

## SOCIAL STUDIES

**Primary Goal** - To gain understanding of people's social, political and economic organization through the use of the skills of analysis and discovery used in the social science disciplines, and to stress good citizenship and democratic values.

<u>Staff</u>	<u>Students</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Cost Per Student</u>
37.68	5,659	\$3,545,498	\$627

### Level K - 6

At the elementary levels, the K – 6 social studies program follows the concentric model. Beginning in kindergarten, students focus on self. The perspective of our children is then expanded in grade 1 to focus on families, grade 2 community and in grade 3 world communities. Fourth grade directs study toward local history, New York State history and, specifically, the history of New York State in relation to the United States history. Fifth grade focuses on Western Hemispheric studies including the United States, Canada and Latin America. Our 6<sup>th</sup> grade students examine global history with an emphasis on key events in European History. Our direction in elementary social studies is to prepare students to apply analysis, synthesis and evaluation to social studies skills, content and material. We continue to equip our students with a solid foundation of social studies content and skills and simultaneously address New York State Learning Standards.

Social studies remains an excellent venue for the teaching of study skills. Teachers use effective instructional techniques to help students develop skills for using textbooks and other works on non-fiction. Specific skills such as skimming, scanning, note taking, using graphic organizers, time management and using a planner for recording assignments are addressed in this process. Components of the new reading program also support the study skills instruction. Teachers effectively use the works of non-fiction to teach the structure found in non-fiction books that, in turn, supports the development of effective study skills. Included among these study skills are using headlines and pictorial information, reading tables and graphs, examining words in bold face and other key content area reading skills. Information about the district social studies program and the studies skills curriculum is shared with new staff at the new teacher orientation each August. This session offers our new teachers an opportunity to receive an overview of the total social studies program and expectations for research and writing.

Another key component of our social studies program at the elementary level is the use of instructional technology to support social studies instruction and research. Examples of the use of technology include use of the Internet and streaming video to present information to students in an engaging manner. Other programs such as HyperStudio, PowerPoint, and Avid Cinema are venues where students and teachers present

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information. Word processing programs are used to write research reports and to complete other assignments.

Our teachers strongly believe that the community outside the classroom remains a valuable way for students to experience learning in the social studies firsthand. Many teachers, as part of the March Staff Development Day, used this as an opportunity to explore learning opportunities in the community. We feel that the knowledge gained from this endeavor will impact our students most positively. Some field trip experiences that our students routinely are involved with include trips to the Colonie Town Library and Pruyn House. Such trips are very effective for second grade, particularly in the study of local history and the community. Our 4<sup>th</sup> graders routinely make field trips to the Iroquois Indian Museum and the Erie Canal Village. Other venues include sponsored events from the Scotia Glenville and the Saratoga Children's Museums.

The social studies program also remains as an important component of our reading program. Teachers continue to utilize the leveled reading books in National Geographic series in social studies and reading. These texts are excellent in providing experiences in critical reading, writing and thinking in the social studies content area. Another important component of our social studies program is character education. In particular, throughout instruction and because of the efforts of the school success teams in all our elementary buildings very specific efforts are devoted to increasing the atmosphere of respect and responsibility in all our elementary buildings. For example, at Boght Hills the post office and building map helps to support the sense of community and helps visitors navigate the building.

Students qualify for academic intervention services in social studies if they receive below a level 3 on the New York State Assessment offered in November of grade 5. Most of the challenges faced on this assessment are based in reading and writing. Therefore, the direct service offered to these students usually focuses on remediating reading and writing needs. Additional AIS support in the content and skill areas is provided by the classroom teacher through additional time, working to support these students, as well as additional attention given to them by the 3- and 4-day support teachers. Specific strategies are directed toward helping students learn the content material and skills while simultaneously developing social studies vocabulary.

This year we also introduced and implemented our revised DBQ's in grades 3 – 6. We are pleased to report that throughout the school year, teachers in grades 3 – 6 used document-based questions and research projects to give students experiences using primary and secondary documents in meaningful ways. The district developed document-based questions revised, in the summer of 2005, were implemented throughout the district. These revised DBQs are now available on the district Intranet and overall feedback from teachers has been positive. In 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, our students require considerable support when doing DBQs. This support and teacher

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modeling is essential as our 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students develop this key skill for the first time. In 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade, our DBQs spark higher-level thinking and authentic debate on the various grade level topics. In any case, work with documents and a variety of sources is an essential feature of our elementary social studies program.

Initially, this year, we were going to focus on curriculum revisions in grades 5 and 6. However, due to the continued focus on reading, especially at grades 5 and 6, a decision was made to target grade 3. This past summer, a curriculum subcommittee met and developed a model of the essential questions, content and skills to begin writing curriculum for grade 3. We hope that this model will serve as a template for all future efforts in grades 4, 5 and 6. The curriculum revision work at grade 3 will continue throughout the school year and most likely will be extended through the following summer.

Another key goal for the elementary program was to assess the state of maps, globes, and atlases across the grade level. This assessment was conducted at the elementary level using two companies to review the condition and need for classroom resources in each classroom. Budget planning occurred, and we will initiate a replacement program for maps and globes during the 2006-07 school year. Additionally, an on-line subscription resource, maps101.com was reviewed by the committee, and subsequently there is great interest in implementation.

In 2005-06, as a result of the work by the District Testing Committee, we decided to eliminate the study skills section of the IOWA Test of Basic Skills. This was one of the recommendations made to the Board of Education by the District Testing Committee. The committee felt that the best assessment of social studies skill and content occurred through the New York State Assessment offered at grade 5. Thus, this is our principal assessment reported for the 2005-06 school year. This year, all district 5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers and several support teachers scored the grade 5 social studies assessment in early December after its administration to our 5<sup>th</sup> grades in November of 2005. The scoring took two days and provided time for our teachers to complete all the scoring tasks including having student essays read and scored by two different teachers. Our teachers also completed an evaluation of the assessment and its scoring and that subsequently was submitted to the New York State Education Department. This process is important in serving to generate conversations about social studies instruction within the buildings. Ideas are shared, and as a result, our instructional program is improved. Our district performance at grade 5 was again outstanding, with approximately 96% of our students meeting the state standard by scoring at level 3 or higher. This is identical to the result of last year. We had 2% of our students scoring at level 2 and 1% scoring at level 1. These excellent results are a tribute to the commitment of the elementary social studies staff to effectively address New York State standards, content and skills in social studies.

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**Grade 5 State Social Studies Assessment**

	<b>Number Tested</b>	<b>Number/% Level 4</b>	<b>Number/% Level 3</b>	<b>Number/% Level 2</b>	<b>Number/% Level 1</b>
<b>2005-06</b>	437	242/55%	180/41%	9/2%	4/1%
<b>2004-05</b>	421	239/57%	164/39%	12/3%	6/1%
<b>2003-04</b>	391	179/46%	183/47%	16/4%	13/3%
<b>2002-03</b>	454	167/37%	267/59%	17/4%	3/1%
<b>2001-02</b>	414	250/60%	159/38%	2/.5%	3/.7%

**Level 7 - 8**

In grades 7 and 8, the main focus of the social studies curriculum is the study of the history of the United States from pre-exploration to the recent past. In the 7<sup>th</sup> grade, students study the pre-Columbian period through the Civil War and Reconstruction. Post-Reconstruction through contemporary times is the principle focus of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade course of study. Essential to students' success is attention to social studies skills, critical to good citizenship. Among these key skills are analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information from multiple sources. In these activities, critical thinking skills are regular elements of instruction. Attributes of good citizenship are also evident in the critical thinking that continually goes on in our junior high school social studies classrooms. Students concentrate on key issues and search for bias and perspective when examining sources and drawing conclusions based upon data. Current events of particular note are discussed as the department believes that by making a connection to the present, the past becomes more meaningful. Character education and citizenship are also taught as these characteristics are evidenced during the development of the United States. Teachers at Shaker Junior High School routinely make links between the role of government and the role of the citizen in a democratic society. In addition, characteristics of good citizens are highlighted and the attributes of good citizenship are stressed as they apply to smaller societies such of the Shaker Junior High School community.

Again, students did very well on the New York State Social Studies Assessment at grade 8. The number of our students scoring at level 4 increased substantially to 57% from 49%. Ninety-two (92) percent of our students at the junior high school earned scores at level 3 and level 4. It should also be noted that of the eight students earning a level 1 score, seven of the eight students were ungraded high school students who took the assessment as part of the New York Education Department's plan to meet the needs of students with disabilities who previously took a local assessment. (This special off-grade testing was only done during the 2005-2006 testing.) These excellent results are indicative of the high quality of social studies instruction that occurs at Shaker Junior High School.

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For students who enter grade 7 requiring AIS in social studies, which is annually a minimal number, monitoring is the primary means of providing academic intervention services. Monitoring constitutes additional help outside of class and after school for students with specific deficiencies in social studies content and skills. In addition, students who struggle in social studies during the year are assigned after school time with their content area teachers. The outstanding results on the grade 8 assessment reflect well on our students, and the number proceeding to Shaker High School in need of AIS services remains very small. Furthermore, feedback from Shaker High School indicates that our students are well prepared to meet the demands of the high school program.

At the junior high school, social studies is supervised by Dr. Moore. A variety of strategies are used to ensure student success. For example, again this past April a school wide DBQ day was held. In this activity, all 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students completed a practice DBQ in an effort to prepare for the grade 8 assessments and also to provide all students with an actual testing environment/situation for the completion of the DBQ. In addition, since the grade 8 assessment covers content from both years, all 8<sup>th</sup> grade teachers conducted specific classes to review the 7<sup>th</sup> grade content with their 8<sup>th</sup> grade students prior to the 8<sup>th</sup> grade assessment in early June. Our 7<sup>th</sup> grade teachers assisted the 8<sup>th</sup> grade teachers in helping students to review this content. Another key strategy is continued emphasis on the improvement of students' study skills. Study skills related to social studies instruction are integrated effectively into the classroom discussion and discussed regularly at department level meetings. Teachers focus on note taking, organization, preparation for tests, analysis of perspective and reading comprehension as appropriate. Technology is yet another vehicle for enhancing social studies instruction at Shaker Junior High School. Examples include research that involves Internet sources, Video Streaming, PowerPoint for both teachers and students and other technologies that are integrated into instruction and shared at department level meetings.

Reading also receives considerable focus from the junior high school social studies department. This year various reading activities were piloted by different teachers. Two teachers completed an historical novel in cooperation with their English department colleagues. Social studies teachers also worked collaboratively with their English Department colleagues on writing expectations, and both departments assist one another in writing tasks, especially in the completion of DBQs essays. This will be a continued emphasis for the 2006-07 school year.

Dr. Moore also devotes a considerable amount to time to effective supervision of the social studies teachers and their instructional practices. Each teacher is required to submit professional/personal goals to guide teacher development over the course of the school year. This year the goals were submitted and addressed for each teacher in the end of the year evaluation. Lesson plans are submitted by teachers and reviewed on a

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weekly basis. Dr. Moore offers feedback on these lesson plans as appropriate. Furthermore, each social studies teacher is observed by at least two building level administrators. Department meetings are held at a minimum on a monthly basis and essential department work was addressed on the March and November Workshop Days. Furthermore, teachers are encouraged to participate in professional development activities including conferences, in-service courses, and professional organizations as important. Our teachers at Shaker High School and junior high school complete district in-service courses and maintain memberships in the various social studies organization, locally, statewide and nationally.

### **Grade 8 State Social Studies Assessment**

	<b>Number Tested</b>	<b>Number/% Level 4</b>	<b>Number/% Level 3</b>	<b>Number/% Level 2</b>	<b>Number/% Level 1</b>
2005-06	454	259/57%	154/34%	33/7%	8/2%
2004-05	472	230/49%	208/44%	32/7%	2/1%
2003-04	477	160/34%	265/56%	48/10%	4/1%
2002-03	413	141/34%	210/51%	61/15%	0/0%
2001-02	425	123/29%	263/62%	39/9%	0/0%

### **District Final Examinations**

On the grade 7 final examination, the number of our students achieving A's and B's is down somewhat, 61% compared to 68.6% in 2004-05. The numbers of students achieving D's and F's is also up, 19.4% compared to 12.7% in 2004-05. Results on the grade 8 exam remain fairly consistent with those of previous years. There were 76.2% of our grade 8 students who achieved grades of A or B on this exam compared with 79.2% the previous year. The numbers of students achieving D's and F's is down slightly, with 7.2% scoring a D or F in 2005-06 compared to 7.8% in 2004-05. (Note that the NYS assessment serves as the final exam for grade 8.)

### **Grade 7 Social Studies**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Number of Students/Percentage 2005-06</b>	<b>Number of Students/Percentage 2004-05</b>
A	135/ 32.3%	179/40.4%
B	120/28.7%	125/28.2%
C	82/19.6%	83/18.7%
D	32/7.7%	27/6.1%
F	49/11.7%	29/6.6%

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### Grade 8 Social Studies

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Number of Students/Percentage 2005-06</b>	<b>Number of Students/Percentage 2004-05</b>
A	260/48.8%	230/58.0%
B	95/27.4%	129/21.2%
C	58/16.6%	78/17.4%
D	25/4.9%	23/5.6%
F	10/2.3%	11/2.2%

For the 2006-07 school year, the Shaker Junior High Social Studies Department will continue its effective assessment preparation activities, as well as monitoring students requiring social studies academic intervention services. In addition, the integration of technology-related activities into regular classroom instruction will receive considerable attention and focus. The department study skills and technology objectives will be reviewed and revised as necessary. Finally, recognizing that it is imperative that our social studies students connect the past to the present, considerable efforts will be made to analyze methods to effectively integrate current events study into both 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade instruction.

### Level 9 - 12

The Shaker High School Social Studies curriculum combines state requirements and electives into a program that effectively addresses the skill and content for our students to function effectively as contributors to a participatory democracy in the United States, as well as an increasingly globalized world. Grades 9 and 10 follow the New York State mandated curriculum in Global History and Geography. This culminates in a two-year Regents offered at grade 10. Our grade 11 students study United States History and Government. This course also culminates in a New York State Regents exam. In the senior year, students take two required courses, Participation in Government and Economics and Economic Decision Making. The department also offers a variety of electives including Psychology, Criminal Law and War and Conflict, all of which focus on specific student interest. The high school program offers many opportunities for students to explore both requirements and elective courses and further hone their social studies content and skills.

For the 2005-06 school year, Shaker High School students performed very well on standardized testing. Students in the Advanced Placement Program scored extremely well. Students scoring at level 3 or higher included 100% in the United State History, 92% in US Government and 95% in World History. Congratulations are extended to the high school faculty for their excellent work in preparing the students to take the Advanced Placement exams! Many thanks are also in order to the veteran teachers who mentored and inspired the members of the Social Studies Department to continue **SOCIAL STUDIES** (cont.)

the record of excellence that had been established in the department over the years. This level of commitment on the part of both the faculty and the students is reflective of the outstanding performances they attained on these assessments. We are also very pleased that all our students exceeded the performance standard of 90% or more scoring at or above level 3.

This past year, fifty-six students took the CEEB Achievement Test in United States History. These students achieved a mean score of 693 and exceeded the district performance standard of 677 by sixteen points. This result outdistanced both national, state, and Suburban Council norms. In World History, only nine students took the test and achieved a mean score of 629. This was substantially under the district performance standard. However, the fact that only nine students took the assessment accounts for the wide fluctuation in results that we see in World History from year to year.

The overall results of the New York State Regents exams in Global History and Geography and United States History and Government reflects strong progress. Ninety-three percent of the US History and Government students and 92% of the Global History and Geography students passed the exams. Mastery results, where students score 85 or above, are also outstanding. In United State History, 65% of our students attained mastery and in Global History, 55% achieved this important milestone. Both results represent increases from the previous year. Again, congratulations are extended to the department for their excellent results on these examinations.

**NYS Regents - Global Studies (Gr.10)**

	2005-06	2004-05
SHS - No. tested - 538 (99% of those enrolled) Percent passing =	92%	91%
Shaker HS - Percent of Average Grade Enrollment 65-100 passing =	98%	86%

**NYS Regents - United States History and Government (Gr.11)**

	2005-06	2004-05
SHS - No. tested - 431 (93% of those enrolled) Percent passing =	93%	89%
Shaker HS - Percent of Average Grade Enrollment 65-100 passing =	86%	86%

Percentage of students scoring 85 or higher on Regents Examinations:

	2005-06	2004-05
<b>Global Studies</b>	55%	53%
<b>US History &amp; Government</b>	65%	57%

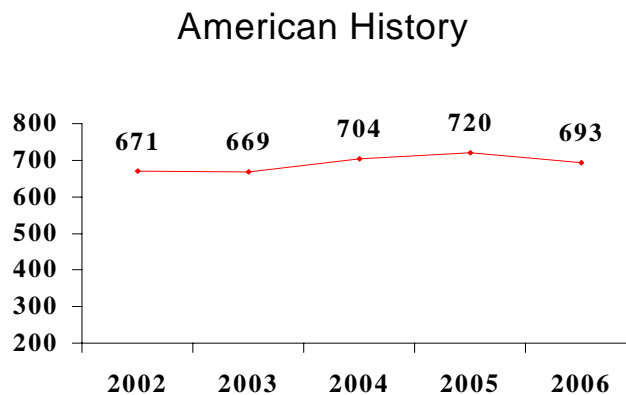
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**CEEB Achievement Test** - - Performance standards = 677 American History; 677 World History.

<b>Number Tested</b>	<b>American History</b>	<b>Difference over/under Performance Standard - 677</b>	<b>World History</b>	<b>Difference over/under Performance Standard - 677</b>
56	693	+16		
9			629	-48

Students continue to score at high levels on the AP exams. Student scores at 3 or higher included 95% in US History, 90% in US Government and Politics and 91% in World History. All exceeded the performance standard of 90% scoring at level 3 or higher. Congratulations are extended to the high school faculty for their excellent work in the Advanced Placement Program and the scores demonstrated in all three courses. The level of commitment by both the faculty and the students is reflective of the performances attained. Student interest in all levels of the Advanced Placement Program from 9<sup>th</sup> grade to 12<sup>th</sup> grade remains solid. Social studies continues to be the only department that offers advanced placement at three levels in grades 10, 11, and 12. Noteworthy is the fact that we had our highest participation in World History as 44 students completed the course and took the AP exam in grade 10.

**(2002-2006 Results - CEEB American History)**



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**CEEB Advanced Placement** - Performance standard = 90% to score "3" or higher

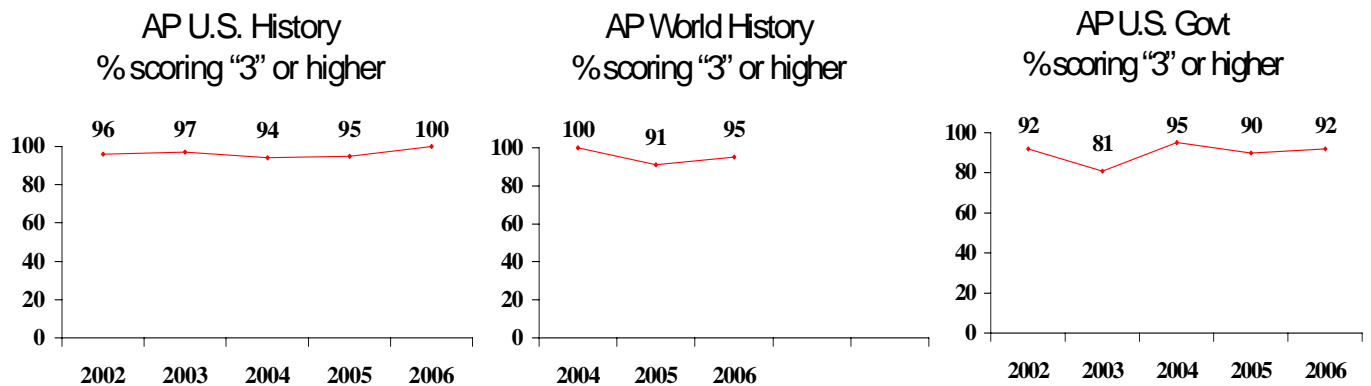
	<b>US History</b>	<b>Difference over 90%</b>
SHS Percent scoring "3" or Higher	100%	+10
Number tested	66	
NYS Percent scoring "3" or higher	58*	
US Percent scoring "3" or higher	50*	

	<b>World History</b>	<b>Difference over 90%</b>
SHS Percent scoring "3" or Higher	95%	+5
Number tested	44	
NYS Percent scoring "3" or higher	65*	
US Percent scoring "3" or higher	52*	

	<b>US Government</b>	<b>Difference over 90%</b>
SHS Percent scoring "3" or Higher	92%	+2
Number tested	73	
NYS Percent scoring "3" or higher	55*	
US Percent scoring "3" or higher	52*	

\*(Data for NYS and US are for 2005; data for 2006 is not yet available.)

**(2002-2006 Results - AP American History & World History & U.S. Government)**



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## Regents Competency Tests (RCT)

### RCT INFORMATION

#### Grade 10

Subject	Number Failing		Percent of Class	
	2005-06	2004-05	2005-06	2004-05
Global Studies	5	14	.9%	2%
<b>Grade 11</b>				
Global Studies	1	5	.2%	1%

#### Grade 11

Subject	Number Failing		Percent of Class	
	2005-06	2004-05	2005-06	2004-05
US History & Government	4	6	.9%	1%
<b>Grade 12</b>				
US History & Government	1	0	.2%	0%

(Percentage failing is the percentage of the class; it is not the percentage of those taking the test.)

We are working in labs and after school to remediate those needy students.

### Additional Information

On the departmental examinations, our results also reflected strong progress. On the 9<sup>th</sup> grade assessment, our scores increased from 90% to 91% scoring in the expected range. Our Regents level students showed solid gains with 97% passing while 93% of basic students achieved a passing score on the departmental examination. The Social Studies Department continues to revise curriculum assessments and instructional practices, especially in the area of Global History and Geography. For students electing the humanities option, the interdisciplinary approach in 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade remains a strong and vital choice for our students. Ninety five percent of grade 9 Humanities students passed their examination, 96% of grade 10 students passed the Regents examination with 98% passing in grade 11.

For students requiring remediation of Regents examinations in order to achieve a high school Regents diploma, the social studies department maintains many strategies to ensure student success. Included among these is parental contact, after school help, departmental review sessions, consistent practices and essay writing and the development of critical reading skills. Most importantly, the social studies department

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teachers are concerned with sound instructional practices and have developed a collegial atmosphere where the sharing of ideas is encouraged and done routinely. Summer school and the remediation offered to students at risk of failure provides them with an opportunity to improve their content and skill acquisition to obtain a Regents diploma. Finally, our basic level program with smaller class size and increased resources has helped raise the performance of our weaker students.

The social studies department continually engages in renewal and reflective practice toward instruction. Our teachers at Shaker High School are prepared and cognizant of changing state mandates especially in the areas DBQ and essay writing. Many of them have participated in the various aspects of the New York State test construction process. The content area focus on reading and writing skills has been expanded as the state exams continue to demand skill in both areas. The department is intent on providing additional resources and assistance for students with weak reading, writing and thinking skills who continue to be expected to achieve Regents success. Identifying deficiencies and devoting time and resources to strengthen these skills will be a continued emphasis.

This past year, summer curriculum workshops were devoted to the Advanced Placement Program and the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade Humanities course. Curriculum resources projects and enrichment materials were developed. Furthermore, as part of the district wide initiative on reading and writing, the social studies department continually seeks ways to integrate primary resources and documents in order to improve reading and writing skills. For students interested in other opportunities in social studies, the elective program remains a viable resource. Interest in the electives including Sociology, Psychology, War and Conflict and Criminal Law remains high. Mock Trial and Model United Nations are also other avenues that have garnered much student interest and support. Both activities engage students in real world, authentic applications of social studies content and skill and our students enjoying traveling to competitions throughout the Northeast. Finally, technology has become almost second nature to social studies instruction. Teachers utilize computers and presentation devices for everything from PowerPoint to streaming video and music clips. Research tools have also been expanded as digital primary sources and documents make their use within their classroom. All these activities are focused on ensuring higher-level thinking and engaging instructional practice.

Essential to the social studies program at Shaker High School is the development and understanding of character education through appreciation of our national heritage, state and local history and commitment to a globalized world. Knowledge of the national heritage is integral to the course of study in the grade 11 US History and Government course, as well as the grade 12 Participation in Government offering. While the majority of state and local politics is addressed in the grade 12 Participation in Government curriculum, Economics also treats many significant policy areas as well.

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Global History and Geography develops our students' sense of participation in an increasingly diverse and expanded society. Continually, we look for opportunities for our students to engage in real world applications of their knowledge in order to prepare them to become responsible citizens and voters by the end of their senior year. Additionally, the extensive use of guest speakers, field trips and activities such as students in Local Government Day provide our students with opportunities that enhance their understanding of civics, citizenship and government. Other field trips such as those to Salem, Massachusetts, the United Nations and New York City are also effective in expanding the horizons of our social studies students. We again extend our congratulations to the social studies department for an outstanding year.