



Clayton County Public Schools

Department of Social Studies

MORCEASE BEASLEY
Superintendent of Schools

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2020-2021 School Year

Clayton County Public Schools is not responsible for the views expressed in the documents used in the Social Studies curriculum that are not created by the District, including but not limited to, the documents used in the Document Based Questions (DBQ) program, the images used in the Unit Preview Day materials, and the sources used to respond to the compelling questions used throughout the curriculum. According to the historical thinking skills developed by the National Center for History in the Schools, students must understand multiple perspectives, which means learning about historical events and people that have diverse views. In order to teach students how to “think like a historian,” we must expose our students to historical documents with viewpoints that are different from their own viewpoints and even our own viewpoints. The teacher must provide a historical context that allows students to think critically about multiple perspectives and help them understand the historical setting of each document. The Social Studies Georgia Milestones assesses all of the aforementioned skills, and we must do our due diligence to prepare students to be successful by exposing them to the DBQ process, compelling questions, and high impact strategies for teaching Social Studies.

Civic and civil discourse is one of those high impact practices supported by our district as well as the Georgia Department of Education. When analyzing documents and answering essential questions, students and teachers often engage in conversations about controversial issues. Clayton County Public Schools is not responsible for the personal opinions held by individual teachers. Nevertheless, the Department of Social Studies provides teachers with guidance on how to engage in those conversations while being sensitive to all communities. While discourse and debate are highly encouraged, the Department of Social Studies also encourages teachers to allow students to seek their own truth instead of teachers imparting their own beliefs onto students.

America’s history, as well as the world’s history, is full of controversial events that are difficult to understand and that evoke a variety of emotions among adults and children, especially in today’s climate. Those events will continue to show up in our state standards. Also, our curriculum would not be complete without making connections between the past and the present, discussing current events, and making it relevant for our students now. When doing so, it is our job as social studies educators, among other things, to 1) provide students the opportunity to learn about history and current events using the content standards, 2) afford students the opportunity to learn about multiple perspectives, 3) teach students to critically think about how historical trends manifest into current events and systems, and 4) to support students in the learning process as they determine the beliefs and ideals they will adhere to for their lives.

Clayton County Public Schools acknowledge parents’ rights to not have their children engage in learning about certain topics, and the teachers in collaboration with the principal and parents may provide appropriate standards-based alternative assignments for those students.

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