

**SADDLE BROOK
MIDDLE SCHOOL**

Grade 8 Honors Social Studies

HANDBOOK

Procedures for:

**Screening, Qualifying
and
Exiting the Course**

Grade 8 Honors Social Studies Description

The Grade 8 Honors Social Studies course is designed to provide challenging opportunities for students who demonstrate strength in the area of Social Studies. Students in this course will move beyond the general 8th grade Social Studies curriculum, developing a global perspective of how geography and history interact to create patterns of social interaction throughout history.

The Grade 8 Honors Social Studies program of study is a rigorous academic environment specifically designed to meet the intellectual, creative, social and emotional needs of high academic achieving students in the area of Social Studies.

The goal of the program is to produce self-directed, life-long learners who will become productive citizens. Enrollment in Grade 8 Honors Social Studies will prepare students for the demands of the high school Honors or AP courses including AP World History in freshman year.

Selection for the Honors program is a multi-step process.

SCREENING PROCESS

SCREENING is defined as the assessment of each student in order to facilitate identification and programming.

In order to appropriately place students in this course, a range of information will inform the decision-making. A description of the data points is explained below.

I. Learning Characteristics

The student's current Social Studies teacher will provide information about the student's learning characteristics using the Renzulli-Hartman Scales as a basis for their input. The scales identify key characteristics in the areas of:

- A. Learning
- B. Motivation
- C. Communication
- D. Reading

II. Class Performance

The student's performance in their current Social Studies course is an important factor in determining those students who would be well suited to an Honors level class. The student's report card grades from the first three marking periods will serve to inform the placement decision.

III. Content Knowledge

The Grade 8 Honors course will maintain a rigorous pace and high expectations for students' reading and writing abilities. A screening exam will be administered to measure competency of the skills necessary for students to be successful in the class.

Information from the Screening Process is compiled on the Screening Summary Worksheet.

- I. Scores and/or grades are entered and the weighted equivalents for all indicators are tallied.
- II. Students must score 13 points or higher out of 16 points to qualify for placement in Grade 8 Honors Social Studies.
- III. The Screening Worksheets are forwarded for administrative review. In a dispute between home and school regarding the placement decision, the administrative decision will prevail.

If a student enters the district in 8th grade having been identified and included in the previous district's Honors or Advanced Social Studies class, the screening process may be pre-empted.

QUALIFICATION TIMELINE

Using the data from the Screening Process, students who qualify for Grade 8 Honors Social Studies have been identified as having strong skills academically as well as strong analytical and study skills who have the ability to excel in the program. The following timeline will be utilized for identifying students.

March

Teachers will identify students who would be well suited for an Honors level class. Parents have the right to request that their student be included in the screening process even if a teacher has not identified him/her. The student's current Social Studies teacher will complete the Renzulli-Hartman Scale for Motivation, Learning, Communication, Reading, and Planning for each student.

March – April

Students will take a screening exam to measure competency in the areas of comprehending unfamiliar text and using writing to present an analysis/interpretation of their reading. Written responses may take the form of argumentative and/or informative essays.

Data will be collected, sorted, and screening summaries will be created to rate students based on the program rubric.

May

Parents will receive written notification of eligibility for the program and signed permission must be returned to the school prior to the end of the year for the student to participate in the program.

COURSE ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS

I. Summer Assignment

Students must fully complete the summer assignment for the beginning of the following school year in order to stay enrolled in Grade 8 Honors Social Studies.

II. Monitoring

The Honors Social Studies teacher will conduct ongoing formal and informal assessments in class to ensure that each candidate's placement in the course is the best fit for him/her. Any struggles or difficulty adjusting to the program will be communicated to the parent by the teacher via phone calls, emails, progress reports, and student assignment reports. All communication should be documented on the Genesis "Conference" tab during the first marking period.

EXITING PROCESS

Criteria for exiting Grade 8 Honors Social Studies:

- A written request is made by either the parent or student that they no longer want to continue in Honors Social Studies.
- Regular class attendance falls below acceptable levels as per the district attendance policy.
- Chronic behavior problems requiring administrative action or intervention.

A combination of the following behaviors:

- Current average is a D or lower.
- Student fails to meet assignment deadlines and turns in work only when prompted by teacher.
- Student's behavior interferes with the learning process.
- Student struggles to stay on task when asked to work independently.
- Student has difficulty working cooperatively with others.
- Homework/class work/projects are poorly prepared or incomplete.
- Student has difficulty paying attention to procedures and details in class.
- Student fails assignments/tests/quizzes regularly.

- There is little evidence of skills/strategies taught during the unit of study.
- Summer assignment was incomplete/never handed in after given extended time to complete it.

If placement in Grade 8 Honors Social Studies is not the proper fit for a student, the teacher will follow the procedure set forth below:

- Teacher will discuss the possible exiting with the Middle School Assistant Principal.
- A meeting with the parent(s) along with the teacher and administration will be scheduled to discuss the reasons their child will no longer continue in the Honors course.
- A letter from the administrator setting forth the reasons for exiting the program will be given to the parent(s) as additional documentation.
- Student(s) will then be placed into an on-level classroom that will better suit his/her needs.