

Social Studies Departmental Vision:

We often view hard science as the only type of science. But science (from the Latin *scientia* -- knowledge) is something much more general, which isn't defined by decimal places and controlled experiments. It means the enterprise of explaining and predicting -- gaining knowledge of -- natural phenomena, by continually testing one's theories against empirical evidence. The world is full of phenomena that are intellectually challenging and important to understand, but that can't be measured to several decimal places in labs. They constitute much of ecology, evolution, and animal behavior; much of psychology and human behavior; and all the phenomena of human societies, including cultural anthropology, economics, history, and government.

Communication

COMMUNICATION between teachers, parents, students, guidance and administration is **VITAL** to an **EFFECTIVE** learning environment. You are encouraged to share your questions and concerns at anytime by calling the school, writing a note to send in with your child or via e-mail (THIS IS MY FAVORITE!). ctmiller@basdschools.org You will play an important role in your child's success this year. **ENCOURAGE** your child to have good study habits and come to class prepared. Remind them of what acceptable behavior and dress **LOOKS** and **SOUNDS** like. I will be calling you on occasion to report progress or lack thereof.

Course Description

American History is the course of study in 8th grade Social Studies. Using the integration of Literacy and Language Arts, the students will learn about the birth and growth of our nation and the important dates, events, and people that helped to shape the history of the United States. Content areas include Native Americans, Exploration, Colonial America, Revolutionary War and the Constitution. Current Events will also be an important part of the curriculum, learning what is taking place worldwide while making meaningful connections to students' lives. There will be a focus on higher level thinking using Norman Webb's work on Depth of Knowledge (DOK). This year, we will be taking a field trip to Historical Bethlehem sites, including the Hoover Mason Trail. Students will also research the impact the Bethlehem Steel had on the social and economical development of our community. We will look forward to continuing this partnership and integrate technology to its fullest capacity for successful learning.

Student Textbooks & Materials

Davidson, James West, et al. *America: History Of Our Nation*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall Education Inc., 2009. Print. Due to a limited number of textbooks, students will NOT have a textbook to bring home. This textbook is also available online for the students.

Required Student Supplies

As your child begins an exciting 8th grade school year there are a few items that will be useful to ensure success in history class.

- A folder/binder
- Real World Problem Journal (provided by Mr. Miller)
- Pencils/Pens/highlighters
- Glue sticks/bottle of glue
- Pack of colored pencils and thin colored markers



Major Course Objectives

- Examine the early civilizations and cultures of the Americas placing them in a global historical context.
- How do environmental factors affect development in the Americas?
- Identify and evaluate America's exploration, development, and divergence.
- What influences affected the growth and prosperity of the colonies?
- How do unique experiences of the colonists shape future political and social ideas?
- What kind of nation did the revolution create?
- Explain and defend the reasons for our current Constitutional Government.

Possible Major Projects

Debates (Columbus) (Loyalist vs Patriot Debate)

Research and Create an Artifact representative of the studied period/culture.

Real World Problem Research Project - yearlong

Oral History with a person 50 years older than your student.

Google Presentation on the Battles of the Revolutionary War

Draft a Declaration of Rights

Teacher Homework Policy

Homework **is** an integral part of the learning process. Assignments are given about 3 nights per week, and **should be listed in the student's planner**. Students are responsible for making up all work missed during an absence. They should have a "homework buddy" that they can call/text/email to get assignments and/or notes from when they are absent. Students can also check Google Classroom to see what the day entailed. Any assignments turned in late will automatically receive **points off** unless otherwise noted by the teacher. **It is the student's responsibility** to contact the teacher after returning from an absence. Consistent failure to do homework will result in parental contact, detentions, and/or administrative/guidance referral. Refer to student handbook for homework policy due to legal absence.

Teacher Grading Policy

Grading Policy is based on a "**total points**" system. A student's grade can be calculated by dividing earned points by total points. We encourage both parents and students to use **e-school/the parent portal** as a tool to stay current and up to date on your child's grades and attendance.

Classroom Management Plan

Student Expectations

1. Be here...be ready to learn
2. Be respectful
3. Be responsible
4. Be actively engaged in learning
5. Follow instruction the first time
6. Follow all classroom procedures

Consequences

1. Verbal Warning
2. Student-Teacher Conference
3. Teacher Detention – parent notification
4. Parent/Guidance contact
5. Code of Conduct Referral

Extra Help

Extra Help will be available before and after school based on the teacher's individual schedule. Arrangements can also be made upon student request. Morning help is also available from 7:45 a.m. to 8:05 a.m. upon request. Note: Students must notify the teacher the day before coming into school for extra help and receive a pass. Please check school website for activity bus schedule and times.