

Office of the Superintendent of Schools
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Rockville, Maryland

July 22, 2020

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Board of Education

From: Jack R. Smith, Superintendent of Schools

Subject: Diversity in the Secondary Social Studies Curriculum (06-11-20-01)

Question

During the discussion after *Public Comments*, Ms. Silvestre requested information regarding when families can expect changes in the secondary social studies curriculum to include more diversity in the teachings of U.S. History.

Response

In 2017, the Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs team began a revision of the Grade 8 and Grade 9 U.S. History curricula in order to become more inclusive of the diverse peoples who are part of our shared history. Black history, indigenous history, and women's history collectively are American history and are included in every unit of each course. Latin history and Asian American history are prominent components of the second half of the Grade 8 course and in every unit of the new Grade 9 course. Both curricula focus on agency, resistance, and resilience while not ignoring or downplaying the racist policies and actions that are part of our shared history. The Grade 8 curriculum has been implemented for the past two years. The Grade 9 curriculum currently is in development and will be piloted at 11 high schools in the 2020–2021 school year prior to its implementation across all high schools in the 2021–2022 school year.

While the newly revised secondary curriculum is well positioned to provide students anti-racist instruction that includes diverse perspectives and experiences, the current elementary curriculum has limited resources that speak as powerfully as those in secondary schools. In addition, the Maryland State Department of Education released new elementary social studies standards in June 2020 that will require considerable revision of the Montgomery County Public Schools Pre-K–5 social studies curriculum. The Anti-Racist Curriculum Project Team, led by Dr. Monifa B. McKnight, deputy superintendent, currently is engaged in developing a plan for revising the elementary social studies curriculum. Several upgrades are expected to be implemented in fall 2020, with a more complete review and revision occurring throughout the school year for implementation in 2021–2022.

If you have any questions, please contact Mrs. Niki T. Hazel, associate superintendent for curriculum and instructional programs, Office of Teaching, Learning, and Schools, via e-mail.

JRS:JSW:NTH:ajl

Copy to:
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