

Social Studies SFVC Minutes

Meeting Date and Time: Thursday, August 15, 2024, 4:03 PM – 5:30PM

Committee Chair/Co-chairs: Peter Ramsey, Howard Libit

Members: Eve Case, Kishanna Brown, Matthew Wilson, Miriam Spalding, Jennifer McDonald, Tracy Oliver-Gary, Claire Blankenfeld, Raleigh Nelson, Caroline Weiss-Stiles, Jon Marketto

Today's Attendees: Peter Ramsey, Howard Libit, Eve Case, Kishanna Brown, Matthew Wilson, Miriam Spalding, Jennifer McDonald, Tracy Oliver-Gary, Claire Blankenfeld, Raleigh Nelson, Caroline Weiss-Stiles, Jon Marketto, Monet Scruggs, Josh Otarola

Next Meeting (Day and Time): Thursday, September 26, 2024, 4:00 PM – 5:30 pm

Meeting Notes:

- Call to Order
 - The meeting was called to order at 4:03 PM by Peter Ramsey. The agenda was reviewed, and no amendments were made.
- Announcements and Updates
 - For the September 26th session, Peter announces that the Asian American Pacific Islander work group and the Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Washington (JCRC) will join to discuss their respective issues. There may be additional guests, but this is subject to change.
- Approval of Previous Minutes
 - The minutes from the July 25th meeting were approved. Peter Ramsey noted that the minutes had been circulated in advance and no corrections were submitted.
- Roll Call and Quorum Confirmation
 - All members were present and a quorum was confirmed
- Approval of Agenda
 - Agenda approved without objection
- Discussion Items: SWOT Analysis of Frameworks Across Multiple Grade Levels

- PreK – 2nd Grade
 - The discussion centered on how well these frameworks introduce foundational civic knowledge and promote inclusivity. While strengths include a strong emphasis on basic civic principles and social responsibility, weaknesses were identified in the explicit integration of focus themes. Possible opportunities were noted in enhancing these frameworks with more direct references, with a potential challenge being the varying levels of teacher preparedness to address sensitive topics at an early age. The grade level team felt that following the guidance of national organizations such as the American Holocaust Museum, the inclusion of explicit content within the lower elementary levels should be avoided. Eve Case added that the Frameworks need a numbering system for standards, to help gauge true alignment.
- 3rd-5th Grade:
 - Raleigh Nelson noted that the third-grade Framework effectively supports educational objectives and aligns with state standards, particularly in teaching basic social studies skills. However, she identified a lack of representation of cultural aspects in geography standards. Raleigh also highlighted that while Unit 1 was strong in civic education, Unit 2 had issues with cultural representation in geography.
 - Eve Case followed, building on Raleigh's points, she observed that the Frameworks for grade three and four emphasized local history. Eve suggested adding resources and activities to enhance inclusivity and diversity and proposed including more perspectives in historical comparisons, such as immigrants and early Jewish colonists.
 - Kishanna Brown then discussed the fifth-grade Frameworks. She noted that grade five often mirrors content from grade nine U.S. history, covering several core standards but also lacking a clear numbering system, which complicates alignment. Kishanna pointed out that the Frameworks need better organization and explicit inclusion of diverse groups and issues.
- 6th-8th Grade:
 - Tracy Oliver-Gary led the conversation, beginning with a review of the Frameworks for grades six and seven. She emphasized that the vast breadth and complexity of content in these Frameworks make it challenging.
 - Tracy highlighted the integration of geography and history, and that Frameworks could be bolstered by an alignment with current world history content, especially in terms of Democratic revolutions. She noted that the Framework's geography focus might be challenging for teachers, as it mixes historical content that doesn't align with the expected periods for teaching.
 - Carrie Weiss added to the discussion, pointing out that the Framework's coverage of some topics may lack materials for sixth and seventh graders.

- Howard Libit proposed an improvement for teaching authoritarian regimes by extending the period covered to include significant historical examples like Hitler's Germany and Stalin's Russia. He also noted the need for a shift in public understanding, as the new Frameworks represent a departure from traditional, chronological teaching methods.
- **Closing Discussion**
 - Peter Ramsey from MSDE led the concluding part of the meeting with a focus on the next steps for the committee. He agreed with previous discussions about the importance of aligning indicators and objectives with standards to ensure clarity. Peter emphasized the need to refine the language in the Frameworks and suggested adding explicit language to enhance the Frameworks where possible.
 - Peter proposed that the committee should focus on making actionable changes and narrowing down specific suggestions for the Frameworks.
 - Peter announced that the high school group, including John, Claire, and Mariam, would have the opportunity to start their discussion at the next meeting in September.
 - Peter reminded everyone that between now and October 24th, the committee's task would be to take a highly focused approach that will leverage their analysis into specific, narrow, and explicit suggestions for the Framework.
 - Peter concluded the meeting by expressing appreciation for the productive discussion. He also offered himself and Josh as thought partners for any additional meetings or questions outside of the main group discussions.
- **Next Steps & Adjournment**
 - Grade level teams: Focus on creating specific and actionable recommendations for the Frameworks by the October 24th meeting.
 - High school group to begin their discussion at the September meeting.
 - Peter and Josh to offer support as thought partners for smaller group meetings and additional questions.
 - Meeting was adjourned at 5:33 pm