation Strategies and Techniques that apply to Social Studies*

Learning Agendas/Contracts

A learning contract is an agreement established between a student and the teacher; it sometimes involves the student's parents. The contract specifies concrete learning and/or behavioral objectives for the student that all parties agree need to be achieved. The contract also specifies:

- the goals of the contract
- the obligations of each party to the contract
- the time frame within which the terms of the learning contract are to be fulfilled
- the basis on which it will be determined that the conditions of the contract were met

Sample Resource

<http://www.educ.ualberta.ca/staff/olenka.bilash/best%20of%20bilash/learning%20contracts.html>

Anchor Activities

Self-directed specified ongoing activities in which students work independently

Sample Resource

[http://www.rec4.com/filestore/REC4\\_AnchorActivityPacket\\_080513.pdf](http://www.rec4.com/filestore/REC4_AnchorActivityPacket_080513.pdf)

Curriculum Compacting

Curriculum Compacting is an instructional technique that is specifically designed to make appropriate curricular adjustments for students in any curricular area and at any grade level. Essentially, the procedure involves (1) defining the goals and outcomes of a particular unit or segment of instruction, (2) determining and documenting which students have already mastered most or all of a specified set of learning outcomes, and (3) providing replacement strategies for material already mastered through the use of instructional options that enable a more challenging and productive use of the student's time.

Sample resource:

<http://www.gifted.uconn.edu/sem/semart08.html>

### RAFT Assignments

RAFT is an acronym for a structured technique used to guide student writing. RAFT assignments are used to demonstrate a student's knowledge using a defined point of view. This strategy requires students to write using an assigned format to an audience other than the teacher.

Sample resource:

[http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/SSWAC\\_225020\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/SSWAC_225020_7.pdf) p. 18

### Flexible grouping

Flexible grouping is a range of grouping students together for delivering instruction. This can be as a whole class, a small group, or with a partner. Flexible grouping creates temporary groups that can last an hour, a week, or even a month.

Sample resource:

<http://www.teachhub.com/flexible-grouping-differentiated-instruction-strategy>

### Jigsaw Activities

Jigsaw is a strategy that emphasizes cooperative learning by providing students an opportunity to actively help each other build comprehension. Use this technique to assign students to reading groups composed of varying skill levels. Each group member is responsible for becoming an "expert" on one section of the assigned material and then "teaching" it to the other members of the team.

Sample resource:

<http://www.adlit.org/strategies/22371/>

### Extension Menus

Students select from a set of possible assignments (3 to 9 choices is common). Students may be required to select more than one choice. Choices offer differentiated objectives. Choices are often grouped by complexity of thinking skill. Activities are independent so students have freedom as well as responsibility. A variety of options enable students to work in the mode that most interests them.

Sample resource:

<http://gilbertps.schoolwires.net/cms/lib3/AZ01001722/Centricity/Domain/809/Teaching%20Gifted%20Book%20of%20Forms.pdf> Sample See p. 13

### **English Language Learners**

The purpose of adapting content lessons for LEP students is to lower the language barrier and make the English used in such lessons as comprehensible as possible. In social studies, LEP students' capacity to learn can be greatly inhibited by the academic vocabulary and, sometimes, lack of cultural experience living in the United States for short periods of time. Every student deserves an education that is culturally relevant and meaningful to his/her present and future lives. Social studies is the prime location for culturally-relevant pedagogy.

Educators provide various grouping strategies such as flexible grouping and/or paired learning being sensitive to the language proficiency level of the LEP students. A student's capacity to become fluent in English will be greatly enhanced by activities in oral and written language that connect one's own life in meaningful and engaging ways.

#### Instructional Supports:

Hands-on materials

-bilingual dictionaries

-visual aids

-teacher made adaptations, outlines, study guides

-varied leveled texts of the same content

Please refer to the following link-

<http://www.state.nj.us/education/modelcurriculum/ela/ELLSupport.pdf>

as mentioned on the NJDOE website.

#### Preparing students for the lesson:

- Building Background Information through brainstorming, semantic webbing, use of visual aids and other comprehension strategies.
- Simplifying Language for Presentation by using speech that is appropriate to students' language proficiency level. Avoid jargon and idiomatic speech.
- Developing Content Area Vocabulary through the use of word walls and labeling classroom objects. Students encounter new academic vocabulary in social studies, particularly when studying the disciplines of history, civics, economics, and geography.

- Concept Development-Students will be learning about rights and duties, voting, public issues, revolutions, the environment, and many new concepts. Enduring understanding requires thorough and contextualized study of these subjects across grades and courses in social studies.
- Giving Directions- Stated clearly and distinctly and delivered in both written and oral forms to ensure that LEP students understand the task. In addition, students should be provided with/or have access to directional words such as: circle, write, draw, cut, underline, etc.

#### Presenting the Lesson:

- Use multiple strategies and varied instructional tools to increase the opportunities for students to develop meaningful connections between content and the language used in instruction.
- Provide students with opportunities to express new knowledge and learning using written, verbal, and non-verbal communication.
- Provide students with opportunities to participate in numerous social studies discussions to increase ELLs competency and confidence in verbal discourse; frame classroom conversations on subjects of interest and cultural relevance.
- Utilize a “reverse chronology” approach to teaching history/social studies to even opportunities for students with and without vast cultural knowledge and make study of the social studies more meaningful.

#### Sample Resources:

CanDo Descriptors -

[https://www.wida.us/standards/CAN\\_DOs/](https://www.wida.us/standards/CAN_DOs/)

Colorin Colorado - <http://www.colorincolorado.org/educators/>

WIDA - <https://www.wida.us/>

**Students with Disabilities (appropriate accommodations, instructional adaptations, and/or modifications as determined by the IEP or 504 team)**

Instructional adaptations for students with disabilities include, but are not limited to, the below approaches. These general suggestions are particularly resonant with students in social studies classroom settings, grades K-12. The primary aim of social studies education is cultivating active and informed citizens. For students with disabilities, self-determination and interdependence are two core principles of citizenship education that applies directly to their educational needs and interests.

Student Motivation – Expanding student motivation to learn content in social studies can occur through: activity choice, appeal to diverse learning styles, choice to work with others or alone, hands-on activities, and multimodal activities.

Instructional Presentations - The primary purpose of these adaptations is to provide special education students with teacher-initiated and teacher-directed interventions that prepare students for learning and engage students in the learning process (Instructional Preparation); structure and organize information to aid comprehension and recall (Instructional Prompts); and foster understanding of new concepts and processes (Instructional Application) e.g. relating to personal experiences, advance organizers, pre-teaching vocabulary and/or strategies; visual demonstrations, illustrations, models.

Instructional Monitoring – Social studies instruction should include opportunities for students to engage in goal setting, work with rubrics and checklists, reward systems, conferences.

Classroom Organization - The primary purpose of these classroom organization adaptations is to maximize student attention, participation, independence, mobility, and comfort; to promote peer and adult communication and interaction; and to provide accessibility to information, materials, and equipment.

Student Response - The primary purpose of student performance responses is to provide students with disabilities a means of demonstrating progress toward the lesson objectives related to the Social Studies Framework activities.

### **Students at Risk of School Failure**

Any of the strategies outlined in the other differentiation/modification categories may be used to address the needs of these students who are at-risk.