

*School Alliance for
Continuous Improvement*

**Tully Central School District
K-12 Social Studies Training Visit
*TRAINING SESSION ONLY
NOT A COMPLETE REVIEW***

April 2009



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Introduction and Overview

This feedback report is a product of the School Alliance for Continuous Improvement (SACI). Produced by the District Review Team, it includes:

- ◆ General information about SACI;
- ◆ Scoring information based on evidence pertaining to the district's educational program;
- ◆ Strengths, recommendations for growth, and innovative practices identified by the team;

The districts in this alliance represent rural and suburban schools from across the State. These districts include diverse populations in terms of ethnic and socioeconomic factors, and demonstrate a range of results in student performance as indicated by State measurements. These districts share certain common interests:

- ◆ A commitment to rigorous standards for all students;
- ◆ A commitment to assessing student performance against international, national and local measure of excellence, both quantitatively and qualitatively;
- ◆ A commitment to using data to guide school improvement and planning to continuously evaluate the impact and effectiveness of school improvement efforts.

In order to operationalize these commitments, district representatives have employed systems thinking and a data driven approach to determine how to affect teaching and learning in their districts. Representatives have worked closely together to:

- ◆ Develop a model to monitor, measure and report the effectiveness of district systems by analyzing data related to identified performance indicators;
- ◆ Train teams of teachers and administrators as "critical friends" -- professionals who can externally review and validate evidence of a district's progress in planning, implementing and attaining results and provide useful feedback which encourages self-reflection and continuous improvement;

- ◆ Create tools for identifying, and forums for sharing successful and innovative practices that help all students meet higher standards.

During a week in April, 2009, a team of SACI trained educators and Tully faculty reviewed Tully Central School District's K-12 social studies program. The purpose of the review was to train a team of Tully teachers, teaching assistants, and administrators in the SACI model using information collected from their social studies program. The team gathered data from interviews, documents and observations and used it to reach a consensus related to each of six indicators.

This report presents a summary of team decisions related to the evidence found and agreed upon. It is a rich repository of information to support strategic planning designed to improve educational processes in the district.

Acknowledgements

District Review Team

This report was created as a result a collaborative effort between the District Review Team and the hosting district.

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Information Sources

Interviews:

The following forty-nine (49) individuals were interviewed by the team as part of the District Review information gathering process:

Administrative intern
Art teachers (2)
Assistant elementary principal/Director of Special Education
Assistant principal 7-12
Board of Education members (2)
Elementary principal
Elementary teachers (10)
Enrichment teacher
Foreign language teacher
Library media specialist
Multi-age teacher 5-6
Parents (2)
Principal 7-12
School Business official
School counselors, high school (2)
Social studies teachers 7-12 (6)
Special education teachers, junior high school (2)
Special education teachers, elementary (2)
Special education teacher, high school
Student body president
Superintendent of Schools
Teaching assistant, technology
Teaching assistants (7)

Documents:

The following documents were reviewed by the team as part of the District Review information gathering process:

Academic Eligibility 2007-08
Academic Intervention Plan
AIS Report 2008
American Dream Project
Ancient History plays, Global Studies 9
Annual Professional Performance Review
Board of Education Goals 2008-2009
Board of Education presentations 2008-2009
CDEP Long Range Plan
Collaborative Research Plan grade 8 English/social studies
Curriculum standards and benchmarks, various
District calendar, 2008-2009
District Goals 2007-08
District Organization Chart
District Safety Plan 2008
District Website
Document Inventory
Economics course outline
Economics lesson plans
Enrollment summary by poverty level
Faculty Resources Website
Global Studies 9 course outline
Global Studies unit plans (various)
Grade 4 Erie Canal authentic samples
Grade 6 social studies tests and answer keys
Graduation Rate for 2003 Cohort
Graphic organizer, document based questions
Graphic organizer, Roman Empire
History Unit (1960s) introduction
K-6 social studies benchmarks with standards
Kindergarten curriculum
Mythology textbook (grade 9 Honors)
New York State School Report Card
New York State Social Studies data/grade reports 11/07
New York State Social Studies data/grade reports, grade 5 2004-2006
New York State Social Studies data/grade reports, grade 8 2006-2008
New York State voter registration form
Our Communities, grade 3 teacher manual

Participation in Government course outline
Powerpoint® presentation, Global Studies 9
Professional Development Plan
Public meeting information sheet
Regents item analysis reports
Regional Information Center Data Reports (various disaggregated data), January and June
Research paper guidelines, grade 7
Research paper guidelines, Global History 9
Resources, Greek Heroes
Resources, Greek Mythology
Responsorial assessment
Rubric for Writing, grade 6
Saint Joan
Sample Document-Based Questions
School Report Card 2007-2008
Senior exit survey 2004 and 2008
Social studies 7 course syllabus
Social studies 7 unit
Social studies curriculum K-6, 2000
Social studies curriculum, grade 10, units 1-5
Social studies draft curriculum guide grades 7-8
Social studies overview, grade 6
Social Studies plans, grade 5
Social studies research plan 7-12
Social studies teacher resources
Social studies textbook, grade 2
Social studies textbook, grade 4
Social studies texts grades K-12
Sociology curriculum
Sociology textbook, grade 12, 2007
Teacher Websites (various)
Technology Report, 2008
Tully CSD Policy Manual
Tully Elementary School library web page
Year-long standards plan, grade 1

#1: The leadership system is linked to goals for student performance.

Definition:

The degree to which the district operates from the perspective of a shared vision/agreed upon goals that are driven by student performance.

Plan:

1. A district mission statement exists which promotes the creation of an environment that focuses on personal responsibility, student performance and life-long learning.
2. A Comprehensive District Education Plan (CDEP), with representation from all stakeholder groups, exists containing measurable goals and objectives including specific suggested initiatives.
3. Annually revised Board/District goals are developed from CDEP and are intended to be communicated to staff at the beginning of each year through the District Web Site and on Superintendent Conference Days. One of these goals is for 64% percent of the students attend a 4 year college.
4. There is a plan for a mentoring program for new teachers with expectations for both the mentor and protégé. The plan includes a screening and application process for selecting mentors.
5. There is a hierarchal organizational chart delineating instructional and operational staff reporting responsibilities.
6. There is an administrator assigned to oversee the K-12 social studies program and a social studies department coordinator for grades 7-12. There is a written job description for the coordinator position.
7. The Program of Studies, available on the Counseling and Career Center website, includes all 7-12 social studies course offerings, descriptions, and course sequence plan.
8. There is a district Academic Intervention Services (AIS) Plan and a District AIS committee that is currently meeting to update the plan.

Implementation:

1. Board of Education meeting minutes show ongoing discussions of long-range goals and Building Administrative staff directives in grades 7-12 are related to Board goals.
2. The administrative cabinet (superintendent, principals, assistant principals and business administrator) meets weekly.
3. Interviews indicated that some staff is aware of the district decision making processes.

4. Interviews indicated that some staff are involved in the decision making process.
5. Interviews indicated that some staff is aware of the existence of district wide plans.
6. At the high school level, the social studies department chairperson runs monthly department meetings and sends minutes to the building principal.
7. Most social studies staff indicated that administrative supervision of curriculum and instruction varies.
8. The Grade 7- 12 social studies department coordinator oversees collaboration on instruction and curriculum on a formal and informal basis.

Outcomes:

1. Grade 7-12 social studies teachers indicated that as a result of their collaboration, they successfully implemented “Pit Stop” Academic Intervention Services which contributed to academic success in the social studies as measured by unit exams and New York State Regents Exams.
2. The collaboration also led to a research paper covering grades 9-12. Success was determined by the percentage of students demonstrating competency in producing a research paper.
3. 94% of the 2008 Tully graduates are attending post-secondary education with 58% attending four year institutions.

#2 Instructional practices are evaluated and modified based on assessment of student performance.

Definition:

The degree to which educators use student data to drive instructional change.

Plan:

1. The district Annual Professional Performance Review plan includes a rubric which identifies instructional proficiency levels. These levels are described as unsatisfactory, basic, proficient or distinguished.
2. The social studies department has a consistent plan for incorporating Document Based Questions (DBQs) in grades 7-12 and research papers in grades 9-12.
3. There is an Academic Intervention Services (AIS) Plan K-12.

Implementation:

1. A K-12 AIS committee has been formed to review the District AIS Plan.
2. According to interviews, social studies instruction is differentiated at the ninth grade level and teachers are free to make individual instructional decisions to meet K-12 New York State Standards.
3. A variety of instructional strategies are used K-12, including living history, lecture, DBQ instruction, non-traditional projects, daily geography questions in grade 4, and Castle Learning® software in grades 9-12.
4. Fourth and twelfth grade teachers enhance social studies instruction by incorporating field trips and authentic learning experiences including mock elections, voting and immigration simulations.
5. According to interviews, instructional decisions in grades five, eight, ten, and eleven tend to be dictated by the New York State assessments.
6. At the K-6 level, the schedule for social studies instruction varies based on time availability as determined by teachers at various grade levels.
7. Social studies support is available through Academic Intervention Services in grades 9-12 ("Pit Stop"), and an enrichment program is available for selected students in grades 1-6.
8. Social studies instruction is supported through the collaboration of social studies teachers with library media specialists, special education teachers and teaching assistants at the K-12 level, and with art teachers at the K-6 level.

Student Outcomes:

1. Teacher interviews indicate that student writing has improved as a result of consistent expectations for the research paper.

#3: The curriculum is linked to standards for and data on student performance.

Definition:

The degree to which the curriculum is linked to state and district standards for and data on student performance.

Plan:

1. Social studies K-12 curriculum is focused on NYS Standards. Social studies curriculum outlines for K-6 exist, which include: ideas, resources, standards, and assessments.
2. A proposal to purchase 9-12 social studies textbooks beginning in June 2009 exists.
3. There is a plan to select new social studies books for the 6th grade.
4. A plan exists to increase enrollment in Advanced Placement and to increase college credit opportunities in social studies.
5. A process exists for the 7-12 social studies department to meet and align curriculum.

Implementation:

1. The 9-12th grade social studies department collaborated to develop requirements for a research paper which outlines specific skill development at each grade level.
2. Some ELA and social studies teachers work collaboratively. Some elementary teachers teach Document Based Questions (DBQ's) as part of their ELA program; the ELA basal reader series supports social studies content in grades 3-6; social studies AIS is addressed in ELA throughout the elementary school; some social studies enrichment exists in K-6 art activities, and in 8th grade there is a collaborative ELA and social studies project.
3. Curricular decisions are made by teachers in social studies and some are approved by administration.
4. According to interviews, curriculum maps for social studies exist for some grades in various stages of completion, and some social studies teachers refer to them. Third grade social studies teachers created curriculum maps for pacing. The instruction is completed within the first half of the school year. Fifth grade social studies curriculum is mapped and benchmarks in social studies are met by December. There exists a partially complete 7-8 social studies draft curriculum guide that includes: topics, essential knowledge, concepts, essential questions, performance indicators, assessment activities, and resources.

5. According to the Advanced Placement (AP) social studies teacher, curriculum development is done in conjunction with other AP social studies teachers in the region.
6. Some social studies teachers in the elementary school collaborate with the Library Media Specialist (LMS) to develop unit and lesson plans – including DBQ’s - to collect resources, and to work online for research, as well as podcasting with some 6th grade students.
7. There are a variety of curricular practices K-12. The fourth grade team works collaboratively to plan social studies curriculum. These teachers team-teach some of the social studies units through the text, and the curriculum provides opportunities for authentic learning, such as, field trips, reenactments, and projects while the sixth grade team incorporates a living history project.
8. There are a variety of assessments in social studies K-12, including foldables, creative projects, unit exams, and research papers.

Outcome:

1. From 2004-2008, over 84% of Advanced Placement United States History students have scored 3 or higher on the AP Exam.
2. Due to curriculum directly linked to state standards, data indicates that Regent’s Exam grades have increased in some scoring categories as follows:

Global History	% students 55 or above	% students 65 or above	% students 85 or above
2006-2007	96	84	55
2005-2006	93	87	48
2004-2005	91	84	44
US History and Government	% students 55 or above	% students 65 or above	% students 85 or above
2006-2007	98	91	52
2005-2006	93	89	65
2004-2005	95	89	55

4: Professional and organizational development is linked to student learning needs.

Definition:

The degree to which professional and/or organizational development is linked to student learning needs as measured by student performance.

Plan

1. A Professional Development Plan exists that includes criteria used for evaluating teachers, assessment approaches, teacher improvement strategies, training and performance evaluation.
2. There is a process in place for teachers to apply for staff development opportunities through the building level Staff Development Committee.
3. There is a Mentoring Plan for new teachers with expectations for both the mentor and protégé.
4. The district has an Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) plan that is designed to set goals for individual professional growth.
5. Interviews indicated that a plan exists for teacher training in the use of services by the Board of Educational Cooperation Services (BOCES).

Implementation:

1. There are building level staff development committees that meet monthly; minutes are distributed electronically to staff. Building level committees:
 - a. manage the staff development budget,
 - b. review and determine approval of submitted staff development requests.
 - c. track building staff development
 - d. work collaboratively with building administration to develop and implement Staff Development Day agendas.

There is a chairperson for each building Staff Development Committee. The approval process includes required alignment with district goals and/or New York State standards.

Professional development opportunities specific to social studies curriculum and instruction are available pending approval by the staff development committee.

2. Grade 7-12 social studies teachers indicated that they share professional development experiences at department meetings.
3. Administration uses Board Goals and direction to influence the use of Staff Development Days. The current focus is on K-12 curriculum development in English and Math.

4. There are numerous opportunities for staff development in instructional strategies and social studies content through the following vehicles:
 - a. Regional BOCES,
 - b. Teacher Resource Center,
 - c. District Staff Development Days,
 - d. State and local social studies conferences, and
 - e. available social studies grants.
5. Interviews indicated that some staff is aware of the focus and direction of staff development.
6. Board Goals, some administration, and most staff interviewed indicated that ELA and math were the primary focus for staff development.
7. Most grade 7-12 social studies staff indicated that staff development was applied in the classroom and some indicated that staff development energized their teaching.

Student Outcomes:

1. Most grade 7-12 social studies department staff indicated that the Document Based Questioning (DBQ) workshops have provided teaching strategies that have improved student scores on State DBQ questions as measured on the New York State Social Studies Regents at grades 10 and 11.
2. Most social studies staff indicated that the collaboration and development of the research paper improved student achievement on New York State Assessments.

#5: Data Management and communication are linked to improving the entire learning organization

Definition

The degree to which information is managed and communicated for the purpose of improving the entire learning organization.

Plan:

1. There is a plan to use a Youth Intervention Team (YIT) K-6 and a Pupil Services Team (PST) 7-12 for the purposes of referring students for special education testing.
2. There is a Comprehensive District Educational Plan (CDEP) which states that the district will provide assessment information about incoming students at all grade levels. This information will be available to parents and instructional staff.
3. There is a plan to communicate information about curricula developments via scheduled presentations to the Board of Education for the 2008-2009 school year.
4. There is a plan to use district data teams to analyze and interpret data through the use of Data Mentor.
5. There is a plan to have a representative from the Central New York Regional Information Center facilitate bi-monthly in-district discussions with teachers surrounding data.

Implementation:

1. The Director of Special Education presented the K-12 special education program to the Board of Education in October 2007.
2. The district uses a variety of vehicles to communicate information to parents including five and ten week reports which are generated through Progress Book, parent conferences for all students K-6 and select students 7-12, the district newsletter (Knight Insight), and email.
3. The district subscribes to the Central New York Regional Information Center. The Superintendent shares the data gathered through the CNYRIC with the Board of Education and the administrative cabinet. The data is reported in the Board of Education minutes and the Knight Insight. Math and ELA achievement data are mailed home to parents.
4. There is a district website which allows community and staff to access district information, including district data, contact information, and district forms.
5. Some teachers use a variety of data to measure student achievement and identify gaps in student learning, including state assessment data and the Wechsler Achievement Test for special education students.

6. According to interviews, there is an administrator who serves as the central information officer and is responsible for distributing data reports received from the CNYRIC.
7. The district utilizes regional services to collect, process, and distribute data, including the use of Fast Score (an electronic scoring service for Regents Exams), IEP Direct® (special education reporting system), RTI Direct ®(Academic Intervention Services reporting system), Progress Book® (an electronic grade management system), and SIS ® (Student Information Services, a student management system).
8. Social studies grades are reported on the elementary report card at grades 3-12.
9. An exit survey was administered to graduating seniors in 2008. Student responses have been discussed at the administrative level.

Student Outcomes:

1. Some interviewees provided anecdotal evidence suggesting that the use of data in modifying instruction has resulted in an increase in student achievement.
2. The Global History Regents Exam and the U. S. History Regents Exam have shown an increase in passing rates of 65 or higher over the past four years, with a 5% and 4% increase respectively. The 5th Grade NYS Elementary Social studies assessment and the NYS 8th Grade Intermediate Social Studies assessment have shown an increase in student achievement over a three year period, with an increase of 10% for each exam.
3. There was a 92% high school completion rate for the class of 2007 based on 2003 cohort data.

#6: Technology for Teaching and Learning

Definition

The degree to which technology is integrated with teaching and learning (curriculum, instruction, and assessment) to provide educational opportunities for all students

Plan:

1. A district technology plan exists, which includes, technology objectives and plans, budgetary and goal-oriented details regarding the role of the technology committee.
2. A data team exists to improve student outcomes. This team uses Data Mentor®, a student data analysis software package.
3. A plan exists for all K-6 classes to have scheduled time in the computer lab.

Implementation:

1. Data Team members are receiving training in the use of the Data Mentor® program this school year.
2. Some K-12 staff have experienced technology training during staff development and/or individualized instruction, and some teachers are aware of the process to obtain new technology.
3. The Technology Committee has ordered ELMO projectors for each grade level K-6.
4. Some teachers use technology for social studies instruction: Power Point(r) presentation software, ELMO (presentation equipment), video streaming (downloading video clips from the internet), overhead projectors, and liquid crystal display (LCD) projectors (presentation equipment), web quests, videoconferencing, and slideshows.
5. Some K-12 classes use the computer labs for social studies to complete assignments: Brain Pop® (student interactive informational/assessment website), Power Point, web quests (internet based inquiry assignments), and research databases for the research paper.
6. Many secondary teachers utilize Castle Learning® in order to make instructional and curricular decisions in social studies.
7. The district employs a district technology coordinator, a secondary technician assistant, and two computer lab teaching assistants. A technology committee exists in the district. In the high school there are three labs, one contained in the library media center, one laptop cart, and one self-contained lab. In the elementary school there is a lab devoted to keyboarding, an iMac® lab, and several available computers in the elementary library media center.

8. Some teachers are trained to use individual webpages and some teachers utilize these webpages for social studies.

Student Outcomes:

No available student outcomes directly linked to technology at this time.

Areas of Strength

The following areas of strength in the district's overall programs were identified during the District Review process:

1. School is the center of the community
2. High level of student participation on extra-curricular activities
3. Student behavior and work ethic
4. Student relationships with teachers and administrators
5. Parents view district positively
6. Positive relationship between the Superintendent and BOE
7. Many staff members live in the community
8. School is perceived as a safe and orderly environment
9. Character Education culture at the elementary school
10. Scheduled alignment of special education services at the secondary level
11. Social studies department 7-12 works collaboratively
12. Quality of teaching assistants
13. Performance of students on Social Studies Regents
14. Community and parental support
15. Collaboration with other schools at the college and high school levels
16. College credit courses inclusive of AP
17. Elementary plays at every grade level
18. Parent-teacher relationships
19. Elementary school welcoming environment
20. Grade 4 teachers and the 7-12 social studies department members are passionate toward teaching social studies.
21. Resilient staff through administrative changes at both the building and district level
22. Art teacher and librarian support for social studies at elementary school
23. Collaborative teaching with library media specialist at the elementary level
24. Student photos create sense of community and student comfort in the elementary school building
25. 5-6th grade multi-age class

Recommendations for Growth

The following recommendations for growth in the district's overall program were identified during the District Review process:

Rubric #1 - Leadership

1. There exists a CDEP plan, a District Mission Statement and Goals. What needs to emerge is a district wide plan inclusive of social studies measurable goals, processes, and structures for involving the K-12 community. An implementation plan needs to be designed that is fully understood and operationalized for internal and external stakeholders. The plan should include an action plan identifying tasks, timelines, responsible persons and the budget. This plan should be designed to answer concerns related to:
 - a. frequent administrative changes at the building and district level
 - b. job descriptions related to student performance inclusive of department chairs
 - c. parental concerns about administrative turnover
 - d. K-12 articulated curriculum in the social studies area
 - e. clear line of accountability which is K-12 in scope
2. As a result of perceived changes in educational focus at the building and district level, staff needs to know and understand the role of SACI in the decision making process for the district. This should address issues related to:
 - a. what's the follow-up for SACI
 - b. reference to past documents
 - c. utilization to make improvements

Rubric #2 - Instructional Practices

3. The district does not have a plan to evaluate instructional practices and modify those practices based on the assessments of student performance. Staff has autonomy in the utilization of instructional strategies. This plan needs to address issues related to:
 - a. benchmarking
 - b. reflective classrooms
 - c. introduction to document based questions
 - d. academic Intervention Services
 - e. common planning time
 - f. utilization of teaching assistants

- g. articulation of instruction K-12

Rubric #3 - Curriculum

4. There is a need for comprehensive K-12 social studies curriculum which clearly identifies the learning expectations by grade level. Once established it should be monitored and reviewed to ensure consistency of instruction. It is recommended that a K-12 committee design the program from a results-driven model. This should address issues related to:
 - a. curriculum specific to grade levels
 - b. textbook selection
 - c. materials linked to curriculum
 - d. reading level of chosen materials
 - e. time devoted to teaching social studies K-6
 - f. teaching for the grade 5 and 8 state tests
 - g. existence and utilization of curriculum maps
 - h. alignment between grade levels
 - i. making teachers aware of their responsibility at all grade levels for student performance on state tests.
 - j. pacing
 - k. depth of understanding
5. Once curriculum is in place, the following procedures need to be created, linked to the curriculum and implemented:
 - a. textbook selection procedure
 - b. grading policy K-12
 - c. need for honors electives and additional social studies courses at the high school level.
 - d. extra-curricular opportunities related to social studies

Rubric #4 - Staff Development

6. The district needs to present evidence that there exists a professional and organizational plan linked to student measurable learning goals that are clearly understood and implemented K-12. Staff development needs to be:
 - a. based on student needs
 - b. implemented widely
 - c. monitored to ensure accurate implementation
 - d. evaluated for effectiveness using student performance data
7. The district should examine its present methods of delivering staff development to

ensure that appropriate staff is participating in essential learning germane to their area of responsibility. Some specific areas of concern are data analysis, technology utilization, content area reading, writing across the curriculum, and data based questioning.

Rubric #5 - Data Management

8. The district has formulated a process for managing and sharing data. The plan is in its infancy and does not specify specific and measurable goals. The plan should specify how the school will come together on an action plan inclusive of tasks, timelines, persons responsible and budget for achieving stated goals. Once these elements are in place, the district should track:
 - a. people aware of data usage
 - b. people using the data effectively
 - c. changes made as a result of data analysis
 - d. who should share the data
 - e. timeliness of data
 - f. What data should be tracked
9. Communication links between grades K-6 and 6-7-12 need to be reviewed to determine effectiveness of vertical articulation of curriculum. Report cards need to be reviewed K-12 for consistency, articulation, and effectiveness in communicating student achievement.

Rubric #6 - Technology

10. The technology plan should be revisited to determine if it indicates how teachers are to integrate technology with teaching and learning to provide learning opportunities for all students. In addition, staff needs to know and understand the processes for:
 - a. procurement of equipment (e.g. ELMO)
 - b. access to technology
 - c. staff development
 - d. coordination to teaching and learning
11. Efforts to link student utilization with performance have to be established through determination of what learning can be facilitated and accelerated through the use of technology or has technology utilization led to improved student performance.

Innovative/Best Practices

The following innovative and best practices were identified during the District Review process:

1. Character Council program at elementary level
2. Teacher resources available at elementary location K-6
3. Murals on walls at secondary level
4. Pit Stop (AIS support in social studies)
5. Procurement of Castle Learning ®
6. Vertical articulation of Research Paper in the social sciences at grades 9-12
7. 5-6th grade garden
8. Black Knight Fridays in elementary school
9. Traveling Planetarium in auditorium
10. Plan for data team
11. Design of district web page