

MEMORANDUM

TO: Arlington School Board
FROM: Social Studies Advisory Committee
DATE: November 20, 2017
SUBJECT: Recommending Year Report

Introduction

The social studies curriculum is a natural home for development of the 4Cs -- collaboration, communication, critical thinking, creativity. There can be no doubt that the major political and social events of the past year point unmistakably to the need for every student to learn these skills, which are necessary to participate thoughtfully and productively in the democratic process at every level. These same skills are essential to our collective ability to engage with citizens of other countries to solve common problems, manage conflict, and maximize economic productivity and social welfare. The Social Studies Advisory Committee commends the Social Studies Office for its exemplary performance in developing curriculum, recommending resources, and providing professional learning opportunities to ensure that APS continually improves its delivery of the social studies curriculum and emphasis on the 4Cs. Of note is the Office's recent launch of a local history initiative and support for the Historical Marker video series.

The Committee presents two recommendations this year that build on the Office's strengths and advance the mission and vision of the Department of Teaching and Learning: (Mission) To ignite a passion for learning with equitable access and multiple pathways where learners connect, create, and innovate; (Vision) All individuals strive for their best as learners and global citizens. These recommendations also align with the APS Strategic Plan priorities and ACI's priorities. Our recommendations in both areas recognize the need for equitable access and multiple pathways to learning and provide opportunities for culturally responsive instruction, all of which can be used as strategies for closing the achievement gap. Our global education recommendation can inform future choices regarding K-12 instructional focus.

Recommendation #1: Increased focus on global education and citizenship

The SSAC has developed a three-part plan to move APS social studies, and hopefully eventually all instructional areas, in the direction of global learning.

Step 1: Create a Global Education Resource Repository (GERR)

We recommend APS develops a database of global and social justice curricula mapped to the current Social Studies curriculum (and other curricula as appropriate), field trip

guides, training guides and other resources to help lower the entry bar to incorporate global awareness into APS classrooms. This would include both existing resources developed by various organizations (e.g. Oxfam, UNESCO, NASA etc.) and original content developed by APS teachers. Expecting individual teachers to search out these resources themselves is unnecessary, unfair and produces unequal results. Instead, this database would be available to teachers for easy use in their classrooms. As teachers develop additional resources they could also be uploaded into the database, keeping it current. This feedback allows for identification of APS pockets of best-practice and the means of disseminating that information to all classrooms. The GERR will create a platform for information-sharing, preventing duplication of effort and will allow teachers easy access to curated global education materials. These resources would be differentiated, including using multiple means of expression and engagement. We hope to engage students from all backgrounds by developing materials that focus on a wide variety of locations and issues from around the world. In addition, global education's focus on real-world problems may help engage students who find more theoretical classroom experiences harder to access.

Step 2: Develop a database of global community resources

Arlington is located in a privileged location for easy access to global community resources. The Washington, D.C. area hosts a wide variety of international organizations, embassies, internationally-focused government agencies and international non-profits. In addition, many citizens of Arlington either work with these organizations or have well-developed expertise in related areas. Finally, Arlingtonians originate from all over the world. Matching classrooms studying different locations with cultural informants with first-hand knowledge of those locations should make learning more engaging. Although APS classrooms occasionally capitalize on these resources, we could be leveraging our proximity to these organizations and individuals much more effectively. We imagine partnerships that would allow teachers to access this deep knowledge and real-world experience from around our community. By developing a database, we remove the onus for teachers to identify these types of enriched experiences and make it easy for classrooms to access the resources prevalent in our community. Importantly, the database allows all classrooms from around the county equal access to the same resources, rather than rely on personal contacts by teachers. We believe this should be a county-wide effort, with clear recognition that these community resources encompass more than just social studies and that in addition to serving as an invaluable resource for classroom teachers, this is also a way for APS to engage more fully with the community in general to develop a stronger school-community connection.

Step 3: Develop a plan for future steps towards global education

As we move towards a focus on global education we think it is important to do so deliberately, including mapping new resources to interdisciplinary curricular themes and consulting interested stakeholders. We suggest that both the Department of Teaching and Learning and different ACI committees (for example, Social Studies, World

Languages, Science and English Language Arts) hold discussions in order to build a roadmap of the best way to bring global learning to APS in a universal and equitable fashion.

We anticipate this roadmap would include development of global learning opportunities for students proceeding hand-in-hand with complementary professional development opportunities for staff. We believe this could be accomplished by encouraging actual and virtual exchanges and participation in international interdisciplinary collaborations (such as a exploration into the environmental and human impacts of ocean pollution); creating more robust partnerships with local organizations focused on global issues; developing more intentional linkages between ideas to actions; improving methods to assess global learning; prioritizing hiring teachers with a global mindset and/or background; and providing professional development opportunities consistent with achieving these goals.

Rationale:

Arlington Public Schools Mission: *Arlington Public Schools instills a love of learning in its students and prepares them to be responsible and productive global citizens.*

We are connected with others from around the world through our economy, through migration and through global issues that span borders, such as the environment and human rights. These connections will almost certainly continue and accelerate into the future. With this in mind, we believe it is crucial to encourage students to become comfortable with global collaboration, deeply-analyzed world knowledge and intercultural competency. We feel the time has come to pay more explicit attention to creating the global citizens central to the mission of APS.

In addition, a global education focus expands the options for culturally responsive education and allows students who currently operate in “deficit” mode (for example, English Language Learners) to operate in “strengths” mode (as experts in particular issues) and thus provides strategies to tackle achievement gaps by engaging students on a deeper level. For more information on the compelling reasons to prioritize global education, please see Appendix 1.

In Spring 2017 SSAC conducted a survey on global education practices within APS (for further information please see Appendix 2). From our 105 respondents we found reports inequitable pockets of global learning and internationally-focused opportunities for APS students. Particularly at the elementary level, some schools have many more global learning opportunities compared to others. In addition, while some teachers collaborate with other classrooms internationally, the vast majority do not. Finally, only approximately half of teachers link global issues to action. The survey points to priority intervention by APS in the following areas: a need for equitable access to global opportunities; a better method of sharing resources and best practices; training and support for teachers to engage in international collaborative projects; and professional development focused on helping teachers link issues to action.

This recommendation includes the beginning steps to establish a greater emphasis on global education. We hope to partner with other committees as we develop these recommendations and believe this focus offers tremendous opportunity for exciting interdisciplinary curricular work and integrated learning. We believe that every curricular area should be incorporating these goals into their teaching and we recognize that some curricular areas may already be doing so, for example World Languages instruction includes a focus on world cultures and world language knowledge is an essential part of global communication skill-building.

We believe this recommendation aligns with all of the APS 2011-2017 Strategic Plan goals in the following ways:

Goal 1: Challenge and Engage All Students

- Deep, real-world application focused on the issues that particularly engage individual students.
- Global collaboration encourages students to think flexibly, creatively and consider new perspectives.
- Teaches students how to seek out and evaluate knowledge and how to engage with the world, gaining skills and understandings.

Goal 2: Eliminate Achievement Gaps

- Changing the narrative from deficit to expert, by allowing students (for example ELLs) to capitalize on existing knowledge.
- Providing a natural pathway for culturally responsive learning.
- Building intercultural communication skills allows all students to cross group boundaries (ethnic, socio-economic, learning differences, etc.) more effectively.

Goal 3: Recruit, Retain and Develop High Quality Staff

- Energizing opportunities to excite and challenge students may result in greater teacher satisfaction.
- Chance to develop new skills related to global learning and interdisciplinary collaboration.

Goal 4: Provide Optimal Learning Environments

- Global issues are so broad that they naturally lend themselves to interdisciplinary collaboration in academic areas and the arts, helping students make connections between events, movements, and ideas.
- Global education can include locations both in and out of the classroom

Goal 5: Meet the Needs of the Whole Child

- Focus on taking action as the culmination of exploring issues helps to develop civic competencies and community service and engagement.
- Students will learn and explore tolerance, privilege, gratitude, justice and responsibility and other important themes as part of this focus.

Budget Implications: \$3000 in total. Step 1 (Global Education Resource Repository): The resource repository would be populated during the summer by APS teachers contracted for this purpose. We anticipate the cost to be approximately **\$1500** (2 teachers for approximately 25 hours of work each). Step 2 (Global Community Resources Database). We anticipate a member of staff would be hired over the summer to begin populating the database. We would hope to work closely with School-Community relations in order to reach out to community members who could volunteer their time and expertise. The approximate cost would be **\$1500** (2 teachers for approximately 25 hours of work each). Step 3 (Roadmap for transition): **Negligible** for the current budget cycle; costs for future budget cycles would depend on how and when roadmap priorities are implemented.

Committee Vote: 4—Yes* 0—No 5—Did Not Vote**

* One individual has been actively involved in the process of creating our recommendations but is still going through the process of being appointed by the School Board. We consider this person a member and have included their vote.

**These members did not vote due to inactivity with the committee this school year.

Recommendation #2: Support Performance Assessment Tasks (PATs) in social studies instruction and devote necessary resources to continue developing them.

Rationale: The expansion in PATs use continues to be a priority for the SSAC given their ability to promote “4Cs” skill building. Additionally, the directive from VDOE to expand the use of performance assessments across all subject areas makes this assessment and instructional practice especially important. In Spring 2017, performance assessments were incorporated into the new county-wide curriculum template. The Social Studies Office is continuing to adjust the PATs to make them more flexible and effective for students at all levels. New social studies resources have differentiated components and foreign language translations as well as opportunities for more rigorous instruction to support personalized learning. We support the continued use of resources to develop PATs as they become more ubiquitous within APS both for testing and as a teaching tool.

We believe that PATS will challenge and engage all students (Strategic Goal 1) by providing opportunities to use the “4 Cs” to demonstrate learning. In addition, the flexibility of PATs may help students who find it difficult to demonstrate learning in a standardized test taking situation (such as the SOLs). Testing enduring understandings and critical thinking will help teachers more accurately pinpoint areas in which students are struggling - providing opportunities to further tailor future learning to unique needs. The flexibility combined with useful feedback should provide important ways to help address the existing achievement gaps (Strategic Goal 2).

For samples of PATs recently used in APS classrooms, see
<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B-WZibaqdn0uMUdCN0xfY1gtQVk?usp=sharing>

Budget Implications: None, already included in allocation for curriculum work.

Committee Vote: 4—Yes* 0—No 5—Did Not Vote**

* One individual has been actively involved in the process of creating our recommendations but is still going through the process of being appointed by the School Board. We consider this person a member and have included their vote.

**These members did not vote due to inactivity with the committee this school year.

Past Recommendations

The Committee asks that APS continue to support instructional priorities identified in the Committee's past recommendations.

2015-2016 Recommendation #1 (History Alive! Training): All Grade 4 and 5 teachers who teach social studies participate in a mandatory one-day History Alive! training by the end of the 2017-2018 school year.

Regardless of instructional focus, the History Alive! pedagogy is ideally suited to serving the mission the Department of Teaching and Learning: To ignite a passion for learning with equitable access and multiple pathways where learners connect, create, and innovate. It is based on the premise that students have various learning styles and competencies and that the curriculum should be accessible to all students. History Alive! engages students via multiple means such as classroom debate, role-playing, small-group work, and individual written, visual, or oral work. Significantly, this approach can be applied to any curriculum, not just social studies. When the Committee met with teachers in 2013 about this training, they enthusiastically endorsed it. APS currently requires all secondary education social studies teachers to participate in History Alive! training.

Status: The Social Studies Office continues to offer History Alive three times a year, with one day during the school year dedicated to only train elementary teachers. All fourth and fifth grade teachers are not yet trained but the Office continues to provide opportunities for training. This past summer, these included a week-long institute and a day-long summer institute at the Festival of the Minds. The Office plans to offer a school-day training this school year specifically targeting elementary teachers. The Social Studies Office is also working to make sure that History Alive training integrates with other initiatives in APS, most specifically personalized learning and the integration of technology.

Strategic Plan Alignment: Goal 1 (Ensure That Every Student is Challenged and Engaged), Goal 3 (Recruit, Retain, and Develop High-Quality Staff), Goal 5 (Meet the Needs of the Whole Child).

ACI Vote: 14 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstaining

Previous Budget Implications: \$6700 to provide one-day training for 90 teachers.

2015-2016 Recommendation #2 (Integrated Learning): APS shall develop a sustained, systemic commitment to providing all schools and teachers the space and resources for effective multi-curricular integrated learning. The School Board will instruct the Superintendent's Office to develop guidance to school administrators supporting integrated learning at all levels and commission an inter-departmental, single grade-level curriculum review to provide teachers with connections among the different subject areas to aid the development of 2016-2017 lesson plans.

The concept of integrated learning, or integrated curriculum development, means to teach core concepts or skills by connecting multiple subject areas to a unifying theme or issue. An integrated approach encourages students to see connections and develop critical thinking skills. In addition, we believe this would free up additional instructional time, as a single lesson plan, in theory, could satisfy objectives in multiple subject areas. The goal of integrating curriculum areas should be a guiding principle when APS retools existing instructional programs or undertakes new instructional programs.

The Committee continues to support the dedication of resources to an inter-departmental, single grade-level curriculum review to provide teachers with connections among the different subject areas to aid the development of lesson plans.

Status: The Department of Teaching and Learning has not yet undertaken this effort. However, two STEM coordinators have worked with core offices to increase curriculum integration and have provided lessons for teachers to use. The Social Studies Office continues the expansion of social studies trade books into K-3 classrooms and has developed new K-5 literacy lessons to support the integration of social studies into other content areas. The Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning is working to provide more cohesive, integrated curriculum.

Strategic Plan Alignment: Supports all five Strategic Plan goals.

ACI Vote: 14 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstaining

Previous Budget Implications: \$7,000 for seven grade-specific teachers (Math, Social Studies, English, Science, Spanish, Health & Physical Education, and Arts & Music) to conduct the recommended curriculum review.

Committee Members:

Heidi Gibson* and Royce Sherlock* (Co-Chairs), Bob Corolla, Scott Nathanson, Lanhx Nguyen,* Brig Pari, Anne Paris,* Paula Pettavino, Katherine Ryan

* Participated in development of the report.

Staff Liaison: Cathy Hix

APPENDIX 1

Making the Case for Global Education

The reason behind the push for global education is threefold – to prepare APS students for 21st Century careers, to prepare them for engagement with pressing global and social justice issues and to use global studies to strengthen our own community.

Arlington Public Schools have an obligation to students to prepare them for the world into which they will graduate. The U.S. Department of Education has launched a push for global competency education as a way of advancing “equity, excellence and economic competitiveness” (Department of Education, 2017). The OECD has recognized global competency as important enough to include on the upcoming 2018 PISA test administered to students from around the world (OECD, 2016). Groups as diverse as the American Management Association (AMA, 2012) and the Council on Foreign Relations (Klein, 2012) have identified necessary characteristics for future graduates; we need to be educating flexible, critical thinkers with great communication skills and global savvy.

Firstly, we need to educate APS students for successful working careers. Our society and workplaces have changed drastically since the schooling of the last generation and the world is increasingly globalized and integrated. It is easy to find thought leaders pointing out that preparing tomorrow’s workforce to compete in a global marketplace requires a shift of priorities. As Mansilla and Johnson (2011) put it in their report prepared on behalf of the Council of Chief State School Officers,

Contemporary societies are marked by new global trends—economic, cultural, technological, and environmental shifts that are part of a rapid and uneven wave of globalization. The growing global interdependence that characterizes our time calls for a generation of individuals who can engage in effective global problem solving and participate simultaneously in local, national, and global civic life. Put simply, preparing our students to participate fully in today’s and tomorrow’s world demands that we nurture their global competence. (p. xiii)

The definition of global competence includes an understanding of international issues, the ability to work with and communicate with people from around the world and the ability to function productively in the world community (NEA, 2010). Global competence goes hand in hand with so-called “21st Century skills” such as critical thinking, communication, collaboration and creativity (the 4 Cs) (P21, Beyond the 3 Rs). According to a survey by the American Management Association in 2012, a majority of businesses and organizations predicted that the 4 Cs would be increasingly important, yet they found mastery of these skills in new employees was actually decreasing (AMA, 2012). Former Secretary of Education Arne Duncan has spoken extensively about the key role global competence has in teaching the skills needed for tomorrow’s workforce and citizenry (Duncan, 2011). The Committee for Economic Development (2006) has chimed in stating, “Our firms increasingly need employees with knowledge of foreign

languages and cultures. For example, cultural competence and foreign language skills can prove invaluable when working on global business teams or negotiating with overseas clients” (p. 11). The College Board published a report in 2012 warning,

If the U.S. does not enact measures to counter this growing [international] competition, it faces the risk of being outmaneuvered, outperformed, and outpaced by countries that have the ability to adapt to ever-increasing rates of constant change, something that will characterize global markets for the foreseeable future. In order to achieve this goal, the U.S. must possess a citizenry who demonstrate sufficient levels of global competency — that is, they have the right skills, aptitudes, and dispositions necessary to navigate and excel in a highly fluid, globalized, and increasingly competitive environment. (Balistreri, et al, p. 6)

Global competence requires examining problems from new angles and engaging in problem-solving with individuals from disparate backgrounds. Clearly, today’s learners will need to be able to do more than just gather information or use it in routine ways. Students must be ready to interact with future colleagues, clients and competitors from around the world and comfortable with the global competence skills needed for participation in the international marketplace.

Secondly, in addition, for preparing students for future global careers, we need to prepare them to engage as global citizens. Global problems loom large as a certainty of the future. Forces of globalization, including the internet, are changing the very idea of what it means to be a citizen (Kennedy, 2012). The recent migration crisis in Europe has highlighted the fact that some problems are too big and cross too many borders to be managed alone. Environmental concerns, such as climate change and pollution in our seas and oceans are also prominent examples issues that will only be effectively addressed by a large majority of countries working together. The list continues with terrorism, cross-border conflicts, money-laundering, quality assurance issues related to global supply chains, global pandemics, and many more. The upcoming generation will undoubtedly need to grapple with these problems.

If we expect U.S. citizens to work with citizens from around the world when they are adults, we must teach them how to do it when they are children. Teaching students about collaboration and their rights and responsibilities, not just as U.S. citizens but as global citizens, is a critical step in combating major global issues that threaten our society in very real ways.

Lastly, educating for global competency can be a way of reaching students from diverse populations. Fernando Reimers (2009) reminds us, “A curriculum that makes intercultural competency an asset, rather than a deficit, can powerfully motivate immigrant students who navigate cultural borders daily to engage, not just in further developing their global competency, but in all disciplines as well” (Number 1, para. 21). Given Arlington’s persistent achievement gaps, focusing on global education could be a method of reaching struggling individuals through real-world, immediately relevant learning. Viewing Arlington’s diversity as a strength and as a tool to teach us how to

communicate across cultures would be a very positive way of embracing our differences and using them to contribute to Arlington's dynamism.

Global education is deeply aligned with the School Board's 5 strategic goals:

Goal 1: Challenge and Engage All Students

Focusing on global learning and global citizenship is tailor-made to address the goal of challenging and engaging all students. Students are taught to seek out and evaluate knowledge. Global learning opportunities provide a possibility of deep, real-world application and can be focused on the issues that particularly engage individual students. In addition, it dovetails naturally with a focus on 21st Century skills. Since it is impossible to predict what industries will be providing the bulk of jobs for today's students, the most important thing to focus on is to teach students how to seek out and evaluate knowledge and how to engage with the world.

Goal 2: Eliminate Achievement Gaps

Global learning provides a natural pathway for culturally responsive learning as well as opportunities for students normally viewed as having "deficits," such as English Language learners, to shine and share their strengths. Addressing issues, such as migration, with which some of these students have personal involvement, allows them to be experts. This is equally true in virtual exchanges in which, if they feel comfortable, ELLs can act as translators to the rest of the class.

Goal 3: Recruit, Retain and Develop High Quality Staff

Teachers become teachers because they want to have an impact on students and make them think. Allowing teachers energizing opportunities to excite and challenge students may result in greater teacher satisfaction. It will also provide a way for staff to develop new skills related to global learning and interdisciplinary collaboration.

Goal 4: Provide Optimal Learning Environments

Global learning is not about gathering specific bits of knowledge, but about gaining skills and understandings. Global collaboration encourages students to think flexibly, creatively and consider new perspectives. Students make connections between events, movements, and ideas. Global education can include locations both in and out of the classroom and encourages students to interact with their daily environment with new global perspectives.

Goal 5: Meet the Needs of the Whole Child

Global learning helps students explore the world and make connections. Global issues are so broad that they naturally lend themselves to interdisciplinary collaboration. The focus on the whole child includes this collaboration across academic areas and the arts. Through global learning, students are put in situations that challenge their way of thinking and understanding the world, forcing them to grapple with difficult issues. The result is not only academic development, but character development as well. Students will learn and explore tolerance, privilege, gratitude, justice and responsibility and other important themes as part of this focus. The result is students not only better prepared for the workforce, but also for the demands of democratic citizenship.

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APPENDIX 2

Promoting Global Citizenship in APS: A Snapshot of Current Practice

(from Spring 2017 survey taken by 105 APS Social Studies teachers, note not every elementary school was represented in survey responses)

86% of social studies teachers say they incorporated elements of global citizenship in their classrooms.

However, when we tried to find out what that meant, we got quite an uneven picture of promotion of global citizenship.

In-School Global Citizenship Activities

71% of teachers surveyed said their school holds on international day/night/week

44% say their schools host exchange students, including almost all the high school and middle school respondents, but also notably Tuckahoe Elementary School and Ashlawn (which seems to have a Costa Rican exchange). Interestingly a minority of respondents from Discovery also say their schools host exchange students.

35% of teachers say their schools participate in a sister school relationship. At the elementary level, ATS, Jamestown and Tuckahoe have sister school relationships (also some teachers at McKinley and Hoffman-Boston report the same). One respondent from Swanson and two from W-L report a sister school relationship. Sister school relationships seem most likely to occur in elementary schools.

28% of survey participants report that there is internationally-themed school programming. Jamestown highlights an international migratory bird project, a writing exchange with Randolph, and country reports where students research and write books about selected countries. McKinley does a monthly cultural heritage read-in with classroom tie-ins. Tuckahoe engages in cultural and heritage shares and pen pal exchanges with their sister school. Several W-L teachers reported that there are heritage assemblies to share cultural backgrounds. Another W-L teacher volunteers examples of Model Arab States of the Gulf (GCC), Arab/Israeli Conflict Simulation, and Maquiladora Inquiry Letter Writing as examples of this. Another W-L teacher shared that within the IB program “Kids examine case studies for various IB geo issues from all over the world. Water scarcity, Development Issues in the World's poorest countries, Ecological Preservation.”

24% say there are internationally-themed extracurricular activities. High school teachers particularly highlighted international clubs that are available.

14% of respondents say students from their school go on school-sponsored international trips. At the high school level, one out of six respondents from Yorktown and four out of nine from W-L say this occurs. At the middle school level two out of four respondents from Williamsburg report this taking place. At the elementary level Ashlawn and Tuckahoe (two out of seven respondents) report this is happening in their school. However, notably, one teacher at Gunston shared that he/she had been blocked from taking students on international school trips. This teacher noted his/her opinion that

“The most important thing a student of this age could do would be to travel abroad with a group of peers.”

12% of respondents say international service projects are taking place at their schools. Patrick Henry is organizing a fundraiser for Emmanuel Yeboah's school in Ghana that is specifically for people with disabilities.

In summary, many, but by no means all schools have an international or multicultural night. Middle schools and high schools often have exchange students and internationally-themed clubs. Although sister school relationships clearly exist, it appears teachers across the school may not entirely be aware of them, similar to variation in reporting exchange students and international travel opportunities. Even where these do exist, knowledge of them seems to be uneven among teachers. There is also a notable variation of activities among schools. For instance, although Tuckahoe seems to host exchange students, have a sister school relationship and have a school-sponsored international trip, this seems to be very unusual.

International Collaboration

Only 23/103 respondents reported that their classroom had ever collaborated with a classroom in another country. Of these, by far the most common method was exchanging letters/emails/videos (19/23). Other methods included Skyping (5/23), participating in a collaborative project with one particular other classroom (4/23), participating in a collaborative project with multiple other classrooms (4/23), and hosting a student from abroad visiting the US on an educational trip (1/23).

International collaboration, when it occurs, seems to largely be confined to the elementary classroom. Of elementary school teacher respondents 21/57 said they had participated in an international collaboration. By contrast only 1 middle school and high school teacher said that they had.

Using Area Resources to Talk About Global Issues

Most frequently respondents used diversity in the classroom to discuss global issues (78/90). Teachers shared that they focus on using classroom diversity including student-led heritage presentations, making heritage boxes, and showing maps of where each student is born. Occasionally, teachers shared locally-available food (35/90) or used field trips to explore different cultures (31/90). Less frequently (21/90), teachers used connections between local areas in Arlington and their relation to world events (e.g. Little Saigon). Even more infrequently (7/90), teachers used STEM-related field trips to explore global issues such as climate change. Note that this may be due to a survey of Social Studies teachers. It is possible that Science teachers would be more likely to have completed these types of field trips. Other local resources individual teachers identified as using were “discussed international monetary issues, tourism, spending habits of other nations, gift giving in different cultures”; Spanish language and culture; and hosting a screening of a global environmental film about ocean plastic and asking students to pledge to take action.

Global Topics

Most commonly teachers talk about diversity in the US (85/95), and everyday life for people in various other countries (71/95).

At the elementary level, almost invariably diversity and everyday life in other countries is mentioned. In addition, 13/57 teachers talk about international human rights and 5/57 talk about worldwide/cross-border environmental issues.

At the middle and high school level topics are much broader, including international organizations, human rights, environmental issues, current world events, globalization and its potential impacts, and US foreign policy. Individual teachers also volunteered that they teach about international monetary policy, international history, comparative policy, trade agreements and population demographics.

Group work and lectures are often the form teaching takes. However, literature with an international focus (45/88), debate (37/88), and research projects (32/88) are all fairly common. Other ways of teaching include discussion (7/88), service projects (6/88), acting out/adapted play and simulations (2/88), virtual field trip (1/88), booktalks (1/88), ethnographic text reading (1/88), webquest & videos (1/88) and students bringing in artifacts and pictures (1/88).

Take Action

Just over half (54/105) of teachers say that they do not discuss what specific actions students might take to address world problems.

Of those that do discuss this, teachers teach about students' role in active citizenship and civic participation, service projects/raising money/philanthropy, individual environmental actions and their effect on global environmental issues, research projects with a culmination in taking action, acceptance and tolerance, and building friendship and peace.

Where It Is Taught

Elementary school teachers largely make explicit global/international links in social studies (58/62), but also Language Arts reading (42/62) and less frequently in language arts writing (24/62), science (20/62) and math (10/62).