

Follow up to Controversial Topics Parent Academy
Wednesday, November 17, 2021

The following are questions and answers to questions that came to us from the parent academy we hosted regarding high school social studies curriculum and how we teach controversial issues that did not come up in the webinar. Please feel free to view the parent academy. See the link on our district website.

Is there a committee at SBHS which addresses controversial issues and identifies when and where such issues can be covered in the various curricula?

-The state outlines the grades in which the issues are taught. Usually by 8th Grade or by 12th grade. And our district creates the order of courses. As mentioned in the webinar, we have a group at the high school that focuses on this work. It is called "Race to Justice" and has many stakeholders including students.

Should the treatment of Native Americans and African Americans in the first 200 years of our history be viewed as holocausts?

-The standards do not attach the term Holocaust or Genocide to either of these groups.

Does SB teach any aspects of Critical Race Theory?

- Critical Race theory is not discussed in our classes and is not in our curriculum.

Who approves the documentaries and movies presented in controversial subject matters?

- There is a board approved curriculum including resources for all content. Teachers do have discretion to incorporate other/newer resources and materials. In the case of controversial issues, they confer with the supervisor before using them in their class.

Does SB use 1619 resources in the classroom?

- We do not use The 1619 Project as resources in Social Studies classes.

What controversial issues might be covered in a Local History course?

- Local history would most likely be NJ History. NJ is not immune to many of the same issues that other states have faced over history from corruption to civil rights. Many modern issues in NJ from school funding, affordable housing, urban sprawl, climate issues, municipal spending.

Does SB teach about whiteness?

-We do not teach about "Whiteness" in our classes. The Race Class and Gender elective encourages students to examine different parts of their identity and how they relate to each other. They also look at the history of race relations in America and they ask students to examine race's role in American institutions.

How is the Social Studies Department addressing the drug addiction issue?

- Psychology Classes deal with the mental and physical aspects of addiction, but mainly health classes, counselors, case managers, and Bridge Center will educate and assist students on dealing with ongoing addiction issues.

What cultural enrichment programs have proved successful in the Social Studies Department?

-Our Global Studies department routinely engages in professional development opportunities that allow us to speak with professionals in many areas including culture, religion and history. They have proved to be some of the most valuable cultural experiences we've shared as staff and we look forward to learning more about the communities of people we serve.