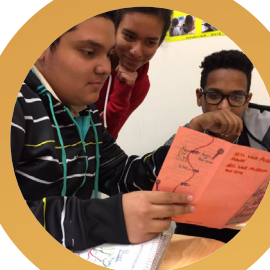




Arlington
Public
Schools

SOCIAL STUDIES BRIEFING REPORT

May 2017





SOCIAL STUDIES

The APS Social Studies Program serves to engage students in 21st century education through meaningful and challenging experiences, that will allow students to understand the relevance of history and the social sciences and to become informed, responsible, and reasoned citizens of a democratic society and an interdependent world.

MAJOR SERVICES

- Prepare each student to succeed in a diverse, changing world through curriculum and instruction that focuses on 21st century skills and other school experiences responsive to each student's talents, interests, and challenges.
- Develop, revise, and enhance curriculum and instructional programs to support a rigorous curriculum aligned with state standards.
- Provide students and teachers with access to technology and other resources that support high quality social studies instruction.
- Engage teachers in professional learning that focuses on best practice pedagogy and skills of the 21st century and beyond.
- Promote high-quality instruction through observation and feedback cycles for teachers.
- Monitor instruction and program implementation through classroom walkthroughs and data analysis.
- Build effective relationship with parents and the community so that they know about and actively support the education of our students.

Bright Spots

LOCAL HISTORY INITIATIVE

The local history initiative has provided an opportunity for students to learn about the uniqueness of Arlington. The publication of the book *A is for Arlington*, co-authored by two APS teachers, introduces APS elementary students to the key events and landmarks of the Arlington community. A partnership with George Mason University created *Through the Doors of Stratford*, six learning modules which help secondary students see the civil rights events in Arlington as a foundation for understanding the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s-1960s. The development of resources and lesson plans have provided multiple opportunities for APS students to "see themselves" in the curriculum and learn how events in Arlington connect to the United States and the world.

VIRTUAL OPPORTUNITIES

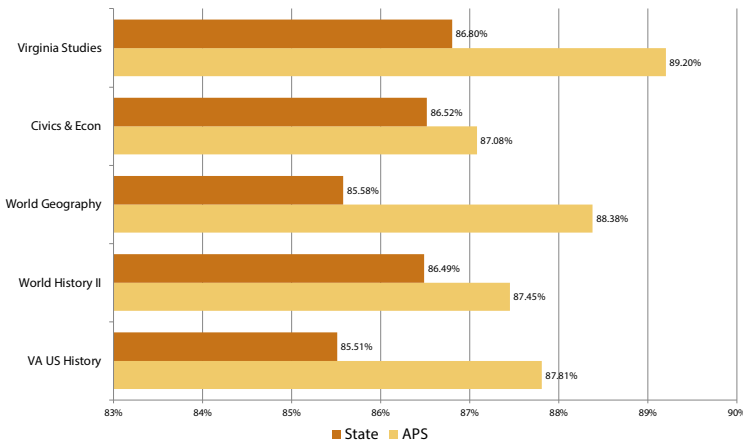
To provide alternate pathways for students and support the increase in access to digital devices, the Social Studies Office has worked to provide online learning experiences. All Economic and Personal Finance courses in APS are blended courses allowing students to meet the VDOE graduation requirement for an online experience. Additionally, the Social Studies Office has three APS teacher-created virtual courses in Economics and Personal Finance, US/Virginia History, and US/Virginia Government. These courses are offered online as full year courses, semester courses, and summer courses providing flexibility to APS students in earning social studies credits.

Data which Provides Insight

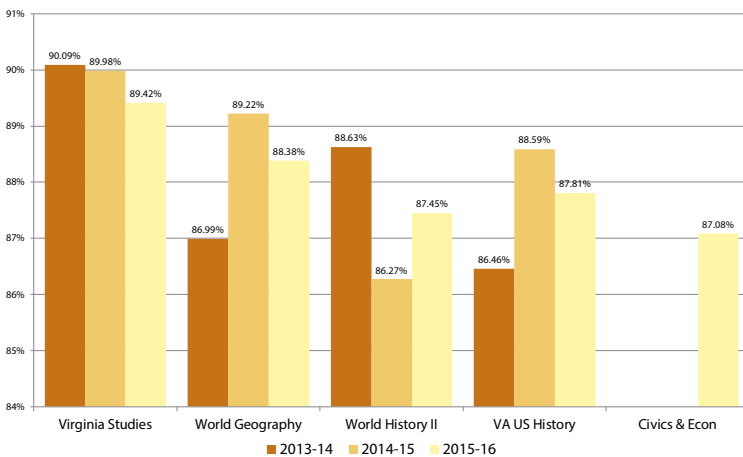
VDOE STANDARDS OF LEARNING IN SOCIAL STUDIES

Arlington Public Schools outperform the state in five of the six social studies SOL tests. One course, WHI, scored below the state average. This course is taken by a small number of APS students primarily in one school. The Civics and Economics SOL Assessment scores in APS surpassed the state average during its first year of administration in school year 2015-16. Additionally, in 2016, the SOL pass rate of students taking World Geography in Grade 8 was 92.5%, providing those students with a high school course credit, prior to entry into high school.

Social Studies SOL Scores – State Comparison



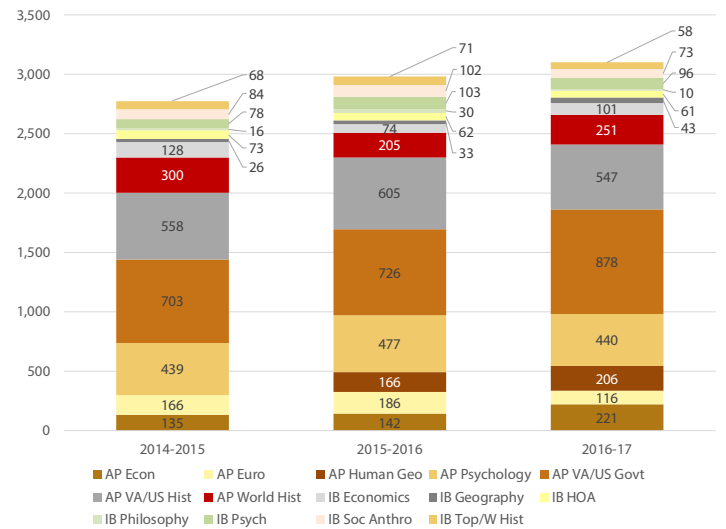
Social Studies SOL Scores- Three Year Trend



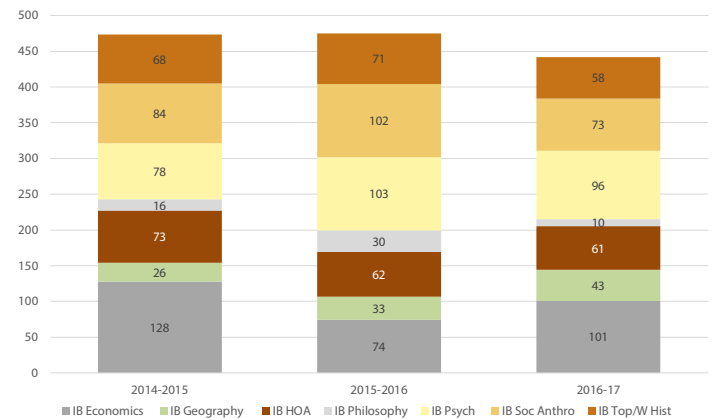
AP/IB COURSE ENROLLMENTS

The Social Studies Office currently offers seven Advanced Placement (AP) and seven International Baccalaureate (IB) courses. Enrollment numbers in AP and IB social studies courses continue to be high, especially in US/VA Government, taken by 878 students in 2016-17. A new course, AP Human Geography has steadily increased since its inception in 2015-16. AP enrollments have increased 358 students over the past three years while IB enrollment has slightly declined. However, IB enrollment is expected to increase in the 2017-18 school year.

AP Social Studies Enrollment



IB Social Studies Enrollment



DIFFERENTIATED OPPORTUNITIES

In partnership with the Special Education, ESOL/HILT and Gifted Services Offices, the Social Studies Office has worked to create opportunities for all students. Over the past two years, a US/VA Part 1 and Part 2 course was designed to provide support for special education students. This course provides a two-year track for a required high school credit course and also includes an opportunity for a verified credit.

Support for students with LEP (limited English proficiency) needs was provided through the development of a US/VA Government course specifically designed for HILT students to earn a graduation credit. This course provides strong language acquisition support to scaffold understanding of the content. This course was implemented across the county in school year 2016-17. Plans are currently underway to create a similar course in Economics and Personal Finance for school year 2017-18.

Over the past two years, the Social Studies Office has also partnered with Gifted Services to provide teacher training and resources for enriching opportunities for our advanced students in social studies. The incorporation of the Document-Based Question project training and resources has increased the use of primary source analysis and writing throughout the county in grades 4-10. Additionally, for the past two summers, the Social Studies Office and Gifted Services have partnered to offer two summer enrichment opportunities for advanced learners through partnerships with the Close-Up Foundation and the World Affairs Council.

Professional learning opportunities such as SIOP and History Alive! have provided social studies teachers with increased strategies and resources to meet the needs of all the students they teach.

Ongoing Work

K-3 TRADEBOOK INITIATIVE

The reorganization of the K-3 social studies curriculum by the Virginia Department of Education created the opportunity for the addition of trade books in Grades K-3 to facilitate the integration of social studies with language arts. Each K-3 classroom teacher has been provided with a bin of social studies leveled books directly aligned with the 2015 Virginia Social Studies Standards. The Social Studies Office has provided professional learning opportunities focused on the integration of these trade books and the development of literacy integrated lessons is ongoing.

PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENTS

The APS Social Studies staff continues in the development and implementation of performance assessment tasks. In the past few years, development has included more scaffolding for students with specific learning needs and the integration of technology for the creation of task products. These tasks, available in Grades 3-12 are required as alternate assessments in Grades 3,6, and 7. The development of these rigorous tasks positions Arlington to be ready to implement the district created assessments that will be required as Social Studies SOL assessments are phased out beginning in 2018-19.



What We Learned

RESOURCE ALLOCATION

This year, the Social Studies Office is going through the resource adoption process for courses from Grades 4-12. A wide range of stakeholders, including teachers, staff specialists, parents, Social Studies Advisory Committee members, and other community members have participated in our resource fairs. The new resources will focus on providing updated social studies content as well as personalized learning opportunities for APS students. The resource selections for Social Studies will be presented to the School Board for approval in June 2017.

COLLABORATIVE PROFESSIONAL CULTURE

The Social Studies Office has worked to create a more collaborative culture that encompasses all teachers who implement or support social studies instruction. All these teachers are on our list serve and get biweekly updates from our office regarding opportunities for students and teachers through Social Studies Snapshots. Teachers are also encouraged countywide to share lessons and resources with their colleagues through the site Social Studies on Google. This site provides important information from our office as well as access to a folder where teachers are sharing lessons across the county. Social Studies teachers also work collaboratively on site-based initiatives at their schools and share their work through our Google site as well as at a June event which highlights the work of individual schools.

CLASSROOM WALKTHROUGHS

The Social Studies Office staff has had the opportunity to visit all secondary social studies classes in the past three years. These visits include follow-up feedback to teachers about their practice. During these walkthroughs, we have been able to identify practices related to student-centered learning that we have videotaped and shared with social studies teachers through our Vision newsletter. These classroom walkthroughs also help us develop professional learning offerings that are responsive to the needs of teachers.

Moving Forward

The work of the Social Studies Office will include the following:

- 1) Expand our understanding of personalized learning and provide the professional learning for teachers that will help students thrive in classrooms that are centered on their individual learning goals and needs.
- 2) Align curriculum documents to new social studies curriculum resources and a standard district template.
- 3) Continue the development of performance assessments as the state begins to phase out SOL assessments for social studies.
- 4) Continue the integration of social studies curriculum with other core areas to facilitate strong student connections and understanding.